

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x01 - "Emancipation."

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. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Sparks, wreckage, small fires. The bridge is a total wreck. It seems like nothing could have survived this mess.

A HAND reaches out from beneath a fallen wall panel, pushes it aside. A body struggles to pull itself out. Gradually it is revealed as DEZ, captain of the *Even Odds*, bloodied.

On his knees, Dez looks around at the wreckage of his ship. He hauls himself up to his feet, but ROARS with pain as he discovers a broken ankle and topples back down again.

DEZ

Facity! Talk to me!

No answer. He crawls over the broken panels, FLINCHES from a sparking cable. A green furry leg pokes out from under more wreckage - he SCRAMBLES as best he can towards it. DRAGS pieces of singed metal out of the way to uncover...

...the unconscious body of PIF, the dog-like Aarruri alien. Dez feels for a pulse on his furry neck, sighs with relief. He looks up at the main VIEWSCREEN - it is cracked right down the middle, dark and useless. He calls out loud...

DEZ

Srral! Are you there?

A CRACKLE of distortion from the speakers - electronic attempts to form words, but without success. A BURST of sparks from a corner somewhere, and the sound dies out.

Muffled MOANS and grunts from the rear of the bridge. Dez heads in that direction. Panting and wincing from the pain. FACITY - the Wadi first officer - drags herself up from the floor to a sitting position. Woozy, disoriented, big bruise on her head, skimpy outfit torn - she quickly covers up...

FACITY

(slurred)

Wha... what happened...?

DEZ
Oh, Fac! You're alright!

FACITY
I wouldn't go that far...

He GRABS her in a strong hug of relief - she GASPS in pain.

DEZ
Oh, sorry...

...and he lets her go.

FACITY
Where's everybody else?

DEZ
I only found Pif. He's down, but
alive. I think my ankle's broken.

FACITY
That's all? What about Neane?
Coamis? Srral?

DEZ
I'll keep looking.

He turns to begin crawling back across the bridge...

FACITY
Not without me.

She begins to haul herself upwards, but Dez turns back...

DEZ
Stay where you are. You might have
a concussion.

FACITY
Shut up.

Fighting the dizziness, she staggers slowly forwards...

FACITY
I see something...

A BODY lying face down, badly burned. Facity grimaces and holds back vomit at the smell. Across the room, Dez sits on the deck, cradles his ankle, shares her look of dismay.

Facity crouches, grabs the dead, limp arm, turns the body over. A female alien we haven't seen before, eyes staring glassily, half her face recognisable among the flash burns.

FACITY

It's Neane...

DEZ

Damn it.

A crackling, distorted synthetic voice issues from a small speaker located somewhere in the room - the voice of SRRAL.

SRRAL (comm)

Dez... Facity... are you there?

FACITY

Srral! Yes, we're here! Are you okay?

SRRAL (comm)

Affirmative... mostly.

DEZ

How bad is it, Srral?

SRRAL (comm)

Much of ship is heavily damaged. I am only able to find one system intact enough to communicate.

FACITY

Any sign of the rest of the crew?

SRRAL (comm)

Negative. Internal sensors appear to be disabled.

DEZ

Yeah, I'm not surprised.

BANG - Facity and Dez jump in shock, expecting the worst. A hatch has burst open in the deck, and BRAD the giant female Dosi crew member appears. She squeezes through the tight space, hauling a cloth bag through the hatch after her...

DEZ

Brad. You scared me to death.

BRAD

Be glad I had the chance. Why are any of us still alive?

DEZ

I have no idea.

BRAD

You saw who was attacking us. They don't stop until the job's done.

SRRAL (comm)

I may know why attack was stopped. Access to main computer garbled at best. But in last moments before external sensors lost, registered more incoming ships. Assumed they came to join attack. Instead they fired on our attackers. In fight between them, we are forgotten.

DEZ

So they might still be out there?

SRRAL (comm)

Affirmative.

Brad digs into her bag and pulls out a random collection of phasers. She hands one to Facity and another to Dez...

BRAD

I brought weapons, just in case somebody decides to board us.

DEZ

Good idea. Can you find Glessin? Pif needs attention. We all do.

BRAD

Yeah, I found Glessin. I found him curled up in a ball and talking to himself. Poor guy's gone crazy.

FACITY

(defensive)

He's not crazy.

Srral's voice interrupts, the synthetic tone nevertheless conveying urgency and fear...

SRRAL (comm)

Incoming transporter signal.

DEZ

Weapons! Take cover!

A WHINE in the air - a transporter signature forms in the middle of the bridge. Facity and Brad rush to hide...

...but Dez can't move, left alone in the centre. He stares in horror, raises his weapon, knowing he's got no chance.

DEZ

(shaky)

Don't move. We've got you covered.
What do you want from us?

ANGLE - ON TARAN'ATAR

The Jem'Hadar soldier stands in his black jumpsuit, unarmed. He looks at them curiously...

TARAN'ATAR

I came to help.

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

Standard establishing shot. All is well.

3 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

A regular afternoon on the Promenade. We start on the UPPER LEVEL, watching Starfleet and aliens of all shapes and colours mill around, going about the business of their day.

PAN around from the upper level, down to the LOWER LEVEL to watch the people mill similarly there. Quark's is middling-busy with a lunch-time crowd.

Eventually settle upon the Replimat, where KIRA and VAUGHN sit together at a table. Kira is eating, mid lunch break. Vaughn has no food - he only just sat down.

KIRA

Four admirals?

VAUGHN

That's what I was told.

KIRA

We had a whole damn interstellar war and the most we got was one admiral. What's the crisis now?

VAUGHN

I don't believe it's an actual crisis as such. More of a review.

KIRA

A review? Of what?

VAUGHN

Well, you. Us. The station, Bajor, some of our recent missions and misadventures. It's almost a year since Bajor joined the Federation.

KIRA

Okay. And?

VAUGHN

And as you know, Admiral Akaar was closely involved in that decision. And it's part of his job to follow up. To see how Bajoran society is handling the change, how they're integrating into the larger whole.

KIRA

So I can look forward to more of his charming interview technique. Ro will be thrilled. Who else?

VAUGHN

Bill Ross. These days, he's in charge of assignment of materiel. So I assume he's coming to assess Deep Space Nine itself. Equipment requisition, maintenance issues, technology upgrades and the like.

Kira nods, a bit relieved. She has nothing against Ross.

KIRA

Next?

VAUGHN

My former boss, actually. The head of Starfleet Intelligence, Alynna Nechayev.

KIRA

Little blonde woman? Straight to the point? Smile like an icicle?

VAUGHN

That's the one. You know her?

KIRA

She came to the station once, to advise Benjamin on the Maquis situation. Led to one of his more memorable rants.

Vaughn's expression cools at Sisko's name. Kira doesn't notice - she is smiling at an amusing memory.

VAUGHN

Well, I imagine she'll have some questions for us all about the whole Taran'atar-Iliana-Ghemor-alternate-universe business.

KIRA

She can ask away. I have nothing to hide.

VAUGHN

The only one who I don't know personally is Marta Batanides.

KIRA

And what does she do?

VAUGHN

According to the database, crew assignments. Who goes where, who gets what ship - or station. She's in Starfleet's humanoid resources department, you might say.

KIRA

So what does she want with us?

VAUGHN

Well, much like Bajor, it's been almost a year since you put on the uniform. It's standard practise for all Starfleet captains to sit for a periodic review of their performance, especially when newly promoted such as yourself. Admiral Batanides will be looking into your reports, your decisions --

Kira drops her fork to her plate with a clang.

KIRA

She what?

VAUGHN

Relax, Captain. It's no more than we do with our officers here. And you have nothing to worry about. You're an excellent captain, and I support every decision you've made in that time... well, except for the one about firing me.

Kira smiles, taking the joke how it was intended. She picks up her fork again and takes a last bite of her food...

KIRA

So when do they get here?

VAUGHN

Day after tomorrow.

KIRA

Well, thanks for the heads up, Commander. It's good to know I have the inside track.

He smiles, accepting her confidence in him. She stands, takes her plate back to the replicator to be recycled, and comes back. Kira shakes her head, still bemused...

KIRA

Four admirals. And here I was wondering what I would find to pull my hair out over today.

4 EXT. SPACE - EVEN ODDS

The patchwork freighter vessel lies half-dead in space, with running lights on barely half the ship and visible damage all over. Parked alongside is the small Bajoran shuttle Taran'atar used in 9x24 "Ha'mara."

5 INT. EVEN ODDS - MEDICAL BAY

COAMIS, the young Wadi man from 8x23 "Rising Son," is dead. Grey-skinned, badly scarred and trembling hands gently pull a sheet up over his face. Cardassian medic GLESSIN stares at the lump under the sheet, unblinking...

Sickbay is just as patchwork and damaged as the rest of the ship. Beside Coamis's bed is another carrying Neane's body.

Facity is also in the room, big bruise still on her head, now in a new outfit. She is gentle and soothing...

FACITY

I'm sorry, Glessin. Are you going to be okay?

Glessin is still shaking slightly, but refusing to let any more out than that. He doesn't want to talk about it...

GLESSIN

Thank you for your concern, Facity, but I'm fine.

FACITY

It's okay to not be fine. It's completely understandable that you'd have... well... flashbacks. Nothing to be ashamed of.

GLESSIN

(blank)

I'm not ashamed. I am a little worried about our new guest.

FACITY

You're not the only one. But Dez hasn't decided what to do about him yet.

GLESSIN

I'll tell you what to do. Kill it.

And he turns away, goes to a panel that is still half dead, and begins working on it. Facity sighs, turns to leave...

6 INT. EVEN ODDS - CORRIDOR

Facity emerges into the half-lit corridor, with sparking cables and smoking conduits. Dez and Pif are waiting for her. Dez leans on a walking stick to help his splinted ankle; Pif tries not to put weight on a bandaged front paw.

DEZ
Is he any better?

FACITY
Not really.

PIF
I could try talking to him.

FACITY
Thanks, Pif. But I think he just
needs to keep busy, keep himself
distracted. He'll get through it.

The three begin to walk down the corridor, all limping or
otherwise favouring their injuries...

DEZ
How are repairs going?

FACITY
Prees is doing what she can. She
says some areas are still so
damaged that Srral can't even get
in to look around, never mind fix
anything. A lot of the spares we
were carrying are as ruined as the
things they were meant to replace.

DEZ
(sigh)
All right.

They reach another door, where Brad stands with a rifle.

DEZ
Are you ready for this?

FACITY
As I'll ever be.

DEZ
Open the door.

Nervously, Brad pulls a lever. The door opens onto...

INT. EVEN ODDS - QUARTERS (CONTINUOUS)

...one of the standard smaller quarters, as in 8x23 "Rising Son." Taran'atar sits on the basic, functional cot. Facity, Dez, Brad and Pif enter - he looks at them disdainfully...

TARAN'ATAR

Why do you keep me prisoner?

DEZ

I think it's understandable, under the circumstances.

FACITY

There's a theory that we should have just killed you outright.

Taran'atar STANDS sharply - the others FLINCH, brace for attack. Brad raises her rifle, Pif raises his hackles and growls under his breath. Taran'atar is only curious...

TARAN'ATAR

I offer no threat. I received your distress call. I came to help.

DEZ

You're a Jem'Hadar. Why would you want to help us? Why should we trust you?

TARAN'ATAR

I have allowed you to confine me for almost a full day without argument. I have no weapons.

FACITY

A Jem'Hadar is a weapon.

TARAN'ATAR

True. But if I had wanted to kill you, one door and one Dosi guard would not have stopped me.

BRAD

He's not lying. I haven't heard a peep since we put him in here.

BRAD (cont)

And look at him - he's not in uniform. He doesn't even have a tube for that drug they use. Maybe he's not with the rest of them.

TARAN'ATAR

(sneering)

My body does not require the white. I was assigned outside the Dominion, as an observer of life on board the Federation outpost Deep Space Nine.

DEZ

(surprised,
hopeful)

Jake... Do you know Jake?

TARAN'ATAR

Jake Sisko - I am aware of him.

DEZ

Is he... okay?

TARAN'ATAR

To my knowledge, yes. I have encountered him rarely.

Taran'atar has done all the defending himself he is going to. It is up to Dez now to do whatever he is going to do. Dez thinks for a moment, takes a deep breath, then...

DEZ

Alright. I'll let you out.

Facity begins to protest, but Dez raises a hand to silence her - which only annoys her more...

DEZ (cont)

But you'll be under armed guard at all times. Any problems, and we don't ask any more questions. Is that clear?

Taran'atar nods. Dez turns to leave.

8 **INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE**

Lieutenant NOG works at his engineering panel...

NOG

Incoming message from the USS
Sentinel, Captain. They'll be
arriving with Admirals Akaar,
Batanides, Nechayev and Ross
within thirty minutes.

KIRA

Very well, Lieutenant. Make sure
upper pylon two is ready for them.

NOG

Aye, sir.

Kira turns to Vaughn, beside her at the central Ops table.

KIRA

Commander? Please prepare to greet
the admirals.

VAUGHN

With respect, Captain, they'll be
expecting the station's commander.
You don't want to start off on the
wrong foot by sending a mere first
officer, do you?

Kira purses, sighs, gripes, harrumphs... but can't argue.
She plods up the stairs to the turbolift...

KIRA

Oh... this is gonna be bad.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

9 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

The Akira-class USS *Sentinel* is docked on an upper pylon...

10 INT. DS9 - DOCKING CORRIDOR

KIRA takes a deep breath, straightens her DRESS UNIFORM, planning to make as good a start as she can. RO is with her, wearing her armature supports and using a walking stick. A phalanx of Starfleet security wait with them.

The airlock door rolls open, and Admiral ROSS is the first to emerge, warm and friendly, his adjutant behind him...

KIRA

Admiral Ross - welcome back to
Deep Space Nine.

ROSS

Captain Kira - wonderful to see
you again. The uniform suits you.

KIRA

Well, thank you. If you'll join
Lieutenant Ro, her staff will take
you to the quarters we've secured
for all of you.

ROSS

Thank you, Captain.
(hands her a padd)
The schedule my adjutant drew up
for meetings with your staff.

KIRA

Certainly - I'll see to it that
the arrangements are made.

Ross steps off to the side, waits with Ro... leaving room
for NECHAYEV to step forward and immediately hand over her
own padd. Kira is a bit thrown by the brusqueness...

KIRA

Admiral Nechayev - welcome back to
Deep Space Nine.

NECHAYEV

Thank you, Captain. Here is my own
schedule for meetings. We have
much to discuss.

No more said, Nechayev walks on through. Kira turns back to
the airlock - and pulls herself up to full height as AKAAR
unfolds from the small space and peers down at her...

KIRA

Admiral Akaar. I welcome you with
an open heart and an open hand.

She smoothly performs the traditional greeting, as seen in
8x14 "Twilight." The enormous, intimidating Capellan allows
the tiniest smile, and performs the gesture back...

AKAAR

Captain Kira. I thank you for your
welcome, and I return it in kind.

He hands her another padd - she struggles to hold them all.
As Akaar steps past, he notices Ro. Subtly looks her up and
down, noting her Starfleet uniform and her leg supports...

AKAAR

Lieutenant Ro.

RO

Admiral.

And that's all they have to say to each other.

Finally BATANIDES emerges, last seen TNG 6x15 "Tapestry."
She shuffles forwards, struggling to manage her own armful
of padds, a bit scatter-brained and disorganised. Smiles
broadly at Kira, holding out her free hand to shake...

BATANIDES

Ah, Captain Kira. A pleasure to
meet you at last. Just... bear
with me a sec here, sorry...

She shuffles through her padds, peers at each in turn...

BATANIDES

Oh for crying out loud... where is
the blasted thing...

Ross and Nechayev exchange looks - they have put up with
this for the whole journey. Batanides' adjutant, a Bolian
lieutenant, calmly hands her another padd...

BATANIDES

Oh, thank you, Tomil.
(passes it to Kira)
Here you go - sorry, bit muddled.
Always on the last minute.

KIRA

Don't worry about it, Admiral.
Welcome to DS-Nine. Lieutenant...?

Ro nods to her staff, who lead the contingent back down the
corridor. Ro hangs back with Kira, taking the rear...

RO

(sotto)
Ready to kill yourself yet?

KIRA

Don't give me ideas.

And they continue along the corridor...

11 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Taran'atar lifts a large heavy object with no difficulty,
takes it to PREES, the female Karemma engineer, who works
on the main viewscreen. Other crew members work on fixing
various panels and devices. Brad is nearby keeping watch.

PREES

Put it there. Thank you.

He does. Nearby, the silver metallic liquid form of SRRAL
slips out from an open panel, gathers into a pool on the
deck, then reaches and slips into another piece of tech...

TARAN'ATAR

Interesting - a Himh Worker. I was not aware any such creatures had left the Himh homeworld.

PREES

(defensive)

Srral's a genius. I've never known a better engineer in my life.

TARAN'ATAR

He was designed to be so. Just as I was designed to be a soldier of the Dominion.

PREES

Then why are you here? Why are you helping us? How exactly does this "bring glory to the Founders"?

Taran'atar flinches, struggles to find an answer...

TARAN'ATAR

The Founders would wish me to aid you in this instance.

PREES

I find that difficult to believe, under the circumstances.

Taran'atar turns away, distract himself with manual labour, still trying to come up with a good answer...

TARAN'ATAR

You are friends of Jake Sisko. Jake Sisko is important to Kira Nerys. Kira is important to Odo. Odo is a Founder. Therefore the Founders would wish me to help.

PREES

Okay, that's the weakest excuse I've ever heard. You didn't even know we knew Jake until you were already here.

(no response)

PREES (cont)

The Founders would not want you to help us, and you know it. You shouldn't even be able to help us without a specific order to do it. So why isn't your head exploding for going against the Founders?

TARAN'ATAR

(sharp, defensive)

I am not against the Founders.
I follow them in all things.

By now, the other crew have stopped working to listen in...

PREES

And another thing. If you really were assigned to Deep Space Nine by the Founders like you said, then what were you doing out here in our neighbourhood?

TARAN'ATAR

I... left that assignment.

PREES

You "left"?

TARAN'ATAR

I chose to leave.

PREES

Since when does a Jem'Hadar choose anything?

TARAN'ATAR

A recent experience left me with the ability to make decisions for myself. I chose to return to the Dominion, where I belong.

PREES

But then you chose to come and help us? Why? Why are you here?

And Taran'atar can't answer the question.

12 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira looks out through the door of her office onto Ops. She sees the turbolift rise into place, carrying AKAAR. She takes another deep breath, steels herself...

KIRA
Admiral - right on time as always.

AKAAR
Of course. Shall we?

He walks on ahead of Kira into her office without invite. She bites her tongue and follows him in. They sit...

AKAAR
I have many meetings scheduled, Captain. One with Minister Asarem, another with General Lenaris, more with the staff of the Starfleet recruitment facility in Musilla. So I will get to the point.

KIRA
Okay...

AKAAR
Please detail for me the current relationship between Starfleet personnel and Bajoran Militia personnel aboard the station.

Kira sighs, preparing for a long and stressful meeting...

13 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN ENGINEERING

Some of the known engineering crew, such as CANDLEWOOD or PERMENTER, work at various locations doing various things. The door opens - NOG leads ROSS into the room. Nog talks constantly, trying to impress as much as possible...

NOG
...so things were kind of a mess after our fight with the Klingons. A lot of repairs. So I took the chance to try out some ideas.

ROSS
(indulging him)
Like what?

NOG
Oh! Well, I was thinking about how the ablative armour took a hammering and then I remembered the nanobot defence we developed to fight the Cheka in the Gamma Quadrant. So I wondered if I combined the two, maybe I could get the nanobots to take some of the heat, so to speak --

ROSS
Lieutenant. Relax. You don't have to try so hard to impress me. I'm already impressed.

NOG
(pleasantly
surprised)
Thank you, sir.

ROSS
I realise you're probably used to a lot of people saying you're too young to be in such a position of responsibility...

NOG
It has come up from time to time.

ROSS
...or that you've got big shoes to fill. But I wouldn't have approved Captain Sisko's request to give you a field commission during the war, or Captain Kira's request to promote you to Chief Engineer, if I hadn't already seen potential in you myself.

Nog is genuinely quite touched now. He is not used to getting such validation...

NOG
Thank you, sir.

Ross moves on to the next part of the tour, nonchalant...

ROSS
I just wish your magic touch
extended as far as stopping every
single runabout I give you from
exploding.

NOG
(chuckle)
I don't think anyone's that much
of a magician, sir.

14 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Where Kira is still holding her tongue, trying her hardest
not to be offended by Akaar's blunt questions...

AKAAR
Have you observed any tension
between those former Militia
members who have transferred to
Starfleet and those who chose to
remain with the Militia? Is it
possible there is resentment
between the two factions?

KIRA
What factions? You're seeing
divisions that don't exist.

AKAAR
I am seeing nothing, Captain. I've
only just arrived. I'm simply
asking if there might be an aspect
to relations aboard the station
you may be blind to, because of
your own service history within
both organisations.

KIRA
Admiral, my service history is not
a problem.

KIRA (cont)
In fact, I like to think it's an
inspiration - proof that Starfleet
and the Militia can work together.

AKAAR
An admirable goal, Captain. Are
you certain the rest of your crew
feels the same?

KIRA
Yes. I know for a fact that all of
the crew on Deep Space Nine are
happy to be here and happy to be
working together.

15 INT. DS9 - OFFICE

A smaller office space, used for visiting dignitaries.
Batanides sits on one side of a desk, opposite DAX.

Batanides is inspecting a padd before her on the desk. Dax
is perched rather nervously, awaiting Batanides' reaction.

After a moment, Batanides looks up at Dax...

BATANIDES
You're certain about this?

DAX
Yes, Admiral. I'd like you to
consider my request for transfer.
I'm ready to leave Deep Space
Nine.

On Dax's resolute expression...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

16 INT. DS9 - OFFICE

Where we left it...

BATANIDES

Does Captain Kira know?

DAX

She does. I discussed it with her yesterday, once I heard you were coming. It's only fair.

BATANIDES

Okay. I'll look over your request and let you know when I can.

DAX

Thank you. In the meantime, I'd appreciate it if you didn't say anything to anyone else just yet. There are some people I'm going to have to work up to telling...

Off Dax's thoughtful, worried face...

17 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

...to BASHIR sat on the long side of the main table, trying not to be nervous. Opposite him with a padd is ROSS.

ROSS

It must have been a very traumatic experience. You were, after all, clinically dead for a time. Were you able to have any counselling?

BASHIR

There wasn't time. I took a week off to recover, then Taran'atar attacked Kira and Ro, and I had lives to save.

ROSS

Which you did with your usual skill, Doctor. But what I wanted to talk about was the loss of the *Missouri* on the Kornak homeworld.

BASHIR

I can hardly be held responsible for that.

ROSS

Perhaps not. But what you could conceivably be held accountable for is the fact that the remains of the *Missouri* were left behind when you were rescued.

BASHIR

The ship was crippled, Admiral. I never even saw it again after I fell out of it. In mid-air.

ROSS

Doctor, your own report states this was an aggressive military culture that would take any advantage it could. And that the Kornaks were experimenting with cybernetic devices intended to connect all their soldiers into one easily controlled network.

Bashir sighs, exasperated. Knows what Ross is getting at...

BASHIR

I'll admit that there were some superficial similarities to the Borg. But the Kornaks are no threat to anyone but themselves.

ROSS

And yet in the aftermath of your contact, they now have access to advanced Starfleet technology that could allow them to leave their planet and survive in space.

BASHIR

Admiral, what do you expect me to do about it? The damage is done. If you're looking for someone to blame, perhaps you should speak to Commander Vaughn. He'll tell you that there wasn't time to scan an entire planet for Starfleet tech. He had a limited window, and he chose people over politics.

(pointedly)

Something not all command-level officers are capable of doing, I might add. Some are quite happy to ride roughshod over people's lives in the name of security.

ROSS

What are you saying, Doctor?

BASHIR

Oh, nothing. Certainly nothing your fellow admirals here on the station need to hear about.

A moment, as Ross digests Bashir's unspoken threat...

ROSS

Tread carefully, Doctor. However clever you think you are, there's still the chain of command.

Bashir is not cowed, sits back with a small smug smile...

BASHIR

Given everything we've discussed, what action do you recommend regarding the Kornaks, Admiral?

ROSS

As you say, Doctor, nothing to be done about it now. But be aware of the consequences of your actions in future. I think you'd do well to reconsider those counselling sessions. Dismissed.

Bashir languidly stands from the table and walks out. Ross watches him go, not pleased at how the meeting went...

18 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

RO sits at her desk, wearing her armature supports, walking stick against the wall. She holds herself tight, refusing to give Adm NECHAYEV the pleasure of seeing her rattled...

NECHAYEV

I'm sure it won't come as a surprise, Lieutenant, if I tell you there are people who don't believe you have any business wearing a Starfleet uniform, much less being head of security on such a major outpost as this.

RO

I'm well aware of Admiral Akaar's opinions about me. And frankly, I couldn't care less about them.

NECHAYEV

Don't make the mistake of thinking Akaar is the only one, Lieutenant. You've managed to aggravate an impressive number of officers in your time.

RO

I'm sure they can handle it.

NECHAYEV

Fortunately for you, an equally impressive number have made a habit of standing up for you, regardless of how... "flexible" your adherence to regulations is.

RO

I guess it pays to have friends in high places.

Nechayev bites her tongue...

NECHAYEV

It also pays to have the skills to back up the attitude. Your work during the parasite crisis, and on unravelling the Sidau massacre, was undeniably excellent from an intelligence perspective. But don't imagine for a moment that you're invulnerable, Ro.

(cold smile)

I haven't forgotten that it was my mission on which you decided to abandon your oath and betray Starfleet to the Maquis.

RO

(prickling)

I never betrayed anybody. I just learned that Starfleet isn't always as right about everything as they think they are.

