

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x26 - "Unity, pt 3."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Unity

by SD Perry

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

KIRA bursts out of the security office, making her way to a turbolift. DAX, NOG and SHAR rush out after her and head in their own directions. RED ALERTS begin to sound...

COMM VOICE (comm)
Station alert. Alien presence on
board, lockdown status. Invaders
are small, insectile, dangerous --

Panicked people rush about while security try to keep the peace. Kira forges her way through...

WEX (o.s.)
Colonel Kira.

Kira looks up -- WEX is blocking her way, trying to get her attention. It takes Kira a moment to recognise her...

KIRA
Wex. Now isn't a good time. If
you'll excuse me --

WEX
I understand, but it's important
that we talk. I may be able to
help you. I want to help.

KIRA
You want to help, find Taran'atar.

Kira steps past Wex, heading on to the turbolift...

WEX
I know you'll want to hear what --

KIRA
It'll have to wait.

And she steps into the turbolift, leaving Wex to watch her go with her big black eyes...

2 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

The room is in commotion as the Red Alerts sound and flash, with EXTRAS rushing about to various tasks. RO appears on the rising turbolift platform, heads towards Kira's office.

Through the door she can see Kira talking animated on her comm screen. She notices Ro and beckons her in...

3 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

Kira closes the comm as Ro enters. Kira is tense, worried, guilty over what happened, determined to deal with it...

KIRA

Asarem tells me that she can't get through to the Ashalla monastery. There's hostages at at least five other sites. Six senior members from the Chamber of Ministers, a number of prominent vedeks... and B'Hala, the Central Archives, and the shrine at Kendra are all now under parasite control.

RO

We still have no trace on thirty-four people aboard the station, and three Cardassians have been injured by Bajoran mobs. But the parasites are definitely dying. The victims will all be okay.

Listening but also still constantly thinking, Kira comes to her decision. She speaks with confidence and strength...

KIRA

Right. Good. Sounds like you're on top of it. I need you to get Nog, ch'Thane and Chief O'Brien to the *Defiant*, but do it quietly. Dax is already there, but she'll need the signal that we're go. Macet will spot us, even cloaked, but we can deal with that when it comes up...

RO

(impressed)

...You're taking the *Defiant* out.
Without Akaar's authorisation.

KIRA

Gard had to mean the main parasite mother, the matriarch... and the Orbs are the only artefacts anyone calls the Tears. She's at the monastery, Ro, I know it. Kill the mother, maybe all the females die.

RO

(re comm screen)

Did you tell them that?

KIRA

Akaar was too busy ordering me to stand down to hear what I think. Starfleet has a way of overlooking renegade conduct when things turn out well. This is anything but.

Ro nods with sympathy, having experienced that herself...

KIRA (cont)

I'm supposed to confine myself to this office until the admiral gets here, at which time he'll take my report, and coordinate with Asarem and the Federation to contact the parasites to discuss their demands.

RO

That could take days.

KIRA

Which is why I'm going to try and stop her myself. The secret is out, and Bajor is paying the price, so I've got to do what I can. And since I'm officially out of the picture, the negotiators can argue that I was acting on my own.

Ro smiles, impressed with her commander's guts. But then...

KIRA (cont)

I'm leaving you in charge here.

RO

(dumbstruck, tiny
croaking voice)

What? You can't...

KIRA

I can. You're my security chief.
You know what's happening at every
level, you're more than competent
enough to handle this. All you
need to do is what you're already
doing - keep everything and every-
one moving, find those missing
bugs, and when Akaar shows up, do
whatever you can to stall him.

RO

You can't... I can't... Bowers,
maybe, or --

KIRA

No time for this, Ro. You know you
can do it. Put Shul on security,
Selzner can keep Ops running, and
Chao can take over engineering.
I'll tell Bowers to back you.

At that, Kira departs the room on her mission...

...leaving Ro stunned. But as she looks out at the bustle
in Ops, a small smile creeps in. She can do this...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. BAJOR - ASHALLA MONASTERY

Seemingly peaceful and calm from the outside...

5 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

The door is FLUNG open and a group of parasite-possessed Bajoran monks jostle JAKE, JOSEPH and JUDITH into the room - all trying to protect the massively pregnant KASIDY...

PRYLAR

Sit. Don't make trouble or we'll
kill you.

The Siskos behave themselves - but the Bajorans stay in the room anyway, phasers drawn, blank expressions...

JAKE

We won't make trouble. Everything
is going to be fine, isn't it?

OPAKA (o.s.)

Jake?

Jake turns towards an ornate half-curtain, pulls it back --

-- revealing OPAKA sat on the floor, caring for VAUGHN who lies on a pillow by her side. Jake goes to her...

JAKE

Sulan? What the... Everyone, this
is Opaka Sulan, the former kai of
Bajor. Sulan, this is my family.

The whole family goes over to sit with Opaka, help Kasidy settle onto another pillow. Kasidy seems to relax somewhat in Opaka's presence, taking comfort...

JAKE

Sulan, do you have any idea what's
going on here?

OPAKA

None at all. Perhaps they've
simply gone insane.

JAKE

I think they're possessed. On the
way here, I heard one of them
refer to himself as 'this body.'

KASIDY

At least they left Keiko and the
children alone.

JOSEPH

Only to pass on a damned message.

JUDITH

So then what do they want with us?

JAKE

They know Opaka and dad's family
are important to Bajor, they must
be counting on that to bargain for
whatever it is they're after.

JOSEPH

(exasperated)

I swear, this planet...

Judith gives him a 'shush' look. Jake looks down at Vaughn,
unconscious, wounded but bandaged, his head on the pillow.

JAKE

What happened to Commander Vaughn?

OPAKA

He was in the middle of a sacred
vision when they burst in and shot
him, then took away the Orb. His
pagh remains with the Prophets.

(certain)

They will take care of him. I know
they will...

CLOSE IN on Vaughn's fluttering half-closed eyes...

6 **INT. ASYLUM - COMMON AREA**

Vaughn, in his 1950s vision-guise of ELI UNDERWOOD, shares a basic lunch across a utilitarian dining table with BENNY RUSSELL, the 1950s vision-guise of Sisko. Other inmates do similarly, over the clanging of metal trays and utensils.

A JANITOR mops the linoleum floor, smiles broadly at Benny as he passes. Eli finds that odd - is Benny not the inmate here? Why are they all so solicitous of him?

BENNY

Do you have children, Eli?

ELI

(stiffly)

A daughter.

BENNY

(proud smile)

I have a baby on the way. My girl, Cassie, she's expecting any time.

ELI

(what do I say?)

That's nice. So, ah... Cassie is your girlfriend?

BENNY

I miss her, very much. I thought I'd be okay here... but knowing that she's waiting for me at home, about to have our baby... I don't know. It's important for me to be here, but... but relationships don't stay on hold. People keep moving and growing, and if you spend too much time away... you miss things. You miss life.

Eli doesn't know how to respond to this strange, compelling man. He goes back to his simple meal...

BENNY

What's your daughter like?

Eli smiles as he drifts off into pleasant memories...

ELI

She was... she was perfect. A perfect baby. I met her mother when I was serving in Korea. Pria looked just like her mother, but acted more like me, I think. She was careful. Watchful.

BENNY

And now?

ELI

Stubborn as a mule. Beautiful. Smart. She's got an impulsive streak in her.

(smiles)

When she was twelve, she decided she wanted to go to the beach for the day. But her mother was too busy to take her, so Pria actually took Ruri's car. Just borrowed the keys and drove off, happy as you please. She made it three blocks before running over a curb, ended up in a neighbour's rose bushes.

(chuckles)

She could barely reach the pedals, didn't even know where the beach was, but she gave it a good shot.

BENNY

(delighted)

I bet there was hell to pay when you got home.

ELI

(sadder)

No... I was out of town, at a sales conference, I think... Ruri told me about it later. I missed a lot of things, Benny... I thought I was doing the right thing, doing what I was supposed to do.

(more)

ELI (cont)
But I missed it... all that time,
all those memories... and there's
no way to get it back.
(embarrassed)
I, ah... I'm sorry.

BENNY
Don't be sorry, Eli. I'm glad you
said what you did. I'm glad you're
here. Just don't forget you still
have a daughter. Just because you
missed part of her life, doesn't
mean you have to miss all of it.

ELI
She's...

FLASHBACK

The hand fires the gun... Blood spatters Prynn's face...

BACK TO SCENE

ELI (cont)
...she doesn't want to see me.

BENNY
If my child didn't want to see me,
I'd keep trying. I'd try until one
of us stopped breathing, just to
let that child know I loved them.

Benny reaches across and lays his hand comfortably across
Eli's. Eli begins to hope for a second...

...then pulls his hand away. He drains his cold metal cup,
putting it down empty.

ELI
Guess we should get out of here.

BENNY
(mysterious grin)
Guess we should.

7 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Defiant berthed on the docking ring, numerous Cardassian ships looming nearby...

8 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

KIRA anxious in the centre seat, with DAX at tactical, SHAR at sciences, O'BRIEN at engineering and TENMEI at helm...

SHAR
Cardassian sensor window in
three... two...

KIRA
Kira to Ro, we're ready here.

9 **INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Ro stands on the upper level, outside Kira's office...

RO
Acknowledged, Colonel.

Ro nods to SELZNER at the sciences station, and CHAO at the engineering station. They both work their consoles...

10 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Kira nods to O'Brien, who works his console...

O'BRIEN
Activating cloak now.

11 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Defiant ripples out of sight as the CLOAK rises. At the same time, EMITTERS come to life around the airlock...

12 **INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Chao's panel shows a GRAPHIC of the section of the docking ring at which the *Defiant* is berthed. As *Defiant* cloaks... the emitters cast a stasis field that takes the same shape as the ship. Chao nods nervously to Ro...

13 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Lowered lighting for stealth mode...

O'BRIEN

Stasis transmission is holding,
Colonel. Anyone scanning the area
will get a general reading of the
correct size and weight, but it
won't stand up to real scrutiny.
Hell, it won't stand up to anyone
looking out a window.

KIRA

It'll hold long enough for us to
be on our way. Ensign?

Tenmei acknowledges, works her panel. On the screen --

-- the station recedes as *Defiant* manoeuvres away, turning
to face the Cardassian ships.

Tenmei smiles in grim determination - this is her chance,
after the previous time didn't work out...

14 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Following what appears to be empty space... gliding past
the looming Cardassian ships, including the *Trager*...

15 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Everyone holds their breath, watching the Cardassian ships
slip past on screen... Kira murmurs...

KIRA

Go to full impulse at your first
opportunity, Ensign.

TENMEI

Aye, sir.

Gradually, the ships become fewer, and the tiny dot of
Bajor in the distance grows closer...

At his console, O'Brien plays back the message he received from KEIKO. He has seen it before, and it both relieves and angers him. He should have been there to protect them...

KEIKO (screen)
...they're fine, we've been taken to a Starfleet camp in the Hill province. A lieutenant Bowers is taking care of us. They weren't hurt, Miles.

KIRA (o.s.)
Chief?

O'BRIEN
(caught)
Sorry, Colonel, what did you say?

KIRA
Is there any way to transport through the cloak without being detected, even theoretically?

O'Brien starts to automatically shake his head 'no' -- but then stops as an idea occurs to him...

O'BRIEN
Theoretically, I suppose.
(thinking as he talks)
If we created a series of overlapping subspace fields to use as a transport site, each gradually weaker as it neared the surface... they'd get a reading, but too vague to identify. And nowhere near the ship. If it works, though - which it probably won't - we'd only be able to beam one person through without setting off the surface sensors.

SHAR
That would take an enormous amount of energy, more than we have.

O'BRIEN
(shrug)
So we tap the warp core. We're not
using it for anything else.

KIRA
How long will it take?

O'BRIEN
How long have we got?

KIRA
Do it. Shar, you and Nog help him.
You too, Prynn, once we establish
orbit.

They all nod. O'Brien and Shar rise, head for the door...

16 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

As Shar and O'Brien walk along. Shar is quietly impressed
with O'Brien's suggestion...

SHAR
You believe it will be possible to
integrate the weakest field into
linear space, with the transport
subject inside.

O'BRIEN
Anything's possible.

17 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Kira sits in the centre seat, watching the conflict come...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

18 CLOSE UP

...on Vaughn's flickering eyes as he receives his vision...

19 INT. ASYLUM - COMMON AREA

Eli wanders the common area alone, pale light making waving shadows on the walls as thunder rolls in the distance...

Games of chess, draughts, backgammon. Decks of cards. The art area, with its plain white paper and coloured crayons. Pictures pinned to the walls, classic sci-fi images. One crumpled drawing shows the pulp fiction version of DS9...

Bemused, Eli walks away and down the corridor... As he approaches one room, he hears VOICES, hovers outside...

Inside, Benny holds court. SHAUN (Shar), SAMUEL (Bowers), THERESA (Ezri), SUE-LYNN (Opaka), LAURA (Ro), LEO (Akaar) and TERRENCE (Taran'atar) speak in the slightly confused voice of the Prophets. Benny patiently answers...

SAMUEL

But if you recognise your basic
aloneness, of what import are the
relationships? They do not last.

LAURA

Is it memory? Does it provide the
same comfort as the communication
and time spent with the other?

BENNY

Not the same. But yes, there is
comfort in the memories. Even in
unhappy ones. Remember what I said
about familiarity?

SHAUN

There is comfort in familiarity.
In not-change.

BENNY
Because...?

SHAUN
Because change is difficult. As
with letting go of anything, even
the bad seems better than the
nothingness that might take its
place. We know this.

BENNY
(pleased)
That's right. We know this.

Eli is unsettled by this situation. What is going on in
this place? And who is Benny Russell? He turns away...

20 **INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM**

Opaka sits over Vaughn, doing what she can for him. After a
moment she looks over to where the Sisko family sit against
a wall. Kasidy is propped up on every cushion they could
find, but still looks uncomfortable, flushed...

OPAKA
There's a basin in the storage
cupboard. Perhaps one of our...
watchers might escort someone to
the fountain outside?

JAKE
I'll ask.

JOSEPH
I'll go with you.

Jake stands, helps Joseph to struggle his own rickety frame
vertical. They move towards the Bajorans, who still stand
keeping watch. Once she is sure the Sisko men have gone...

...Opaka goes over to Kasidy, trying to be as soothing as
she can. This is women's business.

OPAKA
How are you feeling?

KASIDY
(forced smile)
Not very well. Though to be fair,
I haven't felt that great lately.

OPAKA
When the baby comes, women set
aside the memories of discomfort,
I think, to focus on the emotions
of the moment. The anticipation,
the joy. But carrying a new life
through the last few weeks is no
easy task, is it?

KASIDY
No, it isn't. Particularly when -
(sudden shift)
-- the baby's moving.

With a glance for permission, Opaka places her hand gently
on the swollen belly. She closes her eyes, feeling for the
movement. The muscles JERK involuntarily. Opaka knows what
it is - the contractions have started. Kasidy is in labour.

KASIDY
My back hurts.

OPAKA
(worried, covering)
I'm sure it does.

21 INT. ASYLUM - CELL

Eli jerks, awoken by the increasingly loud THUNDER rumbling
outside the asylum walls. He had fallen asleep on the thin
cot in his cell, and had another bad dream. He looks up --

-- and Benny is there, sat on his bed, a shadow in the dim
light. He places a comforting hand on Eli's shoulder...

BENNY
Eli, are you alright?

ELI
I'm... fine...

FLASHBACK

The hand fires the gun... Blood spatters Prynn's face...

BACK TO SCENE

BENNY

(sharp)

Stop it.

ELI

What - why are you here? What's
going on? What's wrong?

Benny gestures to the barred window, where THUNDER rolls
louder than ever and dark SHADOWS move ominously...

BENNY

Some things are happening. Though
really, what do you care? I mean,
you don't live here, right?

(taps Eli's head)

You live there. You stay there.

ELI

Where is everyone?

BENNY

Don't worry about everyone else. I
thought we'd have more time here,
but circumstances have changed,
and we need to get some things
cleared up, do you understand?

Eli nods, not understanding in the slightest. He is still
disturbed by this strange situation, but Benny's presence
reassures him...

BENNY

For me, this place has been about
learning and teaching. It's only
one of the places I am... that
probably doesn't make much sense,
but never mind. Things don't
always make sense, do they?

ELI
(understatement much?)
No, they don't.

BENNY
I'm here to help, do you believe me?
(Eli nods)
And you're here because you think
you killed your wife.

ELI
I did. I did kill her.

BENNY
You think you did.

ELI
(annoyed)
No, I don't think I did it, I did
it. I shot Ruri.

BENNY
(patient)
You think it. You live it, again
and again, keep it in your mind.

ELI
So? I feel bad about it. I... I
deserve to be punished.

BENNY
And as long as you believe that,
you will stay here. I know what it
is, to stay in pain. You think
it's beyond your control. But you
can decide to let it go. Because
here's the thing...
(leans in, emphatic)
...it doesn't matter anymore. The
nature of time, for beings like
you and me - it has to be about
movement. It has to be a process,
not a goal. There is no goal.

ELI
I know that, but --

BENNY

You don't know it. Listen, Eli.
Hear what I'm saying with your
gut, not your ears. Time moves.
Ruri is dead, she died a long time
ago, but you are alive. What you
have with your daughter isn't a
noun, something that can be broken
or fixed. It's a verb, a process,
something you create with each and
every moment. Work with Pria to
make each moment worthwhile. But
repeating the guilt, living in the
pain, the past... it doesn't work.
It denies time. It denies life!

Eli cries openly, holds onto Benny's hand, to the lifeline
he is offering. Benny stands, holding his hand out...

BENNY

Stand up, Eli. Come with me.
Decide to move on, to explore...
to see what there is to see.

There is another deep RUMBLE of thunder, and the building
actually begins to TREMBLE from the force of it...

ELI

What's happening?

BENNY

It's time to leave, Eli. Will you
come with me? Can you?

Still crying with emotional catharsis, Eli grasps Benny's
hand, stands, looks towards the corridor...

ELI

I'm ready.

22 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Defiant is gone, although the stasis field taking its place
is just visible. Cardassian ships still loom ominously...

23 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Ro stands at the central Ops table, increasingly confident about her ability to handle this. A console BEEPs...

SELZNER

Lieutenant Ro, Admiral Akaar has
just requested permission to beam
aboard from the *Trager*.

Ro wonders for a moment what to do about it... then she smiles as she gets a rather wicked idea...

RO

Tell him to come up to the office.
Tell him Kira'll meet him there.

Selzner nods acknowledgement, and Ro takes a deep breath. She leans back against the Ops table, keeping an eye on the turbolift and just spoiling for a fight...

RO

If I'm gonna resign... may as well
go out with a bang.

24 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

Kasidy sits, back propped up against the wall, WRIGGLING on the pillows to get comfortable, BREATHING heavy.

Everyone tries to comfort her, and she appreciates it, but she is getting a bit sharp from all the stress and fear. The contractions come again, and Kasidy grits her teeth...

Then Opaka GASPS -- as she realises the cushions are wet, a damp patch spreading out from Kasidy's bottom. Kasidy looks down at herself in surprise. Her water has broken...

KASIDY

Oh...

JUDITH

Kas?

At Judith's worried face, Kasidy begins to cry...

25 **EXT. SPACE - BAJOR ORBIT**

In orbit of the blue-green planet, with Cardassian ships visible in orbit, but far on the other side...

26 **INT. DEFIANT - TRANSPORTER ROOM**

Kira steps up onto the transporter pad, scared but knowing she has to do something. Nog, Shar and O'Brien all work on various parts of the consoles...

O'BRIEN

I've pinpointed the entrance to the underground chamber. There are a number of lifeforms near it, but I can't get an exact count. The subspace fields are causing a lot of interference --

KIRA

Let's do it. I'm ready.

O'BRIEN

Colonel, I have to remind you that I'm not going to be able to beam you back up. If you make it down there okay, you're on your own.

KIRA

Keep talking and I'll throw up, Chief.

With a wry smile, O'Brien nods and works the consoles...

O'BRIEN

Good luck, Colonel.

Kira dissolves in the transporter beam...

27 **INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PASSAGEWAY**

...and rematerialises in a cold, dark, stone passageway.

As soon she is solid enough, before she can even catch her bearings... HANDS descend on her.

Parasite-possessed Bajorans KNOCK the phaser out of her hand, SWEEP her feet out from under her, THROW her to the ground with their artificially enhanced strength.

There is nothing she can do - as much as she struggles, she is outnumbered and overpowered and caught off guard.

Six Bajorans pin her limbs to the ground, one leans over her threateningly, his wide and silent GRIN spreading as the tiny purple PINCERS emerge, and Kira's eyes flare...

But suddenly all six are YANKed back away from her...

As Kira cringes on the floor, unable to see what happened, she hears the SCUFFLES of a fight, GRUNTS of exertion, and finally bodies crumpling to the ground or against walls.

The fight over, Kira gets warily to her feet, unable to see her saviour. She looks around at the fallen bodies, not understanding what happened. Then there is movement...

...out of the shadows steps a figure - it's Wex.

KIRA
(stunned)
Wex?

Wex reaches out lovingly towards Kira, who flinches away.

WEX
I'm... sorry, Nerys.

As Kira watches amazed, barely daring to believe what she is seeing, Wex begins to CHANGE. Her body ripples, turns golden and liquid, and reforms moments later... into ODO.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

28 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PASSAGEWAY

Kira stares in amazement at Odo's sudden appearance. Happy, angry, shocked, relieved, excited, a dozen other emotions.

KIRA

You... I...

...and then they are embracing as if they will never let go. But soon enough they both pull back - *work to do*.

KIRA

You know why we're here?

ODO

Yes. The hostages. The queen.

KIRA

You take the hostages.

ODO

(doesn't want to
let her go)

We should stay together.

KIRA

We have to hurry. And you've got a better shot at protecting them.

ODO

(reluctant)

Alright.

Even though they both know they don't have time, they can't say goodbye just yet, gazing into each other's eyes...

KIRA

You could have said something.

ODO

You were busy.

She smiles sheepishly -- then FOOTSTEPS approaching...

ODO
(whisper)
We have to go.

She reaches up to cup his face... he kisses her hand...
then she leaves, picking up her dropped phaser on the way.

He lovingly watches her go for a moment, then MORPHS into a
small, weasel-like creature, scuttling into the darkness...

29 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

Ro stands at the central Ops table, taking reports from the
crew, as Admiral AKAAR rises into Ops on the turbolift.

Without sparing a look for Ro, Akaar marches over to Kira's
office, walks inside -- and stops.

Ro turns just enough to see him sneer at Kira's absence...
and she turns back to work with a smile.

30 INT. ASYLUM - CORRIDOR

The building SHAKES with the thunder. Eli is disoriented,
not sure why the walls are shaking, but Benny forges ahead
confidently. Eli looks at the dull green walls...

...but are starting to fade, becoming misty and blurred.

ELI
The walls...

BENNY
We have to hurry.

ELI
Why?

Benny doesn't respond, just pulls Eli on down the corridor
as the building continues to disintegrate around them...

A coruscating WHITE LIGHT obscures the far end of the
corridor, and Benny is dragging them towards it...

CRACKS appear in the walls and floor, and more white light streams in through them. Eli watches all this in dismay...

ELI
Benny, what's happening?

BENNY
(raising voice)
Dissolution. Hurry, Eli!

Terrified and uncertain, Eli follows Benny on further...

31 **INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM**

Vaughn lies ignored on the floor, eyes flickering...

...while everyone else gathers around Kasidy. She hisses, moans, breathes in heavy, steady rhythms. Opaka holds her hand, helps her focus on breathing and staying calm...

Jake shoots an uncertain look at Joseph and Judith, unsure what to do for the best. He brushes Kasidy's hair out of her face, as she GROANS through another contraction...

A small throw blanket is across Kasidy's spread lap - Opaka gently reaches under it to check Kasidy's progress. Behind them, the Bajorans continue to stand mute and impassive...

...until there is a SHOUT from the passageway outside.

VOICE (o.s.)
Intruders! Intruders!

The three Bajorans react with momentary shock, but quickly aim their phasers at the Sisko family...

PRYLAR
We warned you what would happen.

The leader FIRES --

-- but a thin limb of CHANGELING protoplasm springs out of nowhere and blocks the weapon's beam.

On instinct, Jake throws his body around Kasidy's, forming a human shield. Joseph and Judith join him...

Kasidy continues to huff and puff and groan...

The other two Bajorans FIRE their weapons --

-- but more slivers of Changeling FLY to block the beams.

Odo coalesces on the floor of the prayer room, taking on near-humanoid form for a split second...

...before spreading out into a thin, wide Odo-SHIELD that blocks more phaser bolts from the Bajorans.

Thin limbs of Changeling LEAP out of the main body... and PUNCH the Bajorans unconscious against the stone wall.

More SHOUTS from outside, POUNDing against the door. The shield form changes shape again...

...ending up as humanoid-Odo standing with one arm spread flat and holding the door closed.

Jake shares a smile of gratitude with him...

...then turns back to Kasidy, who GROANS again...

32 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PASSAGEWAY

Kira creeps along - she can hear the commotion, the groans and gasps and shouts and thumps as they chose down the stone passages - but she has her mission to complete.

33 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ATRIUM

Kira emerges into the area with the holographic reflecting pool from 1x01 "Emissary." The pool is not functioning, and reveals the spiral STEPS leading down into the darkness...

Phaser held out before her, Kira creeps down the steps...

34 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ORB CHAMBER

Kira creeps down the steep, candle-lit steps...

From below her, a wet, sucking, squelching SOUND that comes in pulsing waves...

She grimaces at the idea of what could make such a sound, wrinkles her nose at the horrible SMELL that goes with it.

Kira reaches the bottom of the steps, emerges into...

...the secret underground room where the Orb was hidden. Now all nine ORBS are here, laid out in a circle...

...and in the middle of the circle lies the MATRIARCH.

Massive and swollen, four metres from tapered tip to tip. Sickly, fishbelly-white flesh PULSES in rhythmic movements, squeezing EGG SACS out from its rear. Dozens of semi-formed soldier parasites squirm inside each egg sac, waiting.

Kira gapes in unvarnished horror and revulsion...

The matriarch senses her presence, raises what passes for its head. Blind, milky eyes try to focus. Small, atrophied pincers GNASH uselessly. Her dripping maw opens wide...

...and SCREECHES the alarm.

35 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PASSAGEWAY

In the dark corridor, where Kira first materialised...

...the six Bajorans - knocked out by Odo - now JERK awake at their mother's signal. They scrabble to their feet...

...and head towards the Orb Chamber and Kira.

36 INT. ASYLUM - CORRIDOR

Benny and Eli grow closer to the bright, swirling LIGHT...

The building continues to SHUDDER, the floor and walls crumble to pieces around them, light streaming in...

Benny and Eli are at the last point where there is anything to stand on, before the light overtakes everything...

Eli is still scared and confused... but Benny drags him forward, pushes him to go ahead, shouts over the noise...

BENNY
There! Go!

ELI
What about you?

BENNY
I'm right behind you!

ELI
But --

BENNY
It's okay. Now go!

Benny grins wide - excited, peaceful, encouraging - then
SHOVES Eli forward into the light...

37 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ORB CHAMBER

Kira frozen, disgusted... SHOUTing from above... one of the
EGG SACS breaks open...

...and the tiny soldier parasites tumble out. In moments
they get their bearings -- and scuttle towards Kira.

She raises her phaser, BLASTS the nearest one. The mother
SCREECHes again in fury, and more parasites come at Kira.

What do I do?! She doesn't have time or phaser power to
kill them all before they overwhelm her... so she *prays*.

KIRA
Help me...

SISK0 (v.o.)
(half-heard)
Nerys...

...and inspiration hits. Kira holsters her phaser, steps
confidently and calmly towards the nearest ORB BOX, turns
it to face the matriarch... and opens the box doors.

The silver-white LIGHTS streams out, flowing over the
matriarch. It turns its head and SCREECHES.

Kira steps towards the next Orb, and opens the door. Then the next, then the next, then the next...

Each reveals a slightly different shade, blending together to fill the room with ever brighter swirling white light...

The matriarch SCREECHES...

Kira reaches the ninth Orb, the last one. She is barely visible in all the blinding, surging light...

KIRA
(triumphant)
You want Bajor? Here it is.

Kira opens the final box...

WHITE OUT

38 PROPHETS' REALM

The fog parts -- to reveal the parasite MATRIARCH, alone. It looks around, screeching now in fear more than anger...

SISKO (v.o.)
(soft, distant)
I see you.

The matriarch whips her head around, searching...

Far away, a dark humanoid FIGURE approaches, an indistinct shape in the white, but growing closer...

SISKO (v.o.)
(soft, distant)
I'm here to tell you that it's
over. Your campaign, your hatred...
your time. It all ends here, now.

It is BENJAMIN SISKO. The Emissary looms closer, eyes aglow with righteous power. The matriarch SCREECHes defiance...

SISKO
You picked the wrong planet!

WHITE OUT

39 **PROPHETS' REALM**

Elsewhere in the white void, the Vorta - SEJEEL - and his garrison of JEM'HADAR look around in confusion...

SEJEEL

First! I demand an explanation for this!

FIRST

I have none to offer.

SEJEEL

We had just entered the Anomaly...
a sole Federation vessel stood
against the might of thousands of
Dominion warships.

FLASHBACK - 6x06 "THE SACRIFICE OF ANGELS"

-- Sisko stands on the bridge of the *Defiant*, staring down the enormous Dominion fleet at the end of the wormhole

-- The ships begin to disappear into nothingness

BACK TO SCENE

SEJEEL (cont)

We were on the verge of changing
the face of half the galaxy, and
this is your response? If not for
your incompetence, we would
already be -- First! Look at me
when I address you!

FIRST

Be silent. Do you hear that?

They listen closer... and hear the SCREECHes and WAILs of the parasite matriarch in the distance, growing closer...

SEJEEL

What is that? What's happening?

And then it appears out of the fog, thrashing its tail,
gnashing its pincers, coming closer all the time...

SEJEEL
First...

FIRST
Weapons!

The entire garrison of Jem'Hadar reach behind their backs
and draw their *kar'takin* blades, raising them high...

FIRST
Victory is life!

ALL JEM'HADAR
Victory is life!

...and the horde charges forwards, death on their minds...

WHITE OUT

then FADE IN to...

40 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ORB CHAMBER

Job done, the Orbs' light recedes, turning quietly in their
open boxes. All the tiny soldier parasites lie still, dead.

Kira is exhausted, but triumphant. Then she looks again...

...and where the matriarch was, surrounded by the open Orb
boxes, is a new figure. Kira's jaw drops in astonishment...

SISKO (o.s.)
Hello, Nerys...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

41 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Akaar paces the room angrily, waiting for Kira. Ro trots up the stairs and pops her head in, sweet as pie...

RO
May I speak with you, Admiral?

AKAAR
Where is the colonel? She was supposed to wait for me here.

Ro enters, closing the door behind her, struggling to keep her pleasant demeanour as Akaar glowers and bullies her...

RO
I regret to inform you that the colonel is unable to meet you at this time. However, I'm prepared to present you with a full report.

AKAAR
You're giving me the runaround, Lieutenant. We are in a crisis situation, and I would rather not have to deal with any of your... nonsense right now. Where is she?

RO
(okay that's it)
My nonsense? Colonel Kira is working to resolve this crisis. What are you doing, exactly, besides looking for somewhere to put your foot down? Now, do you want to hear my report, or not?

Akaar stares at her, *stunned* to be spoken to like that. But Ro can see the stormclouds gathering. He's about to blow...

Then suddenly both of their combadges CHIME, and they look through the doors out into Ops --

-- where the crew are spontaneously celebrating, cheering and hugging each other.

SELZNER (comm)

Lieutenant, Bajor is reporting the
hostage-takers have collapsed. At
every site. The parasites are
dying. Lenaris is standing by, he
says - he says it's over, sir.

Akaar and Ro stare at each other, equally surprised. At
last the admiral finds his voice, cool but professional...

AKAAR

I have things to do, Lieutenant.
Please inform the colonel that
I'll expect her report as soon as
she returns to this office.

He turns and strides out of the door without looking back.
Ro watches him go, aware that she nearly got herself well
and truly fired. She grins, as relief and elation set in...

RO

Maybe I have an affinity for this
kind of work.

42 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - PRAYER ROOM

Unconscious on the floor, the Bajorans' mouths creak open
-- and a small, purple parasite crawls out of each one.
Judith and Jake dash over to STAMP on them...

JUDITH

Got it --

JAKE

They're dying --

All three parasites are soon squished into pulpy messes.
It's quiet outside, so Odo lets go of the door, OPENS it...

...and sees more collapsed Bajorans, more parasites making
a run for it. He watches the little bugs falter, no-one to
possess, slower, slower... and eventually run out of life.

Then a SCREAM from inside the prayer room - Kasidy is in the final stages of labour. Odo guards the door...

Vaughn gradually regains consciousness, looks confused... at Joseph Sisko dabbing his forehead with a damp cloth.

JOSEPH

You're okay. Just rest now, you're gonna be fine.

...while Opaka stays with Kasidy, coaching, soothing her.

OPAKA

What's happening? Are they all --

JAKE

Yes, all of them!

OPAKA

Oh, thank the Prophets! Thank --

KASIDY

Uuunnhhh!

JAKE

Get someone down here right now!

OPAKA

...Two, three, four...

JUDITH

You're doing great, Kas, great!

OPAKA

...Nine, ten, and breathe, good,
deep breath and push, two, three...

JUDITH

There! There, I see it!

Kasidy bears down, not even conscious of the people around her anymore, the PUSH is everything, and she SCREAMS...

OPAKA

Good, good!

JAKE
Oh, God! Oh, it's so -

JOSEPH
Kasidy...

Beaming, Opaka brings the BABY out from under the blanket.

Joseph hands her the damp cloth - she re-wets it and dabs the baby clean. Everyone gazes on in wonder and love...

JUDITH
She's beautiful, Kasidy. She's so beautiful.

Opaka hands the baby to Kasidy... who cradles it, unable to take her eyes off its face... they all laugh with relief...

SISKO (o.s.)
Oh... Kasidy...

Kasidy looks up, amazed, happy tears in her eyes...

...and SISKO stands in the doorway, Kira beside him. They stride towards her... and Kasidy bursts into tears of joy.

Everyone is laughing and shouting, asking questions...

...but Kasidy and Ben only have eyes for each other and their new baby.

43 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Safe and triumphant now, as the *Defiant* rests in its place on the docking ring, with the *Trager*, *Gryphon* and others sitting on various other docking ports.

44 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

The walkways are filled with happy, relaxed people, smiling and going about their lives.

KIRA walks along the Upper Level, watching them all with satisfaction. New Federation and Bajoran flags drape the balconies, and there is a low-key air of celebration...

KIRA (v.o.)
Station log, Colonel Kira Nerys reporting... We did it. The station is safe, Bajor is safe. The parasite matriarch has been destroyed, and all the people who were controlled by them have recovered.

(sadder)
Well, almost all. Captain Mello and Commander Montenegro of the *Gryphon* were killed. Tigart Hedda, the woman who hosted the station's mother parasite... she couldn't be saved. Neither could the others like her on Bajor. And of course, Shakaar Edon is gone.

(cheering up)
But overall, I'd say this is a victory. Bajor's membership in the Federation is back on solid ground now. The parasites' plan meant rushing the signing ceremony last time around, so some things were missing. Some people who should have been here, weren't. This time... we'll do it right.

45 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS

GARD stands inside his security cell. CYL is outside, with DAX, and the three are talking MOS. It looks like it's not especially good news...

KIRA (v.o.)
As for the Trill, this situation affected them just as severely as it did us. They concealed vital intelligence about a major threat, and conspired to murder a foreign head of state. There's got to be some kind of repercussions. And I get the feeling it could get a lot worse before it gets better.

With a nod, Dax leaves Gard and Cyl alone...

46 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

RO and ODO perch on corners of the desk, laughing as they swap Quark anecdotes. Dax enters from the cells, smiles at Ro, takes Odo's hand in friendly welcome, then heads out...

47 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

...onto the Promenade, over to the Replimat, where BASHIR waits. They smile... but there's tension. Things aren't entirely right between them, and they need to talk...

On the lower level now, Kira strolls past, watching with a light smile. AKAAR approaches, greets her with professional courtesy. He can't deny things worked out for the best...

48 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Ro looks out the door -- at Akaar. He finishes his brief conversation with Kira, turns... and makes eye contact with Ro. A stiff nod of acknowledgement... then he walks away.

Kira enters, Odo turns to her, they take each other's hands and gaze lovingly into each other's eyes... Ro looks away with a faint smile, slightly jealous of their happiness...

49 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

TENMEI strolling home - but she stops, grits her teeth...

...because VAUGHN is waiting outside her quarters, visibly nervous. After a moment, she starts walking again...

TENMEI
(polite but cold)
Commander.

VAUGHN
May I speak to you a moment?

TENMEI
If I say yes... will you stop
calling me?

VAUGHN
No. I already made that mistake.

She considers that for a moment... then shrugs...

TENMEI

Come in.

She leads him into her quarters...

50 **INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS**

Once the door closes, she turns with arms folded...

TENMEI

What do you want?

He takes a deep breath. He has to get this right...

VAUGHN

Maybe I should tell you what I don't want. I don't want to tell you I'm sorry again. And I don't want your forgiveness.

TENMEI

What?

VAUGHN

I could tell you I'm sorry a billion times, and it would never make up for my behaviour as your father. There's no excuse for how inadequately I've loved you.

Tenmei folds her arms tighter, trying to hold on to her attitude... but is a little confused by his eloquence.

VAUGHN

All I want now is to get to know you a little. You don't owe it to me, and if you don't want to talk to me for a while, that's okay too. But I won't stop trying, not ever again. Giving up, telling myself that you were better off without me... that has been the worst mistake of my life.

Against her best efforts, the ice is starting to melt...

VAUGHN

I'd like it very much if you'd
accompany me to the ceremony
tomorrow. And maybe after that,
something to eat. Or the next day,
or next week. Whenever you're
ready, Prynn. Whatever you want.

She clears her throat, trying to keep the emotions out...

TENMEI

I'll think about it.

VAUGHN

Thank you.

As they awkwardly try to figure out - *what now?*

51 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Kira and Ro lurk just outside Quark's bar, out of his line of sight. With them is Odo-disguised-as-WEX, and Kira is egging the alien girl on with a mischievous grin...

52 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Wex enters the bar... Kira and Ro peep their heads around the doorframe, trying to control their giggles... Quark is about to pour a drink when he sees Wex approaching...

QUARK

(I hate you)

Ah - Wex. And what can I do for
you today?

Wex doesn't respond, just places her hands on the bar and looms as much as she can. Then she starts MORPHING...

...and Quark JERKS in surprise, THROWS himself backwards, CRASHES into the shelves, glasses SMASH, drink SPLATTERS all over his shirt... then he SLIPS on the spilled drink, legs pinwheeling comically, and he collapses to the floor.

In the doorway, Kira and Ro are HOWLING with laughter...

Quark looks up from the floor with amazed horror...

...and Odo replies with his scornful little half-smile. He turns... and saunters smugly back to Kira and Ro, leaving Quark panting in a mess on the deck.

From the upper level, Taran'atar watched the whole episode. Even the Jem'Hadar has managed a little smile of amusement.

53 INT. DS9 - SHAR'S QUARTERS

Shar sits at his desk, calmly reading reports and articles. A CHIME at the door, and he goes to it to answer...

It is VRETHA, his zhavey. Shar tenses, not ready for this. She is just as unyielding as ever... but they stay polite.

SHAR

Will you come in?

She enters, still stiff. She stands awkwardly in the room, as if waiting for him to speak, not sure what to say...

VRETHA

I'll be returning to Andor the day
after the ceremony.

SHAR

Oh?

VRETHA

I came to ask... if you will be
joining me. I believe there was
some consideration among the three
of you, that an arrangement might
be made...

SHAR

None has been. I think that they'd
be best off with another. But I
thank you for your offer... if
that's what it was.

She glares at him, accusing. He remains calm, if unhappy. He refuses to let her make him feel guilty anymore.

Not getting anywhere, she turns, heads towards the door...

SHAR

Whether or not I am able to help
our people, I have a place here,
zhavey. I was able to help Colonel
Kira resolve the situation on
Bajor. I'm - I'm wanted here.

VRETHA

You were wanted at home.

SHAR

No, I was needed at home. That's
not the same thing. Perhaps I'm
wrong... perhaps I've done every-
thing wrong. But I want to stay
here, now.

Vretha stops in the doorway, but does not turn around to
look at him. Her voice is like ice...

VRETHA

Stay then.

And she walks out without another glance.

Shar stares at the door for a moment, then sighs and goes
back to his desk, picking up the reports where he left off.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

54 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - GARDEN - DAY

Opaka sits on the bench in the courtyard garden, reading again. This time, it is the Ohalu book.

YEVIR steps into the garden, as Vaughn did. Full of doubts, nervous to be around the legendary former kai. She welcomes him with a smile, trying to see the best in him...

YEVIR

You wished to see me, Eminence?

OPAKA

I am merely Sulan now, Vedek
Yevir. Please, sit - I only wish
to speak with you a moment.

Uncertainly and uncomfortably, he does...

OPAKA

I don't know if I conveyed to you
how much I admired your work with
the Cardassians. The return of the
Tears is a great achievement. It
speaks to the power of your faith.

YEVIR

I am merely an instrument of Their
will... and that of the Emissary.

OPAKA

What do you think you'll do next?

Yevir hesitates, looking away uncomfortably...

YEVIR

Once, I believed I was destined to
become kai.

OPAKA

And now?

YEVIR

(isn't it obvious?)

You've returned, Eminence. No, I must follow through on my peace initiative. I thought I might go to Cardassia for a time, as an ambassador of faith.

OPAKA

Your vision is inspiring. You have truly been touched by Them.

YEVIR

Perhaps... perhaps you will be able to heal Bajor's spiritual disunion in a way I was not.

OPAKA

...I see no disunion. Our people are simply learning new ways to seek and understand the Prophets, new ways to walk their path.

YEVIR

But the Ohalu heresies challenge the very foundation of our faith!

OPAKA

Is that something to fear?

Yevir doesn't answer, too confused and unsure. Opaka knows she has to tread carefully if she hopes to convince him...

OPAKA

I think that exposing our people to such ideas might prove helpful. That such an act... might even be seen as an act of faith.

YEVIR

(stands suddenly)

What I did in Attainting Kira Nerys had to be done. She placed her own judgment before that of the Vedek Assembly, and --

OPAKA

Kira Nerys may be the truest child
of the Prophets I have ever known,
Vedek. No matter what losses she
endures, what injustices are
inflicted upon her, no matter how
long or how deeply she struggles,
her faith never wavers. What she
did in releasing Ohalu's book was
an affirmation of that faith.

She stands, takes Yevir's trembling hands in her own...

OPAKA

As I see it, it was not the release
of the Ohalu text that set Bajor's
present discord in motion. It was
the Attainder of Kira Nerys.

She walks away, leaving him to consider her words...

55 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Ro enters, but pulls up short -- at the sight of a PACKAGE
on her desk. She looks around, wondering who could have
left it there. Then she steps around her desk...

...and slowly unties the string, unfolds the brown paper
wrapping. Inside is a Starfleet UNIFORM with a security
gold collar and lieutenant's pips. On top is a small paper
note, hand-written in an elegant cursive script...

INSERT - THE NOTE

In case you needed encouragement.
JLP.

BACK TO SCENE

Ro stares in wonder at the note, wondering what that man
continues to see so deserving about her. She unfolds the
uniform, holds it up against herself to see how it looks.

Smiling uncertainly - she is still not totally convinced -
she drapes the uniform over the back of her desk chair...

56 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

...and walks back out onto the Promenade. As she passes Quark's bar, she looks in - what will she tell him?

Kira passes in the other direction, nods to Ro...

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

...and continues on into the bar. Quark is miserable enough as it is, but seeing Kira just makes him even grumpier...

QUARK

What, you wanna ruin another very expensive shirt for me?

KIRA

Hey, you were the one who wanted me to cheer up. And I'll pay for the cleaning - and the broken glasses. At a reasonable price.

QUARK

What difference does it make now? Bajor's joining the Federation after all, which means that after tomorrow's party, I'm finished.

KIRA

Yeah, that's a shame. Look, I only came by to bring you some news.

QUARK

Whatever, just get it over with.

KIRA

(dramatic sigh)

With the approval of the Chamber of Ministers and the Federation Council, your bar is declared the Ferengi Embassy to Bajor. In other words, effective immediately, the space between these walls is the sovereign territory of Ferenginar, subject to its laws and practises.

Quark SNORTS at such seemingly irrelevant nonsense. Then he stops, stunned, the penny dropping...

QUARK

Are you telling me... my bar is
the new Ferengi Embassy? And I'm
the new ambassador to Bajor?

KIRA

I had no say in the staffing.

Quark can hardly believe it. His mind drifts, imagining all the wonderful profits that will now come his way...

QUARK

Diplomatic immunity?

KIRA

Don't push your luck, Quark. Come
by my office tomorrow and we'll
hammer out the details. Better
yet, make it the day after.

Kira turns and walks away, hiding a small smile she would never let Quark see. He's still standing there amazed...

QUARK

I'm still in business...

Quark's dabo girl TREIR jiggles over, beaming widely...

TREIR

Congratulations, I overheard.
Either you have the dumbest luck
in the quadrant, or somebody in
high places really loves you.

QUARK

Rom...

As Quark realises what his brother has done for him...

TREIR

I assume you'll be wanting to
renegotiate our contract...?

58 INT. DS9 - ZIYAL'S ART EXHIBIT

In the space formerly occupied by Garak's tailor shop...
It's quiet, very few people. Ro stands gazing at the art,
hoping they will help her sort out her thoughts...

One is a crude but effective portrait of a FACE, bisected
so that one half is Bajoran and the other half Cardassian.
Also absorbed in the painting is a Cardassian civilian...

RO
It's wonderful, isn't it?

GARAK
It's my favourite.

Ro double-takes -- and realises she is standing next to
GARAK. She tenses a moment, knowing his reputation. But he
is calm, thoughtful. He doesn't seem to pose any danger...

RO
Mister Garak. Are you... are you
here for the signing?

GARAK
You know, that was my original
purpose. See a few friends, watch
the ceremony... I suppose I was
looking for some kind of closure
to my time here. But now that I've
seen this... I think I might just
go home again. Avoid the rush.

He turns to her, smiles warmly, touched by the paintings...

GARAK
It's been a pleasure to meet you
in person, Lieutenant. Please,
give my regards to Quark.

Garak offers a polite smile, and exits. Ro wonders if she
ought to do something... but decides that he's no trouble.

She turns back to the drawing, coming to her decision. She
straightens herself. She is staying...

59 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

Everyone in Ops is excited, on edge, waiting for something.

The turbolift rises into Ops... carrying SISK0 in civvies.
The moment he steps off, BOWERS stands and booms...

BOWERS
Captain on deck!

Everyone turns to face Sisko. Someone starts clapping, and soon the whole room is ringing with APPLAUSE and CHEERS...

SISK0
At ease.
(no effect - louder)
At ease!

Gradually the din dies. He appreciates the welcome, and he steps down into the pit, smiling around at them all...

SISK0
It's good to see you all. I hope to be able to catch up with each of you later. But right now, I'm late for a meeting. And the CO hates to be kept waiting.

Gentle laughter... Sisko climbs the steps to the office...

60 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

...the doors open, Sisko steps in... and something is immediately THROWN at him...

He CATCHES it instinctively - and smiles when he sees that it's his BASEBALL. Kira is grinning wide...

KIRA
I suppose you'll want the office.

Sisko grins too, remembering their first ever conversation in this room. He is different now - more centred, serene, contented...

SISKO

I thought I'd say hello first. The
new uniform suits you, by the way.

She looks down at herself - a Starfleet captain's uniform,
with the red collar. Touches the four pips of a captain,
bashful. She feels good in it...

KIRA

Still haven't got used to the
rank. Makes me feel like I've been
demoted. And the combadge is on
the wrong side.

SISKO

You'll adjust. Or Starfleet will.
(lobs baseball back)
And this belongs with the
station's commander, I think.

KIRA

(delicately)
You're not coming back?

SISKO

Actually, Starfleet wants to make
me an admiral. They planned to
offer it to me after the end of
the war.

KIRA

That's wonderful news! And well
deserved. You'll be -

SISKO

I turned them down, Nerys.

KIRA

So... what are you going to do?

SISKO

I'm going to take my family to the
Federation induction ceremony. And
after that... well, I thought I'd
stick around for a while, see what
happens next.

KIRA
Something always does.

SISKI
Yes, it does, doesn't it?

Kira strides out proudly towards Ops...

...and behind her back, Sisko's smile falters. Something always happens next. Then he follows her out...

61 EXT. BAJOR - OUTSIDE ASHALLA - DAY

An open air PARK, public event space, packed with endless people, milling excitedly. This is the Federation signing ceremony, and the entire planet has turned out for it.

A large STAGE has been constructed on a natural rise, and every major dignitary of the Alpha Quadrant stands on it...

AKAAR and VRETHA in the centre as the official Federation representatives, welcoming Bajor's First Minister ASAREM.

On their right, OPAKA and LENARIS of Bajor. MACET, EKOSHA and LANG from Cardassia. MAZ and CYL from Trill. MARTOK and WOLF from Qo'noS. ROM and first lady LEETA from Ferenginar.

On their left, the senior staff of Deep Space Nine and their friends. VAUGHN stands with TENMEI, not entirely at ease but trying. SHAR is nowhere near his zhavey, standing companionably with NOG and JAKE as they share a joke.

RO and QUARK stand together, Ro wearing her new Starfleet uniform and Quark in his new best ambassador's outfit. They turn and smile at each other. They're going to be okay. DAX, BASHIR and BOWERS are there too, enjoying the mood.

KIRA holds hands with ODO, with TARAN'ATAR keeping close. Kira wears her Starfleet uniform... smiles over at YEVIR...

...and we see her EARRING back in place, glinting in the sun. Yevir offers a half-hearted polite smile...

Over all this, Jake quotes from Ohalu...

JAKE

(v.o. from 8x01)

"Battles fall and fail, and there
is a time of waiting, the space
between breaths as the land heals
and its children retire from war."

JAKE looks down from the stage, sees JOSEPH and JUDITH in the front row of the crowd, happily watching the ceremony.

Near them stand TREIR, MORN and HETIK, then the O'BRIEN family. Miles turns to Keiko, nods to her - he'll go with her to Cardassia. She smiles warmly and hugs him tight.

Jake turns to see SISKO, near him on the stage. His arm is thrown lovingly around KASIDY, who carries their new baby daughter, all three glowing with happiness.

JAKE

(v.o. from 8x01)

"The first child, a son, enters
the Temple alone. With the Herald,
he returns, and soon after, the
Avatar is born. A new breath is
drawn and the land rejoices in
clarity and change."

Asarem steps forward, and makes a comical play of searching about her person for a pen. The crowd chuckles amiably...

Akaar raises the official signing DOCUMENT... Asarem inks her thumbs, presses them firmly to the page. A CHEER goes up, and streams of CONFETTI and BALLOONS explode all over. The crowd celebrates, dignitaries beam with satisfaction...

Kira looks to Sisko, and they share a triumphant smile that says *"We did it. We actually did it."* Over this...

KIRA

(v.o. from 8x02)

"The child Avatar will be the
second of the Emissary, he to whom
the Teacher Prophets sing, and
will be born to a gracious and
loving world... a world ready...
to unite."

62 INT. KASIDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Late night, and the family has enjoyed a huge celebratory dinner some hours ago. Pots and plates are strewn about everywhere. Jake is making a valiant attempt at gathering them and taking them to the kitchen. He's tired but happy.

Joseph is fast asleep in Kasidy's rocking chair, and Judith is standing by the large picture windows, gazing out on the surrounding fields contentedly.

Ben walks around slowly, closing windows, pulling shutters, lowering lights. He gives Judith a peck and half-hug as he goes past, gently kisses his father on his sleeping head.

With a last goodnight wave to Jake, he goes to the bedroom.

63 INT. KASIDY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Inside the bedroom, Kasidy sits in a chair, already in her nightclothes and tastefully feeding the baby. She smiles at him as he enters and disappears into the en-suite bathroom. He comes out a moment later in his own nightclothes.

Kasidy comes to him, and they both climb into bed together, placing the baby in between them. They settle in, facing each other across the happily gurgling, sleepy baby.

They smile in pure contentment, fingers entwined with their daughter's. Everything is right in their world.

Sisko reaches up to tap off the light, and we...

BLACK OUT:

THE END