

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x22 - "Ascension."

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 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

A table on the main floor, at which several civilians of various races sit. Perched on a chair with them is PIF, spines erect and tail wagging with happiness at the fact that he is the centre of attention.

One of the civilians has one of Pif's tiny green puppies in her lap, snuggling and offering belly rubs. Everyone coos and baby-babbles at the almost unbearable cuteness.

QUARK is behind his bar, watching this with a grimace of revulsion. He turns away to return a bottle to its shelf, and when he turns back, he JUMPS in shock...

QUARK

Bah!

...because another puppy is sitting on the bar right in front of him, tail thumping, waiting to be cuddled. Quark steadies himself from the shock, muttering to himself.

QUARK

Filthy little vermin...

RO is nearby, with a coffee but standing, ready to run if needed. She reaches out to scratch the puppy's neck.

RO

What are you talking about? I think they're adorable.

QUARK

They're unsanitary, is what they are.

RO

But they're so soft and furry!

QUARK

I know. And furry things are unnatural. Animals don't have fur on Ferenginar.

RO
Because of the damp?

QUARK
Exactly! Who wants to be all matted and water-logged?

Quark proudly strokes his own large bald head to emphasise the point. Ro pouts at him.

RO
Well, I'd keep your voice down if I were you. People tend to not like it when someone calls their baby "unnatural."

QUARK
Oh, don't worry. If I can avoid calling my own niece a hairy half-breed, I can manage this.
(pointed)
As long as they stay off the bar.

With a roll of the eyes, Ro lovingly lowers the puppy down to the deck and lets it scamper off back to its parents.

QUARK
How are you doing?

RO
(evasive)
What do you mean?

QUARK
Oh, nothing. Just that... I've been living on this station for a long time now. I've spent the last ten years watching my friends go off to war, risking their lives... and they don't always come back in one piece.

Ro doesn't really respond, just looks down into her coffee. Quark is being deliberately casual but obviously fishing...

QUARK

I know I make it look easy, but it's no fun always being the one left behind. Always the one who has to keep morale up, the rock everyone leans on...

Ro smiles quietly to herself. She knows Quark is only trying to be helpful.

RO

That's the second officer's job, Quark. Hold down the fort while everyone else has all the fun.

Clearly they're both worried about the others. Neither wants to say it out loud, but they both know.

SHAR (comm)

Ops to Lieutenant Ro.

RO

(taps combadge)
Go ahead, Shar.

SHAR (comm)

It's nearly time, sir. You wanted to be informed?

RO

I'll be right there. Ro out.

She taps the combadge to close, takes a last swig of coffee and steps back from the bar. Ro and Quark share a moment, then she turns and leaves. Quark watches her go, feeling sympathetic. Then he turns back to the bar...

QUARK

Bah!

...And the puppy is back on the bar, tail thumping away, waiting to be cuddled. Quark grits his teeth...

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

The turbolift rises into Ops, carrying Ro. She steps off and down to the centre table, where CENN runs the boards. SHAR is at sciences, LEISHMAN at engineering, SEVAK at tactical and extras elsewhere. Shar works his panels, and the viewscreen reveals the star field, a fleet of Bajoran Militia ships holding position.

RO
(to Cenn)
Anything from Lenaris?

CENN
Negative, Lieutenant.

Ro nods anxiously. Then Cenn's panel beeps - an incoming message. Cenn reads it, looks up at Ro, surprised.

CENN
It's not General Lenaris. It's a personal message, for Lieutenant ch'Thane.

SHAR
(eyes wide)
For me?

RO
Take it in the Captain's office,
if you want some privacy.

SHAR
Thank you, Lieutenant.

He clearly wasn't expecting anything. A little confused, Shar gets up from his station and heads into Kira's office (an extra takes his place). Then Ro turns back to Cenn.

She's just waiting for something to happen. And desperately hoping it won't. There's another alert on Cenn's panels...

CENN
General Lenaris reports rising
neutrino levels.

They both know what that means.

RO

Tell him to back off another five-hundred kilometres. I don't want them to get caught up in the backwash.

Cenn relays the message...

3 **EXT. SPACE**

The ships of the Bajoran fleet back away, spreading out further from the wormhole's event horizon.

Then it happens - the wormhole BURSTS open, surging with power and energy and colour. Only it's different. It's much more powerful, erratic, violent.

And the colour is not the usual serene and peaceful blue. The wormhole is BURNING, orange and yellow and red flames churning amongst the blue and white petals.

Our **POV** shakes with the force of it.

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

Ro and Cenn grip the edge of the table, holding on as the station shudders. Cenn gapes in horror at the sight...

CENN

Prophets... I don't see how anything could survive that.

RO

Let's hope the Prophets themselves can.

The door from Kira's office opens and Shar emerges. He's looking a bit shell-shocked, barely notices the station shaking. He's had big news. Ro doesn't have time to ask.

RO

Shar, are the gravimetric distortions affecting Bajor?

Pulling himself together, Shar excuses the extra from the science station and takes over the panels. He reads...

SHAR

Yes. Starfleet stations on the surface are reporting tectonic disturbances all over the planet.

A particularly violent shudder shakes the station. On the screen, the wormhole churns and spits fire into space.

RO

This has got to end soon.

Ro grits her teeth, grips on tight, watching the screen...

5 EXT. SPACE

Just then, it does. The wormhole closes back up, but leaves wisps of coiling energy and distortions in the space around it, taking longer to dissipate than normal.

6 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Ro and Cenn remain on edge, watching the screen...

RO

Stay alert, everyone. It's not over yet.

Everyone continues to wait, just the humming of the power core and the silent flashing lights of YELLOW ALERT. They wait. And they wait. Ro looks to Shar...

RO

Anything?

Shar shakes his head. Ro looks to Cenn. He shakes his head too. They all go back to waiting.

RO (v.o.)

And that was all we knew. We had no idea how things were going... how things had gone on the other side. There was no way to tell. So we just had to wait, and hope that

if something came through the wormhole, it was the right kind of something.

7 **INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

Admiral AKAAR sits across the table, looking into camera.

AKAAR

You did not know of Captain Sisko's plans in advance?

ANGLE to reveal Ro sits opposite him. The pair have their usual spiky repartee, but this is an official debriefing.

RO

I knew the plans he told us, Admiral. I didn't know what else he hadn't told us.

AKAAR

And had you known... would you have attempted to stop him?

RO

How am I supposed to know? I don't believe in the Prophets like he did. Does. Besides, it doesn't matter now, does it? It's finished.

AKAAR

The threat may be over. That is yet to be determined for certain. As is the cost of success.

RO

The cost... Well, that's something we're just all going to have to live with.

Ending on Ro's reined in but clearly damaged emotions...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

8 EXT. SPACE

The colourful wisps of the Omarion Nebula. Slowly ZOOM in, until we find the *Even Odds* sitting against the backdrop.

9 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

DEZ in command, FACITY, GLESSIN and BRAD elsewhere. And PRYNN at the helm.

PRYNN

Okay. We're holding position at the Omarion Nebula. This is where we got the Ascendants' attention last time. Let's hope they're creatures of habit.

DEZ

(deadpan)

Yeah. Let's hope. Dez to Jake.

10 THE WA

JAKE and RENA stand together in the white space of the WA.

JAKE

Go ahead.

DEZ (comm)

We're in position. If you're still determined to do this... then you may as well go ahead and do it.

JAKE

Understood. Sisko out.

Together, Jake and Rena reach out to the orange patch... and both their fingers swim into the colour.

The Wa shifts to its orangey-hued communications mode. The VOICES start to whisper. Jake and Rena look to each other - it's done. No turning back now.

11 **INT. ASCENDANT PAVILION**

Close on ILIANA's smiling eyes...

ILIANA

It's time.

12 **EXT. ASCENDANT ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT**

The buildings and tents and constructions have been mostly dismantled and reabsorbed back into the ships.

All around the rim of the black glass amphitheatre that is their base, tiny Ascendant ships are glowing with power. Thousands of them, lighting up the night sky.

One at a time, then faster and faster, more and more, they lift effortlessly off the ground and into the air. They peel away from the crowd and up into space, and away.

Iliana and RAIQ stand by one of the last ships remaining. Raiq clambers up the ladder to the cockpit, climbs inside. Iliana holds back. She looks around... at the dismantled settlement and the guttering fires. The empty tents and pavilions. All the ships leaving. This is really it.

Iliana climbs up after Raiq, into the ship. The canopy closes, and the ship lifts gently up, turns and flies off after its companions.

13 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

Waiting, waiting... Dez turns to Facity at a rear console.

DEZ

Anything?

FACITY

I'd tell you if there was.

Waiting, waiting... There's an alert on Facity's panel. Facity checks it, turns to Dez. No need to say it. Dez turns to Prynn, who has been waiting anxiously.

DEZ

Go. Now.

14 **EXT. SPACE**

Against the backdrop of the Omarion Nebula, the *Even Odds* powers up and jumps straight to warp. We slowly turn to look behind it...

...and a cloud of tiny Ascendant ships are chasing it down, thousands of predators pursuing one helpless victim.

15 **EXT. SPACE**

The Jem'Hadar fleet, spread throughout the Idran system. We focus on one of the small fighter ships...

16 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

KIRA stands in the centre, and TARAN'ATAR is her First. Both wear the comm headsets. Other Jem'Hadar run the other bridge stations, and all of them are armed, just in case.

But Kira is on edge. So many questions, so many worries, and she can't do anything about any of them.

17 **EXT. SPACE**

What looks like empty space. But we slowly CLOSE IN on one particular spot...

POV pushes forwards through a distortion field... and we're right up on the *Defiant's* hull. We keep pushing forward until we also pass THROUGH the hull of the ship, through bulkheads and technology, and into...

18 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

...where VAUGHN sits in command. DAX is at sciences, BOWERS at tactical, ALECO at the helm, extras elsewhere. Lights are low - BLUE ALERT indicating the ship is under cloak. Just like everywhere else, the tension is enormous.

VAUGHN
Everything's set up with the
subspace relay?

DAX
Yes, sir. Between Nog, Shar and
Jadzia... we got it.

Vaughn nods along. He already knew all this. Asked it a
dozen times already. But he needs to fill the time.

VAUGHN
Anything from the *Even Odds*?

DAX
No, sir. But that doesn't mean
anything one way or the other.

Vaughn GRIPS his armrest harder, clenching and clenching...

19 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

On Prynn, as she runs the helm, all her concentration on
the console and the readings and the viewscreen...

20 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Even Odds* runs as fast as it can, but it's not enough.
The lead Ascendant ship FIRES its massive jagged bolt of
white electricity...

...and misses, as the *Even Odds* twists out of the way.

21 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

No time to gloat, but Prynn does allow herself a small
smile of pride. Facity runs a rear console...

FACITY
Can they do their jump trick at
warp?

PRYNN
No idea. Never asked.

22 **EXT. SPACE**

More and more Ascendant ships are joining the chase. Three
of them FIRE at once. *Even Odds* dodges the first shot, and
the second... but the third HITS.

CLOSE UP on the *Even Odds* hull, as the dissolving effect begins to take hold...

23 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

Facity is checking her panels...

FACITY

Direct hit... ablative armour is holding.

PRYNN

(concentrating)

Thank you, Nog...

24 **INT. DEFIANT - ENGINEERING**

On NOG, at the tall stand-alone console in the middle of the room, the warp core throbbing rhythmically behind him.

NOG

Everyone in position?

He looks around at his staff, including regular faces like PERMENTER and CANDLEWOOD.

NOG

Captain Sisko said that when the subspace inversion starts, it can cause fluctuations in the warp core. So stay alert.

PERMENTER

We're on it, sir.

25 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Silence and impatience on the bridge, just the low hum of the ship's systems and the gentle beeping of sensors...

...until a louder repeating BEEP on Bowers' console. He reads the results, turns to Vaughn...

BOWERS

The *Even Odds* just entered the system, sir.

VAUGHN

Alright, everyone. Stay cool. They don't even know we're here.

26 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Even Odds* runs... and the massive cloud of Ascendant ships follow it into the system.

We focus on one of the small silver dart-like vessels in particular, leading the chase...

27 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #1**

Raiq is in the front seat, working the ship's smooth silver surfaces via their shifting coloured patches. She drives the ship onwards, eagerly chasing the *Even Odds*. Iliana is in the seat behind her, watching everything.

The surfaces shimmer, the colours shifting in such a way that catches Raiq's attention. Manipulates the controls, interprets the results...

RAIQ

Mistress, this star system... the vessel responds to it. The historical database has generated a report...

She reads it further, her eyes bulging, her jaw dropping...

RAIQ

By the great Unnameable... this is the home of the Eav'oq. The place of our greatest enemies... and our greatest defeat.

ILIANA

And I have brought you back to them, as I promised I would.

RAIQ

Oh, praise the True! Mistress, you
truly are touched by their light.
We have succeeded! The Fortress
must be near...

Another shift in her consoles. She reads again...

RAIQ
The ship responds anew.
(angry sneer)
Mistress... look.

Iliana leaves her seat and looks out of the clear canopy...

28 **EXT. SPACE**

...At the enormous Jem'Hadar fleet looming before them.

29 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #1**

Raiq is appalled at this sight.

RAIQ
The animals. The monsters who
worship the false polymorphs...
They protect the Eav'oq.

ILIANA
It appears they have allied
against us...

Furious, Raiq dives her silver hand into the ORANGE smudge.
The tone of the interior shifts from bright silver to
burning orange, signifying communications mode.

RAIQ
Archquesters! Knights of the
Ascendancy! The Fire has lit the
way, as doctrine promised. But
these animals block our path.
Destroy them all!

Mindless in her fury, Raiq yanks her hand out of the orange
smudge and works the panels, shifting the ship into attack
mode... while Iliana sits back and watches, inscrutable.

30 **EXT. SPACE**

The entire Ascendant fleet turns as one and surges towards the Jem'Hadar fleet.

The Jem'Hadar fleet readies itself for combat...

...and the *Even Odds* is caught in between.

31 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Kira shouts to her Jem'Hadar crew...

KIRA

Here they come! Remember... no-one gets past. Do whatever you need to stop them. But no stupid sacrifices. I don't need martyrs, I need winners.

Taran'atar moves to direct his soldiers. Kira jerks as she suddenly remembers...

KIRA

Oh! And don't shoot the *Even Odds*. Get them through the lines and behind us.

She stands in the centre of the bridge, watching the fleet approach on her tiny eye-screen...

32 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

Running her helm station, Prynn looks up at the viewscreen, with its image of the massive Jem'Hadar fleet looming in front of them, getting ever closer...

PRYNN

Holy sh-

BAM. The ship is hit by another Ascendant power bolt. Prynn gets back to business.

33 **EXT. SPACE**

As the Jem'Hadar and Ascendant fleets engage, the *Even Odds* dances and swerves around, avoiding BOLTS of electricity from one and BLASTS of phaser power from the other.

One Ascendant ship pursues the *Even Odds* straight into the lines. A Jem'Hadar fighter ZOOMS past and blows it to bits.

We focus on one of the massive Jem'Hadar behemoth ships, holding position at the centre of the distribution...

34 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #2**

The bridge of the giant ship. WEYOUN serves as its Vorta, with the teenage Founder MEERA also there. The ship shakes as it comes under fire...

A ball of FLAMES bursts into life in the middle of the bridge, wafting away and revealing ASCENDANT #1, sneering with hatred. Meera staggers back out of its way as the Jem'Hadar soldiers turn towards it...

WEYOUN

Protect the Founder!

The Jem'Hadar form a barrier around Meera. One of them draws his *kar'takin* blade and slashes it at Ascendant #1... but the blade goes right through him as if he's not there.

35 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Kira and Taran'atar's crew. They also have ASCENDANT #2 on their bridge, and the Jem'Hadar are reacting...

KIRA

Ignore him! He's just a hologram,
he can't do anything.

TARAN'ATAR

Do as she says!

The other Jem'Hadar turn back to running their ship. It shudders under more external fire. Taran'atar pulls his own blade and holds it out towards Ascendant #2, just in case.

The Ascendant sneers back at him, then turns his attention to the computer screens, stares at them hard. The screens run and fritz with data. Lights begin to flicker and die.

Power is interrupted across the ship, sputtering and trying to reengage, like a car trying to restart a stalled engine.

KIRA
(eyes wide)
Oh. I forgot that part.
(out loud)
Find where that signal is coming
from and destroy it!

36 **EXT. SPACE**

The battle continues to rage all around, Jem'Hadar ships and Ascendant ships exploding left right and centre. The two fleets seem about evenly matched.

Kira's Jem'Hadar fighter bucks sideways, turns and FIRES hard on the Ascendant ship nearest to it. A few moments of serious phaser fire, and the tiny ship EXPLODES.

37 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Ascendant #2 bursts into flames as his origination point is destroyed. He screams as he burns away to nothing...

KIRA
Track that frequency and send it
out to the entire fleet. Tell them
to block it.

Taran'atar works a control on his headset as he passes on the message...

ROSS (v.o.)
I see you haven't entirely
forgotten your Starfleet training
then, Captain.

CUT TO:

38 **INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

Admiral ROSS sits across the table from Kira. She does not appreciate his comment.

KIRA

This wasn't a Starfleet mission,
Admiral. You made sure of that.

Her eyes move to take in the whole table - Ross, Akaar and BATANIDES, sat in a line across the table from Kira. This is an official after-action review by a whole panel of admirals. She blames them all equally.

Ross looks down and licks his lips. He regrets not being able to support Kira. But what's done is done. Batanides tries to be a bit nicer, as is her way.

BATANIDES

But you were successful in
repelling the holographic
Ascendants...?

KIRA

At first.

39 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

The ship seems to be back to normal, power restored, the Jem'Hadar concentrating on tracking external threats.

But then there's another burst of FLAMES on the bridge, and ASCENDANT #3 stands before them, holding a spear.

KIRA

Damn it! They must have changed
the frequency.

JEM'HADAR #1 roars with fury and moves towards him... But before he has a chance to do anything, Ascendant #3's image seems to ripple, as if passing through a force field. His spear bursts into flame, he LUNGES forwards...

...and SPEARS Jem'Hadar #1 right through the heart.

As Jem'Hadar #1 screams and Kira's eyes flare in panic...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

40 EXT. SPACE

The battle rages in space...

The *Even Odds* is still darting around, dodging desperately to stay out of the way.

41 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Prynn grits her teeth, all her concentration on her helm...

Behind her, Dez holds on tight to his chair. The screen shows what seems like hundreds of Jem'Hadar and Ascendant ships, the image ducking and swerving as we fly through.

DEZ

(whine)

How many of them are there?

FACITY

Fewer than there were.

42 EXT. SPACE

The *Even Odds* twists again, avoiding an Ascendant ship...

...that is currently pummelling the giant Jem'Hadar battle cruiser. It's one of a dozen that are ganging up on the larger vessel. Their electric bolt weapons come at the giant ship from every side...

43 INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #2

Weyoun and Meera. The Vorta cowers in a corner of the bridge, trying his best to keep the little changeling behind him while protecting himself at the same time.

The bridge is packed with Jem'Hadar soldiers and Ascendant knights battling hand-to-hand, phaser rifles and *kar'takin* knives against flaming spears and hand-thrown fireballs.

WEYOUN

Founder, please, stay back.

MEERA

These demons have taken enough
from the Dominion already.

Meera slips past Weyoun, striding forwards into the fight,
and heads for Ascendant #1. Weyoun chases after her...

WEYOUN

Founder!

ASCENDANT #4 STABS Weyoun from behind, the burning tip of
the spear piercing through his chest. Looking down at it in
simple surprise, Weyoun crumples to the floor, dead.

Seeing this, Meera screams in renewed fury. She rushes for
Weyoun's killer, her hands MORPHing out into coiling ropes
of changeling fluid as she comes...

44 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #3**

Dominion Vessel 288, featuring VANNIS and REKAN'GANAR. The
Jem'Hadar First fights ASCENDANTS #5 and #6, swirling and
slashing and spinning as they attack him from both sides.

VANNIS

Second! Concentrate on your
targets. I want them gone!

JEM'HADAR #2 does so. We feel the ship's weapons FIRE, and
hear the boom of a successful kill. Meanwhile, Rekan'ganar
kills Ascendant #5 with a hard STAB through the chest.

Then he twirls back to Ascendant #6... whose hand is made
of flames. She THRUSTS the hand right into Rekan'ganar's
face, burning the Jem'Hadar First to death on the spot. He
SCREAMS and sizzles, and crumples to the ground.

Vannis staggers back with a GASP. Ascendant #6 turns to
her, lifts her hand. She's carrying one of the energy balls
we saw Blas use. She grins evilly, readies to throw...

45 **EXT. SPACE**

The Jem'Hadar ship EXPLODES.

The battle continues to rage...

46 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Kira and Taran'atar. Ascendant #3 battles JEM'HADAR #3, the knight's flaming spear CLANGing against his knife. The rest of the crew are still running the ship.

Taran'atar turns to Kira with a stony look...

TARAN'ATAR

Dominion Vessel Two-Eight-Eight is
destroyed, Captain.

KIRA

Vannis...

Jem'Hadar #3 succeeds in SLASHing Ascendant #3's throat. In another burst of flames, the knight vaporises.

47 **EXT. SPACE**

The giant Jem'Hadar battleship, under siege from a dozen of the tiny Ascendant ships, all firing their electric bolts.

The planet-side edge of the battle zone. The Jem'Hadar are holding the line, no Ascendants are getting through.

After a moment, the *Even Odds* ZOOMS through a tiny gap in the battle, into free space.

48 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

Prynn is still concentrating hard at the helm. Jake and Rena have returned to the bridge. Glessin and Brad run other stations. Facity checks her panels, elated...

FACITY

We're clear! We're through the
lines!

JAKE

Yes! Congratulations, Prynn!

RENA

And not a single casualty.

And then an EXPLOSION brighter than any so far appears on the viewscreen...

49 **EXT. SPACE**

The giant Jem'Hadar battleship has finally lost the battle. It CRUMBLES like the *Gryphon*, the body disintegrating while the powerful warp core BLOOMS with fire, consuming the ship from the inside out. One by one, the Ascendant attackers JUMP away, avoiding the tumbling debris.

50 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Kira yelps and flicks her headset's eye-screen up, turning off the feed. The bright light had overloaded her eyes. She hisses and seethes at the massive death toll.

51 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

The crew all look at the viewscreen, watching the massive explosion and fire as the Jem'Hadar battleship burns.

GLESSIN

(haunted)

There must be thousands of
Jem'Hadar on a ship that size...

BRAD

Meera was on there too...

They all gaze sadly at the view on the screen...

52 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Defiant's crew likewise watches the continuing explosion from inside their hidden cloaked ship. Vaughn hardens, staring at the screen...

VAUGHN

Are we still receiving the
transponder from the *Even Odds*?

Bowers works his panels, checking...

VAUGHN

Come on!

BOWERS

Yes, sir. The *Even Odds* is safely through the lines.

VAUGHN

Good. Get our people on board as soon as possible.

And he gets up from the command chair and stalks off the bridge, no more said. Dax calls after him, surprised...

DAX

Commander...?

But no response. He leaves.

CUT TO:

53 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

Batanides leans across the Ward Room table, alarmed...

BATANIDES

I'm sorry, are you saying that Commander Vaughn abandoned the bridge during a combat situation?

Dax struggles to respond. She doesn't want to lie, but she doesn't want to get Vaughn in trouble either. Across the table from her, the three admirals look distinctly unhappy.

DAX

Well, the *Defiant* wasn't really in a combat situation at the time. The *Jem'Hadar* were handling that. And Captain Sisko had already assigned responsibility for our part of the plan to me.

The admirals glower as they reluctantly accept that.

AKAAR

Where was Captain Sisko at this point? Why wasn't he also on the bridge?

DAX

From what I've heard, he was in his quarters. Making some final preparations.

54 INT. DEFIANT - CABIN

SISKO is sat at the tiny desk in his tiny cabin, in front of the tiny computer screen. He stares at it, just as down-cast and heartbroken as before. The door chime BEEPS...

SISKO

Come in.

The door opens. Vaughn is there. Sisko looks at him, and looks away again. He doesn't have time or energy for this.

SISKO

This really isn't a good time, Commander.

VAUGHN

I'm sorry to interrupt, Captain. But this is actually the perfect time. There's something I need to tell you.

(beat)

I'm not here to fight, if that's what you're worried about.

Sisko looks to Vaughn again, and sees that that's true. He relents. Vaughn comes in, and the door closes behind him.

SISKO

What's on your mind, Commander?

VAUGHN

Well, that's the question, isn't it? You see I've been thinking a lot the last few days. Wondering whether the decisions I've made in my career... in my life... were

the right ones. And even if they were... what they might have cost me as a person.

SISKO

That's why you asked me how I knew what to do.

VAUGHN

Yes.

SISKO

And did you find the answer?

VAUGHN

I found an answer.

(deep breath)

I've been so angry at you, for what feels like so long. I felt like you betrayed me. Used me. I cloaked it all in terms of Prophets and accountability... but it was personal.

SISKO

For me too, Elias. I didn't enjoy having to lie to you. But it was necessary.

VAUGHN

I know. That's what I understand now - that it was necessary.

SISKO

What changed?

VAUGHN

A recent mission I undertook. With the help of some others on DS-Nine. It was my mission, but I dragged them into it... exactly the way you dragged me into yours. You played on my sense of feeling old and obsolete, needing to be useful again. I played the same trick on Doctor Bashir. I knew he

wanted excitement and thrills. So
that's what I promised him.

It's as if this is the first time Vaughn has been able to
admit this to himself. Sisko sees that, so he stays quiet
and lets Vaughn get it all out.

VAUGHN

And Ro... she needs somebody to
blame for her problems. I gave her
Section 31. The fact that it's
actually true was neither here nor
there. And in the process I nearly
got both of them killed.

(beat)

So I guess what I'm saying is... I
understand why you did it. And it
turns out we're not so different
after all.

SISKO

That's not necessarily a good
thing, Elias.

Vaughn sadly chuckles, and nods. He agrees with that.

55 **EXT. SPACE**

Outside, the battle is still going on. Ascendants and
Jem'Hadar fight it out, destroying each other equally.

56 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

The Jem'Hadar soldiers run the ship, tracking targets and
FIRING weapons. No more Ascendants, but plenty of burned
and damaged consoles. Taran'atar barks orders...

TARAN'ATAR

Target at bearing three-six mark
two-eight-three. Fire!

We feel the ship FIRE, then we SHAKE as the enemy returns
fire. Kira holds on to the railing against the shaking...

KIRA

What's taking Sisko so long?

TARAN'ATAR

Unknown, Captain. However I can report that the Jem'Hadar are holding the line. The Founder's death will not go unavenged.

Kira looks at him sadly. Another dead Founder.

57 **EXT. SPACE**

The continuing death of the giant Jem'Hadar battleship. And then out of the flames a small shape emerges - a golden MISSILE, launching out of the conflagration and straight at the nearest Ascendant ship. It flies straight at it...

And SMASHES right through the ship's transparent canopy.

58 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #2**

Inside, ASCENDANT #7 is caught by surprise as the golden missile instantly MORPHS into furious tendrils of changeling matter that TEAR into the controls in a rage.

The changeling momentarily MORPHS again into a shape close enough to humanoid for us to recognise it as Meera, and then comes for Ascendant #7. The shocked and scared knight struggles as the changeling fluid flows over his body...

...and CRUSHES.

59 **EXT. SPACE**

The ship falls apart, decompressing from the hole in its canopy. Ascendant #7 floats out into open space. Meera unwinds from the body and heads off for her next victim.

The next Ascendant ship along JUMPS...

...and reappears in open space, away from the battle. It's now pointing right towards the Idran system's sun.

60 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #3**

The pilot of this vessel is BLAS, and he is incensed by the loss of the other knight at the hands of a changeling.

In a fury, he dives his hand into the console's YELLOW patch, clenches his fist... and PULLS.

61 **EXT. ASCENDANT VESSEL**

The missile launcher we saw in 10x14 "Against the Odds" extrudes itself from the ship's smooth silver exterior, pointing towards the sun...

62 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Kira yells urgently...

KIRA
Destroy that ship! Now!

63 **EXT. SPACE**

Three Jem'Hadar fighters converge on Blas's ship, all of them FIRING at once...

...and DESTROY it just before it can launch its missile.

64 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #3**

Blas screams as he is consumed in the flames.

65 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Kira sags with relief...

KIRA
Thank the Prophets...

Then another burst of FLAMES on the Jem'Hadar ship bridge. The flames waft away to reveal...

Iliana and Raiq, standing side by side. Iliana smiles evilly at Kira. On Kira's shock and alarm...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

66 INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1

Iliana and Raiq stand on the bridge, facing Kira.

Taran'atar ROARS, and lifts his knife for a killing blow...

ILIANA
Nerys, wait!

Kira holds her hand out to stop Taran'atar. He obeys her, but stays on alert, as do all the other Jem'Hadar.

ILIANA
I didn't come to fight. I only
came to talk.

KIRA
(wary)
To talk?

Under the above, we begin at Kira's POV and PAN around. As we move, we...

BLEND INTO...

67 INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #1 (CONTINUOUS)

...so that we are now looking from Iliana's POV towards Kira and Taran'atar, who appear to be standing against the rear mirror wall, the Jem'Hadar bridge behind them. It's like the Ascendants' version of Starfleet's holographic communicator system.

KIRA (cont)
I think the time for talking has
passed.

ILIANA
Oh, you'd be surprised.

Raiq is a little confused by this development, but willing to go along with it for the sake of The Fire.

Sisko sits, Vaughn stands.

SISKO

Why now? Of all the times to talk to me... why now?

VAUGHN

Because apparently I'm not capable of being honest with my feelings until we're all at death's door.

SISKO

(quiet)

That's not funny, Elias.

VAUGHN

Wasn't meant to be. But if it comes down to it, then I suppose... I forgive you.

Sisko looks away, trying not to cry.

SISKO

You don't know what you're forgiving me for.

VAUGHN

(isn't it obvious?)

For lying to me.

(beat)

Why? What are you looking for forgiveness for? For killing the Ascendants? That's what you do in a war, isn't it? Kill the enemy.

SISKO

That's bad enough. But it's not the worst.

VAUGHN

I don't see what more about this plan there is to feel guilty about.

SISKO
That's because I haven't told you
the whole plan. I haven't told you
the cost.

Vaughn frowns in confusion...

69 **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #1**

An eerie quiet on the Jem'Hadar bridge, as Iliana and Raiq face off with Kira and Taran'atar. The ship is not under attack during this, but sounds of battle outside continue.

KIRA
You know who you remind me of,
Iliana? ...Dukat.

Iliana's reaction is surprisingly curious, non-violent...

KIRA
Every time he failed, he just
turned to the next bad guy in line
for help, and kept trying. But he
just kept failing. I'd say he
taught you well.

Throwing a wrench in Kira's bravado, Iliana grins.

ILIANA
You're trying to rattle me! That's
almost cute. Had this been a
couple of years ago, it might have
worked, too. But consider this,
Nerys. Maybe... it's not a
coincidence. Dukat did die, after
all... and the *pagh*-Wraiths were
defeated.

Kira is thrown again - what is Iliana saying here? That she intends to be defeated? What's going on?

70 **EXT. SPACE**

With the lights of the battle continuing in the background, we watch the *Even Odds* zoom towards us...

71 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

Prynn is running the helm. She brings the ship to a stop.

PRYNN

These are the coordinates. *Even Odds to Defiant*. We're ready to beam up, Commander.

DAX (comm)

Stand by, Prynn.

Prynn stands and joins the others in the centre. Brad waves a bittersweet goodbye to Jake, while Facity hugs Rena. Jake holds his hand out to Dez. Dez hesitates... then takes it.

JAKE

Thank you for your help, Dez.

DEZ

Just try to leave me out of your insane schemes in future, yeah?

JAKE

(smirk)

I'll try.

FACITY

Stay safe, you three. And good luck.

That done, they stand ready.

72 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Under cloak. Dax is in the command seat. She turns and nods to Bowers at tactical. Bowers works his panels. Prynn, Jake and Rena materialise in a transporter beam on the bridge.

JAKE

Hey, Dax.

DAX

Good to have you back, Jake.

PRYNN
Where's my dad?

73 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Even Odds* zooms away again, making sure to stay as far away from the battle zone as possible.

Move to focus back onto that same battle zone...

74 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #1**

Raiq and Iliana stand in their ship, talking to Kira on the rear bulkhead projection.

RAIQ
Mistress, why do you talk with
this heretic and her animals? We
should be killing them!

ILIANA
Not these ones, Raiq.

RAIQ
But they stand between us and the
Fortress.

ILIANA
Raiq... look at her. Properly.

Raiq is still confused, but does as she's told. She stares into Kira's face...

FLASHBACK - 10x12 "HERESY"

When Raiq first meets Kira on the bridge of the *Defiant*. The imperious Ascendant woman gazes into Kira's face, seemingly fascinated. Cocks her head, looks again.

RAIQ
That face... I know you.

BACK TO SCENE

Dumbfounded and horrified realisation hits Raiq...

RAIQ

Her face. I don't understand. How
did I not see this?

ILIANA

Because I kept you distracted.
Raiq... meet Nerys. She's my...
(searches for
the word)
She's me. And now it's time for
you to go and join her.

Before Raiq can protest, Iliana grabs her and SHOVES her
right at the rear wall of their tiny ship. With the same
RIPPLE effect we saw earlier, she passes THROUGH...

BLEND INTO...

75 INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1 (CONTINUOUS)

...and comes out the other side onto the Jem'Hadar bridge.
She staggers to a stop, utterly confused...

KIRA

Hold her! But don't hurt her.

Taran'atar quickly moves and wraps his arms around Raiq's
entire body from behind, pinning her own arms down. His
physical strength is definitely greater than hers. Iliana
remains as just a hologram, in the centre of the room.

RAIQ

Mistress! What are you doing?

ILIANA

I'm following the Prophets' plan,
Raiq. Or the True's. Or the Fates,
the Siblings, the wormhole
aliens... they have so many names.

RAIQ

You speak heresy!

ILIANA

No! I'm doing exactly what they
want. I'm the Emissary!

(beat)
All that time wasted, thinking it
was the alternate Bajorans. I got
the job right, just the wrong
employer. Funny how life turns
out, isn't it, Nerys?

(beat)
But I've done exactly what I said
I would. I've led you to the
Fortress... To the end.

As Raiq struggles futilely against Taran'atar, Kira
realises something else with horror...

KIRA
You know... about Sisko's plan.

ILIANA
(sad nod)
I know. More than you do, most
likely. There's parts of it I
can't imagine he'd want spread
around in advance.

As Kira wonders what Iliana could possibly mean...

76 INT. DEFIANT - CABIN

Sisko sits at his computer, looking sadly up at Vaughn, who
stands by the door.

SISKO
It's Rena. I told you she was
involved somehow, but I didn't
know how... Now I know.

VAUGHN
What's she going to do?

SISKO
Nothing. She's perfectly normal, a
baker's daughter from a small
fishing village. But the Prophets
sent her to me for a reason.

(beat)

"The Sisko is linear," they said.
"But there are many lines."

VAUGHN

Many lines... alternate universes,
like with the Orb of Souls.

SISKO

Yes. And Rena is here to remind me
of one in particular.

FLASHBACK - 4x03 "THE VISITOR"

Older Jake introduces his wife to his father...

ADULT JAKE

This is Korena... my wife.

BACK TO SCENE

Sisko thinks back...

SISKO

The last time the wormhole went
through a subspace inversion...
Jake and I were out here to see it
up close. We didn't anticipate the
effect it would have on the warp
core...

FLASHBACK - 4x03 "THE VISITOR"

In *Defiant's* engineering, Sisko is desperately attaching
the interphasic compensator to the central console, when a
bolt of energy leaps from the warp core and hits Sisko. The
bolt travels along the device and touches Jake, throwing
him back. Sisko flickers out of view...

JAKE

No!

BACK TO SCENE

Sisko continues his tale. Vaughn listens.

SISKO

I ended up in some kind of subspace pocket, where time didn't move... But Jake lived his whole life without me. Rena was his wife there too. And that's why she's here now - to remind me.

VAUGHN
(realising)
You're going to do it again...

SISKO
I have to. That's the cost. To stop the Ascendants... I have to go back to the Prophets.

VAUGHN
You're planning on abandoning your family. Again.

Sisko gets up from the chair, heartbroken and desperate.

SISKO
Don't make it sound like I want to do it! I have to! To save the Eav'oq, to save Bajor...
(crying)
...I have to. That's what I've been doing...
(re computer)
...trying to say goodbye to everyone. I can't even think of what to say. Of anything that'll make this right...

Vaughn is quietly listening to all this. No reaction.

SISKO
Well? Aren't you going to yell at me, tell me what an idiot I am, for doing whatever the Prophets want?

VAUGHN

No. I told you I'm not here to fight. I meant it. You're certain there's no other way?

SISKO

Not that I can see. Although... maybe... Jake did eventually figure out a way to bring me back... we were connected... maybe you could be that connection for me this time.

Sisko is suddenly overcome with new hope, pleading...

SISKO

You said we had a connection... maybe this is it. If you come with me to Engineering, be my connection... please, Elias...

Vaughn thinks it over. Takes a deep breath, straightens himself. Sisko blooms with hope as he thinks Vaughn is about to agree...

Then Vaughn hauls off and PUNCHES Sisko hard in the head. Sisko tumbles to the deck, caught off guard. He's stunned, confused, groggy from the attack... he looks up at Vaughn.

SISKO'S POV

From his place on the deck, Sisko sees Vaughn looming over him. The older man steps closer, crouches down over his chest, pinning Sisko down, draws back his fist...

...and PUNCHES him again.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

77 INT. DEFIANT - ENGINEERING

The door opens and Vaughn strides in, calls out loud.

VAUGHN
Evacuate this room. Everyone out,
right now.

This catches Nog off guard. His junior engineers look at him, confused...

NOG
Commander? What's going on?

VAUGHN
No time to explain, Lieutenant. I
want this room empty, now. That's
an order. Everyone out!

Nog is still confused, but orders are orders.

NOG
You heard the man. Everyone out.

The junior officers and extras begin to do as they're told.

VAUGHN
Nog, you report to the bridge.
Everything you need is there. I'll
handle things here.

NOG
But Commander...

VAUGHN
Dismissed, Lieutenant.

Vaughn is clearly not open to discussion. Nog can only turn and leave. Vaughn goes to the central console.

VAUGHN
Vaughn to bridge.

78 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Dax in command, Bowers and Bashir at their stations, Aleco at helm, and Prynn, Jake and Rena staying out of the way...

DAX
Go ahead, Commander.

VAUGHN (comm)
Set it off, Dax.

DAX
Where's Sisko?

VAUGHN (comm)
Occupied. Follow your orders,
Commander. Vaughn out.

Dax blinks a little at the brusque tone. But again, orders are orders. She turns to her crew.

DAX
Okay. Bowers, keep the cloak up.
Aleco, slow reverse. Just enough
to trigger the event horizon.

ALECO
Aye, Commander.

Aleco works the helm panels...

79 **EXT. SPACE**

A few moments of silence, and then the wormhole BURSTS into life. The normal, calm and beautiful blue-and-gold version.

80 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #4**

Ascendant #6 (the one who killed Vannis and Rekan'ganar) looks up in shock and amazement as her ship reacts around her. All the silver panels around her CONVULSE gently, flowing and pulsing.

The ambient colour shifts to a blue-and-gold pattern that matches the wormhole. The various coloured patches shift to

resemble mouths, singing the same wordless choral chant we've heard the Eav'oq sing...

81 INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #1

Kira facing Iliana, Taran'atar holding Raiq. Holographic Iliana looks up, seeing something on her own ship that the rest of them can't see. Half relieved, half daunted.

ILIANA
It's starting...

Kira flips her eye-screen back down, eyes wide...

KIRA
The wormhole...

Raiq can seem to just feel it, and is overcome...

RAIQ
It is the Fortress. Iliana, we have found it. We must go. The True are calling to us...

KIRA
But it'll kill you...

ILIANA
You still don't get it, do you, Nerys? This is what they want.

RAIQ
(prayer)
When we find the Fortress, we will be judged, and we will burn in Their Eyes.

ILIANA
You hear that? They will burn. They know that. It's exactly what they've been hoping for all this time. And it was my job... to give it to them.

KIRA
That's the Prophets' plan...

ILIANA
Yes. To finish the Ascendants once
and for all.

This is too much for Kira to understand. That the Prophets
could deliberately lead an entire species to their deaths.

KIRA
But...

ILIANA
Let them burn, Nerys.

Iliana looks over to Raiq, almost pitying...

ILIANA (cont)
But not her. She's the Hand of the
True, the one who leads the
people, just like you, and like
Garak. That's your job. Promise me
you'll keep her safe, Nerys.

KIRA
...I promise. What about you?

ILIANA
I have to go... to the wormhole.
That's the Emissary's job. To
sacrifice themselves for their
people. Goodbye, Nerys.

And Iliana disappears in a burst of flame.

RAIQ
No! Mistress, don't leave me...

82 **EXT. SPACE**

The battle zone. One by one, all the Ascendant ships have
been breaking off their attacks and turning away.

In front of Kira's Jem'Hadar ship, the last one breaks and
turns to follow its compatriots.

83 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #1**

Surrounded by blue-and-gold hues, Iliana pilots the ship alone. She's almost tearful with regret, and yet relieved, and full of the strength of her purpose.

84 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Still under cloak. Bowers reads his panels, turns to Dax with a lump in his throat.

BOWERS
Here they come.

DAX
On screen and magnify.

The image shifts, showing thousands of the tiny Ascendant ships all on course right for them. Everyone gulps...

85 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

As Raiq struggles against Taran'atar, Kira is figuring it all out in her head...

KIRA
Sacrifice. The Emissary's job.
(gasp)
Ben...

She turns to Raiq and Taran'atar...

KIRA
Let her go. We need to follow that ship. Now!

86 **EXT. SPACE**

Kira's Jem'Hadar ship pulls away and zooms off towards the wormhole, leaving a graveyard of destroyed Ascendant and Jem'Hadar ships behind...

Then we're with the Ascendant fleet, the big blue flower of the wormhole a beacon for them as they rush towards it. Nothing else matters to them anymore.

87 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

On the screen, the Ascendants get closer and closer. Behind them, the door opens and Nog enters. Dax turns...

DAX
Nog? What are you doing here?

NOG
Vaughn threw everyone out of engineering. No idea why.

JAKE
What about my dad?

NOG
I haven't seen him. It's just Commander Vaughn down there.

Something about this strikes something in Jake's memory. Prynn sees the look on his face, knows something's wrong...

PRYNN
Jake? What is it?

Jake is thunderstruck, horrified. He turns and runs for the door. Prynn and Rena run after him...

88 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

The others catch up as Jake pelts down the corridor...

PRYNN
Jake! What? Is it my dad?

JAKE
The subspace inversion. My dad told me what happened the last time. I should have remembered. And I think your dad's about to do the same thing...

89 INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #1

Kira is urging the ship to go faster through sheer will...

KIRA

Kira to *Defiant*!

No answer. She turns to Taran'atar, who is working panels.

TARAN'ATAR
Defiant's communications array is
non-functional, Captain.

90 **INT. DEFIANT - ENGINEERING**

Vaughn alone at the central console.

VAUGHN
Engineering to bridge.

DAX (comm)
Dax here.

VAUGHN
You know what to do. The moment
they're on top of us, do it. No
hesitation. Is that clear?

DAX (comm)
It's clear, Commander.

VAUGHN
Vaughn out.

91 **EXT. SPACE**

All of the Ascendant ships coming, coming...

92 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #4**

Ascendant #6 smiles, blissful and content, the very purpose
of her life about to be fulfilled...

93 **DAX**

...in the command chair of the *Defiant*, on edge, waiting...

94 **KIRA**

...on the Jem'Hadar ship, racing to get back...

95 **VAUGHN**

...in engineering, awaiting his fate with calm surety...

96 **PRYNN**

...running down the *Defiant's* corridor as fast as she can, having overtaken Jake and Rena...

97 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #4**

Ascendant #6 looks out through the transparent canopy at the wondrous sight of the wormhole. The vessel around her is thrumming with energy. She's right on top of it...

...and then she's entering the wormhole. The ships of her brothers and sisters doing likewise around her.

ASCENDANT #6

Blessed True, Unnameable Ones...
Accept us into your Fortress and
let us burn in Your Eyes. Let
us... ascend.

98 **DAX**

...looks down at the panel beneath her fingers. And she presses the big flashing red icon there.

99 **SUBSPACE RELAY**

...last seen 10x13, suddenly comes to life. It turns, aims... and FIRES a small, innocuous beam from its antenna.

100 **THE WORMHOLE**

The beam hits the wormhole dead centre, passing right by the Ascendant ships. Nothing much happens for a second...

...and then the wormhole ERUPTS. Just as we saw at the top of the ep - erratic, violent, burning with power.

101 **INT. ASCENDANT VESSEL #4**

The pulsing systems of the ship react violently, like we saw the Wa react. It bucks, spasms, and then just BURSTS.

102 THE WORMHOLE

Right in the mouth of the wormhole where it opens to normal space. The wormhole BURNS around us, and all the Ascendant ships, one by one, are WRENCHING themselves apart.

Canopies bursting, chassis warping and breaking, Ascendant bodies aflame or thrown out into open space before being consumed by the fires of the wormhole.

103 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

Jake HAMMERS on the door to engineering. The ship SHUDDERS around them with the force of the wormhole's eruption. Prynn is wrist-deep in a panel of wires and circuits, desperately trying to get the door open...

PRYNN

I'm coming, dad. Just hold on...

104 INT. DEFIANT - ENGINEERING

Vaughn hears the THUMPS on the door, but he doesn't answer. He looks around - the warp core is starting to react. Great arcs of power SPARK across the room.

105 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Everyone solemnly watches the screen, as the Ascendant ships explode and burn all around them...

106 INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #1

Kira is gazing equally horror-struck at what she sees in her eye-screen. Behind her, Raiq is feeling what's going on. She SHRIEKS, and both hands burst into flame, and she FIRES beams of actual flame at two of the Jem'Hadar crew.

RAIQ

Nooooo! Let me go! Let me go! I want to be with them!

PUNCH. Taran'atar knocks the poor, hysterical Ascendant woman unconscious with one blow. She crumples to the floor. Kira looks down at her, her own emotions churning...

107 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

Prynn is now openly crying as she does everything she can think of to get the door open. But every one of her tricks only results in another negative BZZZT from the computer. Jake and Rena stay out of her way...

PRYNN
(hysterical)
No! Dad! Please... let me in...
Dad please...

108 INT. DEFIANT - ENGINEERING

Vaughn fixes the interphasic compensator into its place in the central console. Then he stands tall, eyes closed, ready for what's coming. The ship is shuddering around him, the arcs of power getting bigger and stronger...

...and then the big one finally hits. It SNAPS at Vaughn like a whip, catching him in its power...

...and he begins to flicker in and out of view, fading away, glowing white as the power crackles around him.

109 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

Prynn hears the CRACK of the whip through the door. She knows what it means. She SCREAMS with rage and sorrow...

110 VAUGHN

...fades from view, completely gone...

111 DAX

...lifts her finger off the firing control.

112 SUBSPACE RELAY

...stops firing...

113 THE WORMHOLE

...closes up, leaving trails of energy...

114 PRYNN

...collapses to the floor, screaming and shrieking and wailing with pain and anguish. Jake and Rena can only try their best to hold her.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

115 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

Beginning on Kira, as she sits at one side of the table. In full uniform, holding herself tight and reined in.

AKAAR (o.s.)

Then it is your belief, Captain,
that Commander Vaughn sacrificed
himself in the course of his
duties as a Starfleet officer.

KIRA

It is, Admiral.

REVEAL that Akaar, Ross and Batanides are across the table from her, as they have been for everyone else. The three of them are no happier about this than anyone, but it's their job to get to the bottom of things.

ROSS

Based upon our interviews with
your senior staff, and upon the
visual records from *Defiant's* main
engineering... I agree. Commander
Vaughn's actions were entirely
voluntary, and selflessly taken to
help end the Ascendant threat.

AKAAR

If that threat can be said to have
been ended at all. This woman,
Raiq, remains. Your own reports,
Captain, indicate that one
Ascendant is quite capable of
being a substantial threat on her
own.

KIRA

I take personal responsibility for
Raiq, Admiral.

ROSS

Very well. But the fact remains that this entire mission was not authorised by Starfleet Command. In fact, it constitutes illegal seizure of Starfleet property in the form of the *Defiant*, illegal diplomatic activity in the form of a military alliance with the Dominion. Your actions may even result in charges of genocide against a government that was not at war with the Federation.

Kira is not about to take that. But she stays tight, under control. There's no point making this worse than it is.

KIRA

How could it possibly have been an authorised mission? I asked for your help repeatedly, and you refused. You left me with no choice. I had to turn to the Dominion.

AKAAR

You could have chosen not to get involved in a situation that was none of your business.

KIRA

If you believe that, Admiral, then you really don't know me. And you don't know Bajor.

BATANIDES

This is academic. The facts of the matter are clear, and there must be consequences. As the senior active Starfleet officer in the Bajoran sector, all the actions taken by the crew of the *Defiant* fall upon you.

KIRA

Let me save you the trouble.

Kira stands, rests her hands on the table.

KIRA

I once threatened to pull Bajor out of the Federation. I was wrong to do that. Even though I believe the Federation wilfully ignored issues that speak to the very core of Bajoran identity, and placed an entire innocent people at risk by refusing to help... I know that Bajor needs the Federation. So I won't make that same threat again.

She pauses, making sure she's got everyone's attention.

KIRA

But I can still protest the Federation's actions myself... by doing this.

She reaches up and unfastens the captain's pips from her uniform collar, and places them onto the table. She takes off her combadge and places it next to them.

The three admirals look down at the objects on the table, and then back up at Kira. Astonished.

BATANIDES

Captain, please... consider what you're doing. Don't be hasty.

KIRA

Hasty?! You really haven't been paying attention, have you? This is what Bajor is. We fight for what we believe in. We sacrifice for what we believe is right.

(beat)

My resignation will be logged within the hour.

She stands up straight, and without leave, turns and exits the room. The admirals try to pick up their jaws.

Kira is stripped down to the undershirt of her uniform, moving around the room, packing things up. She takes her large book of prophecies off the shelves, places it into a crate on her desk. Under this:

VAUGHN (v.o.)

Nerys... if I may call you that. I hope you know that my respect for you is... enormous. These three years as your exec have been some of the happiest of my life, and your friendship has been a large part of that.

Kira now sits at the desk, watching this recorded message from Vaughn on the small desk-mounted screen.

VAUGHN (screen)

I also want to take this chance to thank you for all your help. It was invaluable. And I hope that the step I'm about to take will help you in equal measure. Be safe, Nerys.

Kira places the lid on the crate, hefts it up. She turns and carries it out of the office, out into Ops.

117 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Kira walks down the steps, carrying her crate. Ro stands at the centre table, with Shar, Nog, Bashir, Bowers and Cenn at their stations. She looks around at them all. They look back at her. No more to say. With a sad and final nod, she climbs the stairs back up to the turbolift.

118 INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS

Taran'atar is likewise tidying things up in his room. Ro stands to one side...

RO

What are you going to do now?

Taran'atar stops, genuinely considers the question.

TARAN'ATAR

I have entered a new state of being. It will take some time to determine what that means.

RO

But you are returning to the Gamma Quadrant.

TARAN'ATAR

I am. The Ascendant conflict cannot solve all the Dominion's problems, after all. Vannis's next clone will take my place as Ambassador to Bajor.

RO

I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm going to miss you.

Taran'atar draws himself up straight. He's not the smiling type, but he feels... content.

TARAN'ATAR

I wish you success in your future endeavours, Lieutenant.

RO

And you in yours.

They're good with each other. Ro turns to leave.

119 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY

OPAKA sits on one of the low stone walls, looking out over the peaceful Eav'oq city. Sun, streams, meadows, gleaming marble. It's all safe now.

VAUGHN (v.o.)

Sulan, you've been a force for peace and love all your life. And though you may not know it, the thought of your gentle, open face has given me that peace more times than I can count since we first

met. It would have been nice to
grow old in your company.

(chuckle)

Well, even older.

Opaka smiles to herself as she remembers the moments with Vaughn. She picks up a Starfleet padd off the wall next to her, hops down onto her feet and turns to walk back towards the temple. She'll miss him, but he died for a good cause.

120 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S QUARTERS

Kira enters, carrying her crate. She places it down on a side table, and turns to the window. Raiq stands there.

KIRA

How are you feeling?

RAIQ

Alone. How else would I feel? I am the only Knight alive not to enter the Fortress.

KIRA

It would have killed you.

RAIQ

It is my birthright!

KIRA

There might be other Ascendants still out there somewhere. Maybe Iliana didn't find them all.

RAIQ

I see the lies on your face. You are like her.

Kira sees that it's going to be difficult to make any kind of connection with this woman. But she has to try.

KIRA

I'm going home. To Bajor. And I think you should come with me.

RAIQ

Why?

KIRA

I'm responsible for exterminating an entire race who believed in the same gods I do. I need to spend some time making sense of that. And I think it would be good for you to see... that maybe we're not so different after all.

RAIQ

You are a heretic. You shame the True.

KIRA

Maybe I do. But look at it this way. A Bajoran went to the Eav'oq. An Eav'oq went to Cardassia. A Cardassian went to the Ascendants. Now you can complete the circle. All four races can learn about each other... in peace.

Raiq seems halfway to being convinced. But doctrine is strict. Kira holds her hand out to her...

KIRA

Come with me, Raiq. Take my hand.

Uncertain, but feeling very alone... Raiq takes the hand.

121 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

KASIDY sits in the rocking chair, slowly rocking back and forth with Rebecca in her lap. She's taking comfort in the simple repetitive actions of feeding the child.

VAUGHN (v.o.)

Captain. I must apologise again for striking a superior officer. But I could see how much it was breaking your heart to leave your family. I couldn't allow that. So I've taken your place.

Kasidy looks up from Rebecca... at Sisko, sitting on the couch, far across the room. He had planned to leave them. He wasn't allowed to... and now he has to face her. What can he possibly say, now that she knows?

VAUGHN (v.o.)

You have many decades left to spend with your family now. My sacrifice is a much smaller one than yours would have been. Do not make it a vain one.

122 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR

Bashir runs along the corridor, urgently. He reaches an airlock where people are filing steadily onto a transport ship. Among them is Dax, travelling bag on her shoulder.

BASHIR

Dax! I just heard... are you really leaving again?

Dax turns to him. Half smile, half wince.

DAX

Yes, Julian. I'm leaving.

BASHIR

And you really weren't going to say goodbye?

DAX

Actually, I was just standing here thinking what a rotten thing that is to do to everyone. But nothing's changed, Julian. I still don't belong here anymore.

BASHIR

So where are you going?

DAX

Back to Trill. Gard invited me to help out with the symbiont repopulation efforts. It's only a temporary assignment, until a new

command position comes up
somewhere. And I'm also taking
Doctor Tarses with me. So you've
got your sickbay back.

BASHIR

Thanks... I suppose.

It's always going to be awkward. So it's best to just get
it over with. She stretches up and gives Bashir a quick,
chaste peck on the cheek.

DAX

Bye, Julian.

And then she turns and enters the airlock.

123 INT. DS9 - VAUGHN'S QUARTERS

Admiral Akaar walks through his old friend's quarters. He
sees the guitar on its stand, the spare uniform hanging
against the wall. He picks up the picture of Ruriko.

VAUGHN (v.o.)

Prynn, my sweet, beautiful baby
girl. I am more grateful than I
can say that we got this chance to
get to know each other again.
Please never doubt that I love
you. My only regret is that I
won't get to see you blossom into
the powerful, unstoppable woman I
know you will be.

124 INT. DS9 - PRYNN'S QUARTERS

Prynn is on the couch, weeping her poor, broken heart out
as she lies across Shar's lap. He's been where she is now,
and knows that she just needs someone to cry with.

VAUGHN (v.o.)

People may tell you there are ways
to rescue me, to bring me back.
Promise me you won't try. If you
reverse what I'm about to do, it
might somehow bring back the

Ascendants. And that's a risk we can't take. So don't waste your life pining for me. You have your own life, and that's more important.

Sniffing, Prynn drags herself up out of Shar's arms, sits beside him more normally on the couch. He looks at her, hating what he is about to tell her...

SHAR
Prynn... while you were away, I received a call. From home, on Andor.

Prynn senses the bad news coming...

PRYNN
What did it say?

SHAR
Thia is ready to give birth. I have to leave. My child is about to be born, Prynn.

On top of everything else, now this. How the hell is she supposed to process this?

125 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Ro stands in the office, as the door from the cells opens. RICHTER emerges, leading ETANA by the hand. Etana is nervous to see her friend, former boss, victim.

VAUGHN (v.o.)
Lieutenant Ro. Everything I've ever said about you is true. I do believe in you. I do believe you're capable of so much more than you think you are.

Ro and Etana face each other. After a moment's tension, Ro pulls her into a strong, forgiving hug.

126 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Ro stands at the top of the stairs, outside the commander's office. Cenn, Bashir, Nog, Bowers and extras are there, going about their business.

VAUGHN (v.o.)

If you've had a hard life, then make it better. If you believe you're some kind of bad person, then be someone better. You have it in your power to make a change, Lieutenant. Do so.

The turbolift rises, carrying Admiral Batanides. She walks over to Ro, and the two of them enter...

127 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

They stand in front of the now-vacated desk...

BATANIDES

With Captain Kira's resignation, Captain Sisko's continued leave, Commander Dax's transfer and Commander Vaughn's...

(beat)

...loss in action, the chain of command now falls to you.

Batanides holds up an extra command pip, reaches up to Ro's collar, and gently fastens it into place. Ro's eyes flare with amazement...

BATANIDES

Congratulations, Commander Ro Laren. Deep Space Nine and the *Defiant* are now yours.

(pointed)

And you and I have a lot to talk about.

Ro tenses all over again as she realises... she's talking about the anti-Section 31 group. The admiral holds out her hand. Ro gulps. A lot of heavy responsibility coming her way all at once. But with a deep breath, Ro decides she can handle it. She takes Batanides' hand firmly, and shakes.

128 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY PRAYER ROOM

Kira opens the door onto the prayer room and quietly, reverently enters. She holds the door open... and Raiq tentatively follows her in. The Ascendant woman is wary, still not sure what to make of all this.

Kira leads Raiq further into the room, towards the plinth in the centre, with its Orb box sat upon it. Raiq doesn't recognise the object...

...but once Kira opens the box's doors, she sure as hell recognises the object inside. An Orb, spinning gently, glowing with light. Raiq is overcome with awe, amazement, disbelief that she is actually seeing what she is seeing.

She stands in front of the Orb, transfixed. Kira quietly removes herself from the room, leaving Raiq alone. After a moment, the Orb begins to glow brighter, and its light swirls out, filling the room with power.

WHITE OUT

Slowly the fog fades, until...

129 VAUGHN

...standing alone in the white space. He's calm, a little sad but accepting. He looks around himself, at the utter blankness. This is where he's going to be spending the rest of his existence.

Gradually, his pulsing HEARTBEAT is joined by a second. He frowns, confused. He turns to look...

...and Iliana stands before him. The human man and the Cardassian woman look at each other, surprised, as if to say, "What? I wasn't expecting to see you here."

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW