

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x12 - "Heresy."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. EARTH - SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

The bay, sun glinting off the water, small tourist boats sailing past, the Golden Gate and other landmarks clear. KIRA walks across this view, quickly pacing, agitated...

SISKO (o.s.)
Nerys... relax.

KIRA
Yeah, that's gonna happen.

PULL BACK to reveal that we are inside...

2 INT. STARFLEET COMMAND LOUNGE

...a waiting room, Starfleet style, lushly appointed. SISKO sits on a couch, smart civilian clothes, more relaxed...

SISKO
You did everything you could. It's up to the Council to decide. In the meantime, my father's saying about the soufflé comes to mind.

Kira tries to follow the advice. It doesn't come easy. She stops pacing, gazes out the window at the calm and sun...

KIRA
So what's this part of Earth called again?

SISKO
San Francisco. Where the Academy and Starfleet Command are based.

KIRA
But the government offices were somewhere else, right?

SISKO
Paris.

KIRA
And your father lives...?

SISKO
New Orleans.

KIRA
Have you been to see him?

SISKO
He knows I'm here. But I thought
my time would be better spent
watching you wear a hole in the
carpet.

KIRA
(chuckle)
I'm trying to relax, Benjamin,
really I am. But I just don't know
how you Starfleet captains make it
look so easy.

SISKO
Us Starfleet captains.

KIRA
In name, maybe. But I never went
to your academy. I've never even
been to San Francisco.
(mutter)
Not in this century, at least.

Sisko frowns... Kira sighs. Can't stop worrying. The door
opens, Kira and Sisko turn in hope... and see Adm ROSS
entering. He doesn't seem especially happy.

SISKO
Admiral...

ROSS
Captains. The Council has finished
its deliberations, and come to a
decision.

KIRA
And...?

ROSS
And you'll get your fleet, Captain.

KIRA
(sags w/ relief)
Thank the Prophets.

SISKO
How many?

ROSS
Six ships.

KIRA
Just six?!

ROSS
(pointed)
It's six times what we sent to the
Dominion, Captain. It includes the
Defiant, and my own personal
flagship, the *Cerberus*. So this
had better go well.

SISKO
It will, Admiral. Thank you.

ROSS
(to Kira, stern)
I want to make one thing crystal
clear, Captain. This is it.

Off Kira's confused, worried reaction...

ROSS (cont)
That gamble you made in the
Council chambers - threatening to
withdraw Bajor from the Federation
if we didn't do what you want -
that only works one time. You do
not get to play that card again.
If this fleet fails to achieve the
objectives under which we approved
it, you don't get another one.

Kira gulps. She has no choice but to agree...

KIRA
Understood.

ROSS
I'm placing you in general command
of the fleet. This is your show,
Nerys. Make it count.

On Kira's daunted reaction...

3 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

The station at rest...

4 INT. DS9 - RO'S QUARTERS

The window, the stars. The SOUND of hitching breaths...

...and we find RO sat on her bed, hugging herself, gasping
and shuddering with short, sharp breaths. She lifts a
shivering head and looks across the room at...

...a HYPOSPRAY, sat on her desk. She stares at it for a
moment... then grits her teeth and looks away again.

RO
No.

CENN (comm)
Ops to Lieutenant Ro.

She looks up in surprise, hopeful of a distraction...

RO
Go ahead, Major.

CENN (comm)
The Captain just signalled ahead.
The fleet has entered the Bajoran
sector...

RO
I'll be right there.

The distraction has worked - she gets up happily, hurries
towards the door, leaving the hypospray behind.

5 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

A big FLASH of light, as the *Defiant* drops out of warp and coasts to a stop.

Soon after come five more Starfleet vessels of various classes, making an impressive sight arrayed near to Deep Space Nine. The other ships are:

USS *Gryphon*, Akira-class ("Lesser Evil")
USS *T'Kumbra*, Nebula-class ("Take Me Out to the Holosuite")
USS *Cerberus*, Prometheus-class ("Message in a Bottle")
USS *Gorkon*, Excelsior-class ("Descent")
USS *Blackthorne*, Intrepid-class (like *Voyager*)

6 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

The turbolift rises into Ops, and Ro jumps off it at speed, excited and relieved that Kira is back. The crew - CENN at the central Ops table, DAX observing from tactical, extras elsewhere - are all gazing up at the main screen...

CENN

Kira's on the line, Lieutenant.

She nods for him to go ahead. Kira appears on the screen...

RO

Good to see you, Captain. The crew will be glad to have you back.

KIRA (screen)

(wry smile)

The "crew" will have to wait a little longer, Lieutenant. Admiral Ross gave us a limited window of time to do this. So I want to get out there and get it done before I lose my nerve. You're in charge till I get back.

Ro's hope and relief drain away...

RO

If you're certain, Captain.

KIRA (screen)
I need you to get one pilot and one tactical each in the *Rio Grande*, the *Nile* and the *Yolja*, and get them out to me A-S-A-P. Keep the *Brahmaputra* on watch. Wish us luck.

Ro just nods. Doesn't have much in her to be encouraging to others right now. Kira disappears from the screen.

Downcast, legs like lead, Ro clomps slowly up the steps to the office. Dax intercepts her at the top...

DAX
What's wrong?

RO
Leaving me in command, for one thing. And this stuff with the Eav'oq... Maybe it's just cause I don't follow the Prophets or something, but I really don't see why this is our problem.

Dax tenses - this is too close to what Bashir was saying. She tamps down her protests and tries to encourage Ro...

DAX
It's not about whether you believe in the Prophets or not. It's about whether you believe in Kira... and whether you deserve to wear that uniform.

But Ro didn't take it as an encouragement. She took it as confirmation of all her worst fears and insecurities...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

7 EXT. SPACE

The Gamma exit of the WORMHOLE bursts open - six Starfleet capital ships and three runabouts shoot out of it. The varied vessels look tough and ready for business...

8 EXT. EAV'OQ TEMPLE - DAY

As numerous Eav'oq flounce gently about in the background, VAUGHN and OPAKA sit side by side on one of the low stone walls that trail through the city, mid-counsel session...

OPAKA

It's simply a matter of trusting
in the judgement of something
greater than yourself.

VAUGHN

I do. I believe in the Federation.
The difference is accountability.
Understanding that the decisions
that come to you are the result of
discussion and compromise. Who knows
what the Prophets are thinking?

OPAKA

No-one does, Elias. I wouldn't
trust anyone who said he did. But
I do trust that They know best.

VAUGHN

Why? How can you be so certain?

OPAKA

I'm not certain. I don't pretend
to know the full pattern of the
universe. But I trust that pattern
exists. And I learn more of it all
the time. That's all I need.

KIRA (comm)

Kira to Vaughn.

Pleasantly surprised, Vaughn taps his combadge to answer...

VAUGHN

Captain, you're back. Everything
went to plan?

KIRA (comm)

So far. But there's a lot more
plan yet to come. I need you up
here on the double.

VAUGHN

Understood. Stand by.

He turns to Opaka. He takes her hands, looks into her eyes.
Neither is willing to say the words, but they don't have
to. They know. That done, Vaughn stands and straightens...

VAUGHN

Vaughn to *Defiant*. One to beam up.

Eyes on Opaka, Vaughn disappears in a transporter beam...

9 **EXT. SPACE**

The six Starfleet ships and three runabouts fly at warp...

10 **INT. DEFIANT - MESS HALL**

All the fleet captains are gathered for a mission briefing.
Kira stands by the display, Vaughn and Sisko as advisors...

SOLOK

(Vulcan male, *T'Kumbra*)

If the Ascendants are as mysterious
as you say, how do we find them?

KIRA

Well, this is classified... but the
Ascendants already made one attack -
against the gods of the Dominion.

AKOLKAR

(Indian female, *Cerberus*)

You mean the Founders.

VAUGHN

No - it turns out the Founders had a god of their own. They called it the Progenitor.

KUWAHARA

(Japanese male, *Gorkon*)

Had? Past tense?

VAUGHN

The Ascendants blew up a star to irradiate it to death.

KIRA

Odo had the remains hidden away inside the Omarion Nebula, with a constant Jem'Hadar presence. They think they're just there to protect the Founders' original homeworld.

VAUGHN

Meanwhile the Vorta have been quietly pulling together all the hearsay, rumours and seemingly innocuous readings they can to try and track the culprits. They gave us that data. Our conclusion is that the best place to start looking... is the Omarion Nebula.

THANN

(Selenean male,
Blackthorne)

They're keeping an eye on their new enemies.

KIRA

The Dominion is probably the biggest target the Ascendants have ever taken on. They may be zealous, but I'm betting they're not stupid. They'd make sure.

SISKO

Now, we don't know what level of technology we'll be facing.

SPILLANE

(Scandi female, *Gryphon*)

If they can blow up a star, it must be pretty advanced.

VAUGHN

Not necessarily. One well-placed isolytic subspace weapon can easily make a star go nova.

AKOLKAR

Those weapons were banned in the Khitomer Accords.

SOLOK

Which the Ascendants did not sign.

VAUGHN

They also tend to be very solitary people, spread out to cover as much ground as possible. So hopefully that will play in our favour as well.

SISKO

But if it doesn't, we've got a strong fleet. *Cerberus* is one of the most advanced ships in Starfleet. *Blackthorne* has the fastest reactions. *Gryphon* is the most heavily armed, *Defiant* has the smallest profile. You've all got positives and negatives, so work together.

VAUGHN

Keep your sensors at full power too. We still need more data, and we'll never get a better chance.

KIRA

I think we've covered everything. Return to your ships... prepare your crews... and pray to whatever you believe in that we don't need them.

The captains file out. Last to leave is Spillane, who offers Kira a reassuring squeeze of the shoulder...

SPILLANE

Keep your chin up, Nerys. You handled the parasites, you'll handle this. We're behind you.

KIRA

Thanks, Ann.

Spillane follows the rest, leaving Kira, Vaughn and Sisko.

SISKO

Spillane's right, Nerys. Trust your instincts, trust your crew... and know that they trust you.

11 EXT. SPACE

The purplish-blue wisps of the Omarion Nebula, with the Starfleet armada holding station in the foreground...

KIRA (v.o.)

Ship's log, Captain Kira recording. We've been waiting at the Omarion Nebula for hours. Waiting's always the hardest part. But it finally paid off. The *Blackthorne* detected an Ascendant warp signature a couple light years away. *Gryphon* confirms. So this is it.

The Starfleet ships all jump to warp, away from the nebula.

KIRA (v.o.)

I can't help thinking about what the Tellarite councillor said. About the *Defiant's* first mission. I only pray this time goes better.

12 EXT. SPACE

At a distance, we can just about see a small ship against the backdrop of stars. It is an ASCENDANT VESSEL - tiny and silver and sharp, as first seen in 8x23 "Rising Son"...

KIRA (v.o.)

Magnify.

13 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Kira sits peering at the screen, surprised it's so small...

KIRA
Is that it?

BOWERS, SHAR and TENMEI are at their stations. Sisko and Vaughn hover on either side of Kira, supporting...

BOWERS
That's the source of the warp
signature. Single occupancy
vehicle, but no indications of it
being support for a larger ship.

VAUGHN
So basically yes, that's it.

Tenmei glances over to Shar. He feels her looking, looks at her too. They wordlessly exchange good luck wishes...

KIRA
Send a standard greeting in all
languages and basic lingua-code.
We come in peace, and would like
to meet to talk. The usual.

BOWERS
Aye sir --

A sudden burst of FLAMES in mid-air at the front of the bridge, everyone flinches away in shock...

...till the fire blows out and reveals an ASCENDANT female.

Tall, willowy, a silver covering that may be skin or bio-armour. Large insectile eyes that seem to shine with fire, clothes something like a medieval knight. This is RAIQ.

Bowers JUMPS to his feet, pointing a PHASER. Shar likewise, holding a tricorder. Raiq just looks around, nonchalant...

VAUGHN
(quiet, gentle)
Lieutenant Bowers, stand down.

BOWERS

She beamed through the shields.

SHAR

(off tricorder)

No she didn't. She's still on her ship - this is just a projection.

TENMEI

The other ships are reporting projections on their bridges too.

KIRA

Tell them to let me handle it.

Tenmei nods and relays the message. Bowers unhappily lowers his phaser, but remains ready. Raiq walks slowly around the bridge, taking in everything. Kira steps up to her...

KIRA

I'm Captain Kira Nerys of the United Federation of Planets.

RAIQ

I am Raiq, Archquester of the Ascendancy.

(looking around)

I do not know these vessels.

Raiq is not really paying attention to Kira. Barely even looks at her. She is more interested in exploring.

She looks at a screen - it fritzes, runs with data. Turns to another - the same thing. Shar checks his panels...

SHAR

She's scanning our databases.

Kira steps forward again, trying to get Raiq's attention.

KIRA

Excuse me. If you want to know about us, we're happy to answer your questions. There's no need to break into our computers.

Raiq glances dismissively at Kira, doesn't really respond. She turns away and the computer scan stops. She turns to Shar, looks the Andorian up and down...

RAIQ
I do not know your people.

SHAR
I am Andorian.

Raiq turns, strolls to the back of the bridge, inspecting. Kira follows, trying to open the conversation...

KIRA
We don't know a lot about your people either, but we'd like to. Would you be willing to meet with us in person and tell us more about yourself? We're more than happy to do the same in return.

Raiq ignores Kira and walks up to Vaughn. Right into his personal space. Looks him up and down...

RAIQ
Who do you worship?

VAUGHN
(stern)
I don't worship anyone.

KIRA
(try again)
As I said, we'd love to meet you in person --

RAIQ
If you do not worship, then you have nothing to fear from the Ascendants. And we have no interest in you.

KIRA
Well, that's a shame. I was hoping that we...

But Kira trails off...

...because now Raiq has finally looked at her properly. The imperious Ascendant woman gazes into Kira's face, seemingly fascinated. Cocks her head, looks again...

RAIQ

That face... I know you.

Kira is confused - what does that mean? The others on the bridge look at her, disquieted. Raiq begins to realise...

RAIQ

The priestess on the world where
I crashed. The prison moon, with
its primitives, dependent on the
broken satellite network. The
nurse who returned me to health.

KIRA

(realising)

You're the one who freed Opaka.

RAIQ

You are not she. But you are the
same people.

(w/ horror)

You shame the True.

Kira begins to worry... but then Raiq is swallowed up in another massive burst of FLAMES. Kira flinches back. When the fire burns itself out, Raiq is gone.

Scared, Kira turns to Bowers, who is checking his panels...

BOWERS

Her engines are powering up...

Uh oh...

14 **EXT. SPACE**

Dwarfed by the six large Starfleet vessels, the tiny silver ship starts to glow... ...but then in a big FLASH of white light, the Ascendant ship disappears. It's gone.

15 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

They blink, surprised. What happened? Kira looks to Shar.
He is working his panels hard, intrigued by what he sees...

SHAR

A peculiar discharge of energy, an
element of spatial displacement...
I cannot be certain, but I believe
the entire vessel transported away.

Kira sags, somewhat disappointed, if relieved...

KIRA

Okay... umm... well, at least we
didn't have to fight. Signal the
rest of the fleet that --

But then the viewscreen relays another FLASH of light. Kira
turns to see what it is... and Raiq's ship is back. Shar is
looking at his panels, dismayed at what he sees...

SHAR

Captain...

16 EXT. SPACE

The tiny Ascendant ship is back with the Starfleet group...

...and then another FLASH reveals another ship appearing
off to one side. And then another FLASH - another ship. And
another... and another... and more, surrounding the fleet.

17 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

On Kira's horrified reaction...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

18 EXT. SPACE

Close on Raiq's vessel, its silver tip begins to GLOW...

...and unleashes a huge jagged BOLT of white electricity. All around, other Ascendants ships are firing at the other Starfleet ships... Raiq's weapon SLAMS into the *Defiant*...

19 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

...the bridge SHAKES under the attack. Kira stands in front of her chair as everyone scrambles to their stations...

KIRA

Helm! Get us out of here!

TENMEI

I can't, Captain. They're all around us. We're boxed in.

KIRA

Then we'll have to fight our way out.

Kira confidently takes the centre seat as the ship shakes under fire again. She slaps the comm panel...

KIRA

Kira to all ships. Return fire.

20 EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT

The little ship manoeuvres into optimal position - FIRES pulse phasers. Raiq's Ascendant ship just shrugs it off...

21 INT. GRYPHON - BRIDGE

Spillane is in the centre seat as the ship ROCKS under more fire. She turns to the Tellarite science officer CROTH...

SPILLANE

Croth! Analyse those weapons.

CROTH
They're just a basic electrical
charge. But the sheer power in
them is staggering.

SPILLANE
Launch shuttles!

22 EXT. SPACE - GRYPHON

A dozen small Starfleet FIGHTERS launch from the front bay.
Gryphon FIRES a hardcore phaser spread to cover them...

23 INT. GRYPHON FIGHTER

Riding with the fighter PILOT as we zoom out into the
battle, seeing Ascendants and Starfleet exchanging fire.
The fighter FIRES and hits an Ascendant ship - no effect.

24 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Shar reads his panels...

SHAR
Standard phasers are having no
effect, Captain.

SISKO
Bowers - modulate the frequency.

Bowers looks to Kira for approval. She nods. He does it...

25 EXT. SPACE - T'KUMBRA

The Vulcan ship is under fire from three Ascendant ships...

26 INT. T'KUMBRA - BRIDGE

Cpt Solok and his all-Vulcan crew react stoically...

TACTICAL
Damage to the port side, Captain.

SOLOK
Evasive manoeuvres.

27 **EXT. SPACE - T'KUMBRA**

But the large, lumbering ship is too slow pulling away...
the Ascendants move in for another shot... they FIRE...

And the *Blackthorne* ZOOMS in to cover, lithe body twisting
to protect the larger ship. The Ascendants give chase...

28 **INT. BLACKTHORNE - BRIDGE**

Cpt Thann stands giving orders, his golden tentacle-like
head appendages swinging as the ship ROCKS under fire...

THANN

We have to cover the *T'Kumbra*, we
can manoeuvre much faster...

SCIENCES

Those charges are affecting the
actual metal of the ship itself...

29 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Kira turns to Vaughn...

KIRA

Launch *Cooper* and *Sagan*. And get
the runabouts covering the *Gorkon*.

30 **EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT**

The circular belly hatch opens and two tiny SHUTTLES drop
out, diving into battle as the *Defiant* swerves off...

31 **INT. DEFIANT SHUTTLE**

Human female pilot ZUCCA and Benzite male tactical CARDOK
work their panels with nervous concentration...

CARDOK

Seven-one mark three-oh. Go!

32 **EXT. SPACE - SAGAN**

The shuttle heads straight towards one Ascendant ship,
firing and firing... the Ascendant turns to face them...

In the background, the *Cerberus* is under fire - one of its four warp nacelles is damaged and sputters with blue fire.

33 INT. CERBERUS - BRIDGE

Prometheus-class, sparse and gleaming as seen in "Message in a Bottle." Cpt Akolkar turns to her engineer...

ENGINEER

Upper starboard nacelle's gone!

AKOLKAR

We still have three more. Hell,
five more if we need them.

34 EXT. SPACE - SAGAN

The shuttle FIRES on the Ascendant ship, heading straight for a collision. Firing, firing...

...the two ships BLOW each other to pieces before they get a chance to impact.

35 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Shar turns to Kira in horror...

SHAR

Sagan is destroyed, Captain.

Tenmei turns from her panel in shock...

VAUGHN

Prynn.

He points firmly at her helm panel. She gets the message - pay attention to your work. She turns back, shaking...

BOWERS

But at least Cardok showed us how to kill these things. Constant, continuous phaser fire does eventually get through.

KIRA

Do it!

36 **EXT. SPACE**

Defiant turns and surges back towards the Ascendants with renewed vigour, pulse phasers blasting away...

Gorkon is under fire, takes a HIT on its big belly bulge. *Gryphon* fires on *Gorkon's* attackers - hard, constant phaser fire... until two of them finally buckle and EXPLODE.

37 **INT. GRYPHON - BRIDGE**

Croth punches the air in victory...

CROTH

Yes!

SPILLANE

Celebrate later, Croth.

CROTH

(off panels)

Captain... the hull...

38 **EXT. SPACE - GRYPHON**

CLOSE UP on the hull, under fire by the Ascendant weapon... a DISSOLVING EFFECT is spreading across the ship's skin...

Another Ascendant swoops in, FIRES a continuous bolt of massive electricity... and another, and another...

39 **INT. GRYPHON - BRIDGE**

Croth works his panels, verging on panic...

CROTH

It's just disintegrating. There's nothing I can do to stop it.

Spillane takes a second to gawp in horrified realisation. Then she gets down to business. She hits a comm panel...

SPILLANE

All hands, abandon ship. This is not a drill. Get to the escape pods, now, while you can.

The bridge crew look at her, stunned this is happening...

SPILLANE

I mean it. All of you, go. Now!

They get to their feet and rush for the exits. As he goes, Croth looks back, has a significant moment with Spillane. She nods acknowledgement to him, and he turns and goes.

Now Spillane is alone. She runs to the tactical panel, the place she feels comfortable and most effective...

40 EXT. SPACE - GRYPHON

Under fire, hull dissolving... escape pods LAUNCH, shooting away from the ship as fast as they can. Some get caught by Ascendant weapons. *Gryphon* FIRES and FIRES to cover them...

...until its phasers sputter and fail. The Ascendants keep firing... and the *Gryphon* simply CRUMBLES. Disintegrates into chunks, the ship's construction breaking down...

...until the crumbling reaches the warp core and the ship EXPLODES. The attacking Ascendant ships JUMP, escaping...

41 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

The crew reacts to the explosion on the main viewscreen...

KIRA

Spillane...

SISKO

We need to get out of here.

VAUGHN

We need to save those people!

42 EXT. SPACE

Gryphon's remains BURN, escape pods tumbling. *Gorkon* and *T'Kumbra* manoeuvre close to the cloud of tiny vessels...

As the Ascendant ships LOOM back into view... *Blackthorne*, *Cerberus* and *Defiant* take up defensive positions...

43 **KIRA**

KIRA

Now!

44 **EXT. SPACE**

Defiant, Cerberus and Blackthorne OPEN FIRE, constantly moving and firing, moving and firing, providing cover for the other ships against an advancing wave of Ascendants...

45 **INT. T'KUMBRA - BRIDGE**

On Solok...

SOLOK

Drop shields.

46 **INT. GRYPHON ESCAPE POD**

Two Starfleet randoms huddle together inside the tiny space. Then a TRANSPORTER BEAM forms over them...

47 **INT. T'KUMBRA - TRANSPORTER ROOM**

The two randoms appear on the transporter platform with others. A Vulcan officer helps them clear...

48 **INT. CERBERUS - BRIDGE**

Akolkar looks to her engineer...

AKOLKAR

Is everyone in place?

(engineer nods)

Then do it.

The engineer presses buttons... blue lights begin to flash all around the bridge as it goes to BLUE ALERT...

49 **EXT. SPACE - CERBERUS**

The Prometheus-class ship SPLITS on the x-axis into three sections, all manoeuvring independently, firing all the while. This is MULTI-VECTOR ASSAULT MODE...

50 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Tenmei grins as she watches this on the main viewscreen...

TENMEI

Awesome.

A shot towards her, and she instinctively moves the ship...

51 **EXT. SPACE - BLACKTHORNE**

The other side of the battlefield... *Blackthorne* FIRES...
but her Ascendant target JUMPS away and the shot is wasted.

In a FLASH of light, the Ascendant ship reappears right on
top of the *Gorkon* and FIRES. With shields down, *Gorkon* is
defenceless. The shot BLASTS a hole through the saucer...

Then a SHOT comes from off side - a runabout, firing on the
Ascendant. SHOTS from the other side - a second runabout.

52 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Ensigns ALECO and NARAN are at the controls...

NARAN

Keep firing!

ALECO

I am keeping firing...

53 **EXT. SPACE**

Caught between two runabouts, the Ascendant ship EXPLODES.
In the background, various parts of *Cerberus* dart about...

54 **INT. GORKON - BRIDGE**

Excelsior-class bridge, like the *Enterprise-B*. Cpt Kuwahara
grips onto his seat's armrests as the ship SHAKES...

OPS

Transports complete, Captain.

KUWAHARA

Make absolutely sure, Ensign.

He checks again, then nods to Kuwahara, relieved....

KUWAHARA

Alright, raise shields. *Gorkon* to
all ships. Survivors are on board.
Let's get out of here!

55 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Kira stands up from her chair, a new thought forming...

KIRA

All shuttles and runabouts, sync
shields and pull in close.

56 **EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT**

One of the runabouts pulls in close to the underbelly of
Defiant, the two SHIELD BUBBLES fizzing and combining...

57 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Kira starts working the panels on her armrests...

KIRA

Kira to all ships. We're gonna use
their own trick against them. On
my mark, make a split-second warp
jump. Head for the wormhole, and
don't look back.

VAUGHN

(worried)

Captain, what are you doing?

KIRA

Covering your escape.

Before he can protest, she hits a control and BEAMS OUT.

58 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Aleco and Naran disappear in transporter beams...

...and Kira appears in their place. She immediately moves
to the controls...

59 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Aleco and Naran reappear on the bridge. Vaughn realises what Kira has done, slaps the comm panel...

VAUGHN

Captain!

60 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

KIRA

Don't argue, Commander. You're in charge.

She gets the runabout moving... STABS the comm panel again with force, bravado covering her nervousness...

KIRA

Raiq! This is Kira! I didn't get chance to tell you before... I don't just worship the True. I talk with them. In fact, I'm the Hand of the Prophets! We chat all the time!

61 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

While the bridge crew seem horrified at Kira's actions, Vaughn settles into the centre chair...

VAUGHN

Prynn... get ready to do as she says.

SISKO

(*sotto*)

Elias...

VAUGHN

(*furious hiss*)

Don't even think about questioning my orders on this bridge, mister. I will throw you in the brig.

More worried than angry, Sisko relents for now...

62 **EXT. SPACE - RUNABOUT**

...as it ZOOMS towards the field of empty *Gryphon* escape pods. The Ascendant ships break off and head after Kira...

63 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Kira drives with one hand, checks the screens with the other, terrified but determined. One screen shows USS GRYPHON, PREFIX CODE: 18992. Kira slaps the comm again...

KIRA
Vaughn. Go! Now!

64 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Vaughn grips his armrests...

VAUGHN
Prynn - do it.

Tenmei works her panels...

65 **EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT**

Defiant ramps up and JUMPS straight to warp from standing. The *T'Kumbra*, *Gorkon*, *Blackthorne* and *Cerberus* do the same, the shuttles caught in their wake. Bright flashes of light flare as they stretch out into the distance. They're gone.

Kira is left alone with a chasing pack of angry Ascendants. She drives the runabout into the field of escape pods and *Gryphon* debris... the Ascendants dive in after her...

66 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Kira watches the panels in front of her... waits for the perfect moment... not yet... not yet... Now.

67 **EXT. SPACE**

...and all the escape pods DETONATE. Ascendant ships all over are caught by surprise and destroyed in the flames.

Kira's runabout SURGES forward through to the other side, riding the front of the shockwave to safety...

68 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Kira holds on for dear life as the runabout is swept away in front of the explosion... the RATTLING gradually lessens and ends. She lets out a scared breath of relief...

69 **EXT. SPACE**

The runabout swerves around, looping away from the burning Ascendant ships, in the direction of the Starfleet armada.

70 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Kira hits the comm panel...

KIRA
Yolja to Defiant. It worked. I'm
right behind --

FLASH - an Ascendant ship JUMPS in right in front of her, staring down the front window... and FIRES.

Alarms screaming, computers scrambling... the window starts to crack... Kira looks up, and sees the ceiling DISSOLVING over her head. The ship crumbles around her, air whistling through the ever-growing holes...

She runs for the rear cabin, too late. A great WRENCH of metal, the ship SPLITS, and Kira is swept out into space.

Silently screaming in panic, grasping for anything to hold on to, but there is nothing. She is in open space now, no air to breath, nothing she can do...

On Kira's horrified face, dying...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

71 EXT. SPACE - KIRA

...as she drifts in empty space... no sound except for the slowing BEAT of her own heart... she stares out...

...at the remaining Ascendant ships ignoring her. She's of no concern to them now. They're busy helping their fallen comrades among the graveyard of the *Gryphon* remnants.

She shudders, unable to breathe. Time seems to slow down around her. Her eyes slip sideways a touch, and she sees...

...the WORMHOLE opening, the great blue flower blooming...

She smiles, happy and relieved. The Prophets are coming for her. She tries to force her body to reach for it...

...but she's fading. She gazes rapturously at the whirling eddies of the wormhole, and we go gradually to...

WHITE OUT

Peaceful, calm, the realm of the Prophets...

...until the *Defiant* silently roars back into the battle-field and washes away the DIAMOND RING EFFECT.

The remaining Ascendant ships react to its arrival...

Defiant flips onto its side... shows its flat underbelly to the approaching Ascendants... and reveals the runabout *Rio Grande* hiding in the space between the *Defiant* and Kira...

72 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Vaughn stands in front of his chair, too anxious to sit. The whole crew is in major last chance battle mode...

VAUGHN

Bowers - all weapons, fire!

73 EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT

Close on the *Defiant*'s PHASER CANNONS as they angle out to face the direction of the ship's belly... and OPEN FIRE.

A new circular PHASER STRIP around the shuttle hatch lets loose with a continuous spray of phaser fire.

The Ascendants respond with their electric bolt weapons...

74 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

They ROCK hard from the impact. Vaughn hits the comm...

 VAUGHN
 Nog! Launch the nanobot shield!

75 INT. DEFIANT - ENGINEERING

Panels ERUPT in sparks and smoke. Engineering crew RUSH about containing the damage and keeping the ship running.

NOG is at the master systems display, fingers flying over controls. He hits one last button with satisfaction...

 NOG
 Done!

76 EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT

Hatches in the skin of the ship open and release hundreds of tiny particles, which shoot out to form a barrier...

More Ascendant weapons leap towards the *Defiant*...

...and the nanobots burst in tiny explosions, lessening the weapons' power. But the weakened bolts still get through...

On the *Defiant*'s skin, the Ascendant weapons' dissolving effect starts to take hold. It eats away at the hull...

...and reveals another hull underneath, perfectly intact.

77 INT. DEFIANT - ENGINEERING

Nog watches the progress on his displays with pride...

NOG
Nanobots and ablative armour are
taking serious damage, Captain.
But the main hull is holding.

78 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Panels burst and explode. Sparks fly. Crew dodge flames.
Vaughn yells into the comm...

VAUGHN
Sisko! Do it!

79 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Sisko at the controls, Bashir at the transporter platform
at the back of the cockpit... Sisko hits a panel...

A GRAPHIC shows the shields around the runabout dropping...

80 **EXT. SPACE - KIRA**

Kira floats in open space, protected from the fight by the
body of the *Defiant*. A transporter effect forms over her...

The Ascendants are right on top of the *Defiant* now,
unleashing torrents of weapons fire...

81 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Tenmei CLINGS to her console as the ship SHUDDERS...

ELECTRICITY crackles in the foremost console, scrambling
the computer. Moves along the line, heading towards Shar...
Shar is engrossed in his work, doesn't see it coming...

...but Tenmei does. She leaps towards Shar, grabs him and
yanks him to safety a bare second before his panel EXPLODES
in flames and shattered plasteel. They thud to the deck...

As the ship RUMBLES, Shar and Tenmei gaze into each other's
eyes. She saved his life. Vaughn yells into the comm...

VAUGHN
Sisko! Do you have her?

82 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira slumps unconscious in Bashir's arms. Sisko turns back to his panels and raises the shields...

SISKO

Yes! We've got her! Let's go!

83 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Tenmei and Shar scramble up off the floor...

VAUGHN

Tenmei! Get to your damn station
and get us the hell out of here!

Ashamed, Tenmei rushes back to the helm, takes her seat...

84 EXT. SPACE

Defiant stops firing, and it and *Rio Grande* jump to WARP as fast as they can.

The Ascendants are left alone with their dead...

85 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

The station at rest...

86 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Ro sits on the stairs to the office, figuratively biting her nails, just waiting for something to happen.

After a moment, Cenn reacts to his panels...

CENN

Wormhole!

Ro shoots to her feet. It could be good, it could be bad.

RO

Shields. Yellow alert.

He works his panels. The Ops lighting changes, indicating YELLOW ALERT. The viewscreen shows the wormhole opening...

...and the *Defiant* shoots out, followed by the other ships.
Cenn breathes with relief...

CENN
Defiant. And the rest.
(off panels)
Wait a minute... where's the
Gryphon? And the *Yolja*?
(alert)
They're hailing!

Ro nods... Vaughn appears from the ruined *Defiant* bridge...

VAUGHN (screen)
Drop the shields, now! We've got a
medical emergency!

87 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

RO rushes in - sees KIRA unconscious on a bio-bed, BASHIR
and the other medical staff feverishly working around her.
ETANA pushes past Ro to join them, gets stuck in.

DAX, SISKO and VAUGHN hover in the main room, waiting for
news, anxious. Ro goes to them...

RO
What happened?

VAUGHN
(grave)
Her runabout was destroyed. She
was exposed to space.

SISKO
She won't die. She's too important
to the Prophets.

VAUGHN
(gritted teeth)
Is this really the time?

SISKO
For you to be picking a fight with
me? No, it's not. Kira knew the
risks. She always has.

VAUGHN

She can be reckless and you know it. You're her supposed spiritual guide. Well, this is what you guided her to.

DAX

Kira makes her own decisions, Commander. She's known for it.

VAUGHN

(re Sisko; accusing)

Based on what he advises her!

SISKO

No - based on her belief in the Prophets. She pushed for this mission because she knows it's what the Prophets want. And she knew it long before I came along.

VAUGHN

She nearly died!

SISKO

And how often have you nearly died for what you believe in? There's no difference, Elias! Prophets, Starfleet, it makes no difference. Something had to be done about the Ascendants.

BASHIR (o.s.)

I'm not so sure it did.

They turn to see Bashir emerging from the surgical suite. Etana, TARSES, RICHTER etc are still working on Kira...

DAX

Julian... is she...?

BASHIR

She'll live. She's sedated for now, but she'll live.

(to Sisko and Vaughn)

No thanks to you.

DAX
Julian...!

SISKO
(darkly)
I beg your pardon, Doctor?

BASHIR
I warned you not to go. It was
none of our business. Well, this
is what happens when you stick
your nose in where it doesn't
belong - it gets bloodied.

SISKO
We needed to learn about the
Ascendants, Doctor.

BASHIR
Yes, well, now they've learned
about us, too.

VAUGHN
That's enough, Doctor.

BASHIR
It's barely the beginning! The
Ascendants had never even heard of
us before. We were safe. And now
we're in the same boat as the
Eav'oq. Thanks a lot.

VAUGHN
You're relieved of duty, Doctor!

BASHIR
No, I'm not. Throw me in the brig
later if you want, but I'm not
leaving my patient.

DAX
(breaking in)
What happened to you people? I've
only been away for three months. I
come back and you're all at each
other's throats?

BASHIR
Believe it or not, Dax, it's not
all about you.

Bashir spins on his heel and marches back into the surgical suite. The rest are just kind of stunned at the argument. Vaughn tries to find something innocuous to talk about...

VAUGHN
So how was your first command,
Lieutenant?

RO
Better than your last one,
apparently.

Vaughn can't really argue with that.

In the surgical suite, Bashir is back at Kira's bedside, resetting his nerves after the argument. As the medical team works, we ZOOM slowly in on Kira's unconscious face...

88 EXT. SPACE - KIRA

She shudders, unable to breathe. Time seems to slow down around her. Her eyes slip sideways a touch, and she sees...

...the WORMHOLE opening, the great blue flower blooming...

She smiles, happy and relieved. The Prophets are coming for her. She gazes rapturously at the whirling eddies of the wormhole, and we go gradually to...

WHITE OUT, then **FADE IN** to:

89 EXT. PAREK TONN (STOCK 9x18)

...the vision of Ancient Bajor from "Warpeth." Sisko and Kira stand outside the fortress, as Opaka and Itu open the gates together and welcome them inside...

OPAKA
Stand with us. Bring your people
into the fortress of Idran.

90 **WHITE SPACE (STOCK 9x24, 9x19)**

...the moment from 9x24 "Ha'mara" as the three Kiras stand in a circle, the Prophets themselves weaving in and out...

SHAKAAR PROPHET

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

BLEND INTO the earlier Prophets scene from "Warpath"...

KIRA

Three roads. Three peoples.

VAUGHN PROPHET

All roads meet.

EVIL JAKE PROPHET

Some end.

In NEW MATERIAL, Sisko steps up, calm and reassuring...

SISKO

It's your show, Nerys.

KIRA

But I don't know what to do!

SISKO

You should. I told you a long time ago. Don't you remember?

He smiles encouragingly at her, raises TARAN'ATAR'S KNIFE and STABS her in the chest. She gasps in shock and pain...

CUT TO:

91 **EXT. PAREK TONN (STOCK 9x20)**

General Kira lies on the ground, among the dead bodies of her army. Looks down at herself, at the knife in her chest. Looks to the side, where Sisko lies dying beside her...

SISKO

Should have had allies.

Ancient Bajoran Vaughn steps into the battle against the raging horde of Ascendants, protecting the fallen Kira...

In NEW MATERIAL, Vaughn turns in the midst of battle, gazes at Kira, smiles. He begins to GLOW with an unearthly white light, shining out of him, gradually FADING from view...

The battle scene continues, as we **MATCH CUT TO:**

92 EXT. OPEN FIELD (STOCK 8x13)

The battle scene from "Horn and Ivory," as Kira battles alongside the red-headed Perikian freedom fighter Torrna...

Kira looks around herself, confused to find herself here...

93 INT. PRISON CELL (STOCK 8x13)

Kira and Torrna are captured in a dank and filthy cell...

TORRNA

Damn those foul Bajora - I hope
their Prophets strike them down
with lightning.

Kira shakes her head - that's not how it works. But then she looks up, and sees...

94 INT. DS9 - SECURITY CELLS

...ILIANA staring at Kira as she stands in a cell, manacled to the wall as in "Ha'mara"...

ILIANA

You're too late.

The Bajoran Iliana brings up her hand - she's wearing the *pagh-varam*. She wiggles her fingers in a taunting wave...

KIRA

What happened to you?

Iliana grins sourly, and begins to slowly MORPH.

Her skin thickens and darkens, ridges grow on her face and neck, her hair grows long and black...

...until she is the Cardassian version of Iliana again.

ILIANA
I am the Fire.

And then she's swallowed up in FLAMES, like the Ascendant transporter effect. Grinning at Kira all the while...

CUT TO:

95 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Kira jolts awake with a small, shocked SHRIEK. She quickly looks around, sees that she's lying on the bio-bed...

She realises what just happened. She just had a vision about Iliana...

MATCH CUT TO:

96 INT. ASCENDANT PAVILION

Iliana Ghemor jolts awake from her own restless dream, with the same small, shocked SHRIEK. The Cardassian woman looks around herself, sees that she's lying on a plush mattress on the ground, inside an alien medieval-style tent...

She realises what just happened. She just had a vision about Kira...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

97 INT. ASCENDANT PAVILION

Iliana gets her bearings after the dream. Looks around at the large pavilion - plush and opulent, both religious and military. No difference where the Ascendants are concerned.

Tent flaps RUSTLE and an Ascendant male enters, worried and urgent. This is ESSK - the priest who held the gathering in 9x24 "Ha'mara." Averts his eyes at the sight of Iliana...

ESSK

Forgive my intrusion, Mistress...

I heard a noise, I was worried...

Iliana pulls herself together, wraps the bedclothes around herself in protection. Essk keeps a respectful distance...

ILIANA

It was me, Cardinal. A dream.

ESSK

If I may be so bold, Mistress, you seem to suffer from dreams often.

ILIANA

I do not consider it suffering.

(w/ gravitas)

My dreams are visions from the True, Cardinal.

Essk looks up at her in wonder...

ESSK

You speak with the True, Mistress?

ILIANA

That surprises you?

ESSK

(ashamed to admit)

Simply that... they have never chosen to speak to me directly.

ILIANA

Not even you, Cardinal? Spiritual
leader of all Ascendants? Surely
they would speak to you if anyone.

This is all very embarrassing for Essk. He agrees with her
that they should speak to him... and it galls him that they
speak to her instead. But he could never dare say so...

ESSK

The True have not spoken to any
Ascendant for millennia. Not since
the Eav'oq crusade. It is a matter
of some debate among us as to why.

Iliana is intrigued, figuring out how the Ascendants work,
noticing every detail. Gestures beside her, cajoling...

ILIANA

Sit with me, Cardinal.

ESSK

Mistress... it is improper...

ILIANA

Sit. Cardinal.

Essk daren't disobey. Averting his eyes again, he carefully
sits beside her, making sure to still keep a distance...

ILIANA

Tell me the story of the great
crusade against the Eav'oq. I
want to hear it again.

ESSK

As you wish, Mistress.

Essk settles in to regurgitate the official doctrine...

ESSK

It is the Ascendants' sacred duty,
bestowed upon us by the True, the
Unnameable Ones, to burn out all
heresy against Them, wherever we
find it.

ESSK (cont)

We had found signs and omens on many worlds... but none so much as we found among the Eav'oq. They possessed miraculous objects - the Eyes of Fire. The True's attempt to gaze directly upon their faithful children... but the Eav'oq dared to steal what was meant for us.

Iliana nods along, silently translating all this, comparing it to what she knows from Bajoran religion...

ILIANA

The Eyes gave you vision, let you see as the True see...

ESSK

We were able to retrieve one from the clutches of the Eav'oq... and it reaffirmed that we would one day find the Fortress, and burn with the True. It also foretold... the coming of the Fire.

Essk glances to Iliana, nervous to be sitting with this legendary figure from his religion. She smiles back at him beneficently, granting him permission to continue...

ESSK

But the Eav'oq were covetous and spiteful. They hid the remaining Eyes away. We battled for many years to reclaim them... until at last, the final day came.

98 EXT. SPACE - IDRAN ORBIT (STOCK 10x11)

The Idran planet. All around it a fleet of thousands of Ascendant ships gathered - small and silver and deadly...

ESSK (v.o.)

In their treachery, the Eav'oq possessed weapons we had not anticipated. On the eve of our victory we were cast aside...

The great swirling ENERGY WAVE blooms up from the surface of the planet, growing in power and force, sweeping all the Ascendant ships away, filling the screen until we...

WHITE OUT

After a moment, **FADE IN** to...

99 INT. ASCENDANT PAVILION

...Essk still telling the tale to Iliana.

ESSK

...and banished across the stars.
Even the last remaining Eye went dark, and the True spoke to us no more. But we did not give up our duty... we vowed to continue our crusade in Their name, and to vanquish those who dared speak it aloud, while we searched for their Fortress among the stars.

That's the end. Essk bows his head in silent prayer.

ILIANA

Shall I tell you what my dreams
have told me, Essk?

ESSK

I would be honoured, Mistress.

ILIANA

You will find the Fortress.

ESSK

How can you be so certain?

ILIANA

Because I know the pattern of the
universe, Cardinal.

ESSK

But it has been so long...

ILIANA

Essk... do you not believe that I
am the Fire?

ESSK

(nervously)

Of course, Mistress. I would never -

ILIANA

Did I not appear to you from the
last remaining Eye? And is that not
exactly what your doctrine foretold
would happen? That the Fire would
burst forth from the Eye of the
True, and enlighten the faithful?

ESSK

Yes, Mistress...

ILIANA

Does your doctrine not also say
that the Fire will illuminate the
path to the Fortress?

ESSK

It does, Mistress...

ILIANA

Perhaps you imagine that, being so
far from home, I do not wish to be
among you?

ESSK

I would never presume --

ILIANA

Believe me, Cardinal, this is
exactly where I am meant to be. I
know with every fibre of my being
that this is the task the True
have set for me. The time of the
Final Ascension is at hand, Essk.
Do not lose your faith now.

Essk swallows, only made more nervous instead of reassured
by Iliana's vehemence. He bows his head submissively...

100 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING**

Defiant is docked. *Cerberus* has recombined, a dead nacelle and scorch marks on the hull. *Gorkon* carries a hole in its saucer. *T'Kumbra* and *Blackthorne* are also visibly wounded.

Shuttles and workbees move back and forth between them and the station, as they work together to mend the damage...

101 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Kira sits propped up on the bio-bed. Bashir takes readings, as Dax, Sisko, Vaughn and Ro gather around her, worried...

KIRA

I understand now. I've been going about this all wrong.

BASHIR

Then you've come to your senses at last.

KIRA

Yes. The Ascendants can't be negotiated with. We're going to have to fight them.

BASHIR

Oh, for God's sake...

(off their looks)

Look, Captain, all due respect, but this is madness! Don't you think we've kicked that hornet's nest enough? Half the *Gryphon's* crew is dead.

KIRA

And it's my fault. The Ascendants were going to leave us alone until they recognised me as a Bajoran. So I'm the one who has to fix it.

SISKO

(resolved)

Then we go back to Starfleet. Ask for more ships.

KIRA

No, you heard Ross. He won't give us any more. Certainly not after what happened to the *Gryphon*.

VAUGHN

Then what do we do?

KIRA

The Prophets told me what to do.
They told me two years ago.

Vaughn bites his tongue. He just doesn't get this whole Prophets business, but this is not the time to argue...

DAX

Nerys, what do you mean?

KIRA

If Starfleet won't help us, then we go to the Dominion. I'm going to extend the alliance, and ask for military aid.

BASHIR

Alright, just hold on a minute.
This has gone far enough.

VAUGHN

(low, warning)

Your impulse control seems to be having problems today, Doctor.
Perhaps you should look at that.

BASHIR

But this has to stop. How can we possibly work with the Dominion after everything they did to us?

KIRA

(patient)

Doctor, I know you don't believe in the Prophets. But let me explain why this is the right thing to do.

Bashir is not impressed, but relents and lets her explain.

KIRA

Two years ago, I got sent back in time... something like thirty-thousand years into Bajor's past. The Prophets and the Iconians worked together to teach me a lesson - that despite everything that had happened, I couldn't give up. I had to keep fighting.

(beat)

But that's not all they tried to teach me. I didn't understand it then... but now I think I do.

They're all looking at her, a bit confused and wary...

102 EXT. OPEN FIELD (STOCK 8x13)

The Ancient Bajoran battle scene from "Horn and Ivory," as Kira battles alongside the Perikian freedom fighter Torrna.

KIRA (v.o.)

At the time, Bajor hadn't yet come together as one united world. The provinces were still fighting each other for dominance. The one that was winning... was the Bajora.

103 INT. MEETING ROOM (STOCK 8x13)

The first council of the new Perikian Republic, as the Bajora envoy tries to persuade them to join up...

KIRA (v.o.)

They saw themselves as bringing everyone together, so that there wouldn't be any more fighting. Some of the other provinces didn't agree. They thought the Bajora were just theocratic conquerors out to control everyone.

104 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

The others are baffled, not quite getting the point...

KIRA

Don't you see it? The Bajora were the Dominion of Ancient Bajor. A conquering nation, bringing belief in their gods to all...

RO

And killing anyone who opposed them.

KIRA

At first, yes. But look what came out of that. We became stronger, united against anyone who tried to control us. Now we're friends with everyone! That's what the Prophets were trying to show me - that if the Bajora can become peaceful and cooperative, so can the Dominion.

VAUGHN

Oh, Captain... I don't know...

KIRA

You don't have to trust the Prophets, Elias. You just have to trust me.

RO

Do you really think the Federation will go for this?

SISKO

Ro's right, Nerys. You heard them in the Council chambers. They don't like Bajor's current relationship with the Dominion. They'll never agree to taking it even further.

KIRA

No they won't. But I did this for Bajor, not the Federation. So Bajor is the one that will make the deal with the devil. Elias... call Taran'atar. Let's do this.

On Kira's determined expression...

105 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

Begin on TARAN'ATAR, sat at the far end of the table...

TARAN'ATAR

I wish to be certain of what you
are proposing, Captain. Clarify.

Kira sits opposite him, Vaughn and Sisko on either side...

KIRA

I'm proposing that Bajor and the
Dominion go beyond simple friend-
ship. The alliance has been good
for us both so far, I think you'd
agree. Now I want to take the next
step. I'm asking for your help. If
you will commit Jem'Hadar forces
to help Bajor fight the Ascendants,
I will do everything I can to help
you control the ongoing chaos in
the Dominion, and to persuade the
Federation to enter into diplomatic
relations with you.

Taran'atar nods to himself, considering all this for a
moment... and then looks back up at Kira, decision made.

TARAN'ATAR

No.

A moment of confusion...

SISKO

Ambassador... what do you mean?

TARAN'ATAR

I mean no. There will be no
alliance with Bajor.

KIRA

I don't understand. Why not?

TARAN'ATAR

Because I said no.

KIRA

Taran'atar... this is a good deal.
It's exactly what Odo wanted -
closer relationships with the
Alpha Quadrant. And it's good for
the Jem'Hadar too - a common enemy
to rally against will help you
stop the in-fighting.

(beat)

And I'm not ashamed to admit it -
we need you. You said yourself,
the Ascendants are your enemies.
So fight them with us. Bajor can't
stand against them alone.

TARAN'ATAR

Then Bajor will not stand.

VAUGHN

Ambassador, perhaps we haven't
been clear about the stakes...

Taran'atar slowly gets to his feet, looms over them...

TARAN'ATAR

You have, Commander. Now I wish to
be equally clear. I would rather
destroy this station, and everyone
on it, including myself, than
commit any Jem'Hadar lives to
protect Bajor. Am I understood?

Kira is quite stunned. Nobody can say anything. Taran'atar
takes silence as consent. He stands straight, walks stiffly
to the exit. Kira, Sisko and Vaughn are left sitting there.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

106 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Kira, Vaughn, Dax and Ro stand at the Ops table. Bowers, Shar and Nog are all at their stations...

KIRA

So... what else did I miss?

RO

The Vedek Assembly's in uproar over Yevir's latest stunt. He even made official overtures of friendship to Kai Solis and the Ohalavaru, which has the more conservative vedeks frothing at the mouth, as I'm sure you can imagine. Asarem's trying to keep everyone calm.

KIRA

(chortle)

Good luck with that.

TENMEI enters through the side door, anxious. Glances over to Shar at sciences. He sees her looking, smiles at her.

Vaughn has noticed Tenmei's arrival. He steps away and goes to her. They talk quietly, out of the way of earshot...

VAUGHN

Prynn? Are you okay?

TENMEI

Dad... about earlier, on the *Defiant*. I abandoned my post. I'm sorry. You should discipline me.

VAUGHN

Oh, baby... don't be silly. You brought that whole ship home safe. If you hadn't played that helm like Mozart at his piano, we wouldn't be alive right now.

Tenmei smiles. But then her eye flicks over to Shar again, and she begins to crumble. Vaughn pulls her in close...

TENMEI
I just couldn't...

VAUGHN
I know, baby. I know exactly how you feel. And if you want your old man's advice...

He pulls back, looks her in the eye...

VAUGHN (cont)
Go to him. Go to him now.

Tenmei is almost in tears, but she smiles at Vaughn. She steps away and heads towards the science station.

Meanwhile, the turbolift rises into Ops, carrying Bashir. The doctor carries a travelling bag over his shoulder. He nods politely at Vaughn as he heads down to the Ops table.

BASHIR
Captain, I have something to say.

RO
(pulling away)
I should get back to Security.
I think I've had enough command experience to hold me for a while.

BASHIR
No, Lieutenant, I want you to stay, please. I want everyone to hear this.

VAUGHN
Doctor, what's going on?

Bashir pulls out a padd from his bag, hands it to Kira...

BASHIR
This is my letter of resignation as Chief Medical Officer of DS-Nine, effective immediately.

The room goes quiet. Everyone has heard...

KIRA

Doctor, I know you have reservations about this Ascendants thing...

BASHIR

Reservations? You could say that. You're allying Starfleet officers with a murderous and oppressive regime, to help you get into the middle of a religious war that's not our problem, on behalf of a people who don't even want our help. Well, I refuse to be a part of it.

KIRA

But the alliance with the Dominion isn't even happening, Julian. Taran'atar turned us down.

BASHIR

I know you, Nerys. You won't give up that easily. And since you're apparently determined not to see sense on this, I suppose there's nothing else I can do but leave.

DAX

Julian... you can't do this.

BASHIR

I'd think you'd be happy to see the back of me, Dax. Since we don't seem to be able to exist on this station together anymore without ripping each other to shreds.

(back to Kira)

You and I are the only ones left of the old guard, Nerys. Everyone else has moved on. And if this is the way it's going to be around here now, then I guess it's just time I move on as well.

(to the room)

Bye, everyone. Nice knowing you.

He turns and climbs back to the turbolift, steps aboard...

BASHIR

Docking ring, section twelve.

The turbolift carries him away. Everyone watches him go in silence, stunned. Kira, Ro, Nog, Vaughn... Dax.

107 **INT. ASCENDANT PAVILION**

ILIANA sits in a forest of cushions and silks, given every comfort. She studies from an Ascendant padd.

A RUSTLE, she looks up - RAIQ has entered the pavilion. Nervous, averting her eyes...

RAIQ

You wished to see me, Mistress?

ILIANA

Come closer, Raiq.

(off Raiq's surprise)

Yes, I know your name. Come. It's alright, don't be shy.

Raiq takes a few steps forward. But not very many.

RAIQ

I offer my life, Mistress. I failed you. The infidels escaped death. I am ready to face the penalty.

Iliana actually laughs out loud at that, confusing Raiq...

ILIANA

Raiq, I didn't bring you here to punish you. I wanted to thank you. You've provided me the proof I needed. Sit with me.

Still nervous and confused, Raiq nevertheless obeys...

ILIANA

That woman, leading the alien fleet... do you know who she was?

RAIQ

A heretic, Mistress. She claimed
to speak with the True.

ILIANA

She may not have been lying, Raiq.
You've heard the rumours of a new
race of heretics who claim to know
the True?

(Raiq nods)

She is their leader. She is the
one you must fight.

RAIQ

Me, Mistress? I am a simple knight.
I am not worthy to lead a crusade.

ILIANA

Oh yes you are. You are my chosen
one, Raiq. You are my hand, the
one I send out among the stars to
strike against the heretics.

Raiq is too stunned to speak. Daunted and honoured beyond
belief, she bows her head in prayer...

ILIANA

Now... I want you to come with me.
I've spent long enough indoors for
one life. Time to step outside...
and speak to the knights. There's
something they need to know.

Iliana stands, holds out her hand to Raiq. Awed, Raiq takes
the hand, stands, and they move to the exit together...

108 EXT. ASCENDANT ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Iliana emerges into a small town of tents, clustered in the
natural rocky amphitheatre from 9x24 "Ha'mara." Ascendants
engage in various activities - group prayers, battle
drills, sharpening their spears, stilted socialising.

ESSK stands over a flaming brazier, praying privately. He
turns at the sound of shocked whispers...

But what makes Essk's jaw drop is that Iliana is holding Raiq's hand, guiding her along like a student. Who the hell is this nobody to be holding the hand of the Fire?

Iliana automatically has everyone's attention...

ILIANA

Knights of the Ascendancy... Holy soldiers of the True. These have been strange days. The first time many of you have gathered together in this way in living memory. I spent years in solitude myself. It took me time to become accustomed to so much company. But we can no longer afford solitude. The events of today show us... a new crusade lies before the Ascendants.

Hushed, awed whispers spread through the crowd. Essk purses a little - why did he not know about this first?

ILIANA

The ones you fought, the ones who stole the lives of many knights... they are the new heretics Cardinal Essk warned you of. I was sent by the True not only to light the way to the Fortress, but also to guide you in the fight against them. Because those goals are one and the same. They are called the Bajorans, and taking the battle to them will lead us to the Fortress of the True, once and for all.

The crowd lap it up, their CRIES of bloodlust echoing off the stone. Iliana holds Raiq's hand high up in the air...

ILIANA

This woman, this simple knight of the True, has encountered Bajorans twice now. First an old priestess, twisting the True's sacred doctrine. And today, the warrior who killed so many of your brothers and sisters.

ILIANA (cont)

But hear me well, Archquesters. The priestess is just as dangerous as the warrior. Because even now, she works to cement an alliance between the Bajorans... and the Eav'oq.

The name of the hated Eav'oq gets them ROARING. They hold their spears high, waving them in religious ecstasy...

ILIANA

Yes! The two greatest heretics we have ever faced have joined against us! And these false idolaters will persecute we honest believers for our knowledge of the Truth!

RAIQ

Destroy them!

ILIANA

Yes! We will destroy them. We will hunt down every Bajoran and every Eav'oq, and every other heretic who stands between us and the Fortress. And we will burn them out! They will all die and burn!

VOICES

(repeating)

Die and burn! Die and burn!

Iliana has one last surefire hit...

ILIANA

I... am... the Fire!

The Ascendants ROAR their fervour and THRUST their spears to the stars. The spears' tips burst into FLAME, lighting up the whole black stone quarry in reflected firelight.

Essk stands with a bit more decorum, wanting to be just as enthusiastic as everyone else but somehow not managing it.

Panning up to the black sky filled with stars...

109 **EXT. SPACE (CONTINUOUS)**

...where the remaining ships of the Starfleet armada zoom along at warp. The ships still all show significant damage.

CLOSE IN on the Intrepid-class *Blackthorne*, to the windows along its side. Eventually to one window in particular, until we see BASHIR sat at the window...

110 **INT. BLACKTHORNE - QUARTERS**

Bashir sits in the seat under the window, his traveling bag beside him. By the door stands is Captain Thann...

THANN

If you need anything, Doctor, feel free to call the bridge.

BASHIR

I'm sure I'll be fine, Captain Thann. I promise I won't be any bother.

THANN

Perhaps you'd like to join the senior staff for dinner later?

BASHIR

Oh, I don't know that I'd be the best company right now. But thank you for the offer.

Thann nods acknowledgement, and turns to leave.

With heavy heart, Bashir picks up a padd, and begins to speak into it...

BASHIR

Doctor Julian Bashir, ex Chief Medical Officer, Deep Space Nine. Personal log.

(beat; sigh)

It's done. I just couldn't stay and watch those people - my friends - throw their lives away. Once was bad enough. So I left.

(beat)

BASHIR (cont)

I know I can't be the only one who thinks getting in bed with the Dominion, whatever the reason, is a terrible idea. Either way we end up in another war. And I can't let that happen. So if I have to find those others, and work with them to stop it from happening, then so be it. And I think I know where to start looking for them. End log.

(beat)

Computer, as soon as we're in range of a relay station, please transmit that personal log towards Earth.

COMPUTER

Specify required destination.

BASHIR

No specific destination. Just mark it for the attention of Mister Cole, courtesy of... the organisation.

The computer BLEEPs in acknowledgement. That done, Bashir settles back into his seat, preparing for a long trip.

Pull back out of the window...

111 EXT. SPACE

...and away from the armada, as it flies on into space.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW