

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x02 - "Brave New World."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

incorporating elements from
Fragments and Omens, by J Noah Kym

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INSERT

A symbol fills the screen - Bajoran ideograms arranged into a distinctive logo that appears flashy but trustworthy. Beneath is a subheading in English: BAJORAN NEWS NETWORK.

VOICEOVER

And now, we return to the Bajoran
News Network's special broadcast:
The 2378 Apex Chair Election.

The logo SWOOPS forward to fill the screen, dissolving as it goes, and revealing...

2 INT. NEWS STUDIO

A female Bajoran newsreader, TIANA, sits at a desk, looking directly into camera. The set combines classic Bajoran architecture with modern Federation technology.

TIANA

Hello, and welcome back to BNN's
exclusive coverage of the Vedek
Assembly's election of a new Kai.
I'm Tiana Feen, and over the next
few hours I'll be leading you
through all the news surrounding
the day's events, and exploring
just why these could be the most
controversial kai elections in
recent memory.

ANGLE to reveal a large screen beside Tiana, showing the faces of vedeks BELLIS and SOLIS (both seen in 8x20 "Twist of Faith"). Tiana shifts to stay with the camera.

TIANA

I'll be showing you exclusive
interviews with the figures at the
centre of that controversy,
courtesy of our own intrepid
reporter Teris Juze, plus

conversations with Bajor's most esteemed political and religious commentators, live in the studio.

3 ANGLE - ON MONITOR

Now we're watching this show play out on one of DS9's station monitors.

 TIANA (screen)
 Make sure to keep your screens
 tuned to BNN as we bring you every
 exciting development.

WIDEN to reveal...

4 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

RO sat at the bar, watching the program play on the screens on the back wall. She is unimpressed. The show continues in the background as she speaks.

 RO
 Eugh. That's the signal for me to
 be on my way, I think.

QUARK quickly arrives from the other end of the bar where he had been serving. The bar is fairly busy with Starfleet officers and Bajoran civilians, many of whom are watching the news broadcast as it shows on screens all over.

 QUARK
 No, you're going already?

 RO
 I don't want to hear politicians
 bark at each other, thank you. I
 have real work to do.

Ro turns on her bar stool, and as she does we see that her legs are still encased in their metallic supports. She reaches for a walking stick leant against the bar, begins struggling to manoeuvre off the bar stool onto her feet.

Quark quickly dashes around the bar to her side. He is nervous, wants to help, but doesn't want to intrude.

QUARK
(tentative)
Do you need a hand?

She puts out a hand to stop him.

RO
No. Stay where you are. I can
handle it.

He steps back and lets her struggle. She balances trickily on the walking stick while slowly and painfully dragging one leg at a time off the stool. Finally she is vertical and ready to go. Quark is caught between offering sympathy and knowing he could be killed for it.

QUARK
Well... it was nice that you could
come.

Seeing his earnestness, she softens just a little.

RO
Thank you, Quark. I'll see you
later.

He nods, and she sets off slowly but steadily across the bar towards the exit. She steps gingerly over the threshold and out onto the Promenade, her head held high, daring anyone to challenge her.

Quark watches her go, worried for her. Then with a sad sigh, he grabs a tray of drinks and heads out to serve.

5 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

Standard establishing shot.

6 INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT

Half a dozen passengers ride in the lift. Two Bajoran civilians, two Starfleet officers, one random alien for colour, and Captain KIRA.

The lift comes to a stop and the door opens. Everyone but Kira gets out into the docking ring corridor. The two Bajorans nod their acknowledgements to Kira as they go.

She nods back politely, and then looks up to see VAUGHN waiting to board. He waits for the others to pass, then enters. The door closes and the lift begins moving again.

KIRA
Morning, Commander. Heading to
Ops?

VAUGHN
Certainly am.
(beat)
I'm surprised you're not glued to
the elections.

KIRA
I've been keeping an eye on it.

VAUGHN
Any particular favourite?

KIRA
Oh, I don't know. I'm not a
hundred percent happy with either
of the choices.
(sigh)
At least they're not Yevir.

VAUGHN
(wry smile)
Not like you to hold a grudge,
Captain.

An unimpressed grunt from Kira. It's very much like her.

KIRA
See you on the Nile later?

VAUGHN
...Why?

KIRA

You're coming down to Bajor,
aren't you? We're all going down
to Benjamin's for the party.

A blank look from Vaughn.

KIRA (cont)
For Rebecca's first birthday.

Vaughn actually knew this all along, but had been wanting
to avoid the subject. Now he fakes realisation.

VAUGHN
Ah. Well, that's kind of you to
offer, Captain, but I'll have to
politely decline.

KIRA
Why?

VAUGHN
I already spoke to Dax, I know
she's going too. Someone has to
stay and run the station.

KIRA
I'm leaving Ro in charge.

VAUGHN
Are you sure she's up to it?

KIRA
She only has to sit there and keep
everyone doing their jobs.
Besides, it'll be good for her.
She needs to start getting back
into the swing of things.

VAUGHN
Well, I suppose that's true.
Still, I'd really rather stay
here.

KIRA
Elias... what is it? What's the
problem?

He pauses, trying to figure out something to say that she will believe.

VAUGHN

I just feel... out of place.
Like an intruder. It would be
inappropriate.

KIRA

Rubbish. It's been two years -
you're one of the family now. I'm
not taking no for an answer.

The turbolift comes to a stop and the door opens onto the Promenade. Kira steps out but turns back to Vaughn.

KIRA

Pad B, ten-hundred hours.
(jokingly harsh)
Be there.

With a smile, she walks off onto the Promenade. The doors close, leaving Vaughn inside the turbolift alone.

He is definitely not happy about this.

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

7 EXT. BAJOR - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A sunny day in Bajor's countryside.

8 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE

SISKO stirs the contents of a large pot on an old-fashioned range in the kitchen. He's in his element, humming a happy tune to himself. He leans in closer to sniff - satisfied, he puts the lid back on and turns back to the kitchen.

The room is filled with half-prepared food, containers, bowls and plates. It's like he's catering for a hundred. He pulls off his apron, throws it over the seat of a kitchen stool, and walks through into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

It's set up for a party in here too, with extra chairs. The big screen from the office has been brought out and set up on the mantelpiece over the fire. It's not yet switched on. Sisko surveys the room, pleased. He turns towards the bedroom, gently opening the door.

SISKO
Kas? Sweetie?

BEDROOM

The changing table is still there by the bed. KASIDY is sat in a chair by the window, the baby held to her chest, and Kasidy slowly feeding her from a small plastic bowl.

SISKO
They'll be here soon.

KASIDY
Don't blame me. Blame this greedy daughter of yours.

Grinning, Sisko approaches, leaning down close to the baby.

SISKO

Is that true, Rebecca Jae Sisko?
Are you a greedy girl?

Rebecca finishes her current mouthful, smiles up at her daddy, and BELCHES in his face.

SISKO

Charming.

Sisko places a gentle kiss on the baby's head.

SISKO

Whenever you're ready.

He heads back out to the living area again.

9 EXT. SISKO'S HOUSE - DAY

Sisko steps out onto the veranda. At the end of the path, five Starfleet transporter signatures deposit Kira, Vaughn, BASHIR, DAX and NOG, all in civilian clothes. They begin to walk towards the house. Sisko welcomes them all with a smile or a warm touch, as they pass him into the house.

SISKO

Nerys! I'm so glad you could come.

KIRA

Wouldn't miss it for the world.
(to the others)
Would we?

DAX

Of course not. So where's the
birthday girl?

SISKO

Kasidy's giving her her lunch. Go
on inside, all of you.

Last in line, Vaughn nods acknowledgement, but cold and unfriendly. Sisko knows full well Vaughn is mad at him. But neither of them wants to make a scene in front of the rest. Sisko nods uncertainly back, and Vaughn enters the house.

10 **INT. SSKO'S HOUSE**

The group spreads as Sisko closes the door behind them. Kasidy is just emerging from the bedroom with Rebecca on her hip. Kira goes to her for a friendly half-hug.

KIRA

Oh, here she is! Happy birthday,
Rebecca. How does it feel to be a
whole one year old?

Rebecca stares back at her, bemused.

KIRA

She's ecstatic.

BASHIR

She's one, Nerys. She doesn't have
a clue what day it is. All she
knows is there's lots of people in
her house.

DAX

Stop being such a party pooper.

As Dax playfully pokes Bashir in the belly, Sisko looks across the room to where Vaughn has passed through into the kitchen without saying a word to anyone. He opens the back door and gently steps out onto the deck.

11 **EXT. SSKO'S HOUSE (CONTINUOUS) - DAY**

Vaughn emerges from the house and sees that OPAKA is sat in a deck chair, gazing contentedly out at the fields. Vaughn steps closer, not wanting to disturb her.

VAUGHN

Sulan?

Opaka turns her head, pleasantly surprised to see him.

OPAKA

Elias! Please forgive me, I didn't
realise you'd arrived.

He comes closer, crouches down by her chair.

VAUGHN

Don't apologise. It's easy to get distracted, looking out at all that. You have a beautiful world, Sulan.

OPAKA

It's always a joy to see how well the land healed from the wounds of the Occupation. We should all hope to heal so completely.

Vaughn nods, somewhat solemnly. Things on his mind.

12 EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD - DAY

By contrast, the Founders' planet is dry and barren. As we pan across the empty stone floor, we gradually come upon TARAN'ATAR's face in foreground. He is gazing out at this sight, quietly stunned.

TARAN'ATAR

I don't understand. This is not possible. The Link is forever...

We PAN around slightly to see ODO standing behind him, sharing the view with sadness.

ODO

They knew it wasn't. That was the problem. Why are you here, Taran'atar?

Taran'atar turns to Odo, suddenly remembering he is dealing with a Founder. He stands to attention, his eyes lowered.

TARAN'ATAR

Founder. I returned to Dominion space in order to report on my activities in the Alpha Quadrant.

ODO

(intrigued)
I didn't order you to do that.

TARAN'ATAR

No.

ODO

And yet you came anyway. I suppose that's... progress. Well, make your report. What was so vitally important that you had to come all this way to tell me about it?

Taran'atar hesitates, wondering how to start. He is rather relieved to be interrupted by another transporter signal, which deposits WEYOUN. The Vorta immediately bows to Odo.

WEYOUN

Founder. My soldiers noticed an unauthorised transport to the surface. I wanted to check that everything was alright.

ODO

Yes, Weyoun, I am fine, thank you. It's just Taran'atar.

Weyoun only just notices Taran'atar is there.

WEYOUN

First! This is unacceptable! Transport to the surface is forbidden!

This is unexpected news to Taran'atar.

ODO

It's alright, Weyoun. Vannis contacted me in advance. I gave her my permission.

Weyoun pauses to process that. He is a little put out. He looks Taran'atar up and down - what's so special about him?

WEYOUN

I see. Forgive me, Founder. I must have missed that... update... to your orders.

That's verging on cheeky. Odo is amused. Weyoun straightens to give his own report. Taran'atar lets him - that is, after all, the order of things.

WEYOUN (cont)

The mission you assigned me is completed, Founder. The, um... object in question is suitably concealed and a continuous security presence in place.

Odo receives the report with solemnity. This is not a comfortable subject for anyone involved.

ODO

Thank you, Weyoun. How many others know about this?

WEYOUN

Only you, Vannis and myself. All other Vorta were told only what they needed to know to complete the mission, and any Jem'Hadar who came into contact were eliminated.

ODO

(appalled)

What? You killed them?

WEYOUN

(surprised)

Yes, Founder.

(a touch worried)

You did say that secrecy was our primary concern, did you not? Did I misinterpret you?

Odo is shocked, caught off guard. He can't answer.

LAAS (o.s.)

Well, Odo? Answer him.

They all turn and see that LAAS, the other Changeling, has stepped up onto the islet out of nowhere too. He looks at Odo, amused at this opportunity to push Odo's buttons.

LAAS (cont)

Isn't keeping the secret that the Founders have a god of their own, worth the deaths of a few meaningless monoforms?

Off everyone's reactions to that - Odo's shame, Weyoun's shock, Laas's smugness, Taran'atar's intrigue...

13 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

Just to bring us home...

14 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Ro sits at the desk, working with a padd. The door opens, and she looks up. ETANA stands in the doorway, staring calmly at her.

Ro stares back. Maybe if I don't move, she won't see me.

Etana haughtily folds her arms - she's not going anywhere.

RO

You're going to make me get up, aren't you?

ETANA

Yep.

Etana walks to the couch area and places a small device on the deck. She taps a few keys, then stands back as the device REPLICATES an exercise frame, featuring weights, massage table and more. Ro remains unimpressed.

RO

I'm busy, Kol. I don't have time for this.

ETANA

Sure you do. In fact, since I have official authority from Captain Kira and doctors Tarses and Bashir, you have all the time in the world until I'm satisfied.

RO
You think I'm going to humiliate
myself for your entertainment, in
front of the whole of Ops?

The device all set up, Etana stands, hands on hips.

ETANA
Nobody can see you. They're all
busy watching the elections.
(beat)
I'm not leaving, Laren. You've got
to run out of excuses sometime.

After a moment's more grumping, Ro finally puts aside her
padd and begins to get up. Etana goes to her and gently
assists her out of the seat and towards the exercise frame.

RO
You're a slave driver, you know
that?

ETANA
I'm a nurse.

RO
Same difference.

15 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE

Kira and Sisko are in the kitchen - he putting finishing
touches to lunch, she collecting plates, dishes and bowls.

KIRA
I don't think I'm gonna need to
eat again for a month after we get
through all this lot.

SISKO
Nonsense. Put some meat on your
bones. You're too skinny, Nerys.

KIRA
Rebecca's beautiful, by the way.
She looks just like you.

SISKO

Kasidy says the same thing, but I don't see it. She's growing so fast, Nerys. So many of the things that daunted me when Jake was a baby don't even faze me this time. But I'd completely forgotten how fast they grow as people. I see her changing every day. Every day.

He drifts for a moment, smiling. Then pulls himself back together, and turns to Kira, holding out a large wooden bowl filled with steaming food from the large pot.

KIRA

Well, she's sure gonna change today. She's gonna put on twice her body weight.

They carry their loads out of the kitchen, and into...

LIVING ROOM

...where the gang sit comfortably, chatting. Opaka shares a couch with Vaughn. Nog perches on the arm of an armchair, holding Rebecca and making funny faces for the young girl's entertainment. Rebecca is not overly impressed - Dax and Bashir are the ones chuckling at Nog's performance.

The screen over the fireplace is showing the BNN broadcast, but nobody's really paying attention to it.

Kira and Sisko enter the room and place the food and bowls onto a table to the side, laying things out for a buffet.

KIRA

Lunch is ready. Everyone serve yourselves - we're not your slaves.

Sisko and Kira head back into the kitchen for another load. Nog hands Rebecca back to Kasidy and then eagerly gets up to be first in line for food.

VAUGHN

Can I get you anything, Sulan?

OPAKA

Oh, perhaps just some salad. Thank
you, Elias.

Vaughn gets up and heads to join the queue at the buffet
table, leaving Opaka alone on the couch. Kira and Sisko are
still adding more bowls and foods to the table. Everyone is
happy, mingling, chatting amiably, having a nice time.

DAX

This is an amazing spread, Ben.

NOG

(only half joking)
Could use some tube grubs...

Sisko directly hands him a bowl - tube grubs. Nog grins,
genuinely grateful.

NOG

You're the perfect host, Captain.

VAUGHN

(the tiniest edge)
Yes... and so much to celebrate.
Rebecca's birthday... the new
kai... the Gratitude Festival,
Unity Day coming up soon... and of
course Ha'mara. And all honouring
you. You must be so proud.

Nobody else seems to have noticed, but Sisko has definitely
grasped Vaughn's subtext. The two exchange a bitter look
among the happy crowd, and then Vaughn turns away.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

16 INT. NEWS STUDIO

The news broadcast continues, as newsreader Tiana speaks.

TIANA

Bajor has not had a Kai in the Apex Chair for more than two years now, ever since the mysterious disappearance of Winn Adami.

17 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE

In the living room, the group continues to mingle and chat together, gathering food, shuffling between seats, etc. Opaka, meanwhile, leans forward to pay attention to the TV.

TIANA (screen)

Numerous books have been written expounding on the many wild rumours and theories regarding Winn's fate.

The program shows stock images of WINN, regal and pompous.

TIANA (screen, v.o.)

Many more about Winn's direct predecessor, Opaka Sulan. Interest in the legendary former kai's life has only increased since her unexpected return from the Gamma Quadrant just over a year ago.

And now stock images of Opaka, looking humble and ordinary. Opaka purses her lips, a bit embarrassed to be made such a fuss of. Vaughn gives her an encouraging smile.

OPAKA

I have no problem with people listening to my words. But "celebrity" is not exactly the way I wanted to go.

VAUGHN

Don't worry about it. An old Earth writer once said, "The only thing worse than being talked about, is not being talked about."

Opaka smiles a little. They turn back to the screen.

TIANA (screen)

Opaka's refusal to return to the Apex Chair - usually a lifetime appointment - is only one of many reasons why Bajor has gone without a kai for so long.

(continuing,
background)

No-one could have failed to notice the rise of the Ohalavaru...

JAKE (o.s)

Hello hello? Anybody in?

JAKE has opened the back door, entering the house. RENA is with him. Sisko and Kira, still moving back and forth from the kitchen, are the first to greet the young couple.

SISKO

Jake-o! Grab yourself a plate and dig in.

JAKE

Hey, dad. Kas. Nerys... Nog! You made it!

While Kasidy hugs Rena in welcome, Jake goes to Nog. They are about to do the bro-hug, but Jake stops and shudders...

JAKE

Oh! Nog, you've got... grubs in your teeth...

NOG

Oh, you hew-mons. You're all insectophobes.

Nog forces a hug on him anyway. Dax is next in line...

DAX
Gods, Jake - are you still
growing? Stop it at once.

Back to the TV while the others chat off-screen...

TIANA (screen)
The two leading candidates upon
whom the Vedeks are currently
voting are Bellis Nemani...

The program shows stock images of Bellis...

TIANA (v.o.)
...A long-serving community leader
who emerged as the most outspoken
anti-Ohalavar voice in the wake of
Vedek Yevir's surprise departure
for Cardassia, and Solis Tendren,
the leader of the Ohalavaru
movement itself.

The program now shows stock images of Solis...

TIANA
(continuing,
background)
With me to discuss the merits of
these two polar opposites are
renowned political commentators...

Focusing on Kira as she watches the show...

KIRA
See, this is my problem. Our main
choices are a narrow-minded
demagogue, and a man who doesn't
even believe the Prophets are gods
at all. Surely there has to be a
happy middle ground somewhere.

DAX
You could always vote for Eran...
he seemed like a nice enough guy.

SISKO

The public doesn't vote for the Kai, Dax. Only the vedeks vote.

NOG

Then what's the point of them promoting themselves to the public for the last two months?

JAKE

So that members of congregations can lobby their vedeks for who they want them to vote for.

NOG

Can they vote for themselves?

KIRA

They're not supposed to. But it wouldn't surprise me if some of them did.

OPAKA

Tendren warned me the Assembly had fallen into backstabbing and political manoeuvring. I just hope these elections will put an end to such nonsense.

18 **INT. NEWS STUDIO**

Tiana moderates two Bajoran COMMENTATORS, who sit with her at the main desk. It's a rather heated discussion.

