

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

11x03 - "Self Destruct Initiated."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE WORMHOLE (STOCK FROM 10x22)

Replaying from 10x22 "Ascension". A fleet of Bajoran ships slowly backs away from the event horizon of the wormhole, just in time...

The wormhole BURSTS open, surging with power and energy and colour. Much more powerful, erratic, violent. 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.

2 EXT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE (STOCK FROM 10x22)

Lt Ro Laren and Mj Cenn Desca grip the edge of the central Ops table, holding on as the station shudders. Cenn gapes in horror at the sight on the main viewscreen...

CENN

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

RO

Let's hope the Prophets themselves
can.

(to Shar at Sciences)

Shar, are the gravimetric
distortions affecting Bajor?

SHAR

(off panels)

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...

3 **EXT. SPACE - THE WORMHOLE (STOCK FROM 10x22)**

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.

4 **INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE (STOCK FROM 10x22)**

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

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

As everyone continues to wait...

CROSS-FADE INTO:

5 **EXT. SPACE**

Two small single-pilot Bajoran Militia patrol craft fly through space, close enough to be in visual range but apart enough to not bother each other. They cruise gently through space, on a regular patrol pattern.

We PAN around them until they are coming towards us, and we can see the system's STAR in the distance, making it clear we are within the Bajoran system but on the edges of it.

As the craft pass us, we see the figures at their controls through the canopy windows.

6 **INT. BAJORAN PATROL SHIP #1**

Pilot #1, RENTA, is male, Bajoran, dressed in a technologically advanced space suit of Bajoran Militia style, with clear-visor helmet. He sits at the helm, reading panels and working controls, the only one on board.

RENTA
What do you think? Are we done?

The female voice of the other pilot comes over the comm.

SUNAL (comm)
Stop it. We will complete this patrol if it kills us. Do you really want another of Colonel Doull's inspirational speeches?

RENTA
(exasperated)
Prophets, no. But come on, Sunal - this is pointless. It's been over a week now. There's nothing out here. Starfleet took care of the Ascendants, the Dominion are back in the Gamma Quadrant, the Cardassians are locked away...

6 **INT. BAJORAN PATROL SHIP #2**

Pilot #2, SUNAL, is female, likewise Bajoran, likewise dressed, likewise occupied. She has had similar arguments with Renta many times, to the extent that she doesn't even bother getting angry anymore.

SUNAL
Renta, you know as well as I do that the *Defiant* is out of the system answering a distress call. So it's up to us. And I don't intend on being the one to let the next major galactic crisis through on my watch just because you can't be bothered.

RENTA (comm)
Euch. Fine.

Sunal hears a new BEEP through the comm system from the other ship. She frowns.

SUNAL
What have you got?

7 **INT. BAJORAN PATROL SHIP #1**

Renta reads his panels with consternation.

RENTA

Not sure. I think it's a power signature, but if it is, it's a very weak one.

SUNAL (comm)

Could be a damaged freighter or shuttle. Better go take a look.

8 EXT. SPACE

The two ships turn as one and head off in a new direction. Soon they approach an interstellar cloud of gas and debris. Ship #2 heads towards the cloud while ship #1 holds back.

9 INT. BAJORAN PATROL SHIP #2

Sunal pushes the ship forward cautiously, keeping a close eye on her readouts. The gas cloud looms ominously closer through the canopy window.

SUNAL

Okay, I'm getting something now too. Intermittent readings... they must be in bad shape, whoever they are.

RENTA (comm)

Can you get anything on hull metals or recognisable power configurations? Anything that might at least let us know what we're dealing with here.

SUNAL

Computer's working on it.

By now the ship has drifted forwards into the gas cloud itself. It's all around her...

SUNAL

Wait a minute. Power readings are increasing.

RENTA (comm)

I think you should get out of there, Sunal. I don't like this.

SUNAL

For Prophets' sake, Renta, this is what we're here for.

Ahead of her, a strange eerie red glow is growing in the cloud. Sunal gazes out towards it, intrigued.

SUNAL

(whisper)

What are you...?

Then a sudden sharp BOLT of jagged white electricity leaps out of the glowing cloud, hitting her ship hard. The ship CLANGS and SHUDDERS with the impact, as ALARMS sound all over, lights die and power begins to splutter.

RENTA (comm)

(static, broken)

Sunal! What happened? Are you alright? Talk to me! Sunal!

Dazed from the impact, she looks up and sees the roof over her head begin to dissolve. Pieces of metal flake off, air begins to whistle out. Desperately she begins to reach for the controls under her seat.

SUNAL

Renta! I'm ejecting! Can you hear me?

No response. With no choices left, she yanks the handle under her seat. A HATCH opens in the deck beneath her and the entire ensemble SHOOTs out through it to safety.

10 EXT. SPACE

In her space suit, Sunal shoots away from her dying ship and into the gas cloud. Floating free, she looks up, and through the wisps of matter she sees her ship EXPLODE in a fireball. Pieces of debris fly past her - she just manages to dodge them.

RENTA (comm)

Sunal! Are you there? I'm coming
to get you! Stay where you are.

SUNAL

(mutter)

Like I could go anywhere.

(louder)

Be careful, Renta. We don't know
what this is yet...

11 **INT. BAJORAN PATROL SHIP #1**

Renta is at his controls, urgently pushing his ship on. He pushes into the gas cloud, peering through the window.

Finally the cloud parts a little, and he sees Sunal in her space suit, floating ahead of him. She sees him too, smiles at him in relief.

SUNAL (comm)

There you are. Come on, then.
Hurry up.

But then the red glow comes again in the clouds behind her. Renta's eyes flare in alarm to see it.

12 **EXT. SPACE**

From out of the glowing cloud comes another enormous BOLT of electric power - and it hits Sunal right in the back.

The SCREAMS are blood-curdling as Sunal is BOILED alive in her space suit. Her eyes fizz in her head. Her hair catches fire. Her body BURSTS inside the suit, and then the suit BURSTS too, splattering blood all over space.

13 **INT. BAJORAN PATROL SHIP #1**

Renta SCREAMS in horror, and instantly works his panels to turn the ship away. He's running for his life.

14 **EXT. SPACE**

The remaining ship zooms away, leaving the cloud behind as fast as it can.

15 **INT. BAJORAN PATROL SHIP #1**

Renta urgently works his panels.

RENTA
Militia patrol to Militia Central.
Please come in. This is an
emergency. Come in Militia
Central!

No response.

RENTA
Computer - what was that?

COMPUTER
Collating and comparing sensor
readings with known databases.
Match found.

RENTA
Display.

One of the panels changes to show a diagram of a small,
dart-shaped vessel, with one large word above it, flashing
in angry red. ASCENDANT.

16 **EXT. SPACE**

As Renta's ship zooms towards and past us on its way home,
we focus back on the gas cloud, looming ominously in the
distance...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

17 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

A normal day on the station, as far as they know.

18 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Since most of the crew are off on the *Defiant*, Ops is staffed by largely junior officers. Lt LEISHMAN (human female, Nog's deputy chief), sits at the engineering station. Ens NARAN (Thallonian male, last seen 10x12 "Heresy") is running the Ops table. Ens SELZNER (human female, last seen 8x26 "Unity, pt 3") is at sciences.

Major CENN walks between the stations, keeping everything running. Extras elsewhere as needed.

Leishman reacts to a beep on her panel. Cenn approaches.

LEISHMAN

Incoming hail, Major. Audio only.

CENN

Go ahead.

Leishman works the panels, and Renta's voice comes through.

RENTA (comm)

...Vye to Deep Space Nine. Please come in. Repeat, this is Corporal Renta Vye trying to contact Deep Space Nine, please come in, this is an emergency.

CENN

Corporal Renta, this is Major Cenn on DS9. What's the problem?

RENTA (comm)

Oh, thank the Prophets. I can't get through to Militia Central. We have got us a big, big, big, big, big problem, Major.

CENN
Slow down, Corporal. Tell me
what's going on.

RENTA (comm)
What's going on is Ascendants,
Major.

Cenn's eyes flare in horror. Into the silence:

RENTA (comm)
Yeah, that got your attention,
didn't it? I just saw them, right
now.

CENN
Corporal, are you sure? To our
knowledge, no Ascendant ever
entered the Alpha Quadrant.

RENTA (comm)
Well, they're here. Now. In the
Bajoran system. And they just
killed my patrol partner. So if
you think for a moment that I'm
kidding you about this, I can
assure you I'm not. Open up your
shuttle bays, Major. I'm coming in
hot and fast.

CENN
Understood, Corporal. We'll see
you in a few. DS9 out.

The line drops, and Cenn gets down to business.

CENN
Naran, prepare runabout pad B.
Selzner, try to contact General
Lenaris, I want to know if we've
got the same comm problems as the
corporal. Leishman, interface with
every comm or sensor buoy
throughout the Bajoran sector. If

there's even a hint of an
Ascendant signature...

LEISHMAN

Aye, sir.

As the junior crew get to work, Cenn stands firm at the central table, his face saying "Oh crap oh crap oh crap..."

19 EXT. BAJOR - ESTABLISHING

Back to the central monastery in Ashalla, Bajor's capital.

20 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - GARDEN

The walled garden area last seen in 10x21 "Into the Fire." SISKO and KASIDY are there, with KASIDY holding little REBECCA's hand. With them is PRYNN, anxious and nervous. Wringing her hands, unsure about this whole thing.

After a moment, Kai SOLIS bustles into the area, with novice KIRA a polite step behind him. Kira is thrilled to see Sisko and Kasidy, heartbroken to see Prynn.

SOLIS

Emissary! I do apologise for
keeping you waiting.

SISKO

Not at all, Eminence. I'm just
grateful to you for seeing us on
short notice.

KIRA

It's good to see you, Benjamin.
And look at you, Rebecca! You'll
be as tall as Jake before long.
Prynn... I just wanted to say
again how sorry I am...

SISKO

That's actually why we're here,
Nerys. I was hoping, if it's okay
with you, Eminence, that you could
let Lieutenant Tenmei have access
to one of the Orbs. I know it's a

lot to ask, but she's been having some problems coming to terms...

SOLIS

Ah, of course. Nerys told me about your father's...

(word?)

...disappearance. It's never easy to lose a parent, not even in the service of the Prophets. You have my sympathies.

PRYNN

(awkward)

Thank you, Your Eminence. But actually -

She cuts off as Solis approaches her close. He reaches out with his hand to grasp her ear, but waits for permission.

SOLIS

May I? Dreadful habit, I know, but it may help me to help you.

Unsure what's going on, Prynn looks to Sisko and Kira. They nod for her to continue. Kasidy doesn't look quite so sure.

PRYNN

Go ahead.

Solis gently grasps Prynn's ear, closes his eyes and concentrates. Prynn's wince of pain and confusion grows as the pressure gets stronger. But just as she's on the verge of complaining, Solis lets go and steps back.

SOLIS

Your father came to see me, you know. He was having difficulties with his role in the events surrounding the Ascendant assault. He looked into the Orb of Souls.

PRYNN

What did he see?

SOLIS

It's not a thing one asks. Orb experiences are rare, precious things, Lieutenant.

PRYNN

Whatever it was, it obviously helped him decide to do what he did.

SOLIS

Perhaps. The question is, if you encounter an Orb yourself, what will it help you decide?

Prynn doesn't really have an answer for that.

SOLIS

Please, come with me.

Solis sweeps back out of the garden area. Kira obediently follows, with the others close behind. Prynn is wondering, does this mean she's getting an Orb or not?

21 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ATRIUM

The group passes through an archway and into the same area where Sisko first met Opaka years ago in "1x01 Emissary." The gentle reflecting pool is still there in the middle.

As the group enters, they are greeted by a Bajoran man coming the other way. He is in a grey Militia uniform, his name is Major ROCHAN, and he seems quite urgent.

ROCHAN

Eminence!
(shocked,
realising)
...and... Emissary.

Rochan stops and bows his head in respect, momentarily forgetting what he came for.

SOLIS

Ah, Major. Emissary, Captain Yates, Lieutenant Tenmei, may I introduce Major Rochan, the

Militia's attaché to Ashalla
monastery. What is it that has you
so troubled, Major?

ROCHAN

Forgive me, Eminence, but we just
received a disturbing report from
Militia Central. A patrol craft
has docked at the space station,
claiming to have been attacked...
by Ascendants.

KASIDY

(shocked)

Is that possible? Nerys?

KIRA

I don't see how. Between the
Jem'Hadar and the wormhole
inversion, they should have all
been destroyed.

KASIDY

And how could they have got into
the Bajoran system? Ben?

SISKO

I can't explain it, Kasidy. I was
unconscious in my cabin.

ROCHAN

Central reports that the crew on
the station have confirmed the
patrol's readings, but have not
yet found an explanation. There
appears to be only one ship so
far.

KIRA

(haunted)

One is plenty.

ROCHAN

Indeed. And there appears to be at
least one casualty already.

Prynn whimpers in horror and something occurs to her.

PRYNN

Oh god... is this my fault?

KIRA

Prynn? What do you mean?

PRYNN

My dad's last message to me. He said I shouldn't try to rescue him. That if I did, it might undo what he did and bring the Ascendants back. Did I do this?

KIRA

But you haven't done anything.

PRYNN

But I wanted to! I don't know how the Prophets work - maybe that was enough to piss 'em off.

SISKO

Lieutenant, I'm sure it's fine. With the *Defiant* right there -

ROCHAN

No, Emissary. The *Defiant* left the station late last night. That's why General Lenaris is scrambling as many armed ships as he can find.

KASIDY

Oh hell...

PRYNN

We have to go and help.

KIRA

Prynn...

PRYNN

Captain, we have to. Forget the Orb, we have to help. With the

Defiant gone, all they have is the runabouts, and I stole one of those. No offence, Major, but a bunch of Bajoran ships wouldn't even make a dent on an Ascendant.

KIRA

Alright. But I'll go with you.

SISKO

Me too.

(turns to Kasidy)

Kas... I have to. The Ascendants are my responsibility. If this is my fault somehow...

Hesitantly, Kasidy nods. She knows he needs to do this. But she can't help be a little resentful that this is the most excitement and energy he's shown in days.

SISKO

Eminence, will you take care of them?

SOLIS

Of course, Emissary. They will be safe here.

PRYNN

Alright, let's go.

KIRA

Wait - there's someone else.

22 **INT. MONASTERY - PRIVATE ROOM**

The door opens upon Kira, Sisko and Prynn, waiting outside.

KIRA

We need your help.

Revealing that she is talking to RAIQ..

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

23 EXT. SPACE

A fleet of Bajoran ships, like the ones in "7x02 Shadows and Symbols," moving together with purpose.

24 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Corporal Renta has now joined the crew, in a half-undressed stripped down uniform. He was in too much of a rush to get properly dressed. He joins Cenn anxiously at the Ops table.

RENTA

Tell me what's happening, Major. I
could never read these damned
spoonhead displays.

CENN

(discipline)
Corporal! Not appropriate.

RENTA

Sorry, sir.

CENN

Colonel Doul is commanding the
fleet, he reports they'll be at
the coordinates you provided in
three minutes. The *Nile* and the
Rio Grande will rendezvous with
them there.

(another panel,
surprised)

Oh... Lieutenant Tenmei is on her
way back in the *Brahmaputra*. She's
asking for the coordinates too.
And she has Captain Sisko and
Captain Kira with her.

LEISHMAN

(nervous)
So things are looking up, yes?

RENTA

(tense)

They're just shiny, Lieutenant.

CENN

Have you made any progress on figuring out how the hell they got here?

LEISHMAN

Possibly, sir.

Leishman works her panels, and an image comes up on the main viewscreen - a silent video recording of the events we saw at the top of the episode, as the wormhole goes through its violent inversion, red and burning.

LEISHMAN

I've been going over the sensor readings and visual records of the wormhole inversion event, seeing if we missed anything.

CENN

I was right here, Lieutenant. I watched it happen.

LEISHMAN

But were your eyes open every split second? Watch this.

She works her panels again, and the video replays, at much slower speeds.

ON VIEWSCREEN

The video progresses at super-slow speed a frame at a time.

At the height of the inversion's power, a tiny white light is ejected from the wormhole at top speed, moving so fast it's gone almost before you know it.

BACK TO SCENE

CENN

Replay it.

She does. The video replays. They all watch. There's no denying something came through.

CENN

Kosst. How the hell did we miss that? There was a whole Bajoran fleet and the station's sensors focused on the wormhole.

LEISHMAN

The strength of the gravitation waves and neutrino fields could have overloaded the sensors for a second.

RENTA

Awfully convenient.

CENN

Send this information out to the fleet.

LEISHMAN

Aye sir.

She goes back to working her panel, while Cenn glares at the viewscreen...

25 **EXT. SPACE**

Three runabouts are now joining the Bajoran fleet. We focus on one in particular...

26 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

The same video appears on the side screens of the runabout. Sisko and Kira, both still in civilian dress, watch it in dismay while Prynn pilots.

SISKO

It's the same as what happened to Jake three years ago. When he went into the wormhole to try to find me, and ended up in the Gamma Quadrant instead.

KIRA

Why would the Prophets let one of
these people into the Alpha
Quadrant?

Realising what she's said, she looks to the rear of the
cabin, where Raiq stands watching them all from a distance.

KIRA

Oh... Raiq... I -

RAIQ

Be silent.

Kicking herself, Kira turns back to the front. She was
getting somewhere, and then she blew it.

PRYNN

We're reaching the coordinates
now...

They look out of the window, and see the cloud where the
Ascendant is hiding. Debris of Sunal's patrol ship still
hangs around it.

PRYNN

Scanning now...
(beat)
...I'm not seeing anything.

Sisko moves to a panel and scans as well.

SISKO

I don't read any hull readings, or
power signatures...

PRYNN

They could be hiding. They did it
before, at Drang.

SISKO

Move us in closer. Tell the others
to stay back.

PRYNN

Aye, sir.

27 **EXT. SPACE**

One runabout advances slowly ahead of the gathered fleet, approaching the cloud... and then entering it.

28 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

They creep forward into the cloud, just like Sunal did...

KIRA
Anything?

SISKO
(at panels,
frustrated)
Nothing. I don't understand it.

29 **EXT. SPACE**

Slowly, the runabout emerges out the other side of the cloud. Nothing, no problems. All calm.

30 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Sisko, Kira and Prynn look confused...

PRYNN
There's nothing in there.

Kira looks back at Raiq again, who seems disappointed.

KIRA
I'm sorry, Raiq.

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

Cenn looks up from a panel to Renta, annoyed...

CENN
There's nothing there, Corporal.

RENTA
(resolute)

Nope. You saw my ship's readings,
Major. That thing killed Sunal. It
exists. If it's not there, then it
must have moved.

32 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

They're looking at the readings, confused...

PRYNN

What about their jumping trick?
We've seen whole ships transport
away and reappear somewhere else.

33 **EXT. SPACE**

The larger fleet, *sans* the *Brahmaputra*, and the cloud...

...and the Ascendant ship JUMPS in right behind them,
firing wildly. A BOLT of electricity slams into the rear-
most of the Bajoran ships, knocking it rolling.

The Ascendant moves erratically, still damaged, bleeding
silver fluid. The moment it's fired, it JUMPS away again.

34 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Kira, reading panels...

KIRA

The fleet's under attack!

Raiq looks pleased, proud...

35 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Brahmaputra* rounds the cloud at top speed, rejoining
the fleet. The Bajoran ships turn as quick as they can to
face their attacker... but there's nothing there.

36 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Prynn, peering out of the window...

PRYNN

Where the hell did it go?

37 **EXT. SPACE**

The Ascendant ship JUMPS back in again, skidding sideways, gases and fluids leaking out. It tumbles, out of control. But it's alone in open space. No sign of the Bajoran fleet.

38 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

Inside the ship, things are just as much of a mess as we saw at the end of the last episode. Gases and fluids leak, walls sag, lights throb erratically. The ship continues to drift under inertia, out of control.

The female occupant, called AXNO, lolls semi-conscious in the grip of the chair, flowing around her, protecting her.

With an almighty push, the piece of ship that pierced her leg begins to RETRACT itself. Slowly, agonisingly, it drags out of her leg and back towards the walls of the ship, healing itself.

The pain of this is enough to bring Axno further out of her unconsciousness with a guttural SCREAM.

Once the piece of ship has gone, silver fluid flows from the chair into the massive wounds in her leg. She watches it do its work, still only half awake and confused. She looks around groggily, sees her ruined vessel.

Electric bolts jump across the cabin. Lights throb harder. Energy builds and builds and builds...

...the entire ship JUMPS in a big flash of light.

39 **EXT. SPACE**

...and JUMPS back in right on top of the Bajoran fleet. It's still jagged, uncoordinated, lurching. As the Bajoran ships and runabout turn again to confront it...

...it FIRES. But not in a normal controlled way, more like the ship is overloading with power, convulsing to forcibly eject some of its energy out. Even the act of firing knocks the Ascendant further off its course.

The bolt HITS one of the runabouts - a glancing blow that sends the runabout spinning but does not destroy it.

The rest of the fleet FIRES in response... but the Ascendant JUMPS away again, and the shots are wasted.

40 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

As they react...

PRYNN

Damn it! How are we supposed to fight something that's not there?

KIRA

(off panels)

Those bolts are about a quarter of the power of the ones we've seen before. The ship must be badly damaged...

Kira turns to Raiq, who stands at the back, admiring the carnage with a proud smile.

KIRA

Raiq, what's happening?

RAIQ

The vessel is indeed wounded. Given that you and your animals tried to kill us all, that is not unexpected.

KIRA

But the wild jumping, the half-hearted attacks...

RAIQ

When a vessel is as badly hurt as that, its higher functions can fail. It depends entirely on its pilot. If the pilot is also wounded, or dead... the vessel will act on instinct.

SISKO

The last thing that ship knew, it was under attack. So now it's firing back blindly, not knowing or caring who at.

RAIQ

Correct.

PRYNN

Well that's good, isn't it? If it's not in control of itself, it'll be easier to beat.

RAIQ

Do not take hope. If the pilot is alive, the vessel will heal itself soon enough. And then all the heretics will burn.

Off Raiq's unpleasant smile...

41 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - REFECTORY

The dining room. Kasidy sits at one of the benches, with Rebecca beside her. Kai Solis brings them plates of food.

KASIDY

Say thank you, Rebecca.

REBECCA

Thank you, Mister Solis.

SOLIS

You're very welcome, Rebecca.

Rebecca tucks in heartily. Kasidy is more hesitant.

KASIDY

You don't have to stay with us, your Eminence. I'm sure a man in your position must have plenty to keep him occupied.

SOLIS

Oh, nonsense. Taking care of the wife and child of the Emissary is

a blessed task for any Bajoran.
Even an Ohalavar such as myself.

Kasidy covers a grumble again.

Suddenly there's a great THUNDERCLAP outside. But there shouldn't be thunder - it's a sunny day. Confused, Solis steps away from the table and looks out of the window...

42 EXT. ASHALLA MONASTERY

In the bright blue, placid sky over the monastery, the Ascendant ship is drifting slowly through the air.

In fits and starts, it begins to right itself, its silver tip begins to glow with power... and it FIRES.

43 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - REFECTORY

Seeing this, Solis gapes in horror. As quick as his old body will take him, he dashes back from the window towards Kasidy and Rebecca.

SOLIS

Get down!

The Ascendant weapon hits with a massive CRASH and BOOM. The building SHAKES, pieces of ancient stone crumble, we hear EXPLOSIONS and SCREAMS...

Solis, Kasidy and Rebecca shelter under the bench table as the monastery comes under attack again and again...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

44 EXT. ASHALLA MONASTERY

The Ascendant ship twists and drifts in the air, firing its weapons sporadically, half-heartedly, but still managing to damage everything in its path.

Finally it twists one more time and JUMPS away again...

45 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - REFECTORY

Major Rochan dashes urgently into the room, coughing from the stone-dust in the air, shouting out desperately.

ROCHAN
Eminence! Eminence!

SOLIS
(muffled)
We're here, Major...

Kasidy helps the old man and the young girl out from under the table, avoiding the rubble and debris. Rochan is relieved to find them all alright, if a little scuffed.

ROCHAN
Oh, thank the Prophets...

KASIDY
What was that?

ROCHAN
The Ascendant ship. It's gone now.
But it may be back at any moment.

KASIDY
(grits teeth)
Where the hell is Ben?

46 EXT. SPACE

The Ascendant ship jumps into open space again. Wounded, depleted, it seems to have exhausted itself for the moment.

47 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

The pilot Axno lurches out of her chair, collapsing to the deck with a WAIL of pain. Her leg is still in agony, her head is bruised and woozy. She's panting from the effort of simply moving her limbs.

Bit by bit, she drags herself across the deck to the half-ruined consoles along the side wall. She reaches up, groaning as she goes, until she can touch the panels. Her hand SINKS into the material - it's pliable and unformed.

She's not getting the response to her actions she wanted. She slumps exhausted for a moment, then tries again.

This time, the ship manages to half-heartedly manifest a GREEN WA PATCH underneath her hand. She presses it, and croaks out in a damaged voice...

AXNO
Vessel... location...

The green patch dissipates, and the console sags again, her hand sinking into it like mud. She groans, frustrated.

She tries a different area of the console, which manages to pull itself together into an ORANGE patch. She presses it, and some of the lights around the ship change slightly...

AXNO
My brothers and sisters... Answer
if you hear me...

48 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Alone at the rear of the cabin, Raiq senses something. She presses her hand to her chest, frowns, as if it's nothing more than heartburn. But she's feeling something...

At the front consoles, Sisko receives a message. He opens a channel, and Major Rochan appears.

ROCHAN (screen)
Emissary, the Ascendant attacked
the monastery.

Horror all around...

SISKO

Kasidy... Rebecca...

Kasidy pushes her way into the frame...

KASIDY (screen)

We're fine, Ben. So's the Kai. I don't know if that thing came for us deliberately or if it was just a coincidence, but I want you to stop it before it comes back.

SISKO

You were supposed to be safe...

KASIDY (screen)

Stop that thing, Ben. Then we'll be safe.

(beat)

Love you.

SISKO

Love you too.

Soaring with relief and the first hints of forgiveness, Sisko cuts the signal.

49 EXT. SPACE

The Gamma Quadrant. We see the graveyard of Jem'Hadar and Ascendant ships. Skirting around the outside of it is the *Cooper*, one of the *Defiant's* tiny shuttlepods.

50 INT. SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

Inside the shuttle are RO LAREN and TARAN'ATAR, whose enormous frame is feeling very cramped in this tiny craft.

RO

Sorry about the accommodations. They didn't really design these things with seven-foot super-soldiers in mind.

TARAN'ATAR
I will manage.

RO
Are you sure you wanna do this?
Remember what happened the last
time you asked a "god" for help?

TARAN'ATAR
Nothing happened. I was left
without guidance. As I am now.

RO
(gently)
Then why try again?

TARAN'ATAR
Because I do not know my future,
Commander. I must go forward, but
to what, is not clear.

RO
She's not a fortune teller.

TARAN'ATAR
No. But all of Bajor trusts her.
Captain Kira trusts her.
(pointed)
You trust her.

RO
Yes. I do.

Taran'atar nods firmly, as if that's an end of it. Ro
accepts his decision, and drives the shuttle on.

51 **EXT. SPACE**

As the shuttle clears the graveyard of ships, we see where
it's heading - towards the Eav'oq homeworld.

52 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Just a moment to bring us back home...

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

Cenn, Renta, Leishman and the rest are all hard at work, trying to handle the Ascendant problem.

CENN

Where the hell is that ship? I need information, Lieutenant.

LEISHMAN

I know, Major. I'm coordinating readings from about three dozen different sensor buoys here...

RENTA

(*sotto* to Cenn)

Let her do her damn job, Major.

CENN

(angry mutter)

Let me do mine, Corporal. And while we're at it, remind me to have a talk with you about inappropriate language while on duty, once this is over.

LEISHMAN

Got it! Far side of the system, below the orbital plane.

CENN

Send the coordinates to the fleet.

54 **EXT. SPACE**

The fleet of Bajoran ships and Starfleet runabouts gets moving at highest impulse speed.

At the other end of the system, Axno's ship lists gently in space, still leaking gases and fluids.

55 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

Axno sits, her back against a bulkhead, panting with pain. She presses her hands down into the deck, which is slightly malleable, trying to coax some life into the ship.

AXNO

My vessel... you are still with me. But the Knights... is there nothing of them?

She whimpers in anguish at the thought. Then the ship responds with a change in lighting - the tinge becomes a weak GREEN. She reacts to it with fierce hope...

AXNO

Show me!

She hauls herself a bit more upright, as the ship generates a holographic image in mid-air. It's rough, shot through with static and pixilation as the ship is still weak. But it's enough for Axno to see the approaching fleet of ships.

AXNO

Identify.

The image centres in on the lead ship - the *Brahmaputra*. Sensor readouts and colour washes flow over the image as the ship works to identify them...

A second image appears beside the first - a VIDEO RECORDING of the huge Starfleet-Ascendant battle from 10x12 "Heresy". Axno watches with intensity and compares the two images, grasping the message the ship is giving her. She sneers.

AXNO

The Bajorans. The ones we came to destroy, the heretics who claimed to know the True. Now they come to finish me.

(furious hiss)

They will die and burn.

With her resolve renewed, she drags herself upright by the bulkheads, and staggers to the consoles. With a wipe of the surface, she removes the image and reaches for a growing RED Wa patch. She dives her fingers into the colour...

The unsteady Ascendant ship rights itself, turning to face its approaching attackers. Its tip begins to glow...

...and it FIRES. The bolt is stronger now, hitting one Bajoran ship and making its hull peel away in swathes. It FIRES again, a weaker blow that hits the *Brahmaputra*...

57 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Sisko, Kira and Prynne react as the ship feels the hit.

SISKO
Return fire!

Kira fires phasers. Axno twists out of the way. The Bajoran ships are firing too...

Raiq speaks quietly, almost telepathically.

RAIQ
I am here. Can you hear me? I am Raiq.

No response. Shots still being exchanged.

RAIQ
The pilot cannot hear me!

KIRA
Of course they can't. I haven't opened a channel.

RAIQ
Then do it, woman!

Kira looks to Sisko, who nods his permission. Kira works the panels, nods to Raiq. Raiq shouts into the air...

RAIQ
Archquester! Cease your attack! I am Raiq, fellow Knight of the Ascendancy! Do you hear me?

The Ascendant ship goes quiet. Waiting, thinking.

SISKO

Tell the fleet to hold fire.

Kira relays the message. Everything is quiet as we wait for a response. Then we get it.

A ball of flames BURSTS into life in the middle of the cockpit - the Ascendant hologram effect. It burns away to reveal Axno, gazing curiously at Raiq.

AXNO

Raiq... you lead the Quest. You are the chosen of the Fire.

RAIQ

Yes. I did. I was.

AXNO

Why have you taken these Bajorans prisoner? They should be killed.

RAIQ

Things are more complicated than that, my sister. Much more.

We PAN around the two Ascendant women. As we move from Raiq's POV to Axno's POV, the image BLENDS, until...

58 INT. ASCENDANT SHIP (CONTINUOUS)

...we are seeing the same conversation from inside Axno's ship. Raiq appears to stand inside the ship with Axno.

AXNO

Where are the Knights? The vessel cannot sense their presence, or hear their thoughts.

RAIQ

(pained)

The Knights are gone. My sister, you and I are the only ones.

AXNO

Then you and I, my sister... must bring the others back.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

59 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Picking up exactly where we left off, except seeing the runabout-set version of the conversation.

Raiq appears to be seriously considering Axno's proposal. But before she can say anything, Prynn jumps up.

PRYNN

What? Bring them back? No! You can't do that.

KIRA

Prynn...

Axno looks Prynn up and down, unimpressed.

AXNO

Why is this insignificance speaking to me?

RAIQ

Control your child, Kira.

(to Axno)

You misunderstand my words, my sister. The Knights -

AXNO

(irritated)

My name is Axno.

60 INT. ASCENDANT SHIP (INTERCUT)

With a change of angle, we are now watching the scene from within Axno's ship.

RAIQ

Very well - Axno. The Knights are gone... because the Final Ascension came upon us, just as the Fire said it would.

AXNO
(w/ wonder)
They are with the True?

RAIQ
They are.

AXNO
Then we should celebrate! If the
Final Ascension has come...
(suspicious)
But why do you remain? Why do I
remain?
(worried)
Did we displease the True?

Raiq sighs and looks over at...

61 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT (INTERCUT)

...Kira. The two women finally make a connection.

RAIQ
I do not understand why we were
left behind. The path the True
have set for us is shrouded in
darkness. But it is not for us to
question their wishes.

Kira smiles sadly at Raiq. Axno is not convinced.

AXNO
Are you about to suggest that we
should simply be happy for our
brothers and sisters who are now
with the True, and not wish to be
with them ourselves?

RAIQ
I do not know what to suggest. I
only know that I am alone here...
and I would very much like to have
a sister beside me.

Axno considers Raiq's words. Sisko, Kira and Prynn are
encouraged that they seem to be averting any more crisis.

62 EXT. SPACE - EAV'OQ HOMEWORLD

Seeing the clean, pristine planet from orbit...

63 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY

The *Defiant's* shuttlepod has landed on the soft green lawns on the outskirts of the Eav'oq citadel. Ro and Taran'atar walk across the grass away from it, towards the city.

RO

Not too late to back out.

TARAN'ATAR

Your concern for my emotional state is... amusing.

Opposite them, striding out of the citadel, is OPAKA. When they meet, Ro and Opaka greet each other warmly. Taran'atar hovers back politely.

RO

Ranjen, it's good to see you again.

OPAKA

And you, Lieutenant... oh, Commander. Well! Clearly much has changed since we last spoke.

RO

I'm afraid so. You know about...

OPAKA

I do. Elias recorded a message for me before he took the final steps on his path. I will miss him greatly, but it was a noble choice. His service to Bajor and the Eav'oq will not be forgotten.

RO

He recorded a message for me too. And for Pryn.

OPAKA

How is the poor girl?

RO

Last I saw, she was struggling.
But I think she'll make it. I've
been trying to help as much as I
can...

OPAKA

You miss him too.

Ro nods sadly. Opaka turns and looks up at Taran'atar.

OPAKA

Now! I certainly did not expect to
see you again. What can I do for
you, Taran'atar?

Now that he's here, Taran'atar hesitates to answer.

RO

He's come - for want of a better
word - for spiritual guidance.

OPAKA

I'm happy to help however I can,
but surely, Taran'atar, this is
something you would go to your own
gods for. Why come to me?

TARAN'ATAR

Ranjen Opaka... I cannot ask my
gods. It is the Founders who I
find myself questioning.

Opaka takes a moment to process that. She knows it's big.

OPAKA

I have not spent much time with
your people, Taran'atar. But from
my studies, I know that your
loyalty to the Founders is at the
very core of your being. So
this... Sit with me.

Opaka leads the others over to one of the stone walls that thread through the lawns. Opaka perches on one, gestures for Taran'atar to sit beside her. He does, awkwardly.

OPAKA

I know you are unique among your people. You alone of all the Jem'Hadar are capable of making your own choices.

TARAN'ATAR

I want to follow the Founders. But it seems I no longer know how. There are only three gods remaining to the Dominion, and they disagree on almost everything. And I... also disagree.

OPAKA

I imagine that must be quite disconcerting for you.

TARAN'ATAR

How do you choose which god to follow? What if you choose none?

OPAKA

My customary advice has always been to look for solutions from within. To search your inner self for what you believe to be the right path. No-one else. Your *pagh* will never lie to you.

TARAN'ATAR

Do I have a *pagh*?

OPAKA

I believe every living creature does. Even you.

TARAN'ATAR

How do I hear it?

Opaka turns sideways on the wall and gently, being sure not to startle him, reaches out to grasp Taran'atar's ear.

Of course, adult Jem'Hadar don't have ears, so after a few moments of Opaka fumbling for something to grab, she simply lays her hand gently against the side of his stony face.

That done, she closes her eyes and breathes deeply. The Jem'Hadar soldier gazes back at her, not sure what's happening but somehow feeling comforted by it all. And Ro watches them both, strangely touched to witness this.

64 **EXT. SPACE**

Axno's Ascendant ship and the *Brahmaputra* face each other, with the Bajoran fleet and other runabouts nearby.

65 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

Raiq's hand likewise rests gently on the walls of Axno's damaged Ascendant ship. She takes comfort from the familiar surroundings, after having been without them so long. The ship seems to recognize her presence, responding with soft throbs of light and power beneath her fingers. Raiq smiles.

AXNO

If our brothers and sisters
Ascended, then we must have found
the Fortress at last.

RAIQ

We did. The Fire lit the path.

AXNO

Then we must still be near.

RAIQ

In fact, we passed through the
Fortress. We are now on the other
side of it, in the home system...
of the Bajorans.

AXNO

(wary)

They are the enemy. They are blasphemers in the sight of the True. The Fire said so.

RAIQ
(no conviction)
They are...

66 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT (INTERCUT)

Kira hears the lack the conviction in Raiq's voice. Does it mean anything?

RAIQ (cont)
But my sister, you must -

AXNO
Then why do they not die and burn as all heretics must?

RAIQ
My power is weakened -

AXNO
And if the Fortress is so near, and all the Knights have gone to it, why have you not followed?

RAIQ
My vessel is gone -

AXNO
Mine is not. If you will not join our brothers and sisters in the Fortress... I will.

Axno bursts into FLAMES, taking away the holographic image. Kira, Sisko and Prynne flinch back, but Raiq pleads...

RAIQ
My sister, wait! Axno! Please listen, my sister! Do not...

But there's no answer. She's cut the connection.

67 EXT. SPACE

Axno's ship turns on its wobbly axis, and JUMPS away.

68 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

While Raiq is quietly devastated that Axno wouldn't stay with her, the others are right into action.

KIRA
She's gonna try for the wormhole.

SISKO
Follow her!

Prynn gets the runabout underway...

69 **EXT. SPACE**

The runabouts and Bajoran ships turn and zoom after Axno.

At the wormhole, Axno JUMPS back into space.

The wormhole BURSTS into life, all blue and white petals.

70 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

Axno stands at the controls of her vessel, whose panels throb with the sympathetic blue-and-gold colours of the wormhole itself. She gazes out of the canopy in wonder, her wounded leg and damaged ship forgotten for the moment.

AXNO
(prayer)
Blessed True, Unnameable Ones.
Accept me into your Fortress, and
let me burn in your eyes, as was
foretold. Let me... ascend.

The very purpose of her life about to be fulfilled, Axno works the consoles to move the ship forwards.

71 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

As Prynn works hard to catch up to Axno, Kira gazes with horror out of the window at the churning wormhole, and Axno's tiny ship moving into it.

KIRA
We're too late...

72 **EXT. SPACE**

Axno's ship is sitting right in the mouth of the wormhole, hovering right at the event horizon...

73 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

Axno stands, arms wide and eyes closed, blissfully awaiting the Ascension to come. But after a few moments, she opens her eyes again, perplexed.

Nothing's happening. She looks at the sparkling currents of the wormhole interior, calls out in confusion...

AXNO
I do not understand. Blessed True,
I await the Ascension...

But nothing happens.

74 **EXT. SPACE**

Suddenly, the wormhole closes up again, leaving Axno's ship drifting alone in empty space.

75 **INT. ASCENDANT SHIP**

Axno collapses to her knees, stunned. The ship's systems go dark. She wails in anguish and heartbreak.

Her gods have rejected her.

76 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Kira, Sisko, Prynne and Raiq all look out of the window at Axno's ship, small and alone against black space. They all understand what this must have meant to Axno.

Finishing on Kira, sympathetic and hurting...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

77 EXT. SPACE

The fleet moves slowly through space, with the *Brahmaputra* leading the way, and Axno's damaged ship in the middle, surrounded on all sides by the Bajoran ships.

78 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - HABITAT RING

The three runabouts escort Axno carefully towards one of the runabout pads. The ship settles gently onto the pad, which sinks into the station. The other runabouts move off.

79 INT. DS9 - CORRIDOR

Major Cenn, Corporal Renta and a troop of armed Starfleet security wait at the airlock as it cycles open.

Kira is the first one through the door, followed by Raiq gently leading Axno along, then Sisko and Prynn. Axno looks barely there, unable to process what has happened.

CENN

Welcome back aboard, Captain.

KIRA

Thank you, Major. Although I'm not a captain anymore. I'm just Kira now.

CENN

What would you like us to do with your prisoner?

RENTA

I have a few ideas.

Cenn shoots a shut-up glare at Renta. Kira continues:

KIRA

Well, first of all, she's not our prisoner. She's our guest.

RENTA

I beg your pardon?

CENN

You are right on the edge,
Corporal. One more word and you'll
be my prisoner.

(back to Kira)

My apologies, but... ah... I don't
understand. She did kill at least
one Bajoran officer.

KIRA

We'll deal with that. Right now,
I'll take responsibility for her.

CENN

Very well. But as acting security
chief, I will assign a patrol to
"escort" you at all times.

KIRA

Understood.

Kira leads on down the corridor, with Raiq and Axno, and
the security contingent. Sisko acknowledges Cenn with a
polite nod and then follows them. Prynn steps up to Cenn.

PRYNN

Try not to be too hard on her,
Major. She's just lost...
everything. I know how that must
feel.

CENN

That doesn't excuse her actions,
Lieutenant. Or yours. There's
still the matter of you stealing a
runabout to be dealt with.

Prynn gulps, but nods her acceptance of that.

CENN (cont)

But that can wait until Ro gets
back from the Gamma Quadrant.

Cenn and Prynn follow the rest down the corridor.

80 **EXT. ASHALLA MONASTERY**

Returning us to a calm and peaceful day on Bajor...

81 **INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ATRIUM**

The room is a bit crumbled and damaged. Kasidy sits by the window, gazing out at the countryside, while Rebecca plays hop-scotch happily with herself.

Around them, various monks and Militia techs make repairs as best they can. Lights flicker and machines grind.

KASIDY

Rebecca? Be careful, honey. I don't want you to trip over and hurt yourself.

REBECCA

Okay, mommy.

Rebecca stops hop-scotching, sits down cross-legged on the ground, gets out some jacks and marbles from her pockets. She begins to happily play. Kasidy smiles, satisfied, and looks out of the window again. Major Rochan enters.

ROCHAN

Captain Yates?

KASIDY

Major - hi.

ROCHAN

Captain, I thought you'd want to know that the Ascendant has been stopped. She's been taken back to the space station.

KASIDY

Okay, good. That means Ben and Nerys should be back soon, and I can take Rebecca home again.

ROCHAN

My apologies, Captain. I know the conditions aren't ideal.

KASIDY

Sorry, I didn't mean to complain. I'm grateful to you and the Kai for looking after us. It's just... obviously you've been attacked. There's rubble and machinery and exposed wires everywhere...

ROCHAN

(looks around sadly)

Yes... for such a brief attack, the Ascendant was surprisingly thorough. Don't worry. As soon as the Emissary returns, you'll be safely on your way.

With an encouraging smile, Rochan heads out. Kasidy goes back to gazing out the window. Elsewhere in the room, more cables spark and fritz. The engineers move to fix them.

Unnoticed, the reflecting pool hologram flickers, fritzes out and dies, revealing the secret staircase underneath, that Sisko followed Opaka down in 1x01 "Emissary."

Kasidy is looking at the view. The engineers are occupied with their repairs. But Rebecca looks up from her game.

Quietly, with the natural curiosity of a child, she picks up her toys and goes to peer over the edge of the stairway. With a mischievous grin, she checks that Kasidy isn't watching her, and then begins to creep down the stairs.

82 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

QUARK is standing in the doorway of his bar, observing as Kira, Raiq and Axno walk down the Promenade, tailed at a discreet distance by security. Cenn, Sisko and Prynn are also nearby. Quark beckons Prynn over to him.

QUARK

What's all this?

PRYNN

Another Ascendant. Looks like Raiq isn't the only one left after all.

QUARK

Interesting... A betting pool on how long it takes Starfleet to find more of them could be quite lucrative. The public is interested in this stuff.

Prynn rolls her eyes. Across the Promenade, the Ascendants have reached the Bajoran shrine. Kira tries to welcome them inside. Raiq and Axno both hesitate, but eventually they follow her in. Security set up position outside.

83 INT. DS9 - BAJORAN SHRINE

Kira, Raiq and Axno enter the shrine, through the anteroom and into the main chamber. Axno looks around, unimpressed.

AXNO

Why do I care how heretics worship? These unbelievers have nothing to show me.

KIRA

Don't be so sure, Axno. Take a look at this.

Kira leads them over to the altar area, and shows them the Orb box on its plinth. Axno remains indifferent, so Kira reaches in and opens the box, revealing the ORB inside.

Now Axno is suitably impressed. She gasps, bows her head.

AXNO

The sacred Eyes of Fire... the Bajorans possess them?

KIRA

Not here. This is only a hologram.

Kira waves her hand through the image of the Orb, proving that it's not real.

KIRA (cont)

The real ones are on Bajor itself,
hidden away.

84 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ORB SANCTUARY

Rebecca creeps down the steps, emerging into the secret room at the bottom. She peeks around the corner, and sees all nine Orb boxes set out in a circle on the ground. She skips into the room, delighted.

85 INT. DS9 - BAJORAN SHRINE

Axno is back to being unimpressed.

AXNO

So you are liars. You pretend to possess the Eyes of Fire, to support your own profane interpretation of the True.

RAIQ

She's not lying, Axno. I have seen one of the Eyes myself.

AXNO

You have... looked into the Eye?

RAIQ

I do not know why you and I were denied the Ascension, my sister. But if you come to Bajor, look into the Eye with me... perhaps we will see as the True see. And then we may understand. Together.

Axno ponders the question for a moment. Kira and Raiq are encouraged. But then Axno turns back to Raiq and sneers.

AXNO

No. It is all a lie. And somehow these unclean have convinced you of it. The Fire placed her trust in you to lead the Quest. But you have betrayed us all. You are as much a heretic as these creatures.

Raiq is stung to her core by the accusation. And as Axno stands with the Orb at her back, she stretches out her arms, and the FLAMES begin to form around her hands. Kira reacts in fear...

86 **INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ATRIUM**

Kasidy is still sitting and gazing out of the window.

KASIDY
Rebecca, honey?

No answer. Mildly annoyed, Kasidy turns...

KASIDY
Don't ignore me, young lady...

...but sees that Rebecca is gone. Kasidy panics.

KASIDY
Rebecca! Where are you?
(to engineers)
Did you see where she went?

They shake their heads. Kasidy sees the open staircase, reasons that Rebecca must have gone down it. She shouts...

KASIDY
Rebecca! Are you down there?

No answer. Kasidy begins to descend the steps...

87 **INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ORB SANCTUARY**

Rebecca is hop-scotching around and between the Orb boxes, giggling happily to herself, having a great time. She can hear Kasidy's scared calls and footsteps approaching...

KASIDY (o.s.)
Rebecca! Where are you? Don't run
away from mommy!

As she's dancing around, Rebecca inadvertently catches one of the Orb boxes, and its door swings slowly open. Rebecca stops, fascinated by the strange shining object inside. She crouches down in front of it, reaches out to touch it.

Axno stands, her hands aflame with anger. Raiq looks on in horror. Cenn and a couple of Starfleet security appear at the opening to the shrine, worried...

CENN

Captain, are you okay in here?

KIRA

We're fine, Major, just stay back.
Axno... what are you doing?

RAIQ

My sister, please...

AXNO

You are no sister of mine. You have lived among these creatures for days, rested in their beds, eaten their food... they should die and burn! But instead you let them continue to breathe and spread their lies. You refuse to join the Knights in the Fortress.

RAIQ

(pleading)

But you know we have been denied the Ascension!

AXNO

But the Ascension is not the only way to join the True. Has not our doctrine always stated that upon the end of our bodies in this world, our spirits will burn with the True for eternity?

The flames around Axno's hands grow even fiercer, spreading up her whole arms. Kira realizes what's about to happen...

KIRA

Cenn, get out of here! Go!

Cenn wisely doesn't argue - he and the other security leave. Kira tries to grab Raiq and go, but Raiq refuses. The flames are growing more and more over Axno's body, her legs and chest and head... but she's grinning with victory.

AXNO

You, Raiq... are a heretic. You have turned your back on the True. But I... I remain faithful. I will destroy you, and all these vile trespassers, and this entire house of lies....

The flames on Axno's body shoot out, firing sideways to the walls, setting the entire shrine on fire... and Axno is laughing with the strength of her religious fervour.

AXNO

I will die for the True... and burn forever in their eyes. And I will know that I have taken you with me!

With one final explosion, Axno BURSTS into a massive ball of flame. Everything is on fire.

Raiq reacts instinctively, throws herself in front of Kira. She casts her hands out and forms an instant FORCEFIELD, like an *Invisible Woman* thing, a cocoon surrounding herself and Kira and protecting them against the flames.

89 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Having only just exited the shrine, Cenn and his security people are thrown to the ground as the Promenade is ROCKED by the explosion and FLAMES burst out of the doorway.

Everyone on the Promenade reacts in shrieks of terror - all the usual passersby, plus Quark, Prynne and Sisko.

SISKO

Kira! Kira!

90 **EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - PROMENADE**

The explosion is enough to BLAST a hole in the exterior of the station, flames licking out into space.

91 INT. DS9 - BAJORAN SHRINE

Kira stands inside the forcefield with Raiq, watching sadly as the entire shrine burns around them both.

92 INT. ASHALLA MONASTERY - ORB SANCTUARY

Kasidy emerges from the bottom of the stairs and into the Orb sanctuary. We can hear Rebecca's GIGGLING as she steps into the room. Kasidy sees the nine Orbs set in a circle, one of them open and shining...

But there's no Rebecca. In a panic, Kasidy begins to hunt around the room.

KASIDY

Rebecca! Are you in here? Don't
hide from me, baby! Answer me!

The GIGGLING comes again, echoing around the room. Kasidy looks around, unable to tell where it's coming from.

KASIDY

Rebecca! Baby, please!

There's only the GIGGLING in response. Kasidy stops, and finally notices that one of the Orb boxes is open. Her jaw drops in horror as the realisation gradually dawns on her.

KASIDY

Oh god, no...

We CLOSE IN slowly on the shining Orb, turning peacefully in its box, the GIGGLING sound ringing in the distance...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW