

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

13x14 - "The Professionals"

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

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

### **TNG 18x14 - "INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM MAGIC"**

When her vessel is "damaged", *Challenger* is forced to rescue Tal Shiar agent Sela. LaForge, Brahms, Nog, Scotty and Gomez put their findings from *Intrepid* into action, and find themselves somehow outside the galactic barrier - with LaForge's mother's ship *Hera* floating in the void. Some aliens use a kind of "trans-slipstream propulsion", and it caught *Hera*, *Intrepid* and a dozen other ships in its wake accidentally. Recovering the survivors from *Hera* - which sadly do not include LaForge's mother - the crew tries to return *Challenger* to the galaxy. But Sela has of course interfered, trying to learn the secret of trans-slipstream for the Romulans and their new Typhon Pact friends. She is foiled, but *Challenger* is damaged. The Romulan ship comes through the anomaly and rescues Sela, the *Challenger* crew and the *Hera* survivors - a rare friendly gesture from the Pact. But the injured Scotty voluntarily stays behind, self-destructing *Challenger* to close the anomaly. Back on Earth, the engineers all attend a memorial for the Starfleet legend.

### **TTN 2x14 - "THE COLLECTORS"**

In an alternate universe, Department of Temporal Investigations agents Ranjea and Garcia are at the mercy of the Temporal Intervention Agency, a more aggressive version of the DTI created to meddle in time for the Federation's benefit. Ranjea explains to Garcia that this is exactly why they lock things away in the Vault - to use them without understanding them would cause chaos. Ranjea and Jena Noi continue to clash, but they eventually bond as they join forces to stop the TIA acquiring the Obelisk. The battle throws all of them even further "uptime" to the year 21,436,000, where they meet the Collectors, the very entities who sent the Obelisk in the first place in order to create a nature preserve out of extinct species from all over time and space. The TIA sabotages the Collectors' zoo, but in doing so erases its own timeline so they no longer exist. With the Obelisk neutralised, the DTI agents return to their own time, but not before a passionate kiss between Ranjea and Noi.

### **VOY 11x14 - "THE SIMPLE LIFE"**

Days have passed since *Demeter* was captured by the Children of the Storm, and Cmdr O'Donnell has done nothing but research. He thinks the Children are beautiful, but XO Fife only sees them as destructive. *Demeter's* aeroponics bays are overflowing, the plants growing at insane rates - the Children are practically dancing with joy in response. O'Donnell decides to keep them happy by having the crew constantly replant more seeds, which only infuriates Fife more - O'Donnell is wasting *Demeter's* resources to appease an enemy. But without any telepaths on board, they have no other way to communicate with them. On *Quirinal*, Lasren uses his Betazoid senses to commune with the entities, while Cambridge ponders - if these things are "children", where are their parents? Eden gives B'Elanna four weeks to get *Quirinal* back in space, even if it means working with *Achilles'* seemingly sexist Cmdr Drafar. Back on *Demeter*, Fife raises the prospect of relieving O'Donnell of command...

**TEASER**

FADE IN:

**1     EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The *Defiant* at its usual slot on the docking ring. Another Starfleet ship, the Norway-class *Mjolnir*, has docked at one of the upper pylons. Meanwhile at a lower pylon sits the Cardassian Galor-class vessel *Trager*. Over the above:

RO (v.o.)

Commander's log, stardate 58994-point-zero. The station is playing host to two very important people, as part of our ongoing attempts to bring the Cardassian Union into the Khitomer Accords. What should be an auspicious occasion is a bit awkward for me... because I know one of those people very well.

**2     INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

Cardassian officer MACET stands gazing out of the window. At the sound of the door opening, he TURNS...

...and sees Commander RO entering with a warm smile.

RO

Legate Macet - welcome back to DS-Nine. Sorry to keep you waiting.

MACET

Not a problem, Commander. Mister Evik here has been fine company.

Ro turns to Lt Cmdr EVIK, who has been keeping watch on their Cardassian guest - but nicely.

RO

Thank you, Commander Evik. That'll be all.

EVIK

Commander. Legate.

The Bajoran security chief nods and EXITS.

Now alone, Ro approaches Macet and grips his forearms in welcome. They are, if not friends, then at least friendly.

RO

Congrats on the promotion, Legate.  
And about time too, by the way.

MACET

Thank you - although it was not by my own choice. Unfortunately, it was decided by my government that Gul was entirely insufficient as a rank for the new governor of the Argaya, Lyshan and Solarion systems, so Legate it was.

RO

Governor of three whole systems?  
That's quite a job.

MACET

Given our limited resources, it's the best we can do.

RO

I thought you were given those systems to help with resources.

MACET

(leading)

But given our limited resources...

RO

(catching on)

...You haven't been able to make use of those resources.

MACET

You see our dilemma. Hence my assignment - with a mandate to finally make those systems into something we can actually use.

RO

I was surprised you hadn't been promoted long before now, to be honest. You've been commanding the *Trager* for, what - fifteen years?

MACET

I preferred to maintain my Gul rank as long as possible. It was more... hands on... than Legate.

Ro darkens a little, turns away. Tries to make it look like not a big deal, even though it is. Macet is a touch thrown.

RO

I seem to recall Dukat saying the same thing when he took over the entire Cardassian Union.

Now Macet understands Ro's reaction... he tries to be sensitive to her feelings. He has no wish to make enemies here - indeed his mission is the complete opposite.

MACET

My beloved cousin did that to help cultivate an image as friendly and approachable. Even when megalomania led him to launch a coup and install himself as absolute ruler, he still retained the title of Gul Dukat, just "one of the guys".

RO

And proceeded to order the death of every Maquis he could find.

MACET

Quite. I, on the other hand, kept promotion at arm's length because it always seemed to me that the higher one climbs in the service, the further one gets from the people one is meant to serve.

Ro warms up again - she knows Macet is not like Dukat.

RO

Yes, we've definitely experienced that phenomenon in Starfleet as well, I assure you. We even have a word for it - "Badmiral."

Macet LAUGHS in delight, and Ro joins him. They are friends again, or as near as they will get.

Then the door opens and Admiral AKAAR enters, stern and formal and tall as ever. Ro and Macet turn to greet him.

RO

And here we have the best example of all. Legate Akellen Macet, you may remember Fleet Admiral Leonard James Akaar, now Starfleet's commander in chief and the highest officer in the entire service.

Akaar takes this as cold fact with a hint of a boast. Macet knows that Ro meant it as a smirking dig against Akaar, given what they were just discussing about higher ranks.

Akaar maintains his stern, dignified and ramrod-straight demeanour, taking Macet's forearms in fellowship.

AKAAR

Welcome back to Deep Space Nine, Legate. Your journey was safe?

MACET

It was, thank you Admiral. I come with an open heart and open hand.

Macet performs the traditional Capellan welcoming ritual, earning him the tiniest hint of a smile from Akaar.

Akaar gestures to the conference table, and the two senior officers take their seats, Akaar completely blanking Ro.

AKAAR

Thank you, Commander. Dismissed.

Behind Akaar's back, Ro exchanges a look with Macet - see what I mean? Macet is sympathetic.

Then Ro turns to EXIT out into the corridor, hearing Akaar drone on...

AKAAR (o.s.)  
I'm sure neither of us wants to  
waste time on trivial platitudes,  
Legate, so let's begin...

**3    INT. DS9 - CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)**

...and the closing door cuts off any more, leaving Ro in the corridor and feeling snubbed.

Eyeing the Starfleet and Cardassian SECURITY officers positioned outside, she stalks away, trying but failing to hide her irritation...

FADE OUT

**END OF TEASER**



ACT ONE

FADE IN:

**4**     INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

A PADD on the desk, a finger drumming on it impatiently. Ro is being kept waiting, and she does not like it.

Finally the CLANK of heavy footsteps outside - she stands, straight and tall. Still wants to make a good impression.

The door from Ops opens, and Akaar strides in without being invited. Ro holds her tongue. Neither likes the other, but they are Starfleet officers and they will behave like it.

AKAAR

Commander.

RO

Admiral, thanks for coming.

(re guest seat)

Please -

But Akaar has already taken the guest seat, again without being asked. Ro grits her teeth again and takes her own seat. Just as she is opening her mouth to begin...

AKAAR

I will need access to all records regarding your accommodation and relocation of refugee populations as soon as possible.

RO

Of course, Admiral. Major Cenn is collating that information for you now. It will be ready soon.

AKAAR

Why the delay? You were informed of my visit several days ago, and that my mission included following up on the current state of affairs regarding this sector's refugees.

RO  
(sweet smile)  
I'm surprised such things aren't  
beneath you, Admiral.

AKAAR  
(hardening)  
Beneath me in what sense?

RO  
Only that I would have thought the  
C-in-C of Starfleet, who is also  
doubling as Presidential liaison  
and handling extremely important  
negotiations with a foreign power,  
has bigger things to worry about  
than a few stragglng refugees.

AKAAR  
I am here in person, Commander,  
to demonstrate just how "big"  
Starfleet considers both issues.

Ro backs down for a moment, letting the quiet tension out.

RO  
The Federation is really taking  
this Khitomer Accords / Typhon  
Pact thing seriously then, huh?

AKAAR  
Very much so, Commander.

RO  
Speaking of which, how did the  
meeting with Macet go?

AKAAR  
I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to  
divulge that information.

RO  
Not even a hint?

AKAAR  
No.

RO

(pursing)

Admiral... I am the commander of this station. I am hosting this summit for you. I think I deserve to know what's going on.

AKAAR

You are aware the summit is taking place. That is enough for you to prepare any security plans. You do not hold sufficient rank to know the content of my conversations with Legate Macet, Commander.

RO

But you're the highest admiral in all the land. You have discretion to reveal any details you choose to certain trusted individuals.

AKAAR

I do.

And he holds her gaze until she gets the point - she is not one of those individuals. She realises she walked right into that one. Into the tense silence, Ro's comm sounds:

CANDLEWOOD (comm)

Ops to Commander Ro.

RO

(eyes still  
on Akaar)

Go ahead, Lieutenant.

CANDLEWOOD (comm)

Sorry to interrupt, Commander, but I need your thumb on the new comm traffic protocols. You did ask to be informed when they were ready?

RO

I'll be right there. Ro out.

She stands, glad of an excuse to get this over with.

RO

If you'll excuse me, Admiral, I  
have business to attend to.

As Akaar rises to his full height, Ro gets a new thought...

RO

...unless you'd like to join me in  
Ops? This is the first time you've  
been here since I took command of  
the station, after all. But only  
if you have the time, of course.

Akaar considers that - it feels like a challenge somehow -  
then nods silently. Ro leads him out of the office, now  
eager to show off how well her space station is running.

**5    INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Ro heads into a busy Ops, Akaar on her tail. She leads them  
to the science station, where CANDLEWOOD sits working.

RO

John - what've you got?

CANDLEWOOD

Only the best damn comm protocols  
you ever saw.

Only then does Candlewood look up, and sees the C-in-C  
looming over him. He JERKS to his feet, his chair scraping.

CANDLEWOOD

Admiral! Hi. Sir. I'm sorry, I  
didn't realise you were there.

AKAAR

Apparently not... Lieutenant.

Candlewood totally forgets what he was doing, afraid he is  
about to get cashiered on the spot. Ro helps him out...

RO

You were saying? About protocols?

CANDLEWOOD

Oh, yeah. Yes, sir. Since most of the refugees have now relocated off the station to Bajor or the other colonies, I've been working on reordering the priority codes again. They're ready for your approval. Commander. Sir.

Candlewood quickly grabs a PADD and passes it to Ro. He is being as formal and upright as he can manage, which only serves to highlight how unnatural it feels for him.

Ro peruses the contents of the padd, while Akaar austerely observes and Candlewood wears a frozen smile of terror.

RO

This is fine, John, but you might move the non-official Starfleet comms to the top of the list.

CANDLEWOOD

(nervous glance)

Um... are you sure, sir? I mean, I did consider that, but I didn't think you'd want me to. Sir.

AKAAR

I tend to agree.

Ro tenses, and turns to Akaar with a face that is frozen for a whole different reason...

RO

Agree with what, Admiral?

AKAAR

That the personal communications of Starfleet officers should not be given priority. We sublimate our personal lives when we join the service, Commander.

Ro holds her temper and presents a pleasant facade...

RO

I'd also agree with that, Admiral, if my crew hadn't been sublimating for seven months already in favour of civilians. They've been patient and they deserve their turn.

Not waiting for Akaar's response, Ro hands the padd back to Candlewood with finality.

RO

Give the non-official Starfleet comms priority, John, at least for the next couple of months.

(warm smile)

And say hi to your mother for me.

CANDLEWOOD

(relieved)

I will, Commander. Thanks. Sir.

Candlewood rescues his chair and takes his station again, happy to get out from between these two.

AKAAR

If you'll excuse me, Commander...

RO

(tight smile)

Of course, Admiral.

Akaar draws himself up and heads towards the turbolift, but stops as Major CENN jogs up from the central Ops table...

CENN

Actually, Admiral, sorry...

(holds up padd)

I've completed compiling those refugee records you requested...

(glance at Ro)

With the commander's permission?

Ro nods. Cenn hands over a padd - Akaar acknowledges and steps aboard the turbolift. Candlewood manages to hold his tongue until the lift has taken Akaar out of earshot...

CANDLEWOOD

That was so cold, I've got nipples  
like bullets over here.

Ro BURSTS into loud and raucous laughter, drawing looks  
from everyone in Ops. She gets her herself under control.

RO

Thanks, John. I needed that.

Candlewood is glad to have lightened his commander's mood.  
Ro heads back to her office, still chuckling. But Cenn jogs  
to intercept her again...

CENN

Commander, before you go...  
(she turns to him)  
When I was compiling those records  
I came across a criminal activity  
report from Major Rochan, the  
Vedek Assembly militia liaison...

He pauses, nervous. She won't like it.

RO

Go on.

CENN

It said there's been... "unrest"  
among the refugees in the capital.

RO

What kind of unrest?

CENN

Vandalism, graffiti, petty theft.  
Nothing too serious... so far.

RO

Did you include this for Akaar?

CENN

(sheepish)  
I didn't feel like I could get  
away with leaving it out...

Ro takes a deep breath, absorbing all this...

RO

Well... I'd rather not give him anything he can blame on me. But if we didn't tell him, he'd find out anyway and think I was hiding it from him. You did right, Major.

Ro heads into her office. Cenn and Candlewood exchange a look of sympathy for Ro, then both get back to work.

**6 EST. BAJOR SURFACE - DAY**

The central monastery in the capital city...

**7 INT. MAJOR ROCHAN'S OFFICE - DAY**

Smaller and more functional than the kai's office, but with the usual Bajoran stone aesthetic. Two stone plinths flank the outer wall arch, each carrying a priceless artefact.

Major ROCHAN sits at his desk, working through reports. He looks up to see Vedek KIRA hovering in his doorway...

ROCHAN

Vedek Kira. Something I can help you with?

Taking that as an invitation, Kira approaches. Rochan is polite but busy, would rather not be distracted today.

KIRA

I read your report. About the thefts and vandalism...

ROCHAN

It's under control, Vedek. You have no reason to be concerned.

KIRA

Oh, I'm not concerned. I know you can handle it. I just thought I'd see if there was anything I could do to help out.



ROCHAN  
(sly smile)  
Nothing to do with the fact that  
this is exactly what Vedek Frelan  
has been warning about ever since  
you convinced everyone to let the  
refugees into their monasteries?

KIRA  
(in on the joke)  
Okay fine, you got me.

ROCHAN  
You may assure the vedek from  
Ilvia that this is just a bunch of  
rowdy teenagers with too much time  
and too little to fill it. There's  
been no permanent damage.

SMASH - one of the ornaments by the window SHATTERS and a  
small stone lands on the floor. Rochan is instantly on his  
feet, Kira close behind as they dash to the window...

**8 POV - BAJOR CITY STREETS**

On the street below, a couple of alien TEENAGERS were just  
aiming another stone. But at the sight of Kira and Rochan,  
they quickly scarper into the street, laughing all the way.

**9 BACK TO SCENE**

KIRA  
No permanent damage, huh?

Kira and Rochan both look sadly at the smashed ornament...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

FADE IN:

**10 EXT. BAJOR - ASHALLA STREETS - DAY**

The shanty towns as seen in 13x03 "Troublemaker". Less populated than before, with only a few refugees remaining in the Starfleet issue plasteel temporary shelters.

**11 INT. REFUGEE SHELTER**

Kira and Rochan stand in the doorway of one temp shelter. The same two alien teenage boys stand before them, sullen with heads down and shoulders sagged. An older woman of the same species, MERIM, wears a look of motherly disapproval.

MERIM

What do you say?

JANS

(mutter)

Sorry.

MERIM

Tebla?

TEBLA

I'm sorry too.

ROCHAN

I accept the apology, boys. I hope  
I won't have any more trouble?

Both boys, JANS and TEBLA, continue to look at their feet.

MERIM

Well? Answer the major.

JANS / TEBLA

No sir.

MERIM

Alright. Go and help your sister  
get washed up for dinner. Go on.

The two boys slump off towards the back of the shelter. Merim turns to Kira and Rochan, embarrassed.

MERIM

I'm sorry, Major, Vedek. I'll keep them in line, I promise. And I'll pay for the damage. Somehow.

KIRA

Don't worry about that, Merim. I know this is hardly the best place to raise a family. We're all doing the best we can, you included.

MERIM

I appreciate that, Vedek.

KIRA

Please, call me Nerys.

MERIM

Nerys, then. Thank you.

Kira and Rochan turn and leave. Merim sighs tiredly...

**12**    **EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - DAY**

Kira and Rochan emerge into the narrow, cluttered space between the shelters, and pick their way through...

KIRA

We have to do something to stop this before it gets any worse.

ROCHAN

Perhaps I should station officers here, just to keep the peace.

KIRA

No, they don't need armed soldiers cracking down on them. Authority figures hovering over you never helps, it only makes it worse.

They walk on, unsure what the solution could be...

13 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Re-establishing. All three ships are still present...

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

The place is pretty busy, with more Starfleet officers than usual (from the *Mjolnir*), fewer refugees (although SEBRIGAR the Nausicaan is still around), and even some CARDASSIAN soldiers from the *Trager* at the *dabo* table (TREIR spins the wheel so that Hetik doesn't have to deal with Cardassians).

Eventually we come upon Ro, sat at the bar with a drink in her hands. QUARK leans across the bar, hearing her woes.

QUARK

If you hate each other so much,  
why are you working so hard to  
impress him?

RO

Because I want him to see that I'm  
not the screw-up he thinks I am.  
Not anymore, anyway. And we don't  
hate each other... I don't think.

QUARK

Well, you certainly don't like  
each other.

RO

We used to. But after Garon Two...

Unwilling to elaborate, she takes a healthy slug of her drink instead. Quark stands back to inspect her.

QUARK

I guess it's understandable you'd  
have father issues, considering...

Ro looks up sharply, instinctively annoyed... but then realises he's probably right, and lets it go.

AKAAR (o.s.)

Ambassador Quark.

Ro jerks in her seat at the familiar voice, drink sloshing. AKAAR stands behind her, as stern and expressionless as ever. Quark covers his smirk and responds smoothly.

QUARK

Admiral Akaar. Welcome back to my establishment.

Like he did the Cardassian greeting for Macet, Akaar does the Ferengi greeting for Quark - wrists together, fingers apart, a slight bow. Quark preens at the sign of respect.

AKAAR

A pleasure to be here, Ambassador. My time on the station is limited, but I was hoping we might find a moment to discuss the Federation's invitation to the Ferengi Alliance to join the Khitomer Accords.

QUARK

(sly smile)

I thought you were here to talk to the Cardassians, not the Ferengi.

AKAAR

One takes one's... opportunities where one can, Ambassador.

Quark is impressed - not only with Akaar's use of Ferengi-specific terminology, but with his refusal to rise to the bait Quark laid out. Clearly, Akaar is good at his job.

QUARK

I'm sure that can be arranged, Admiral. I'll check my book and get back to you.

AKAAR

I'd appreciate that, Ambassador.  
(nod to Ro)  
Commander.

Then he turns and leaves, with no more acknowledgment of Ro's presence than that. Quark turns back to Ro...

QUARK

Didn't seem so bad to me.

RO

Yeah? Then why is he checking on me? I'm off duty, it's no business of his who I spend my time with.

QUARK

Yeah... us convicted criminals need to stick together, right?

Ro again looks up sharply... is Quark right?

**15    MACET**

is one of the Cardassian officers at the *dabo* table. While Treir SPINS the wheel and his officers GROAN at the loss, Macet is rather paying attention to the exchange between Ro and Akaar. It's clear there is no love lost between them...

**16    INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR**

Admiral Akaar strides along the corridor, his gigantic form having to duck slightly to get under the bulkhead archways. He reaches a particular set of quarters, presses the CHIME.

TENMEI (o.s.)

(muffled)

Just a minute!

A moment, and then the door opens to reveal TENMEI, out of uniform but still presentable. She reacts with surprise...

TENMEI

Oh! Admiral... I wasn't expecting you. Did you need something?

AKAAR

I apologise for disturbing you, Lieutenant. May I come in?

TENMEI

Ummm... yeah. Yeah, of course.

Tenmei steps aside to let the enormous admiral in - he has to duck his head again to avoid bonking it on the lintel.

**17    INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS - LIVING ROOM**

As Akaar enters, Tenmei sees that the room is a bit of a mess again, and she starts rushing around to tidy it up.

TENMEI

Sorry about the mess, Admiral.  
I wasn't expecting company.

AKAAR

Please relax, Lieutenant. This is not an inspection. In fact, it is a personal visit. I was told your father is staying with you...

Tenmei does stop, absorbs the solemnity of the moment.

TENMEI

I assume you know what happened?

AKAAR

I do. And I'm sorry. Has there been any improvement?

TENMEI

...No.

And that's all there is to say on that. Tenmei rallies...

TENMEI

Well! He's just through here.

Tenmei leads the way to the bedroom, Akaar following.

**18    INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS - BEDROOM**

VAUGHN lies on the bed, old and grey and thin as paper, surrounded by life support machinery. Akaar takes a deep breath to steady himself at the sight.

TENMEI

Not a pretty sight, is it?

AKAAR

No, but a necessary one. One that  
calls a man to pause and think.

Akaar takes a seat by Vaughn's bedside. Takes in the books,  
the guitar, all the ways she has kept her father company.

TENMEI

I'll leave you alone.

AKAAR

There is no need, Lieutenant. In  
fact I'd rather you stay.

(beat)

Each time your father and I met,  
I would raise a toast - "To old  
friends". He would reply... "And  
getting older all the time."

TENMEI

Doctor Bashir doesn't seem to  
think he'll be making that toast  
again any time soon.

AKAAR

And he is only one of millions  
across the galaxy. Each of them  
someone's captain, someone's  
father... someone's friend.

Akaar realises he has turned maudlin, and also rallies...

AKAAR

Forgive me, Lieutenant. But to see  
the man I knew in such a condition  
brings it all home... in a way my  
lofty position rarely allows me.

(darkens again)

Indeed, some seem to believe I am  
incapable of such feelings at all.

TENMEI

(gently)

Admiral, I'm not just an officer.  
I'm also your friend's daughter.  
If you need someone to talk to -



AKAAR

(stiffens)

I appreciate that, Lieutenant, but it would not be appropriate for me to discuss your commanding officer behind her back -

He stops as he realises he has already let too much out. Quite furious with himself, he stands abruptly.

AKAAR

My apologies, Lieutenant. I've taken too much of your time already. Excuse me.

And he strides for the exit. Tenmei tries to call him back.

TENMEI

Admiral -

But we hear the HISS-CLUNK of the door. He is gone. Tenmei sits back down with an exhausted slump...

TENMEI

What the hell was that about?

(to Vaughn)

I bet you know, don't you?

(soft chuckle)

Yeah, that's what I thought. Not like you would have told me even when you weren't brain-dead.

As Tenmei continues to sit with her father...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

**19 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

Akaar and Macet, sat opposite across the conference table, padds in front of them both. We are mid-meeting...

AKAAR

I note with gratitude, Legate, yours and the *Trager's* invaluable assistance to Starfleet during the Europani evacuation, the parasite crisis, and the hostage situation at the Andak project on Cardassia.

Macet accepts the thanks demurely, responds diplomatically.

MACET

My crew and I value our relations with Starfleet - Commander Ro and her people especially.

Okay, great - but why is he mentioning Ro in particular? Slightly confused, Akaar carries on, picks up a padd...

AKAAR

On the subject of Commander Ro, I recently read her report regarding the incident on stardate 56802...

MACET

You are referring to the *Trager's* assignment to capture the outlaw Natima Lang near the Orias system.

AKAAR

My attention was drawn by Ro's claim that you faced some pressure from your superiors to handle the matter more... aggressively than you ultimately did. Would that be an accurate characterisation?

Macet tenses - this feels like an accusation.

MACET

I consider that an internal matter  
for Cardassia, Admiral.

AKAAR

I ask only because it implies that  
not everyone in your government is  
as well-disposed towards Starfleet  
as you. Which in turn suggests  
that any agreement we make today  
may not be universally embraced.

MACET

Are you suggesting the Cardassian  
Union cannot be trusted, Admiral?

Akaar pauses briefly - that's not what he meant at all.

AKAAR

I only meant to raise the prospect  
that despite your and my own best  
intentions, Cardassian membership  
in the Accords may be tougher to  
secure than it at first appears.

MACET

You may well be right about that,  
Admiral. But I can assure you that  
any agreement Cardassia does sign  
will be adhered to. By all of us.

AKAAR

That is good to hear, Legate.

We seem to have come through that strangeness relatively  
unscathed. Probably safest to change the subject.

AKAAR

I would like to turn our attention  
now towards the Lyshan, Solarion  
and Argaya systems. I understand  
you have been named governor?

MACET

That is correct.

AKAAR

Then my congratulations. At least as of three months ago, however, intelligence suggested that little progress had been made bringing those worlds into the Union. Is there anything we can do to help?

Macet tries not to react to what feels like condescension.

MACET

A most gracious offer, Admiral.  
But we can manage.

Akaar pauses - somehow this conversation is not going according to plan, and he has to do something about it.

AKAAR

Legate, I must be frank with you. I do not feel that you and I are "on the same page", as the humans say. If I have done something to offend, I apologise. I can assure you the Federation's wish to bond more closely with our Cardassian neighbours is genuine. I have no ulterior motives in coming here.

Macet softens - perhaps he has been too inflexible.

MACET

I believe you, Admiral. I regret if I have appeared reticent. I am not against the idea of expanding the Khitomer Accords. But I also believe there is much to be done before either of us is ready for the kind of alliance you describe.

(beat)

Perhaps if we took a short break to gather ourselves, we could try again later.

AKAAR

At your convenience, Legate.

They both stand - Macet nods acknowledgement and EXITS. We see his guards move off with him down the corridor. Once the door has closed, Akaar sits back down with a sigh.

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

The commander's office door opens and RO exits into Ops. She is trying not to show it, but she is in a bad mood. She heads straight to the turbolift, calling out to CENN...

RO  
Major, I'll be in the habitat ring  
if you need me.

CENN  
Understood, Commander.

She steps aboard the turbolift and is taken away. From his science station, Candlewood watches her go, worried.

CANDLEWOOD  
Major Cenn - do you have a moment?

CENN  
What's the problem, Lieutenant?

Cenn heads up to the science station. In the semi-privacy of that area, Candlewood mutters quietly to Cenn...

CANDLEWOOD  
Is it just me or is Commander Ro  
super-stressed lately?

CENN  
It's the admiral. If the Militia  
Over-General was hovering behind  
me all day, I'd be stressed too.

CANDLEWOOD  
No, it's more than that. Pryn  
says they know each other.

CENN  
That's Ro's business, Lieutenant.  
You shouldn't be speculating.

CANDLEWOOD

I'm only saying, is there nothing we can do to help her? Take some of the stress off her, at least while the admiral's here?

Cenn is sympathetic, but doesn't want to get too involved - he knows what it's like to be in Ro's bad books.

CENN

I'll... see what I can do.

Candlewood smiles his thanks. Cenn heads back to the table. A PADD is laying on top of it, with an icon FLASHING. Cenn notices and picks it up...

**21 INSERT - THE PADD**

The screen shows FROM FL ADM LJ AKAAR FAO CMDR RO LAREN, RE REQUEST FOR RUNABOUT MISSION AND PILOT, plus various other bits of supplemental information.

**22 BACK TO SCENE**

Cenn sees this, glances back up to Candlewood - here is a little something he can take off Ro's hands, and make life easier for her. He presses his thumb to the padd screen - affirmative BLEEP - and returns to work with satisfaction.

**23 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR**

Ro strides down the same corridor Akaar did earlier, though without the danger of bonking her head on the bulkheads. She reaches the same set of quarters, presses the CHIME.

TENMEI (o.s.)

(muffled)

Just a minute!

A moment, and then the door opens to reveal TENMEI, now half in uniform - undershirt and pants, but no jacket yet.

TENMEI

Oh - Commander. Hi. Wait, I'm not late for my shift, am I?

RO  
No no, you're fine. I was just  
hoping to check in on your dad?

TENMEI  
Sure, if you want. Come on in.

She turns back to her room, and Ro follows her in.

**24    INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS - LIVING ROOM**

Tenmei continues to get ready for work...

TENMEI  
Big day for the old man.

RO  
What do you mean?

TENMEI  
Just that he's already had a ton  
of visitors. Not even two-thirty  
yet, but Julian was here on his  
morning rounds, then Admiral Akaar  
a couple of hours ago.

RO  
(tensing)  
What did he want?

TENMEI  
Same as you - to see dad. Stay as  
long as you like, just lock up  
when you leave. I'm off to Bajor.

RO  
What? Why?

TENMEI  
What do you mean, why? I'm taking  
Admiral Akaar down to the surface  
to check on the refugee camps.

RO  
When did this happen?

TENMEI

About half an hour ago. I assumed you knew...

RO

No, I didn't. I didn't approve any runabout trips today. So who did?

TENMEI

No idea. All I know is that Akaar was here, then he left, then a little while later I got the order to report to runabout pad A. That's why I'm getting dressed.

Tenmei goes over to her computer, picks up a padd. Ro is now *fuming* - she snatches the padd from Tenmei...

RO

Consider those orders on hold, Lieutenant. You're not going anywhere, not till I get this sorted out once and for all.

Ro turns and stomps back out of Tenmei's quarters...

**25    INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR**

Ro heads down the corridor, in an absolute rage, towards the Starfleet security holding position in the distance.

The ward room doors open and QUARK exits into the corridor. He excitedly intercepts Ro...

QUARK

Oh hey, Laren. You'll never guess what Akaar just asked me -

RO

Yeah, apparently he's confiding in everyone except me.

And she barrels on past, in no mood for conversation. Quark watches her ENTER the same room he just came out of - there is no doubt about exactly who she is angry with.



26 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

As the door opens and Ro enters, Akaar is sat alone at the conference table, working on multiple padds. She heads straight for him and SLAMS Tenmei's padd onto the table.

RO  
What the hell is this?

AKAAR  
I beg your pardon, Commander?

RO  
(re padd)  
This! First you question my orders in front of the crew, now you're assigning my pilots however you like without even consulting me? Who the hell do you think you are?

Akaar slowly stands from his chair, reaching his greatest height, but holding his temper. Ro is not intimidated.

AKAAR  
I think I am your senior officer, Commander, and you will show me the respect I am due.

RO  
Oh no no no. You don't get to pull rank. This is personal and you know it. You've been undermining me since you arrived, and I've had enough. We're going to hash this out, you and me, here and now.

AKAAR  
I have not been undermining you, Commander. The visit to Bajor was inspired by the report your own first officer provided me with.

RO  
Bull. Just admit it - you've hated me ever since Garon Two.

AKAAR

You disobeyed orders and got eight members of your away team killed, humiliating me in the process. I placed my trust in you, Ro. Staked my reputation on you. Yet despite your betrayal of me, I have acted with nothing but professionalism.

Akaar picks up Tenmei's padd, works its controls for a moment, then hands it back to Ro. She looks at it...

27 **INSERT - THE PADD**

Where it clearly says, "Approved by Mj. Cenn, D."

28 **BACK TO SCENE**

Ro deflates. Akaar gathers his things...

AKAAR

I suggest, Commander, that any perceived slights on my part were in fact nothing more than a guilty conscience on yours. I expect to see Lieutenant Tenmei at runabout pad A as scheduled. Excuse me.

Akaar heads out, leaving Ro worried that he is right...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT THREE**

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

**29**    EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

Jans and Tebla, the teenage alien brothers from earlier, SCRUB graffiti off a plasteel outer wall. Major Rochan is helping and guiding them, and they all seem friendly.

Kira and Akaar walk between the shelters, but Akaar stops at this sight, and speaks *sotto* to Kira...

AKAAR

Surely a phaser on low power would be quicker and easier...

KIRA

That's not the point. They're the ones who drew the graffiti in the first place. This is punishment.

AKAAR

Perhaps the Major should station more officers to stop such things happening in the first place.

KIRA

They're good kids, Admiral. They don't need armed soldiers cracking down on them. The problem isn't discipline - it's boredom.

AKAAR

...Explain.

KIRA

We've done everything we can for them, but it's not sustainable. Bajor can't absorb a population explosion of millions of people long term. We just can't.

AKAAR

Starfleet can provide supplies...

KIRA

I'm not talking about supplies.  
I'm talking about jobs, schools.  
Merim, the boys' mother - she used  
to be a micro-biologist. Now she  
just sits and waits for the next  
handout. The boys only get into  
trouble because there's nothing  
else to do. They've got food now,  
they've got beds. But what they  
really need is lives. And Bajor  
can't give them that.

Akaar breathes deep, taking everything on board.

AKAAR

Thank you, Vedek. Your perspective  
has been most illuminating.

KIRA

I know you're facing this all over  
the Federation, not just here. But  
all of us, somehow, we're gonna  
have to think of something.

AKAAR

Indeed. Too often, those in my  
position lose track of the smaller  
details in our attempts to grasp  
the bigger picture. I do not want  
to be one of those... "badmirals".

Kira LAUGHS out loud - he knows the word! Akaar chuckles  
along with her, not the stuffy robot he sometimes seems.

KIRA

Admiral, I don't think anyone who  
really knows you could ever think  
you're one of those.

AKAAR

(sobering)

One would hope.

Akaar strides on. Wondering what changed, Kira follows...

30 **INT. DS9 - TENMEI'S QUARTERS - BEDROOM**

Ro paces back and forth, angry and frustrated...

RO

The cold-hearted son of a... He only cares about being the perfect officer. People are irrelevant.

BASHIR is performing physiotherapy on Vaughn's body - lifts one leg, firmly but gently presses the knee to the chest...

BASHIR

So are you mad at the admiral for following the standard procedure? Or for not not following it?

RO

What does that even mean?

BASHIR

Only that you do seem to be taking this very personally considering it was your own misunderstanding.

Ro deflates again, slumps into the chair. Bashir moves to the other leg, performs the same slow, careful movements...

RO

What are you doing, anyway?

BASHIR

Just keeping his body active. His nervous system is more likely to heal with regular stimulation. You could always help, if you wanted.

Grudgingly, but knowing Bashir's right, Ro gets up to help. Bashir guides her hands to the right places so she can take over the movements, while he checks the scanner readings.

RO

It's all their fault. They set me up. Manipulated things on Garon Two so I'd do their dirty work.

BASHIR

Uh-huh. Swap legs.

Ro moves back to the first leg, continues the movements...

RO

And I blamed myself for years. Now I know they forced me into that position, but thanks to him -

(re Vaughn)

- I can't tell anybody. He made me promise not to. Akaar doesn't even know Section 31 exists. And here I am, still keeping my promise, even after... this.

(sad chuckle)

Quark's right - I really do have father issues.

BASHIR

That infuriating mixture of love and resentment, of wanting them to leave you alone and to be proud of you, all at the same time. Yes...

RO

Which leaves Akaar thinking I'm still the same reckless screw-up he tried to mould into a proper Starfleet officer - and failed.

BASHIR

Are you sure about that? If, as you just admitted, you're holding on to your own grudges, then how do you know how he really feels?

RO

He's the one who sent me to jail. I think he made himself clear.

BASHIR

That was a long time ago, Laren, and a lot of things have changed. Maybe he's one of them.

(beat)

Alright, enough stretching. Time to massage the captain's rear end.

RO  
Okay, that's all on you.

Ro backs away, hands up. Bashir chuckles...

RO  
What's funny?

BASHIR  
Oh, nothing. Just... mysterious covert agencies. Old resentments. Long-held secrets. Father issues. It's like Garak never left.

Off Bashir's wry amusement...

**31**    **GARAK**

As displayed on a computer screen...

GARAK (screen)  
As much as I sometimes fantasise that the galaxy would do well to just leave everything in my hands, Legate, I am but one man.

**32**    **INT. DS9 - GUEST QUARTERS**

MACET sits at the computer bank, GARAK on the screen...

GARAK (screen)  
(continuing)  
I can hardly take on the extra responsibility of managing your negotiations as well as my own.

Sleek and efficient Macet has little patience for Garak's verbose style. He holds his tongue and smiles tightly...

MACET  
Just tell me - who is this man? How do I connect with him? He's as unexpressive as any Vulcan.

GARAK (screen)  
As imposing as a Klingon...

MACET  
And as wily as a Ferengi. Clearly  
Commander Ro is not a big fan, and  
I've come to trust her opinions.

On screen, Garak takes a moment to compose his thoughts.

GARAK (screen)  
Admiral Akaar is perhaps the  
quintessential Starfleet officer.  
He believes in the soul and the  
spirit of the Federation above  
all, and defends it vigorously.

MACET  
Isn't he an immigrant himself?

GARAK (screen)  
And yet he has risen to the very  
top of Starfleet. His integrity is  
beyond question, Legate. You will  
find no weakness in that armour.

(beat)

Macet, you and I have both worked  
closely with the Federation since  
the end of the war. But I must  
remind you that we serve the good  
of Cardassia, not the Federation.

MACET  
Are you accusing me of something,  
Mister Garak?

GARAK (screen)  
Certainly not. My point is simply  
that we represent the Cardassian  
government and its people, and  
they are not so pro-Federation,  
despite your and my best efforts.

MACET  
Then what are you suggesting?



GARAK (screen)  
That your armour, my dear Macet,  
must be as impenetrable as the  
Admiral's, if not more so. Do not  
simply give in to his demands.

MACET  
But without making an enemy out of  
the Federation all over again?

GARAK (screen)  
(sly smile)  
A delicate needle, no doubt, but  
one which I have full confidence  
in your ability to thread, Macet.

Macet sits back with an exhausted slump...

MACET  
Well, as long as one of us has  
confidence...

Off Macet's uncertainty...

**33 EST. SPACE - RUNABOUT**

A RUNABOUT flies at full impulse open space...

**34 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Tenmei in the pilot seat, Akaar next to her. Tenmei cannot  
abide the awkward silence, has to fill it with something.

TENMEI  
Everything alright, Admiral? You  
seem... pensive.

AKAAR  
There are many matters occupying  
my thoughts, Lieutenant, the  
majority of which I am not at  
liberty to discuss.

TENMEI  
Is it the refugees? Or is it Ro?

(stony silence)  
So it is Ro. Look, I don't know  
what went on between you two -

Akaar turns to Tenmei, hoping to use the force of his  
authority to stop this uncomfortable conversation.

AKAAR  
Lieutenant. I ask you to stop.

Tenmei pauses for a moment, but does not give in. She may  
well be taking her career in her hands, but it's important.

TENMEI  
I mean no disrespect, Admiral. But  
as the child of your old friend, I  
need to say what needs to be said.

AKAAR  
(cold burn)  
Is this the example Commander Ro  
has been setting for her crew?

TENMEI  
You mean treating them like people  
who are free to express ideas and  
not just do as they're told? Yeah,  
it is. And we respect her for it.

Knowing he shouldn't, Akaar finds himself replying anyway.

AKAAR  
I have seen little in the way of  
respect since my arrival.

TENMEI  
Well, of course she's going to be  
a nervous wreck with you here. But  
she's a good commander. She gives  
her crew the chances they need.  
Look at me - I'm the XO of the  
*Defiant* now in all but name.

AKAAR  
Indeed?

TENMEI

Yes indeed. John Candlewood for another - under Ro he's blossomed into a respectable chief science officer. He'd never have got that chance with my dad in charge - he would have bumped John back down to Ensign rather than put up with his... let's call them quirks.

AKAAR

Yes... I've met the Lieutenant.

TENMEI

Ro may be unconventional, but she is a good commander. Like I said, I don't know what went on between you two, but I have a feeling my father knew. And he's the one who recommended Ro take over for him as commander. You respect his judgement, don't you?

(no reply)

She just needs a chance. The same chance she's already given others.

Akaar doesn't reply, just goes back to thinking. Tenmei has said her piece now, so she returns to her piloting duties.

**35 EST. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Focusing on the Ops dome...

**36 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE**

Akaar steps into the office, tall and straight. Ro stands behind her desk, likewise. They both want to start over, but neither is entirely sure how.

RO

Welcome back, Admiral. How was your trip?

AKAAR

Informative, thank you.

Awkward pause - Akaar is not sure how to do this.

AKAAR

Commander... I have scheduled another meeting with Legate Macet for eleven-hundred hours. I would like to invite you to join me in that meeting... if you are free.

Ro has no idea what to say. She splutters to a response...

RO

Thank you, sir. I'd be happy to.

Akaar is quietly relieved. A potential rapprochement...

**37 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

Macet stands looking out of the window, as before. At the sound of the door, and Ro and Akaar entering, he turns...

AKAAR

Legate, thank you for joining us.

MACET

I regret, Admiral, that I am only here to inform you that I must end our negotiations. I have consulted with my government, and it was decided that joining the Khitomer Accords cannot be the Cardassian Union's highest priority at this time. My apologies.

Macet walks past Ro and Akaar and EXITS into the corridor. They are left stunned...

BLACK OUT

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

**38 INT. DS9 - CORRIDOR**

Only moments later. Macet stalks down the corridor, but Ro quickly follows him, calling out...

RO  
Macet - wait!

Macet does, without expression. Akaar has appeared in the ward room doorway, and looks at the security guards...

AKAAR  
Dismissed. All of you. Get out.

Ro nods subtly for her guards to leave. Macet does likewise for his soldiers. Ro, Akaar and Macet are left alone.

RO  
Macet... what's going on? Are you leaving, just like that? Cardassia will never join the Accords?

MACET  
Not never. But certainly not now.

AKAAR  
Legate, please don't let this be the end. Surely there is some way to convince you to keep talking...

MACET  
You were frank with me, Admiral. Now I will be frank with you. I do not believe it is Cardassia that needs to keep talking.

RO  
I don't understand...

AKAAR  
You accuse us of being disunited. But since my arrival, you Admiral,

and you Commander, have shown the kind of blatant contempt for each other that could only end in death on the Cardassia of old. How can we trust you to respect us when you cannot respect each other?

Ro and Akaar look at each other, stunned. Macet turns to walk away, moving Akaar to call after him again...

AKAAR

Legate...

Macet stops and turns again, grudgingly...

AKAAR

Perhaps the commander and I have allowed our personal feelings to cloud our judgement. We apologise. Sincerely. May we intrude upon you to give us another chance?

Macet pauses to consider. He doesn't want to make enemies.

MACET

The *Trager* is not scheduled to depart until seventeen-hundred hours. Perhaps you can assemble a more united front by then.

Macet leaves once and for all. Akaar and Ro both turn to re-enter the ward room...

**39    INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

Both take seats at the table, in quiet shock at the crimes levelled against them, yet neither is able to deny them.

RO

Is he right? Is this our fault?

AKAAR

It would appear so. I am not often accused of allowing my emotions to interfere with my performance.

RO

(grunt-laugh)

I get it all the time. I know the Federation needs this alliance, Admiral... I can't be the reason it doesn't happen. So I guess we really do have to hash this out, like I said... once and for all.

AKAAR

Perhaps so.

But they sit in silence, neither sure how to start.

**40    EST. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Focusing on the Ops dome, indicating time passing...

**41    INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

The turbolift rises into Ops, bringing EVIK. He heads down to the central Ops table, where CENN greets him...

CENN

Commander - any news on how the negotiations are going?

EVIK

That's what I came to tell you. My guards outside the conference room - they said the whole thing blew up the moment Macet arrived, then Akaar sent them all scurrying.

CENN

So what's happening?

EVIK

I have no idea. But... they're all professionals. I'm sure whatever it is, they'll act like it.

A loud BARK of laughter from the science station. Cenn and Evik turn to look - Candlewood sees their disapproving glares and sheepishly turns back to his work. But Cenn and Evik cannot deny he might well be right...

42 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

Ro on her feet, thundering...

RO

There you go with this "betrayal" crap again! It was nothing to do with you, I wasn't even thinking about you!

Akaar sat at the table, trying to get through to her...

AKAAR

Clearly. And I am referring to the fact that I expended considerable personal capital on your entering the Academy at all.

RO

Is that all you care about - your own reputation?

AKAAR

You must understand, Laren, that as non-Federation recruits you and I are viewed differently to most. Any failure by one of us makes it that much harder for the rest.

RO

Is that why you requested to lead my court martial? To make sure I was properly punished for failing to live up to your standards?

Akaar finally stands - this is a very personal accusation.

AKAAR

I took that assignment to make sure you had a fair trial.

RO

How could it possibly be fair? You were my sponsor - that alone must be a massive conflict of interest.



AKAAR

My personal investment was why I made extra effort to be impartial. But since you declined to defend yourself, what choice did I have but to pass the full sentence?

Touched by the truth of that, Ro collapses back into her seat. Akaar gently lowers himself back into his own.

RO

You... didn't want to punish me?

AKAAR

Oh Laren... you inspired a rage I had not felt since my exile from Capella. A unique disappointment.

As much as she hates to, Ro can't help but feel the shame of disappointing her father figure.

AKAAR

(continuing)

But I put that aside and did my duty. You see me as some monstrous ogre without heart or soul. I tell you my heart beats as strong as anyone's... and you broke it.

RO

(quiet)

Then why act like you didn't care?

AKAAR

I had no choice, or the rage would have destroyed us both.

RO

I think I would have preferred the rage. It's better than nothing.

AKAAR

"Nothing" is safer, believe me. I portray this rigidity not because I don't care... but because I do.

RO

I just wanted to make you proud.  
But you made me feel like nothing  
I ever did was good enough.

AKAAR

My intention was only to act as  
professionally as possible at all  
times. If I occasionally failed at  
that... perhaps you could comfort  
yourself with the thought that it  
reveals my true depth of feeling.

RO

(chuckle)

Yeah, 'cause I always get that  
particular benefit of the doubt.  
You know I was only trying to be a  
professional too, right? To show  
you that I'm good at my job.

AKAAR

So your own crew have told me. And  
perhaps there is more than one way  
to be a Starfleet officer... even  
if things did not go precisely how  
I envisioned all those years ago.

RO

Doesn't the fact that even after  
all that, I'm now the commander of  
one of the most vital starbases in  
the entire Federation, prove your  
instincts were right all along?

AKAAR

Perhaps it does, at that.

They both smile a little - rapprochement has been reached.

RO

Okay, so with all that out of the  
way, what are we gonna do about  
Macet and the Khitomer Accords?

AKAAR

He is merely doing his job as well  
- representing his people. We need  
to present him with a way of doing  
so that meets our needs as well.

They sit back to ponder this conundrum...

**CUT TO:**

**43**    **INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

Macet, sat at the table and looking less than impressed...

MACET

You want us to take your refugees?

Akaar and Ro sat opposite, on the same side of the table...

AKAAR

My mission here has made it clear  
that Bajor and its colonies cannot  
support these people indefinitely.  
But you have three entire systems  
teeming with natural resources and  
so far almost free of population.

RO

If you give permission for those  
refugees to settle in the Lyshan,  
Solarion and Argaya systems, they  
can help you to make use of those  
resources once and for all.

MACET

Cardassia does not need your help.

RO

Come on, Macet - you know we know  
better. No point being proud now.

MACET

So I go back to my superiors and  
tell them we are now taking care  
of the Federation's homeless?

AKAAR

Your assignment was to cultivate those systems, Legate. This would allow you to do so by bringing in skilled, professional people. They ask only for the opportunity to build homes and lives - anything beyond that remains yours.

RO

You sell it to your government as making those worlds profitable at last. We sell it to ours as giving our people a long-awaited home. It's a good deal for both sides.

Macet sits and considers his options. Eventually...

MACET

Very well. I cannot guarantee my government will agree, but I will advise them that I believe this to be in our best interests.

AKAAR

(sigh of relief)

Thank you, Legate. And perhaps -

MACET

Do not get carried away, Admiral. This is not an agreement to join the Khitomer Accords. I believe we still have far to go... but we are heading in the right direction.

Ro and Akaar look to each other - he could be talking about them and their own issues. They both turn back to Macet...

RO

We understand.

All three smile - this was a productive day.

**44**    **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The *Trager* departs from its lower pylon and moves away...

45 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Cenn working the central Ops table...

CENN

Safe journey, *Trager*. May you walk  
with the Prophets.

MACET (comm)

We appreciate the thought, Major.  
*Trager* out.

Ro and Akaar ENTER from her office and descend the steps,  
still reserved but in much better humour than before.

RO

I guess that means you're next.

AKAAR

I am certain the *Mjolnir* will not  
leave without me, Commander.

CENN

Admiral, I would like to apologise  
for the misunderstanding earlier.

AKAAR

No need, Major. Everything worked  
out for the best. Permission to  
disembark, Commander?

Ro straightens her back, pleased with the show of respect.

RO

Granted, Admiral. And maybe once  
you get back, you can see about  
extending the Omega Directive to  
ship commanders even if they're  
not of captain rank. You know, for  
the next time Starfleet thinks  
it's a good idea to deliberately  
cripple every ship in the fleet  
while the Borg are right on top of  
us and not tell me how to fix it.

Akaar worries - is she about to start another argument?

AKAAR  
(sheepish)  
There was an invasion going on...

Ro holds the glare as long as she can - but eventually she can't hold it any longer and the grin breaks through. Akaar is relieved - she was just messing with him.

RO  
Don't think just because we're talking again, I'm gonna stop giving you a hard time. For real, though - sort that out.

AKAAR  
Yes, sir.

Akaar heads to the turbolift, climbs aboard...

AKAAR  
Upper pylon two.

And smiles as it takes him away. Ro turns back to Cenn...

RO  
Carry on, Major.

She trots back up the stairs to her office, much lighter...

**46 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The *Mjolnir* pulls away from the upper pylon...

FADE OUT

**END OF SHOW**