COMMENTATOR 1

Solis is completely inappropriate for Bajor at this time. What we need is a kai who will bring everyone together, not fracture the religious community even more.

COMMENTATOR 2

You're naive if you think Bellis isn't just as divisive a force in the Assembly as Solis. More so.

COMMENTATOR 1

Solis's niece was a member of the reviled *Pagh-Wraith* cult! The same people who tried to assassinate the Emissary, and who willingly followed the demon Dukat. These are not the people we want in charge of Bajor's spiritual life.

COMMENTATOR 2

Do we condemn every person who ever fell under Dukat's spell? Then we condemn half of Bajor and Cardassia with them. Besides, no kai is "in charge" of Bajor. That to me betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of kai in Bajoran society.

19 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE

As they watch, disappointed, Opaka especially...

SISKO

Keep hoping, Sulan.

He gets up to go back to the kitchen. Dax watches him go.

KITCHEN

Dax has followed Sisko into the kitchen, hoping for a semi-private chat. They talk while Sisko prepares more food.

DAX

Ben... do you have a minute?

SISKO

What's up, old man?

Dax hesitates, a little nervous. Looks around herself.

DAX

I just wanted you to know... that I went ahead and did it. I put in a transfer request.

SISKO

Wow... are you sure? I mean...

(grin)

...it's a big step.

DAX

Oh, let's not get into that whole mess again. Yes. I think it's the right thing to do.

SISKO

Have you heard back yet?

DAX

Not yet.

SISKO

Well, you're Dax. How could they say no?

DAX

I hope you're right.

(beat)

Ben... do you think I'm doing the right thing?

SISKO

Not for me to say, old man. But I do know you can handle anything life throws at you. And I know I'm going to miss you. You've been with me in one form or another for...

(calculates)

...twenty-five years.

DAX

You've changed a lot in that time too.

SISKO

Haven't I? What does Julian think?

Guiltily, Dax looks through the partition and sees Bashir, sitting unaware, happily eating and watching TV...

As Laas confronts Odo, Weyoun and Taran'atar...

ODO

It's not that simple, Laas. And you know it's not. So I don't appreciate you coming here just to stir up trouble.

LAAS

How could I resist the chance to see the family all together again?

TARAN'ATAR

Founders, forgive my presumption. But when you speak of a god of the Founders, are you referring to the Progenitor?

ODO

(stunned)

How can you possibly know...?

TARAN'ATAR

I visited the Founder imprisoned by the Federation. She too spoke of the Progenitor. She said that it was the One True God.

ODO

Well, I certainly can't deny that the Progenitor existed... but I don't believe it was a god. But then I never believed the Founders were gods either.

TARAN'ATAR

I too have come to redefine many things during my time on Deep Space Nine.

ODO

Unfortunately, the Progenitor is dead. It was killed by an ancient race called the Ascendants.

TARAN'ATAR

And when the Founders discovered they had lost their god, they felt... adrift. Abandoned. And so they went out into the galaxy, to search for meaning.

LAAS

You're oddly philosophical for a born and bred killer.

ODO

(back on topic)

Regardless, the end result is that the Founders are gone. And Laas and I are the only Changelings left to run the entire Dominion.

WEYOUN

A task at which you have of course excelled, Founder.

ODO

Thank you for the ego boost, Weyoun, but I'm afraid you're only being polite. The truth is, I'm barely keeping them from falling apart altogether.

LAAS

You're wasting your time, Odo. This is the perfect opportunity to do just what I suggested all along - find the rest of the Hundred and create a new Link.

ODO

Laas, I've told you I'm not just going to abandon the Dominion. Not now. They need me. They need us. We have to try.

Laas sighs - he has had this argument with Odo many times. Weyoun and Taran'atar exchange an uncomfortable glance.

LAAS

They are monoforms, Odo. They are irrelevant. Leave them to take care of themselves.

ODO

For better or worse, the Dominion is responsible for the fates of those races now. We can't just pull out and let them fend for themselves.

LAAS

Why not? You wanted freedom for those races, didn't you? That's what you've argued for years.

ODO

Now is not the time. If they knew the Founders were gone, they'd see it as an opportunity to rebel. The bloodshed would be enormous.

TARAN'ATAR

If they defy the Dominion, then they should die.

WEYOUN

The Founder has ordered otherwise, First.

TARAN'ATAR

So I have seen for myself. But I still do not understand why.

ODO

The Vorta are getting suspicious. They're starting to notice that Laas and I are the only Founders they've seen in months. And they already distrusted me anyway. I'm an ally of the Federation.

LAAS

How perceptive of them.

ODO

(ignoring Laas)

Weyoun and Vannis are the only ones who know the truth. And I can't answer every question. It's too much, even for a Changeling's natural tendency towards order. So... I've been delegating.

TARAN'ATAR

(nods w/ understanding)

Leading to the other Vorta trying to guess the Founders' wishes. And the Jem'Hadar fighting over their interpretations.

ODO

I'm afraid so.

TARAN'ATAR

This I understand. To choose between two gods... is not easy.

ODO

Which is exactly why I'm trying to rein the Jem'Hadar in. They need a stricter hand than ever. Until I can figure out a more long-term solution.

LAAS

And what would that be, Odo?

ODO

(sad sigh)

I have no idea.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

21 INT. SSKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Jake, Rena and Nog sit around a low coffee table, nibbling.

NOG

So what have you guys been up to since I saw you last?

JAKE

I've actually been helping in the bakery.

RENA

Marja adores him. I've never seen her let anyone else touch her ovens the way Jake does.

JAKE

Oh, I'm happy to do it. Lets you concentrate on your painting.

NOG

You got back into your work?

RENA

I'm doing a remote course from Dakhur University.

JAKE

And we take trips up to Yyn from time to time. If we need some...
(smirk with Rena)
...inspiration.

NOG

I swear by the Blessed Exchequer, if you two get any cuter, I'm going to vomit.

(stomach gurgles)

Or maybe that's the meatloaf...

Jake and Rena chuckle.

22 **INT. NEWS STUDIO - INTERVIEW SUITE**

Roving reporter TERIS JUZE (seen 9x05 / 9x06) sits in a nice chair opposite Vedek Bellis, interviewing him.

TERIS

Vedek Bellis, you've been labelled a hypocrite for rejecting the Ohalavaru, even while embracing the larger community of the Federation. How do you respond?

BELLIS

I am happy to be a member of the Federation. But in such a vast collection of worlds, we are in danger of losing ourselves if we don't hold fast to what makes us uniquely Bajoran - namely, our religion. What has sustained us for millennia is too important to throw away, especially now.

A separate clip, of Teris interviewing Solis.

TERIS

Vedek Solis, how do you respond to the claims that recognising the Ohalavaru in the Assembly will result in more conservative voices being suppressed?

SOLIS

The Ohalavaru have no interest in restricting anyone's freedoms. Why would we? The entire issue between us is the freedom to worship as we wish without suppression. And I think that the fact an Ohalavar such as myself is even a candidate for such an exalted position, after only two years of existence as a movement, is a clear message that the people of Bajor are eager for a new spirituality.

23 **INT. NEWS STUDIO**

Back to the main studio, with Tiana speaking to camera.

TIANA

Teris also managed to speak with Vedek Yevir Linjarin on Cardassia, shortly after the incident at the Andak reclamation project. The former favourite for kai had this to say regarding his candidacy.

24 **EXT. CARDASSIA - DAY**

Just a plain background is fine, as if YEVIR were standing against one of the prefab walls at Andak (as in 9x05).

YEVIR

Well that's very flattering, Teris, but I have no intention of running for kai again. I find my work here on Cardassia too important and fulfilling to even think of abandoning it. But I would like to say, as regards the Ohalavaru, that my opinions have been tempered of late. I've seen too much to discount anything... and I know in my *pagh* that everything happens for a reason.

He smiles with a gentle and humble air.

25 **INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM**

Kira, however, is less than impressed. She, Sisko, Bashir and Dax are watching and eating. Vaughn stands apart.

KIRA

I see he hasn't completely changed his tune. He still jumped at the chance for a little publicity.

SISKO

(gently chiding)

In a good cause, Nerys.

On the TV, we're back on Tiana in the studio:

TIANA (screen)

First Minister Asarem's office offered a prepared statement that she was looking forward to a good relationship with whoever should win. BNN also reached out to the Emissary Benjamin Sisko, and to Captain Kira Nerys, the senior Bajoran officer in Starfleet, but both declined to comment.

SISKO

You refused to give an opinion?
I'm impressed, Nerys.

KIRA

It wasn't easy.

Kasidy is sitting nearby, bouncing Rebecca gently on her knee. She sniffs the baby gently.

KASIDY

Oops, somebody needs changing.

BASHIR

(innocent)

Not me.

KASIDY

Thank you, Julian. That puts my mind at ease.

(to Rebecca)

Come on, you. There's a nice clean diaper in the other room with your name on it. Literally.

She gets up and carries the baby towards the bedroom.

KIRA

Here, let me help you.

The two women enter the bedroom...

26 INT. SISCO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

...where Kasidy walks to the changing table and lays Rebecca down gently. Kira approaches tentatively, not wanting to intrude where it might be inappropriate.

Kasidy begins removing Rebecca's diaper, cooing smiles at the baby girl, while the baby babbles back.

KASIDY

That's a good girl, Rebecca.

Always so happy and smiley.

(re diaper)

Oh, that's not too bad. Nerys,
would you pass me the towels? Just
there, by the window.

Kira spots a small box of moist towels and grabs them, handing them to Kasidy. While Kasidy continues to wipe and change Rebecca, she sees Kira's amused smirk.

KASIDY

What?

KIRA

It's just funny seeing you all...
mother-y.

KASIDY

Why? You've done it yourself.

KIRA

I may have given birth... but I
never really got the chance to be
a mother.

KASIDY

Do you want to be?

KIRA

Oh, Prophets, I don't know. There
always seems to be too much going
on.

KASIDY

You find time.

(beat)
Oh, speaking of which, did I tell you? I've been thinking I should go back to work again.

KIRA
Back to cargo hauling?

KASIDY
Just part time. A couple of runs a month. The Commerce Authority is always happy for experienced ship captains. Maybe help out with the shipments to Cardassia?

KIRA
What about Rebecca?

KASIDY
Believe me, I have no shortage of babysitting offers. Every woman in the village would kill for the chance to sit for the Emissary's baby. But I was thinking of leaving her with Rena and Jake a couple of days. Let them get to know their baby sister.

KIRA
Sounds nice.

KASIDY
Rena's wonderful with her. I think she's getting a bit broody. I can already see that panicked look in Jake's eyes.

(chuckle at
the thought)
Besides, Ben's here.

KIRA
Kas... can I ask you something?

KASIDY
Of course.

KIRA

Well... what does Ben actually do
all day?

Now they both LAUGH out loud. By this time, Rebecca's new
diaper is done. Kasidy hefts her up, testing that the
diaper is snug. Kasidy and Kira both sit on the bed.

KIRA (cont)

I have a hard time picturing him
with nothing to do.

KASIDY

He takes care of Rebecca, he
gardens, he cooks... but mostly he
just thinks.

KIRA

About what?

KASIDY

Damned if I know. The meaning of
life, I guess. What it all means.
I keep telling him, people have
been trying to figure that one out
for billions of years.

(smirk)

When I want to really get under
his skin, I tell him he's turning
into his father. The aging
patriarch pottering around his
kingdom, ruling with an iron fist.

KIRA

(slightly
apprehensive)

Does he? Rule with an iron fist?

KASIDY

(realises her
mistake)

Oh Nerys, no. Ben's a wonderful
father. But I always knew that.
Still, sometimes I do have to
wonder where his head's at.

27 **INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN**

Vaughn has taken a few plates and bowls back to the kitchen in an attempt to tidy up. He finds a spare spot of counter top, delicately balances them in the space, turns back.

He STARTS in surprise as he realises Sisko has quietly followed him into the kitchen. He immediately turns back around, forcibly tidying the plates and cutlery.

SISKO
(gently)
Elias... we need to talk.

VAUGHN
No, we really don't.

SISKO
(steps closer)
Well, we're going to. We can't go on like this if we're going to work together.

Vaughn finally turns back to him, his jaw set and angry. They keep their voices quiet, not wanting to be overheard.

VAUGHN
I see where Lieutenant Dax learned her bad attitude to command.

SISKO
Actually, I probably learned it from her. And I'm still your superior officer, Commander.

VAUGHN
No you're not. Kira is. And you made me lie to her face.

SISKO
It was necessary. You just have to trust me on that.

VAUGHN
I don't. I used to - we had a connection, I thought. You and me.

We'd been through the same things.
Our partners killed, raising our
children alone. Fate swept us both
towards Bajor, gave us a new lease
on life. I came to you for advice.
And then you betrayed me.

SISKO

Sometimes a commander has to make
decisions he doesn't like to win a
war.

Vaughn SLAMS down an empty plate on the counter.

VAUGHN

We are not at war!

He instantly knows that was too loud.

LIVING ROOM

Dax, Bashir and Nog exchange uncomfortable glances, having
overheard. None of them say anything, just avert their eyes
and pretend nothing is wrong.

KITCHEN

Sisko grits his teeth, trying to maintain his temper.

SISKO

Actually, Elias, yes we are. But
that's not even the point. You
were in covert ops. Haven't you
made decisions you hated, to get
the outcome you wanted?

VAUGHN

Of course I have! But those
decisions don't usually screw over
your own side!

SISKO

I know Nerys. If I'd told her why
I asked you to go with her to the
other universe, she would have
tried to find the other me. And

when she failed, she would have tried to become their Emissary herself. She wouldn't have wanted to, but she would have done it, to stop Iliana. I couldn't let her do that. She's needed here. So are you. More than either of you know.

VAUGHN

(sneer)

You're just making this up as you go along.

SISKO

(patiently)

The Prophets showed me -

VAUGHN

(interrupting)

There are no such things as Prophets! There are no such things as prophecies! Don't you get that? It's all bullshit!

Vaughn looks past Sisko's shoulder, and his breath catches.

Kira and Kasidy are standing in the doorway to the kitchen, having just emerged from the bedroom. Kasidy is holding Rebecca at her hip. Kira is gaping at Vaughn, shocked and horrified. Personally hurt. They heard it all...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

28 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Vaughn rubs his face in embarrassment and shame. Sisko grabs his arm roughly and DRAGS him to the back door.

Kasidy puts a comforting arm around Kira and gently leads her back into the living room. She sends a furious glare towards Sisko, who catches it full force.

29 EXT. SISKO'S HOUSE (CONTINUOUS)

Sisko drags Vaughn across the veranda, down the steps to the grass and across to the large tree in the garden. Once there, Sisko lets go of Vaughn's arm. He is furious.

SISKO

Okay, I let you hit me one time because you needed to get it out of your system, and we were both out of uniform. Hell, I probably even deserved it. But you do not come into my house and insult me and my friends, including the captain you claim to be so devoted to. Is that clear, Commander?

VAUGHN

I never wanted to be -

SISKO

Is that clear, Commander?!

Vaughn bites his tongue, fighting between anger and duty.

VAUGHN

(gritted teeth)

It's clear. You're right. I will apologise to Kira and Kasidy both. Later.

SISKO

Good.

VAUGHN

But the point stands. This belief
in the omniscience of your
Prophets is no good reason to lie
to your friends and comrades.

SISKO

You don't have to subscribe to the
religious interpretation to accept
that the wormhole aliens might
have a wider view of things. Isn't
it sensible to use every resource,
every informant at your disposal
to win a conflict?

VAUGHN

(grits teeth)

Once again, we are not at war.

SISKO

It's coming, like it or not.

VAUGHN

You can't possibly know that!

SISKO

I don't just know it. I feel it. I
see it every time I close my eyes.

VAUGHN

(mocking)

See what?

SISKO

What will happen if I don't do
these things. All the bodies,
Elias. All burning.

Vaughn pauses for a second, disquieted by the image.

VAUGHN

But that doesn't make any sense.
How can they show you what might
happen?

SISKO

What do you mean?

VAUGHN

Everything Starfleet scientists, researchers - even the idiots from Temporal Investigations - every conclusion they come to says that, yes, the wormhole aliens may be able to travel anywhere in our time. But that it's only our time line. There's no evidence that they can cross over to observe or affect other quantum realities. They don't know what might happen, only what will happen.

SISKO

That used to be true.

VAUGHN

What changed?

SISKO

I explained it to them.

Off Vaughn's wary expression...

30 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Kira is back in the kitchen, tidying plates. She looks up and out of the window, over towards the tree, where she can see Vaughn and Sisko talking. Kasidy appears next to her.

KASIDY

Do you have any idea what that's all about?

Kira doesn't answer - she's afraid that she does.

31 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Ro is in the midst of her exercises, uniform jacket removed and down to the undershirt. She is using a quad frame, slowly flexing each leg in turn against a small weight. Etana spots and supports her. While they work...

ETANA

How come you're not watching the elections with everyone else?

RO

Why should I care who's in charge of a religion I don't follow? None of my business.

ETANA

That's a bit naive, Laren.

RO

What do you mean?

ETANA

Well, I may be a nurse now -

RO

Slave driver.

ETANA

(without breaking flow)

- shut up. But I still put my security head on from time to time, and I can't help thinking that the threat you dismiss as irrelevant is the one that'll get you when you're not looking.

RO

You think the church is a threat?

ETANA

I think it's worth paying attention to as a driving force in Bajoran society. Remember the Ohalavaru's protest in the shrine?

RO

You could be right.

ETANA

I'm always right.

32 EXT. SISKO'S HOUSE

Sisko and Vaughn are now sat on the ground, underneath the tree. They have been talking for a while now, and they are both a bit calmer, but there is still tension between them.

SISKO

When I was with them, they taught me things - about my life, their existence, how I fit in with it. And in return, I explained some things to them.

(sad chuckle)

Me and my damn baseball metaphors.

Off Vaughn's questioning look...

SISKO (cont)

When I first met the Prophets - the wormhole aliens - I explained linear time to them with baseball. How when you throw the ball, any one of a million different things could happen, and there's no way to know in advance what it'll be.

VAUGHN

Okay. And?

SISKO

Well, then they wanted to know, what if you threw wild instead of straight down the fair. I tried to explain how one tiny, seemingly insignificant detail, like a sudden gust of wind, can affect everything that comes after, changing your whole future. At first they refused to believe me. They insisted that what happens, happens - "it is one's existence" - and that's all there is to it. But I kept trying, telling them stories and fables and metaphors, until eventually they got it.

VAUGHN

So they set this whole plan in motion based on intel you gave them.

SISKO

Starting with the Orb of Souls calling to Kai Dava centuries ago.

VAUGHN

So this really is all your fault.

SISKO

Do you think I don't know that? Do you think I'm not aware every single second, every time I look at you or Nerys or Jake or... hell, even Rena!

VAUGHN

Rena?

SISKO

Yes. She's involved in this somehow, although I haven't the tiniest idea how.

VAUGHN

I thought you said you saw it all.

SISKO

I know there is a plan. But I don't know what it is. It's more like intuition - just hunches, really - that let me know when I'm on the right path.

Vaughn thinks about that a moment, then gets up to stand, wincing against creaking bones.

VAUGHN

No. I refuse to believe that. There is no pre-destination - nothing is foretold. It's just somebody looking back at what, from their perspective, has

already happened. I might as well tell you what I had for dinner last night - it's about as divinely inspired. It doesn't mean we "have" to do anything. Our decisions are still our own, and you made yours.

Vaughn turns and walks back into the house. Sisko is left alone under the tree, wondering what to do now.

ETANA (v.o.)
How's the pain?

33 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Ro and Etana have just ended their exercise. Ro mops her face and arms with a towel, while Etana fetches her supports for her. While they work to reattach them...

RO
It's a real treat. Like being kissed by baby *utoxa*.

ETANA
(exasperated)
Laren...

RO
Okay, okay... it's a little bit better. I actually slept through the night last night.

ETANA
Good. Do you need any more pain killers?

RO
No, I think I'm good.

A beat.

ETANA
Why do you always have to fight me so hard, Laren?

RO

(sigh)

I don't even know half the time. It's practically habit at this point. I just expect to disagree with everyone.

ETANA

Did you ever think about confounding expectations?

RO

Going along with the majority? I don't think I'm genetically capable of that.

ETANA

Well, this is something you can't fight, Laren. Your life is different now.

RO

You think I don't know that?

ETANA

Oh, I know you know it. But you haven't accepted it yet. Not really. You keep trying to carry on like nothing's changed. But even after you get these things off once and for all -

(re supports)

- there's no going back. You can't just forget this ever happened to you. Accept it, deal with it, and then you can move on.

RO

You transferring to counsellor now? Going for the trifecta?

ETANA

No. I'm doing the same job I always have - friend.

Ro ponders what Etana has said...

34 EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD

Where we left it. Weyoun and Taran'atar stand at attention, while Laas strolls self-righteously around the islet.

LAAS

So. Now that we've had the latest instalment of "The Follies of Odo," I believe there was a report to be made?

ODO

(realising)

Taran'atar. I'm sorry. Please, go ahead.

TARAN'ATAR

(snaps to attention)

Founder. The crew of Deep Space Nine recently became entwined in a complex plot involving individuals from an alternate quantum dimension already known to them. I myself was inadvertently caught up in these events, which resulted in my visiting that dimension for a period of several days.

ODO

I see. Captain Kira ordered you to accompany her?

TARAN'ATAR

(awkward)

No.

ODO

Then why did you go?

TARAN'ATAR

I... came under the control of another. A former agent of the Cardassian Obsidian Order.

ODO
The Obsidian Order?
(growl)
Garak.

TARAN'ATAR
No, Founder. The individual's name
was Iliana Ghemor.

ODO
Ghemor?
(remembering)
Tekeny's daughter?

TARAN'ATAR
Yes, Founder. She had perfected a
method of overriding a Jem'Hadar's
loyalty to the Founders, and
replacing it with a compulsion to
follow her. I was helpless to
refuse.

ODO
Then how are you here now?

TARAN'ATAR
Because the only way to break
Agent Ghemor's control over me...
was to free me from all control.
Including that of the Founders.

ODO
Then... you no longer need to
follow my orders?

TARAN'ATAR
Correct, Founder. Just as you
desired.

Odo pauses to consider the truth of that, pointedly
avoiding the smug look of I-told-you-so from Laas.
Taran'atar is fully expecting to be punished. Weyoun is
very confused about the whole thing.

ODO
Is that... everything?

Taran'atar cannot refuse a direct question. Well, he could, but he doesn't want to. Well, he does want to, but...

TARAN'ATAR

No, Founder. There is more.

ODO

Go on...

TARAN'ATAR

In my confusion between your wishes and the coercion of the other, I... lashed out. People were injured.

Odo feels the horror coming...

ODO

Who?

TARAN'ATAR

The chief of security, Ro Laren. And... and Captain Kira.

(beat)

I killed her.

On Odo's reaction...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

35 QUICK FLASHES

-- Taran'atar, at the far end of the corridor, glaring into camera. His hand is out, as if having cast his knife...

-- The camera slowly PANS down to the chest of our POV - Kira's POV. Taran'atar's knife is buried up to the hilt in her chest...

36 A KNIFE

in someone's hand, glinting in bright sunlight

37 KIRA

flinches at the memory

38 INT. SISCO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

The knife is in Bashir's hand - a large cake knife that he is carrying from the kitchen back into the living room. Bashir brings the knife to the food table, where there sits a delicious extravagant birthday cake with one big candle.

Kasidy holding Rebecca, with Sisko, Jake and Rena, Dax and Nog all gathered close. Kira is half a step back. She takes a deep breath, steadying her nerves and calming herself.

KASIDY

Three... two... one... blow!

On the countdown, they all make a show of blowing out the single candle, on Rebecca's behalf, followed by a CHEER.

Pulling back further, we see Vaughn standing in the archway between kitchen and living room, too uncomfortable to join the party so directly. He watches with a reserved smile, but then he looks over to Opaka, who is also watching from a small distance, but beaming wide to see the ceremony.

Opaka looks up at Vaughn, across the room. Her welcoming, unjudging smile gives Vaughn some measure of forgiveness.

Bashir plunges into the cake with the knife, bringing a large slice to a small side plate.

BASHIR

Okay, who gets the first slice?

NOG

Me!

BASHIR

Lieutenant Bottomless Pit it is.

Bashir hands Nog the first piece. As he cuts another...

BASHIR

What about you, Ezri?

DAX

Maybe I can make some room if I remove my symbiont for a while. It's okay if it's for cake, right?

BASHIR

Here.

And he shoves a piece right into her mouth. She giggles a protest through the cake. Bashir grins back at her, but as he turns away, a guilty look passes Dover ax's face.

RENA

Um... everyone?

They turn to look at Rena, who is standing by the fireplace and the TV screen on the mantelpiece.

RENA (cont)

Looks like the results are in.

TIANA (screen)

And we go live now to Solis Tendren's acceptance speech as the new Kai of Bajor.

JAKE

Yes!

Opaka smiles warmly, satisfied. Kira is a little more ambivalent. The rest of the room is politely celebratory. The TV image changes to Solis, stood at a podium with microphones and cameras (like Yevir at the end of 8x03).

SOLIS (screen)

Thank you, thank you all. I am very humbled by the trust that the Vedek Assembly has placed in me today. And I promise to lead Bajor's spiritual community in unity, faith and fellowship. Specifically, I would like to thank Kira Nerys for opening the truths of Ohalu to us all...

On Kira, still not entirely sure about all this.

SOLIS (screen)

Opaka Sulan for her kind words and encouragements, without which I may never have set foot on this path...

On Opaka, smiling demurely with quiet pride.

SOLIS (screen)

And I commend Vedek Bellis for his passionate but never mean-spirited opposition. I would also like to reassure the vedek, and all who opposed my election, that the rise of an Ohalavar to the position of Kai does not mean that traditional Bajoran worship is gone. Only that there are now more possibilities open to us all. I hope to prove to Bajor that all spiritualities can live in harmony and peace.

Vaughn looks over to Sisko, who is busy with Rebecca. Vaughn is considering Solis's words, about harmony...

LAAS (v.o.)

We are at war with ourselves...

39 **EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD**

Odo stands alone, working to process what Taran'atar told him. Nerys... how could she be dead? It's not possible...

LAAS (cont)

...An entire empire resting on
Odo's every word... and his pet
rock murders his one true love.

Laas struts smugly. Taran'atar is now on his knees, head bowed, awaiting his fate. Weyoun steps forward, as a Vorta commanding his Jem'Hadar. Odo remains too stunned to move.

WEYOUN

First. Your orders were to obey
Captain Kira as if she were the
Founder himself.

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

WEYOUN

She was your Vorta.

TARAN'ATAR

Yes.

WEYOUN

You know the consequences of a
Jem'Hadar attacking a Vorta.

TARAN'ATAR

I do.

WEYOUN

And what do you have to say?

Taran'atar looks up, trying to make eye contact with Odo.

TARAN'ATAR

I accept your punishment.

Odo slowly raises his eyes to meet Taran'atar's, and the blind fury is starting to take over...

39 INT. SISCO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Kira she stands by the kitchen window, washing dishes the old fashioned way. Basic manual labour to distract herself.

VAUGHN (o.s.)

I owe you an apology for before.

She turns to sees Vaughn, standing nervously in the room as other guests are occupied in the living room. He doesn't want her angry - her trust and friendship mean a lot.

Kira looks at him, patiently and calmly waiting. Silently making it clear that she agrees he owes her that apology. Vaughn sees that he is not getting off easily.

VAUGHN (cont)

I was angry, I blurted it out, and I shouldn't have. I'm sorry if I hurt you. I sincerely apologise.

KIRA

(gently)

You seem to have been angry a lot lately. What's going on, Elias?

VAUGHN

Nothing. Just a disagreement.

KIRA

Elias, I'm not blind. Is this about what you asked me in the other universe? About whether I thought Ben had changed?

VAUGHN

It's just... he keeps talking to me about Prophets and prophecies and "this is how it's supposed to be." I have a hard time taking it seriously. The Federation believes in solving our own problems, through learning and diplomacy. Not in waiting for some allegedly higher being to solve them for us.

KIRA

Well... isn't that interesting.

VAUGHN

What?

KIRA

You're still talking about Bajor and the Federation as two separate entities. Aren't we all supposed to be one and the same now?

VAUGHN

Not the same, no. But... I take your point.

KIRA

Bajor isn't the only Federation world with a religious culture, either, is it? There's Andor, the Brikari, the Damiani... I'm only at the beginning of the alphabet.

VAUGHN

Alright. I suppose what I should have said is that humans don't believe in a god.

KIRA

Really? What about Captain Gold of the *Da Vinci*? He's religious, isn't he? Jewish, I think he called it.

VAUGHN

(a bit harassed)

Okay. Okay. I'm sorry.

KIRA

And isn't his wife a priest for that religion? What's it called - a rabbit?

VAUGHN

A rabbi.

KIRA

I'm not trying to make you feel bad, Elias. I guess my point is just that, believe it or not, I actually agree with Solis on this one. Being a spiritual person isn't an us-or-them kind of thing.

VAUGHN

I know that. I do. And that's not even what this is about. I'm not anti-religion - I get along perfectly well with you, and Sulan and I...

(not ready
for that yet)

But he keeps pushing me to see it from his point of view. And I don't.

40 INT. DS9 - RO'S QUARTERS

Last seen in 9x24. Ro enters, still with her supports and walking stick. She grimaces against the pain, but refusing to give in to it. She makes it into her small bathroom.

BATHROOM

She looks in the mirror - tired, in pain. Opens a cabinet, pulls out a hypospray. Watches herself place the hypospray to her neck and inject herself. She breathes deeply as she feels the pain killers spreading through her system.

In the mirror again...

RO

It's a new world.

41 EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD

On Taran'atar, as he awaits his fate...

LAAS

Well, Odo? Aren't you going to do anything?

Odo knows Laas is deliberately taunting him, but it's getting to him anyway...

LAAS (cont)

Here you are, trying to change the Jem'Hadar for the better, make them peaceful and docile, and the one you trust most of all betrays you in the worst possible way.

Weyoun steps behind Taran'atar, unsheathes the Jem'Hadar's knife, and offers it to Odo.

After a moment's hesitation, Odo takes the knife from Weyoun. He looks at it, as if wondering what to do with it.

LAAS (cont)

Don't you love her? Shouldn't she be avenged? Doesn't she deserve that? Or is your precious vision of the future for the Dominion worth more than your lover's life?

Laas is having great fun taunting Odo. Odo stands immobile, very aware of the knife in his hand, and on the verge of giving in to the anger. Taran'atar kneels on the ground, accepting his death with calm. It is the order of things.

VAUGHN (v.o.)

I'm actually glad I came...

42 **EXT. SISKO'S HOUSE**

The rear veranda, looking out over the woods and fields. The sun is dimming, casting an early evening glow. The large tree waves in a gentle breeze.

Opaka and Vaughn stand together, looking out.

VAUGHN (cont)

...despite everything. It was nice to do something so... normal. I missed too many of Prynn's birthday parties when she was a child.

OPAKA

(reassuring)

You're there for her now. And I'm glad I had the chance to be here too. I must leave soon.

VAUGHN

Leave?

(beat; quieter)

You mean leave Bajor, don't you?

Opaka sees Vaughn's downcast face - she reaches out to him.

OPAKA

We already discussed this, Elias. Bajor must forge closer ties with the Eav'oq, and I am by far the best candidate. I would have gone already, but I wanted to be sure that Bajor's own *pagh* was in safe hands before I left.

VAUGHN

And now you're sure?

OPAKA

Oh yes. Quite sure. I don't believe for a moment that the arguing is over, but as long as everyone keeps talking, everything will work out.

Vaughn quietly ponders that for a moment.

VAUGHN

When do you leave?

OPAKA

I'll return to Ashalla tonight, and begin putting my affairs in order tomorrow.

She turns and looks out across the fields with a sad smile.

OPAKA (cont)

I'll be sorry to leave Bajor again
so soon after my return. But I
know it's the right thing to do.
More than that - it's necessary. A
vital piece of the puzzle. At our
age, it's good to feel useful.

VAUGHN

Yes. It is.

On Vaughn's sad, pensive face...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW