

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x24 - "Ha'mara."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: The Soul Key

by Olivia Woods

NOTE: This episode features three different versions of Kira Nerys. For clarity, we will refer to them as follows:

KIRA - Captain Kira Nerys of Starfleet, who has transported to the alternate universe to confront Iliana Ghemor.

ILIANA - Our universe's version of Iliana Ghemor, who has gained control of the alternate Terok Nor while impersonating the Intendant.

GHEMOR - The Mirror Universe's version of Iliana Ghemor. Currently left behind on Deep Space Nine by Kira.

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 MONTAGE FROM PREVIOUS EPS

Silent images flash before us, emotional moments that fade in and out, coming gradually faster and faster, building...

-- Dukat first notices Iliana at the party (9x21)

-- Bashir and Dax drop their hands, as they break up on the runabout trip back from Trill (9x02)

-- Ro and Taran'atar sit together at a table in Quark's, as Kira and Sisko walk by (9x04)

-- Tenmei watches tearfully as Shar embraces his bondmates at Thriss's funeral (9x09)

-- General Lenaris runs the ashes of Sidau village through his fingers (9x10)

-- Iliana looks at her new Bajoran face in a mirror (9x21)

-- Sisko looks a little confused as something occurs to him, under the tree with Kasidy and Rebecca (9x10)

-- Quark's face falls as Ro breaks up with him in the security office (9x12)

-- Vaughn slams his hand on the biobed, arguing with Doctor Girani (9x10)

-- Dukat looms over Iliana-as-Kira in her jail cell (9x21)

-- Nog stares angry up at Taran'atar in engineering (9x13)

-- Vaughn reaches out to hold Opaka's hand (9x10)

-- Iliana huddles into the cold water of the shower (9x22)

-- Ro holds her phaser on Taran'atar, who has just killed the Vorta Luaran (9x13)

-- Taran'atar throws his knife into Kira's chest (9x17)

-- Bashir urgently working on Kira in the infirmary (9x18)

-- Kira first finds herself in a Prophet vision (9x18)

-- Quark squeezes Ro's hand as she lies on a biobed (9x18)

-- General Kira charges out the gates of Parek Tonn (9x20)

-- Bashir and Nog's faces drop as they first discover the image of the Intendant in Taran'atar's comm logs (9x18)

-- Odo watches an Ascendant walk out of the Link (9x16)

-- Kira in her Prophet vision, with the burning Bajorans, Eav'oq and Ascendants (9x19)

-- Sisko and Quark share a look in the infirmary (9x19)

-- Iliana and Ghemor face each other via Orb vision (9x23)

-- Vaughn arguing with Bowers in the ready room (9x19)

-- The Nausicaan assassin collapses forward, killed by Ghemor's sword (9x20)

-- Kira first faces MU-Ghemor, the Cardassian Woman (9x21)

-- Taran'atar backhands Tenmei in the *Euphrates* (9x19)
-- Vaughn crumbling in grief in the ready room (9x18)
-- Taran'atar smashes the neuropulse device to bits (9x20)
-- Taran'atar disappears in a transporter beam (9x20)
-- Tenmei and Vaughn cling desperately to each other as the prison self-destructs around them (9x20)
-- Iliana slits the Intendant's throat (9x20)
-- Sisko faces all his alternates in the Orb vision (9x21)
-- Vaughn reacts as Kira relieves him of duty (9x21)
-- Ro rages at Etana from her wheelchair (9x22)
-- Iliana dons the Intendant's headdress (9x20)
-- Vaughn and Sisko shake on their secret pact (9x22)
-- Taran'atar snaps L'Haan's neck (9x23)
-- Vaughn is confused to find MU-Sisko's grave (9x23)
-- Iliana presses the firing control on the *Negh'Var* (9x23)
-- Kira aims a punch at Ghemor's face (9x22)
-- Kira and Vaughn transport to the Mirror Universe (9x22)
-- MU-Prynn rushes in crying to the meeting (9x23)
-- Ghemor looks at her haggard reflection, lost (9x23)
-- Bashir takes Dax's hands in the bar, encouraging (9x23)

And one final, extended sample...

-- Iliana and Kurn walk into Ops. Iliana grins, flushed with success and victory (9x23)

and **WHITE OUT**. Blending into...

2 EXT. MYLEA STREETS - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Begin on the bright light of a warm sun in a blue sky. PAN down to the streets of this small Bajoran coastal village. The townsfolk are going about their business - there is a tension in the air, but nothing too overt. Hold a moment...

3 EXT. MYLEA COURTYARD - DAY

OPAKA leads VAUGHN through the courtyard outside the bakery - the one where Jake's wife Rena lives and works in our universe. Opaka opens the door and enters...

4 INT. MYLEA BAKERY - CORRIDOR

Opaka leads Vaughn up the stairs, to the landing. SINGING can be heard, soft and gentle. Quietly opens the door...

5 INT. MYLEA BAKERY - BEDROOM

...to reveal MU-PRYNN, sitting on the bed, using the tune to calm its occupant. It's the same song our own Tenmei sang for her mother in 8x22 "Greater Good." But as she looks up to see who is here, she stops, taken aback...

MU-VAUGHN
(thin, croaky)
Prynn? What's wrong?

Our Vaughn's eyes flare in alarm - he recognises the voice.

MU-PRYNN
You have a visitor, Dad.

Mu-Prynn stands aside, revealing an old, decrepit human man lying in the bed - MU-VAUGHN. He is very different from in 9x07 - body withered, skin grey and papery, eyes blind...

MU-VAUGHN
Who is it?

MU-PRYNN
I'm not really sure. I just know
he comes from a long way away. I
think he's a friend. I'll let the
two of you talk.

MU-Prynn stands and walks to the door. Her eyes give Vaughn a silent warning, then she and Opaka are gone.

Vaughn can only stand, not sure what to do here...

MU-VAUGHN

Hello...? Are you there?

VAUGHN

Yes, I'm here.

While Vaughn moves quietly to the bed and takes an empty chair, MU-Vaughn reacts silently to the familiar voice...

MU-VAUGHN

Who are you?

VAUGHN

My name is Elias. Like yours.

MU-VAUGHN

I think I understand. I've heard stories... Why did you come here?

Vaughn hesitates - that is the question, isn't it?

VAUGHN

Someone sent me. But it hasn't gone the way it was supposed to.

MU-VAUGHN

What in life does?

VAUGHN

What happened to you? Why are you on Bajor, in Mylea?

MU-VAUGHN

Where else should I be? I was one of the last generation of Imperial Terrans. Overnight, I went from prince to slave.

VAUGHN

You're Opaka's servant?

MU-VAUGHN

I'm her friend. I knew she was with the religious enclaves, and she hated the Alliance. When Sisko began the rebellion, I was the obvious choice to help unite the two groups.

(rasping cough)

But one last mission, one last battle... and this ancient body just couldn't spring back anymore. Sulan says it's sheer damned stubbornness that's kept me alive this long. I'm not sure what I'm waiting for. You, perhaps.

VAUGHN

Me?

MU-VAUGHN

You think it's an accident that we're here together, now?

VAUGHN

I told you - someone sent me.

MU-VAUGHN

And it hasn't gone the way you thought it would. And now... here you are.

The withered, blind old man COUGHS violently. Vaughn grabs a glass of water from a table and guides his other self's hands to it, helping to drip a few drops of water into his crinkly old mouth. Vaughn can only think about everything.

A RUMBLING sound filters through, shaking the bed...

MU-VAUGHN

I hear thunder.

VAUGHN

That isn't thunder...

Vaughn gets up and looks out of the room's small window. MU-Vaughn struggles to try to turn towards it too...

The door opens, and MU-Prynn and Opaka rush back in. Prynn immediately goes to her father, Opaka goes to Vaughn...

OPAKA

My friends in Singha can arrange
off-world transport for a small
number of us. We can head there as
soon as we relocate the artefacts.

VAUGHN

We may not have time for that.
Keep everyone away from the
windows - I'll be back soon.

And he rushes from the room, as the rumbling increases...

6 EXT. MYLEA - ROOFTOP - DAY

Vaughn clambers out of a hatch onto the stone roof of the bakery. He looks up into the sky...

...and all around the village, six KLINGON troop carrier ships are lowering from the clouds. Heavily armed, clearly threatening, packed with Klingon warriors ready to kill...

KIRA (comm)

Kira to Vaughn.

VAUGHN

(tap to receive)

I see them, Captain. We've screwed
these people good.

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

7 INT. MYLEA BAKERY - BEDROOM

Vaughn rushes back into the room, where MU-Opaka fretfully waits, while MU-Prynn is still fussing over MU-Vaughn...

VAUGHN

You all need to evacuate. Now.

MU-PRYNN

My father can't walk.

OPAKA

Then we shall all carry him.

Vaughn moves to the bed, ready to help MU-Prynn with her father. But MU-Vaughn pushes them away...

MU-VAUGHN

Get off me.

MU-PRYNN

Dad, we don't have time for this.

MU-VAUGHN

I said no. I can't do this, Prynn.
I'd only slow you down. You have
to go. Elias, tell her.

Vaughn looks down at the crippled old man, and swallows...

VAUGHN

He's right. He won't make it.

MU-PRYNN

Shut up! I'm not leaving my father
here to be slaughtered!

MU-VAUGHN

Prynn, look at me! I'm dying! I've
had enough. I love you with all my
heart, but you have to let me go.

MU-PRYNN
I can't! Dad, please, get up!

MU-VAUGHN
Elias... she'll never be safe
while I'm alive.

What he's asking is clear. MU-Prynn turns to Vaughn, sees him drawing his Starfleet phaser...

VAUGHN
Sulan... get her out of here.

MU-Opaka grabs MU-Prynn, drags her towards the door...

MU-PRYNN
Dad! No!

Vaughn leans in close, takes his opposite's hand, presses the muzzle of the phaser to the old man's temple...

VAUGHN
I'll make it quick.

MU-VAUGHN
Thank you.

Vaughn closes his eyes, and presses the trigger. The FLASH reflects on his face, and the body beneath him jerks.

Prynn SHRIEKS and breaks free, rushes back into the room to attack Vaughn. He lets her punch him and batter at him...

MU-PRYNN
Damn you damn you damn you!

Opaka grabs her and drags her away again, screaming and crying all the way. Drained empty of emotion, Vaughn turns back to MU-Vaughn and draws a sheet over the body...

8 EXT. MYLEA STREETS - DAY

KIRA ducks down to the ground, just missing the SLASH of a Klingon *bat'leth*. She raises her phaser - SHOOTs down the soldier attacking her, then his two friends a step behind.

As the three Klingons drop dead, Kira struggles back to her feet. The sounds of fighting continue, but a different kind of SCREAMS grow louder... Kira raises her phaser again...

...but then sees MU-Opaka dragging a wailing, fighting MU-Prynn away from the bakery to safety.

Meanwhile, another Klingon approaches - Kira raises her weapon and SHOOTs him. He goes down.

Finally, after a long tense moment with more SOUNDS of fighting in the background... Vaughn finally jogs around the corner and towards her. Kira sighs with relief.

But then six Klingons turn the corner after him. And at the front of them leading the charge is TARAN'ATAR...

KIRA

Down!

Vaughn wisely doesn't argue, throws himself forward to the ground. Twists, brings up his phaser, FIRES at the Klingons pursuing him. Kira joins him to shoot down the last few...

But Taran'atar has already disappeared.

Kira grabs Vaughn off the ground, hauls him quickly towards the refectory door and inside, SLAMS the door...

9 INT. MYLEA REFECTORY

Kira and Vaughn grab the large meeting table, up-end it and push it against the door to block it. While they do...

VAUGHN

Thanks for the assist.

KIRA

Did you see him? Taran'atar.

VAUGHN

He must have shrouded.

The table in place, they retreat behind meagre cover. They crouch, phasers drawn, listening to the SOUNDS of rampaging Klingons and screaming Bajorans outside...

KIRA

We're going to have to kill him,
Elias. Taran'atar, I mean.

VAUGHN

I understand.

KIRA

Do you? Because I want you to know
I'm not talking about taking
revenge, or exacting justice. Or
even self-defence.

VAUGHN

What are you talking about, then?

KIRA

If we can't cure his brainwashing,
then we should at least set him
free. Snap his chains.

VAUGHN

Put him out of his misery...

KIRA

I think he'd want that. Wouldn't
you? If you had no control over
your life?

VAUGHN

...maybe.

KIRA

I didn't see Opaka out there.

VAUGHN

I made sure she got away with the
Orb shards. And Prynn.

KIRA

Thank you, Elias. Truly. Look...
about my relieving you of duty...

VAUGHN

Captain, you don't have to --

A BLAST of phaser fire, worryingly close outside the room.
Rafters CREAK, dust falls from the ceiling. They tense...

KIRA

I don't think we have a lot of
time left, Elias. So please shut
up and listen. I think maybe I was
feeling a lot like Taran'atar -
as if nothing was in my control.
I felt like everything was going
to hell, and it was all my fault
because I wasn't a strong enough
captain. I was wrong to take my
frustrations out on you.

VAUGHN

For whatever it's worth, Nerys,
you may just be the strongest
captain I've ever known.

KIRA

That's worth a great deal to me.
I wish we weren't in this mess,
but I'm glad you've got my back.

They pause again, listening to the sounds from outside...

VAUGHN

Captain, I need to ask you some-
thing. It's about Ben Sisko.

KIRA

What is it?

VAUGHN

Have you ever known him to lie?

KIRA

Why would you ask me that?

Vaughn starts over, trying to put his confused thoughts
into words...

VAUGHN

Has he changed much over the years
you've known him?

KIRA

Of course. Everyone changes.

VAUGHN

What I guess I mean is, since he returned from living among the Prophets... Is he still the same man you used to know?

KIRA

The honest answer is... yes and no. In some ways he's exactly the same. In others... well, I suppose being among Them changes you.

VAUGHN

Have you been among them? The Prophets?

KIRA

I'm not really comfortable talking about this, Elias...

VAUGHN

I'm sorry. I realise that was an inappropriate question. I'm just trying to wrap my head around something, and the more I try --

A heavy THUD interrupts them, the ceiling above them creaks and groans... and then BREAKS altogether. Wooden beams and chunks of stone plummet down...

...and knock Vaughn to the floor. An angry ROAR heralds...

...KLINGONS jump through the hole in the ceiling, land with weapons drawn.

Kira dives for cover, fires aimlessly through the dust. She scores a few hits, not enough. The Klingons keep coming.

Kira looks to Vaughn, and they share a look - if this is the end, they're going down fighting. Vaughn gets up --

-- but something invisible SWIPES his legs out from under him, sends him back to the ground. A Klingon takes aim --

-- but a fast-moving SHADOW flashes past, and the Klingon ERUPTS in his own guts and blood.

Another Klingon reacts to the surprise, raises his weapon -- then his chest BURSTS open and he falls dead too.

Kira panics, realising what's happening. Desperately scans the dusty air for any sign of him...

...and there he is, barely a metre away, unshrouding in the dust. Kira brings up her phaser --

-- he SLAPS it out of her hand, GRABS her by the throat, LIFTS her off the ground. She chokes...

KIRA

You saved us from the Klingons.

TARAN'ATAR

We were ordered to capture you alive. Obedience brings victory.

She struggles, slowly losing consciousness, fighting it...

KIRA

It doesn't have to be that way.
You're stronger than that. You're
stronger than her. You can break
the cycle. You can choose. Finish
your battle once and for all,
Taran'atar... reclaim your life.

Taran'atar pulls her close, as she is fading out...

TARAN'ATAR

I already have.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

10 INT. TEROK NOR - SECURITY CELLS

Kira GASPS back to consciousness. Her wrists and ankles are held in restraints, welded to the back wall of one of the security cells. Her combadge is gone. She looks up --

-- and realises that ILIANA is with her, staring straight at her as if at a specimen. Dressed as the Intendant, but without the sadistic sensuality, just cold...

ILIANA

I really have to hand it to you, Captain. Beaming to the alternate universe before the static field could envelop Bajor was a crafty piece of quick thinking. Seems I wasn't being paranoid after all. But honestly, what did you think you were going to accomplish?

Kira refuses to reply. Iliana shrugs...

ILIANA

That's okay. It was more of a rhetorical question anyway. And it's not that I mind you being here - just the opposite. It saves me having to go back for you.

KIRA

Why? So you can talk me to death?

ILIANA

(laughs)

Oh, good. There's still a little fight left in you. I can't wait to see your face when Bajor names me its Emissary.

KIRA

So that's why I'm still alive? To give you an audience?

ILIANA

Of course not. I have an audience. Klingons, rebels, your geriatric friend... best of all, one of the leaders of the Bajoran dissident movement. So no. You're not here to be an audience. You're here to suffer what I'm about to do.

Kira gazes into Iliana's face, this face that is identical to hers. She is just as much sad for her as angry...

KIRA

What happened to you?

Iliana darkens. The demons that drive her are coming clear.

ILIANA

What happened? Shall I tell you? Are you sure you want to hear? All about how the man I trusted used you to kill the man I loved, all to get me into his clutches, so that he could then have me replace you? About how the only living things I saw for fifteen years were the monster who came to rape me whenever he needed a pick-me-up, and the man who opened the door to let him in? About how the only thing I had to hold on to that whole time was the knowledge that I was Kira Nerys, Bajoran resistance fighter, and nothing they ever did to me could change that? How about, when I finally clawed my way out of that hell-hole, the entire universe had forgotten I ever existed? Everyone I ever loved - everyone I ever hated - had gone, and taken any hope of comfort or revenge with them? How even my father, even he had given up on me and chosen you to replace me? How am I supposed to get on with my life after that?

Kira is troubled to have finally heard the whole story. She doesn't know how to answer. Iliana waves it away...

ILIANA

Another rhetorical question,
because I'll tell you exactly how
- Trakor's first prophecy. Not to
mention a dozen other visions
about the coming of the Emissary,
all of which cite the same three
criteria. The one called by the
Prophets, the one who opens the
Temple Gates, and the one to whom
the Prophets give back her life.

KIRA

And how does killing the Kira
Nerys of one universe after
another fit into you getting your
life back?

ILIANA

(pensive)

I can't fault you for not seeing
the big picture, Captain. After
what was done to me, it took a
while for me to understand what I
needed to do. But when I meet the
Prophets, they'll see inside me,
just like they did your Emissary.
And they'll understand what I need
to be whole again.

Iliana brings up her hand, with the *pagh-varam* wrapped
around the palm...

ILIANA

...and then I'll use the Soul Key
to find every other Kira that has
laid claim to a piece of my soul.

KIRA

What about Iliana Ghemor's soul?

Iliana is startled. She looks away, unable to answer...

ILIANA

You don't understand. I'm going to be whole. For the first time in my life I'll finally be whole!

KIRA

Who are you trying to convince, me or you?

Iliana snaps - grabs Kira by the hair, SLAMS her head back against the wall, hisses into her face...

ILIANA

Don't push me, Captain. There are others here I could make suffer.

KIRA

Yeah, you could. You could do the same to everyone I care about, and to every Kira in creation. But none of it will make you whole, Iliana. And in the end, you're going to crash and burn.

ILIANA

Bravely spoken, Captain. But a lot has happened since you were taken. You see, after I took control of Terok Nor, I borrowed a page from your book. I coerced Smiley into doing the very thing you commanded of your O'Brien, on the day your wormhole was discovered - propel the entire station towards the Denorios Belt. It has a nice symmetry, don't you think?

Iliana turns to go, assured of her victory. The forcefield pops back into place over the threshold of the cell...

ILIANA

Don't worry - I'll be sure to give the Prophets your warmest regards.

And she's gone.

11 INT. TEROK NOR - CARGO BAY

In foreground, MU-Opaka and MU-Prynn comfort each other.

In the background, Vaughn tests the limits of their prison, pushing at the force fields and tinkering with door locks.

Then the door opens, and Klingon warriors shove more people into the room. More rebels, including MU-O'BRIEN, MU-KEIKO and MU-EZRI. MU-Prynn immediately goes berserk...

...and launches herself at O'Brien, pushing him around. O'Brien doesn't fight...

MU-PRYNN

Murderer! Terran monster! Two million people are dead because of you, you bloodthirsty bastard!

Keiko and Ezri get in the way, push Prynn back...

MU-KEIKO

Back off! It wasn't him!

MU-EZRI

He didn't do it!

MU-PRYNN

Who was it, then? Which one of you is a mass murderer?

MU-KEIKO

None of us! It was the Intendant!

Prynn finally breaks into tears, collapses into grief. Opaka catches her and leads her away. Keiko explains...

MU-KEIKO

She called our bluff and bombed the planet herself. She said she'd keep going unless we surrendered. We had no choice.

MU-O'BRIEN

I'm sorry. I'm so very sorry. I never meant for any of this...

Opaka approaches O'Brien, controlling her emotions. Grasps his ear, vedek-style. They stare into each other's eyes...

...then Opaka lets go and stands back. She nods quietly, accepting the truth. Vaughn steps up to O'Brien...

VAUGHN

Mister O'Brien... what's going on?
I felt the station vibrate a short
while before you arrived...

MU-O'BRIEN

The Intendant. She had us make
some insane modifications to the
deflectors and the thrusters. The
whole station is moving towards
the Denorios Belt.

OPAKA

Is that where she intends to open
the Temple Gates?

MU-EZRI

Temple gates? That's that crazy
thing Ghemor warned us about,
right? That religious thing? She
was serious about that?

VAUGHN

I'm afraid so. Think of it as a
dangerous hazard the Intendant
wants to exploit. It's imperative
we stop her.

MU-O'BRIEN

You'll get no argument from me,
Commander. But this station is
swarming with Klingons, and most
of my people are penned up in
rooms like this.

VAUGHN

Then we'll just have to be ready
to act when the opportunity
finally presents itself.

MU-O'BRIEN
Opportunity? What opportunity?
Look, with all respect, if we have
a hope in hell, I'm not seeing it.

VAUGHN
(enigmatic smile)
We have one...

Before O'Brien can ask more, the doors open - and Klingons barge back in. They go straight for Opaka, grab her roughly and drag her towards the door...

OPAKA
What do you want with me?

The Klingons don't answer. Vaughn tries to interject, grabs one of the warriors, pulls on his arm...

VAUGHN
Hey, leave her alone!

The Klingon pauses long enough to PUNCH Vaughn in the face and then they leave, dragging Opaka with them...

12 EXT. SPACE - TEROK NOR

Terok Nor is encased in a visible shield bubble, with its manoeuvring thrusters firing hard. The station is gliding through space, just as Deep Space Nine did in "Emissary"...

13 INT. TEROK NOR - OPS CENTRE

Iliana stands outside the office, gazing rapturously as the stars zoom by on the main viewscreen. Other positions are staffed by Klingons, including KURN at the central table...

KURN
We have arrived.

ILIANA
All stop. Hold this position.

Kurn nods to his officers, who work their panels, and the engines die out. The starfield on the screen stabilises...

KURN

There's nothing here but charged
plasma and cometary ice.

ILIANA

Open your mind, Kurn. Some of the
greatest treasures of the universe
are those we can't even see.

Kurn grunts, showing her a mocking, sharp-toothed smile. He
is getting to the end of his patience with the Intendant...

KURN

Very poetic, Intendant. But I
prefer the tangible. You assured
me that the effort of moving this
station would be worthwhile.

ILIANA

It will be. We've come this far
together. Surely you wouldn't turn
back now, so close to the prize?

KURN

(sneer)

Very well. How do we proceed?

ILIANA

The next part is for me alone.

KURN

We should not have left the fleet
in orbit of Bajor. They might have
been able to better pinpoint --

ILIANA

The fleet is providing much needed
assistance while Bajor recovers.
Don't underestimate the value of
such good will. The Bajoran people
will remember who came to their
aid in a time of crisis.

OPAKA (o.s.)

Bajor will remember who is
responsible for that atrocity!

Iliana and Kurn turn to see that a defiant Opaka has been bustled into the room by her Klingon escorts...

OPAKA

I know exactly what you did,
"Intendant." Just as I know who
you really are.

Kurn frowns at the odd statement... Unconcerned, Iliana brings up the *pagh-varam*, wrapped around her palm...

ILIANA

Do you also know what this is? And
what I'm about to do with it?

OPAKA

...Yes.

ILIANA

Then you should be happy! The hour
for which your movement has waited
all these years is finally upon
you. You'll witness the opening
of the Temple Gates. And you'll
affirm the coming of the Emissary.

OPAKA

You will never be Emissary.

ILIANA

There's no-one left to block my
path, Opaka.

Kurn's exec KRONA, working the tactical station, reacts...

KRONA

General! I'm picking up unusually
high proton counts and a localised
rise in verteron particles.

Iliana's head snaps towards the view screen - she knows
what that means. But she is confused...

ILIANA

Already? We shouldn't be close
enough to trigger --

But on the screen, the big blue flower of the WORMHOLE blossoms open. Iliana is stunned, amazed, in awe...

ILIANA
I've done it...

KURN
Sensor contact, dead ahead!
(looks at her,
shocked)
Intendant... it's the *Defiant*!

As Iliana's jaw drops in horror...

14 EXT. SPACE - THE WORMHOLE

With the wormhole open and shining, a shape leaps out of its maw, zooming straight into camera...

...and the *Defiant* - our *Defiant* - lets loose with its deadly pulse phasers, firing right down our throats.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

15 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

DAX leans forward in the command chair...

DAX

Attack pattern delta! Prynn, Sam -
give it all you've got!

At helm, TENMEI works her panels like second nature. BOWERS does the same at tactical. On screen, Terok Nor's frame swerves around as the *Defiant* banks and FIRES again...

DAX

Sam, what's the word on hostiles?

The ship SHUDDERS under a return strike from the station...

BOWERS

Other than the station? A dozen
Klingon warships. They're already
breaking orbit, ETA one hour.

DAX

Arm a quantum torpedo - target the
zenith of their shield bubble,
right over the upper pylons.

BOWERS

Aye, sir. Arming... targeting...
firing!

On screen, a torpedo fires towards the centre point over the pylons. It EXPLODES...

...starting a chain reaction of LIGHTNING BOLTS across the shield bubble, which then sparks out. Dax shares a grin...

16 INT. TEROK NOR - OPS CENTRE

ILIANA outside the office, KURN at the Ops table, KRONA at tactical, other Klingons elsewhere. The entire room is in chaos as they try to handle the attack...

KURN
We've lost shields! Intendant,
what are your orders?

ILIANA
(amazed, to self)
This can't be happening. My path
leads here... I'm fated to be --

KRONA
Fire reported in upper pylon two,
near the emergency oxygen tanks.
Suppression system is offline.

KURN
Blow the emergency ports! Vent the
pylon, before those tanks explode!

KRONA
But sir, there are still warriors
in that section --

KURN
Do as I command!

17 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

On screen, part of an upper pylon blasts open, with GASES
escaping and BODIES flying into space. BASHIR pipes up...

BASHIR
I'm picking up Kira and Vaughn's
combadge signals.

DAX
Can you confirm their location?

BASHIR
Ops... commander's office.
(sags)
But there are no Bajoran or human
life signs anywhere near there.

DAX
Keep trying. Dax to Nog.

18 INT. DEFIANT - TRANSPORTER BAY

NOG working the transporter console...

 NOG
Ready whenever you give the word.

 DAX (comm)
Stand by.

19 EXT. SPACE - TEROK NOR

Defiant ROLLS straight towards the fusion core. TWISTS up between the docking and habitat rings. TWISTS again to just barely miss the crossover bridge. FIRES front and rear at the upper and lower defence sails. Lower sail EXPLODES...

20 INT. TEROK NOR - OPS CENTRE

The tactical station EXPLODES - KRONA is thrown back by the flames, CRACKS his skull against a bulkhead, goes down...

21 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

 DAX
Bowers, drop shields and fire!
Nog, you're on - energise!

22 INT. TEROK NOR - PROMENADE

Jammed with Klingon warriors, rushing to try to control the damage from the attack. We go CLOSE to a dark corner under a staircase... and a Starfleet transporter signal forms...

23 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

 DAX
Raise shields! Nog, report!

 NOG (comm)
Transport successful, Captain.

 DAX
 (relieved sigh)
Easy peasy.

24 INT. TEROK NOR - OPS CENTRE

The station ROCKS again - but not from weapons fire. Kurn checks the main Ops table readouts in confusion...

KURN

Thrusters have fired! The station
is moving again!

He looks up to Iliana, who has hauled the insensate Krona out of the way and is working the tactical panels.

KURN

You've set us on a course for the
wormhole! Are you insane?

ILIANA

Keep your place, General!

KURN

No! I've had enough of your
madness. This farce ends now!

Furious, Kurn draws his dagger and STRIDES up the steps towards Iliana. She backs away, into the computer alcove behind tactical. Kurn advances, trapping her there...

He THRUSTS his dagger towards her - she CATCHES his wrist. Her other hand GRABS for the disruptor at his waist - he catches *her* wrist with *his* other hand. He presses in, faces close, her struggling to keep his dagger from her throat...

...until she TWISTS her wrist, and a BLADE pops out of her sleeve and right into his neck. Blood SPURTS everywhere.

Klingon EXTRAs draw their own disruptors and FIRE at her. Iliana holds up Kurn's larger body, using him as a shield, takes his disruptor and SHOOTs every one of them dead.

She THROWS Kurn's roasted body away, TEARS the silver head-dress off, RIPS open the black bodysuit at the neck, WIPES the blood from her face, looks across the room, sees Opaka huddled into a corner, SNEERS at her with contempt...

ILIANA

Kira to Taran'atar.

25 **INT. TEROK NOR - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR**

A Klingon warrior ERUPTS in his own blood and guts, slumps to the ground, dead. Another Klingon turns and reacts in surprise, only for his throat to be RIPPED open as well...

 ILIANA (comm)
 Taran'atar, this is the Intendant.
 Come in.

Taran'atar's head turns, UNSHROUDing as it does. He sneers, hissing his hatred. His hand grips into a trembling fist...

FLASH

-- Taran'atar's dream of being born in the Great Link. The copper strands hold him down, pulling tight. He struggles against them - one SNAPS under the force. Then another...

BACK TO SCENE

He turns away, ignoring the voice. Reaches down, GRABS the fallen Klingons' disruptors, POINTS one at the keypad of the door they were guarding, FIRES. The door HISSES open...

...and VAUGHN smiles with relief to see him.

 VAUGHN
 It's good to see you, Taran'atar.
 Thanks for keeping your promise.

26 **INT. MYLEA REFECTORY**

Earlier, as Taran'atar leads the Klingon attack on Mylea - but now from Vaughn's POV, on the ground, conscious but dazed. He sees Taran'atar holding Kira by the throat...

 KIRA
 Reclaim your life.

 TARAN'ATAR
 I already have.

Kira loses consciousness, and Taran'atar drops her to the ground. Then he walks to Vaughn, still on the ground...

Vaughn backs away as far as he can, tries a weak punch. The Jem'Hadar holds him down with a firm palm on the chest...

TARAN'ATAR

Commander, listen. I'm trying to help. Klingons will be here soon to take you and Kira prisoner. Don't resist. They'll take you to Terok Nor. I'll find you there.

VAUGHN

How can I possibly trust you?

TARAN'ATAR

You can't. Nevertheless, I give you my word.

Taran'atar shrouds and turns away...

27 INT. TEROK NOR - CARGO BAY

Back to scene. Taran'atar hands out the Klingon disruptors he has collected to the gathered rebels. To Vaughn...

TARAN'ATAR

I surrender to your authority.

VAUGHN

Good to know. Report!

28 INT. TEROK NOR - OPS CENTRE

Frustrated, Iliana runs to the science station, works it...

ILIANA (comm)

Taran'atar, this is a direct command. Go to airlock one, on the docking ring. Wait for me there.

Finished at the science station, Iliana jogs across to the transporter platform. It powers up - she BEAMS out.

With her gone, Opaka creeps out from cover, looks around at the mass of Klingon corpses, horrified. Then she looks up at the main viewscreen, the stars still moving...

29 **INT. TEROK NOR - SECURITY CELLS**

Kira still manacled to the wall of the cell, unable to do anything as the station rocks back and forth around her.

Then the door opens and the Intendant marches in, pristine bodysuit and glittering head-dress in place. Two KLINGON guards turn to honour her - and she SHOOTs them dead.

She slaps the panel to deactivate Kira's force field, works another device to snap open the manacles. As she does...

GHEMOR

Sorry that took so long, Captain.
We got here as soon as we could.

Kira is understandably confused... until the penny drops...

KIRA

Ghemor? Is that you?

GHEMOR

Thanks to your Dax and Bashir, yes it is. Long explanations will have to wait. The *Defiant* has taken out most of Terok Nor's defences -

KIRA

Defiant? My *Defiant?*

GHEMOR

Yes, but there's a Klingon fleet due here any moment, so we need --

A WHISPER-RUSH of air behind her. Kira's eyes flare, Ghemor sees it, turns in terror, raises her Starfleet phaser...

...and Taran'atar BATS it right out of her hand. He grabs Ghemor and twists her, SLAMS her against the bulkhead...

KIRA

Taran'atar - stop!

Taran'atar lets go immediately. Ghemor turns back around, and the Jem'Hadar looks at her closer, intrigued...

TARAN'ATAR
You are not her.

Ghemor quickly SLAPS the clasp on her bodysuit, over her heart. It CHITTERS like a combadge, and Ghemor looks up at Taran'atar, hoping for some response. But nothing happens.

GHEMOR
No... They told me it would break
you free from her control...

TARAN'ATAR
I am not under anyone's control.

KIRA
I don't understand. How?

TARAN'ATAR
The Intendant's Vulcan servant.

FLASH

-- Taran'atar pulls himself out of the dream, L'HAAN jerks back in surprise from her mind-meld

BACK TO SCENE

TARAN'ATAR (cont)
I do not understand exactly what
she did to me, but I have found
myself more able to assert my own
will with each hour. I have freed
Commander Vaughn and the rebels.

KIRA
How do I know that anything you're
telling me is true?

TARAN'ATAR
In the event that you doubted me,
Commander Vaughn gave me a brief
message. He says that he still has
your back.

Kira blinks, surprised, but then relaxes. She trusts him...

KIRA
Where is she, Taran'atar?

TARAN'ATAR
Docking ring, airlock one. She is positioning herself at the leading edge of the station - that will reach the event horizon first.

KIRA
(realising)
She's still bent on fulfilling the prophecy, even if she has to destroy the station to do it.

GHEMOR
So what do we do now?

KIRA
We go after her.

30 **INT. TEROK NOR - PROMENADE**

Security office door opens - Ghemor exits, dressed as the Intendant, dragging Kira by the arm. Kira pretends to struggle. Klingons get out of their way, assuming the Intendant is simply taking Kira for torture or something.

31 **INT. TEROK NOR - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR / AIRLOCK**

Now alone in the corridor, they drop the pretence...

KIRA
So, were you ever going to tell me you're the one who was supposed to be this universe's Emissary?
(off her look)
The rebels in Mylea were talking.

GHEMOR
Let's be clear about something, Captain. I'm here to neutralise a threat, nothing more. I'm not even particularly fond of Bajor. Let someone else usher in a new age.

They reach the airlock, circular door already open. Kira takes point, peeking around the edge...

...Iliana stands there, gazing out into space. Disruptor in one hand, *pagh-varam* around the other.

Kira and Ghemor enter, weapons drawn... now all three women who look like Kira are together...

KIRA

It's over, Iliana. Drop the weapon
and step out of the airlock. Now.

Iliana doesn't answer. She raises the *pagh-varam*, the tiny stone releases a SWIRL of green energy...

...and the wormhole BURSTS into life right outside the window. The station SHUDDERS with the force of it.

For once in her life, Kira gazes at her beloved Celestial Temple - and is scared of the sheer power of the thing.

ILIANA

(over shoulder)

You're too late.

Iliana lifts the disruptor...

...and FIRES at the glass of the airlock window. The window BLASTS apart, atmosphere rushes out into the vacuum...

...and all three women are SWEPT off their feet, out into space, and right down the open throat of the wormhole.

On Kira's silently screaming face...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

32 EXT. SPACE - WORMHOLE

The wormhole streaming with light and energy. Terok Nor metres from its event horizon. Atmosphere bursting from the smashed airlock, carrying bits of broken glass and metal...

...plus three BODIES. Kira, Iliana and Ghemor weightlessly tumble through space, into the embrace of the wormhole...

WHITE OUT

33 WHITE SPACE

Quick, anxious breaths... thumping heartbeat... pale-skinned fingers feel out their existence... ILIANA is in the white space, calling out insistently to the Prophets...

ILIANA

I'm here! Can you hear me? I've opened the Temple Gates! I've fulfilled the prophecy of the Emissary! Show yourselves!

ENTEK looks curiously at Iliana - but it is a Prophet...

ENTEK PROPHET

Corporeal entities. They come to us from the Broken Line.

TEKENY frowns. He too is a Prophet...

TEKENY PROPHET

No. Only one is from the Broken Line. The others are from the Penitent.

Iliana frowns, confused. She looks to her side - and sees that KIRA is there. To the other side - GHEMOR stands. They make up a rough circle, which the Prophets weave and cross back and forth through as they speak...

KIRA

Broken? Penitent? What does that mean? Is that how you refer to our two universes?

DUKAT weaves into the circle, then SHAKAAR from a different angle. They talk about the three Kiras, not to them...

DUKAT PROPHET

They are intrusive. Aggressive. Adversarial.

SHAKAAR PROPHET

One is the Hand. One is the Voice. One is the Fire.

TEKENY PROPHET

Only one was meant to come to us.

ILIANA

Then send these others away! You don't need them! I'm the one! I can fill the vacuum that Sisko left when he died.

Entek walks up to Iliana... gazes into her face. He frowns, inspecting her, curious and confused...

ENTEK PROPHET

This one is confused. It speaks with two voices.

ILIANA

I opened the gates! Please! I'm the Emissary! You must help me...

SHAKAAR PROPHET

Help? What is this?

ILIANA

Give me back my life!

Unmoved, all the various Prophets look at each other. Are they discussing Iliana silently between themselves, or simply confused? Then they look back to Iliana...

TEKENY PROPHET
Which life?

Stunned, Iliana can't answer. The Prophets are starting to crowd in on her, all inspecting her as Entek did...

ENTEK PROPHET
Conflicted. Broken.

SHAKAAR PROPHET
Its existence is entwined with our
Hand. It is no longer linear.

DUKAT PROPHET
An anomaly. We should examine it
more closely.

Zooming in close to ECU on Iliana, as she feels the Prophets opening up her mind for all to see...

34 MONTAGE

Lightning-fast clips of Iliana's life story, intercut with clips of Iliana crying with anguish at reliving it all...

WHITE OUT

35 EXT. SPACE

Match the white with a diamond ring effect...

...as the gigantic Klingon ship *Negh'Var* streaks towards us with Bajor's sun at its back, its massive weapons firing...

36 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

As Dax and the bridge crew react...

DAX
Here she comes! Helm, hard to port!
Weapons, target the impulse drive!

BOWERS
Incoming! Ahead one-ten mark two!

DAX
All hands - brace for impact!

...and the ship ROCKS hard from the Klingons' attack.

Dax clings onto her armrests, rides it out. Other crew are tossed from their seats, consoles EXPLODING in sparks...

Tenmei claws back to her seat, brings it under control...

DAX
Damage report!

BOWERS
Power outage on deck two, section three. Hull breach on deck four, section three. Force fields are holding. Several injuries - Doctor Bashir is on it.

DAX
(slaps panel)
Nog, how's it going down there?

37 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN ENGINEERING

Chaos as a room full of engineers run about trying to contain damage. NOG is at a master systems display...

NOG
Do you want the good news or the bad news?

DAX (comm)
Give me the bad.

NOG
You're about to lose fifteen percent of impulse efficiency.

DAX (comm)
What's the good news?

NOG
You're only going to lose ten percent of shield power.

DAX

(wry grin)

Your way of looking on the bright
side of things never ceases to
amaze me, Nog. How long to crank
those numbers up?

NOG (comm)

Ten minutes, minimum.

DAX

Take your time, no rush.

BOWERS

Negh'Var coming about...

DAX

Rest of the fleet?

BOWERS

Nineteen minutes.

Dax gets up out of her seat, goes to the helm, leans over
Tenmei's shoulder, demonstrates something on the panels...

DAX

Prynn... this is where you earn
your bonus this month. Think you
can handle it?

TENMEI

(daunted)

I'll need a few extra seconds to
plot that.

DAX

Get started.

(turns to Bowers)

Sam, I want the pulse phasers and
shields at full strength for this.
Get the power wherever you have
to, but get it done.

(turns back)

Prynn?

TENMEI
(triumphant)
Done!

Dax walks back to her chair and grabs on for dear life...

DAX
On my mark... execute!

39 EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT

Defiant turns towards the approaching Klingon behemoth...
...shakes off multiple enemy disruptor shots...
...as it gets almost to collision point - it TWISTS --
-- slips under the bulbous command module at the bow...
...and dances back and forth across the Klingon's belly...
...takes more disruptor fire, shields spark and sizzle...
...until it TWISTS again, nose pointing right up...
...and lets loose with full power PULSE PHASERS, reversing
away, flying backwards and upside-down.
...the phasers hit the *Negh'Var*'s massive fuel tanks...
...after sustained fire the tanks finally buckle... and the
ship ERUPTS in massive gouts of flame.
Negh'Var is just about broken in two, the entire back half
exploding in consecutive percussive blasts.
BAM BAM BAM - the Klingon flagship is dead...

40 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

...but the *Defiant* bridge is in ruins too. Viewscreen out,
sparks flying, smoke gushing, pipes and girders hanging...

BOWERS
Klingon attack fleet closing in.
ETA now three minutes.

DAX
Nog, can you give me shields?

NOG (comm)
Not in three minutes, I can't.
Sorry, Captain.

DAX
Prynn, how long can we evade?

Tenmei turns to her, just shakes her head...

DAX
Damn. Status of warp drive?

TENMEI
Online...

Dax grits her teeth. She hates to do this...

DAX
Prepare to withdraw. We'll return
and re-engage as soon as --

BOWERS
(amazed)
The Klingon fleet is veering off.
All of them! They're now taking a
heading of two-nine-three mark
fourteen.

TENMEI
I have multiple contacts coming
out of warp. Thirty - no, forty
ships, heading two-nine-three mark
fourteen.

DAX
More Alliance forces?

TENMEI
No, sir. They're Orion. And now
there's another ship decloaking in
front of them, taking point...
(turns to her)
It's the *Defiant*!

41 **EXT. SPACE**

A second *Defiant* - the Mirror *Defiant* - ROARS past our *Defiant* and on towards the approaching Klingons. ANGLE slightly to look behind them...

...and there is a massive FLEET of ships of various designs (some Vulcan, like in 8x11 / 8x12, others like the one from ENT 4x17), but all deadly and heading for the Klingons.

42 **INT. MU-DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

MU-SHAR at helm, Andorian antennae tense and pointing as he drives the *Defiant* on. A rebel soldier ready for battle...

SHAR

The Klingons are heading straight for us. They've forgotten the other *Defiant* completely - just as you guessed, Leeta. They'll be in firing range in six minutes.

Panning around, we see LEETA, comfortable in the command chair. Leeta turns to her side...

...where TREIR stands - a scantily clad but not-to-be-messed-with Orion war mistress.

LEETA

Once again, I'd like to thank you for your assistance during this crisis, Madam Treir.

TREIR

You can thank me after the battle is won, Captain. The Alliance has threatened my people long enough. We are eager to join our swords with anyone who shares our hatred of them.

LEETA

Shar - begin attack run. Weapons, target the lead ships and fire on my mark. Send word throughout the fleet... it's showtime.

CUT TO:

43 **MONTAGE**

The blasting retrospective of Iliana's terrible life rushes past us, as we hear Iliana herself screaming...

KIRA (v.o.)

Stop!

44 **WHITE SPACE**

...to Kira (identifiable by her Starfleet uniform) pleading with the Prophets...

Iliana is weeping openly...

Ghemor is observing and feeling like an intruder here...

KIRA

Stop it! Can't you see she can't
take any more? Let her go!

Iliana's crying and screaming carry on for a few moments more as the mental onslaught continues...

...then the Prophets gathered around her relent... and she calms, her anguished wails coming under control.

The Prophets turn to each other again, discussing silently among themselves. They seem satisfied with a decision made.

They look back to Iliana... and the WHITE SPACE seems to bleed slowly over Iliana's shape.

She begins to fade out from existence... but as she goes, her expression changes. A new look creeps over her face...

Clarity. Rapture. Understanding. And then she is gone.

KIRA

What happened to her?

OPAKA PROPHET

She is the Fire.

GHEMOR
(frustrated)
What does that mean? What does
any of this have to do with my
universe? What is the Voice?

TEKENY PROPHET
You are the Voice.

GHEMOR
Does that mean I'm the Emissary?

DUKAT PROPHET
You are not the Sisko. But you
will do.

And then Ghemor begins to disappear into the white as well.
She raises her hand...

...and the *pagh-varam* is now wrapped around it. She makes
eye contact with Kira, understanding dawning for her too.

And then she is gone. Kira is left alone with the Prophets.

They all turn to look at her - it is her turn now. She is
nervous about what they will do or say to her...

...and then she begins to fade away into the white.

The last expression on her face is one of awe and worry for
what she now knows is to come...

WHITE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

45 EXT. SPACE - TEROK NOR

Terok Nor sits calmly in space, the *Mirror Defiant* on the docking ring, and the Orion fleet hovers in the distance. But we focus on our *Defiant*, holding position nearby...

46 INT. DEFIANT - BRIG

VAUGHN and a trio of Starfleet security direct TARAN'ATAR into the cell... and the Jem'Hadar steps in calmly, allows the security to activate the forcefield. He's made his decision and he's sticking with it, no questions.

47 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Vaughn enters... TENMEI spots him, runs to him for a hug... he hugs back tight, haunted by what he did in Mylea.

That done, he approaches DAX, coughing from the smoke and looking around with a wryly amused eye...

VAUGHN

Throw a party in here, Lieutenant?

DAX

It was quite a show. Clean up's a bitch, though.

VAUGHN

Oh, I wouldn't worry about it. You haven't really captained a ship until you've wrecked the bridge at least once. What's our status?

DAX

Nog's holding things together for now. Terok Nor has settled into a stable position near the wormhole, that just happens to match with DS-Nine's position on our side perfectly. Can't quite decide if that's a coincidence or not.

VAUGHN
Best not to think about it.
(awkward pause)
Any news?

DAX
...No. If they really were in the
airlock when it exploded, then I
don't see how any of them could
have survived.

ALERTS go off on the few functioning panels. The crew turns
to the viewscreen in surprise, ready for the worst...

48 EXT. SPACE - WORMHOLE

The wormhole BURSTS into life, and two small objects shoot
out of the opening - ORBS, gliding towards them.

The wormhole closes again, then the two Orbs are swept up
in swirls of the usual Orb-type ENERGY and disappear...

49 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

A blinding FLASH of swirling Orb energy at the front of the
bridge. A brief glimpse of an ORB SHAPE in its centre...

...then KIRA is standing there. Dax grins, thrilled.

DAX
Captain on the bridge!

Relief, hugs and celebrations all around. Kira is happy to
be welcomed back, but exhausted...

KIRA
Later, later, later. I'll tell you
everything, just later. Right now
I just want to get home.

BOWERS
Captain, we're getting a hail from
Terok Nor...

KIRA
On screen.

The screen changes to show Terok Nor's central Ops table...

A Cardassian Woman is at the forefront - Ghemor. She looks calm, centred, serene, and she is wearing the *pagh-varam*.

With her are Mirror O'Brien, Keiko, Prynne, Ezri, Leeta and Treir. Opaka is gazing worshipfully at Ghemor. Ezri subtly pushes herself in between Leeta and Treir... just in case.

GHEMOR (screen)

We just wanted to thank you and your crew for everything you've done, Captain. But if you don't mind, everybody here has agreed that it's time the people of this universe got back to handling their own affairs.

KIRA

So what happens next?

GHEMOR (screen)

What happens is that things really start to change around here.

KIRA

For the better?

GHEMOR (screen)

We'll see.

The screen changes back to the star field, with Terok Nor hanging there. Kira sighs, and goes to the centre seat...

50 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Defiant* powers up, zooms away and into the wormhole...

51 **EXT. SISKO'S HOUSE - DAY**

SISKO stands by the big tree, holding a baseball bat. He tosses a ball into the air, lifts the bat...

...and WHACKS the ball out into the fields. The ball flies crazy into the trees. He sighs - he's way off his game. He bends down to grab another ball, straightens back up --

-- and there's a FIGURE walking across the fields. Vaughn is in civilian attire, tense and confrontational. Sisko drops the bat, takes a deep breath. Vaughn strides up...

...and PUNCHES Sisko right in the face. Sisko stumbles, but doesn't fight back. He knew this was coming...

VAUGHN

You son of a bitch. I trusted you.

SISKO

I know. I'm sorry.

VAUGHN

You're sorry? Do you have any idea what I did over there? Do you?

SISKO

Yes. But I didn't have a choice.

VAUGHN

The hell you didn't! You played on my trust, you told me everything you knew I'd need to hear to get me to play your game. You planned all of that very deliberately, so don't you dare stand there and tell me you didn't have a choice. Everyone has a choice!

SISKO

It was necessary.

VAUGHN

Was it supposed to be me? Is that what this was about? You sent me to be your back-up replacement, because Ghemor chickened out?

SISKO

It was never about you, Elias. It was about making sure that all the right players are on the field, exactly where they need to be... in order to win.

VAUGHN

Are you listening to yourself?
What the hell happened to you?

Sisko turns away, evasive, hides his expression. He reaches down to pick up his bat...

SISKO

You really haven't known me long
enough to ask that.

Vaughn angrily SNATCHES the bat out of his hand...

VAUGHN

Maybe not. But I know what the
people who served under Captain
Benjamin Sisko think about him. I
know he earned their respect and
their loyalty. That man would
never have manipulated me as
callously as you did.

SISKO

Maybe I'm just not deserving of my
sterling reputation.

VAUGHN

Or maybe you've simply gotten in
too deep with this whole Emissary
thing. You aren't living by your
own rules any more. You're living
by theirs.

Sisko is stung by the accusation. Vaughn HEFTS the bat in his hands. For a moment, Sisko is worried that Vaughn might actually hit him with it...

...but Vaughn just SMASHES it to pieces against the tree.

VAUGHN

Find someone else to play your
games, Ben. I'm done with them.

Then Vaughn turns and walks away across the field.

Sisko watches him go, wondering if he is right...

52 **INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS**

Close on KIRA, sat in a chair, gazing down at the deck, trying to figure out how to start...

KIRA

I think...

She pauses, looks up at... TARAN'ATAR, who is sat calmly on the bench in one of the cells, behind a forcefield...

KIRA

I think I've come to terms with the fact that what happened... the things you've done... weren't your fault.

TARAN'ATAR

But they were. I'm guilty.

KIRA

Of what?

TARAN'ATAR

Of being vulnerable. A liability to you and those for whom you are responsible. In the Dominion, such crimes are irredeemable.

KIRA

That doesn't surprise me. But we aren't in the Dominion now. Life in the Federation has far more shades of grey.

TARAN'ATAR

So I have seen.

KIRA

I can appreciate your preference for a simpler life. Black or white, live or die. Problem is... you've already crossed over into a world that's more complicated than that. And I honestly don't know if there's any going back for you.

Taran'atar does not respond. He only stares back...

KIRA

There's a decommissioned Bajoran scout ship at port four. It's been disarmed and it won't do better than warp five. We also repaired the damage to your room. What I'm saying is, you have a choice now. Return to the life you had before, try to rebuild it here, with us. Or... leave. Go wherever you want. I'm setting you free. What you do with that freedom is up to you.

She stands, walks to the panel, turns off the forcefield. She turns to leave, but Taran'atar calls after her...

TARAN'ATAR

I was not meant to be free.

KIRA

Maybe not. But you're going to have to find a way to deal with freedom anyway. The strings have been cut, Taran'atar, all of them. For better or worse, you have to make your own choices now.

She turns and leaves. Taran'atar watches her go...

53 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

RO hobbles along, using her mechanical armature and a heavy cane. It's hard work, but she refuses to give in.

She approaches the door to her quarters, notices a small PAPER NOTE has been attached to the keypad...

RO

Oh, Quark. You never give up, do you? What is it this time - a drink? Dinner? Naked surfing in the holosuite?

She snatches the paper up, taps the keys, the door opens...

54 INT. DS9 - RO'S QUARTERS (CONTINUOUS)

...and she hobbles into the room, throws the walking stick aside, lowers gingerly onto the couch. Opens the paper...

INSERT - THE PAPER

A very brief handwritten note, a few Bajoran characters...

TARAN'ATAR (v.o.)
I'm sorry. Taran'atar.

BACK TO SCENE

Ro is unsure how to process. Breath catches, emotions begin to surge. Closes her eyes against it, crumples the paper...

RO
Computer... locate Taran'atar.

COMPUTER
Taran'atar is not onboard the
station.

RO
...repeat.

COMPUTER
Taran'atar is not onboard the
station.

Confused at her own emotions, Ro tries not to give in.

But she is overwhelmed... and the tears she's been holding in for weeks now come at last, hard and fast...

55 EXT. SPACE

The Gamma terminus of the wormhole opens, and a small weak-looking Bajoran ship exits into normal space. It trundles along at impulse, the Idran star in the distance...

56 INT. BAJORAN VESSEL

The cockpit of the tiny Bajoran ship - like the one Jake used for his own trip. Taran'atar sits at the controls...

TARAN'ATAR

First Taran'atar, personal log. I am returning home to report on my activities and receive punishment. I anticipate a swift death - it is the only appropriate response to my many deficiencies. I do not expect that even Odo will have any further use for me after what I did. But that is... acceptable.

BEEP BEEP BEEP - an alert on his console. Does he even care? Curiosity wins out, and he taps the panel. Static...

VOICE

...anyone... attack... please...

Taran'atar works the panels further. Sounds rattle and wave through the speakers until a clearer message resolves...

VOICE

This is the independent courier
Even Odds, to anyone within range.
Our ship is under attack. Repeat,
we are under attack. Please, if
anyone is receiving this, we
request immediate assistance...

The message dissolves back into static. Taran'atar switches the console off, turns back to the controls...

TARAN'ATAR

Setting course for Dominion space.

He reaches for the controls... but hesitates, unable to activate the final control. He frowns, confused at himself.

Finally, he makes a decision. He works the controls...

TARAN'ATAR

Altering course. Setting intercept
for the courier, *Even Odds*.

57 **EXT. SPACE**

The tiny Bajoran craft changes course and jumps to warp...

MATCH CUT to:

58 **EXT. PLANET SURFACE - NIGHT**

Crackling FLAMES, filling a ceremonial ironwork dais. PULL BACK, revealing that the dais sits at the bottom of a large natural amphitheatre. Black stone leads up canted surfaces to a circular ridge, and then to black, star-filled space.

The fire echoes in the eyes of RAIQ, the Ascendant warrior from 9x23 "Rising Son." She gazes into the flames, excited and proud to be here. Around her, hundreds of other Ascendants, male and female, are gathered likewise.

Finally, one figure steps forward, and the crowd hushes in anticipation. The lead Ascendant is ESSK, a priest dressed in ceremonial robes, religious but still threatening.

He waves a silver hand over the flames, and they die down, revealing an object at their centre - a Bajoran ORB, but one that is completely black. Essk orates for the crowd...

ESSK

Not for millennia have the Knights
of the Quest gathered so. Not since
the great crusade against the hated
Eav'oq, when the Eyes of Fire fell
dim. In our quest for the Ascension,
we have become a lost people, ever
searching for signs of the True.
Generations have passed, believing
they would at last see the True and
their chosen reunited. But now... a
new breed of heretics has risen to
dare false worship. One Knight even
reported an encounter with these.

Raiq silently preens - that was her...

ESSK

Word of further omens, such as the
realignment of space itself, and
the rumoured return of the Eav'oq,
have come to us. Yet we remain
divided by doubt and distraction.

ESSK (cont)

We gather now, in the sight of the
last remaining Eye of Fire, to
debate these signs once and for
all. Unity is the only way, lest
all Knights be held back from the
Fortress of the True.

Essk kneels before the Orb, praying out loud before it...

ESSK

Divine Unnameable Ones, we pray
that you will reveal yourselves to
us. Guide us to your Truth, that
we might burn out all heresy
against You.

As Essk stands, turns to the crowd, the gathered Ascendants
GASP in surprise. Confused, Essk turns back to the Orb...

...a blood-red LIGHT has begun to burn deep inside. The
priest is stunned - his prayers have been answered.

The light grows quickly, so bright that the Ascendants must
shield their eyes. The priest is knocked to his knees...

When it dies down again, Essk looks up -- and sees that the
Orb itself is gone, replaced with a humanoid figure...

ESSK

Who... are... you...?

Grey skin, prominent ridges, long dark hair. Iliana smiles
a smile of certainty and understanding...

ILIANA

I am the Fire.

BLACK OUT:

THE END