NECHAYEV

And of course you're the only person qualified to make such a decision. But no matter. I'm not here to rehash ancient history. I want to discuss your relationship with Gul Macet.

RO

What about it?

NECHAYEV

You've done good work cultivating him as a resource. My question is, how devoted do you think he is to the Ghemor government, given the recent revelations about the... "connections"... between their families?

She's referring to the Iliana-Dukat thing. Ro has to stop to think - this is an angle she hadn't thought of.

On Ro's worried expression...

19 **INT. DS9 - OFFICE**

KIRA enters the room - she has had a long day, and is in no mood for more bureaucracy. BATANIDES looks up from her desk smiling, stands to shake Kira's hand again...

BATANIDES
Captain, come in. Thanks so much
for coming. Can I get you anything?

KIRA
Umm... a raktajino, I suppose.

BATANIDES
Oh, tell me about it. It's been a
long and thirsty day.

Batanides heads to the replicator, hits keys. The device produces two cups, she hands one to Kira...

BATANIDES
Sit down, Captain. I won't keep
you long.

They move back to the desk and sit, and Batanides begins rummaging around the various padds in front of her...

BATANIDES
Oh, where did I put it? I swear,
I'd lose my head if Tomil wasn't
there to hand it to me every
morning. Don't know what I'm gonna
do when he finally makes an honest
couple of Grem and Sondi...

Kira smiles, not quite sure how to react. Batanides finds the padd she was looking for, pauses with a new idea...

BATANIDES
Speaking of which, how's Ensign
ch'Thane doing? I understand he's
still back on Andor?

KIRA
Yes, he is. Haven't heard much
from him.

KIRA (cont)

But Ensign T'rb is doing a fine job filling in. I just feel bad that I can't give him the job on a permanent basis. While Shar's on paternity leave, the position has to be held open for him.

BATANIDES

Yes, that's the rules, I'm afraid. Still, it's all good experience.

(brandishes padd)

So, let's get down to business, shall we? You had a bit of a tricky year, looks like.

Kira tenses. The friendly chat was too good to last...

KIRA

A little bit, yes. But all the mitigating circumstances are there in my reports...

BATANIDES

Yes, I read over those on my way here. I'm sure my fellow admirals will have done the same, and they may have some questions for you later. But I wouldn't worry, I'm sure it'll all work out fine.

KIRA

(caught off guard)

Oh... well... good.

BATANIDES

(chuckle)

Not what you expected, Captain? Honestly, I think too many of us forget on our way to the top that we've all been in your position. So I like to put the smiling face on the admiralty when I can. You've got enough problems.

KIRA
That's very refreshing to hear,
Admiral. Thank you.

BATANIDES
You're welcome. I must say your
diplomatic skills have improved as
well. I don't think I've ever seen
Akaar so surprised as when you did
that heart-hand thing he loves.

Kira is forced to grin. Batanides is turning out to be
nothing like she expected. She relaxes...

KIRA
That was funny, wasn't it?

As the two women chuckle together...

20 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

Just enough to indicate time passing, with a suggestion of
late night. *Defiant* and *Sentinel* where they were...

21 INT. DS9 - VAUGHN'S QUARTERS

Dimly lit, late at night. VAUGHN sits alone, idly strumming
his guitar. The playing helps to calm his mind. His uniform
jacket is cast off and thrown over the back of the couch.

After thirty seconds or so...

COMPUTER
Incoming signal from unknown
source.

He calmly puts his guitar aside and stands up, pulls his
shirt tight and neat, takes a deep breath...

VAUGHN
Accept.

The speakers respond with a SQUEAL of static, like the
sound of an old modem. Vaughn winces slightly at the sound.
As the sound continues, a TRANSPORTER effect forms over
Vaughn. He dissolves...

22 **INT. DS9 - QUARTERS**

...and rematerialises in another set of quarters. The room is completely dark, lit only by the stars through the window and the small blue lights on three transporter PATTERN ENHANCERS, laid out in a triangle.

Vaughn has materialised in the centre of the triangle. He looks around, not surprised by any of this.

Admiral BATANIDES steps out of the darkness, into the circle of pale light cast by the enhancers. She looks up at him, calm and firm. She too is out of uniform.

BATANIDES

Elias. Good to see you again.

VAUGHN

Marta. Good to see you too. The new transporter enhancers work well, I see.

BATANIDES

So far. If they worked right, then no-one will have any idea either you or I were here.

VAUGHN

I hope so. We shouldn't be seen together.

BATANIDES

So. I've completed my review of Kira. Have you completed yours?

Off Vaughn's stern face...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

23 INT. DS9 - QUARTERS

Vaughn has moved towards the window. Batanides follows, and they stop together to gaze out...

BATANIDES

Elias...? I asked you a question.
Have you made your decision about
Captain Kira?

VAUGHN

I have.

BATANIDES

And? Do you think she's ready to
join our little group?

VAUGHN

(turns to her)

Actually... no.

(off her surprise)

Oh, I have no doubt she could
handle it. If she had to. But the
truth is, I don't want her to. She
has enough to worry about. And...
I have someone else in mind who I
think would be more suitable.

BATANIDES

Who?

VAUGHN

Not who you'd think. I'd rather
not say more until I have to.

BATANIDES

If you're sure. Just remember,
things can happen quickly. Don't
leave it too long to bring this
new person in. You're not getting
any younger, Elias.

VAUGHN

I can always rely on you to cheer me up, Marta. Do we have anything else to discuss?

BATANIDES

A handful of minor incidents where I suspected their involvement. Nothing I could prove, of course. Remember the Tomed Incident?
(faux forgetful)
What was that guy's name?

She reaches into a pocket and pulls out a small data chip. Vaughn plucks the chip from her hand, with a knowing look.

VAUGHN

It'll come to me.

At that, he walks back over to the pattern enhancers and steps into the triangle. Batanides works some controls...

BATANIDES

I hope you're sure about this.

Vaughn dissolves in a transporter beam. Batanides remains there, silhouetted against the window of stars...

24 EXT. SPACE - EVEN ODDS

The freighter ship still in space, battered and bruised...

25 INT. EVEN ODDS - SHUTTLE BAY

...to TARAN'ATAR carrying heavy objects again under Prees's directions. Brad stands nearby, with a weapon at the ready.

DEZ and FACITY walk by, keep a close eye on Taran'atar...

FACITY

Dez... I know you have this thing for taking in orphans. But a couple of stranded Ferengi and an adventurous Friagloim are a lot different from a Jem'Hadar.

DEZ

I see something in him, Facity.
He's... trying to figure himself
out. I know how that feels.

FACITY

Just remember what I said. There's
a lot of things can go wrong here.

Facity leaves, GLESSIN passing her to enter. The Cardassian
is stiff, wary-eyed. Dez frowns a little to see his medic
in this unfamiliar locale, then walks over to Taran'atar...

DEZ

Taran'atar... I want to talk to
you. Why are you here?

Taran'atar pauses, puts the object he was carrying down,
turns back to Dez. Prees and Brad watch them...

TARAN'ATAR

Why does everyone on this ship ask
the same question? I am offering
to help. What does it matter why?

DEZ

Because none of us understand. And
until we do, we can't trust you.

Taran'atar growls under his breath. He hates this. In the
background, unnoticed, Glessin prowls, watchful...

TARAN'ATAR

I was returning to the Dominion.
I expected to be put to death for
my... deviancy.

DEZ

Why would you do that?

TARAN'ATAR

That is the order of things. I
have followed that order loyally
for over twenty years. I see no
reason to stop now.

DEZ

Really? I see a reason. In fact if that's what you expected to happen then the reason seems pretty damn obvious to me. You just didn't want to go home and be killed.

In a sudden flash of movement, Glessin comes at Brad from a side angle with a hard PUNCH in the face.

As Brad THUDS to the floor unconscious, Glessin grabs her weapon, spins and points it right into Taran'atar's face...

GLESSIN

You won't need to. I'll kill you myself.

Off Taran'atar's stern expression...

26 INT. DS9 - WARDROOM

...to KIRA sitting on one side of the table, trying not to look nervous as she faces all four ADMIRALS on the opposite side, each with padds filled with Kira's own reports...

AKAAR

Perhaps you're aware of the Prime Directive, Captain. Among other things, it describes Starfleet's policy of non-interference.

KIRA

(deadpan)

I think I heard that somewhere, yes, Admiral.

AKAAR

(not amused)

And yet members of your senior staff interfered in the political affairs of multiple planets over the past year. The Trill parasite crisis, the kidnapping of the Andorian councillor, a challenge against the Ferengi Grand Nagus...

KIRA

That assistance was specifically requested by the leaders of each of those planets. I'd think you'd be happy to see Starfleet making themselves invaluable to member worlds. Not to mention building relationships for Bajor.

AKAAR

True, image is a vital component of the service. Curious then that your own world cannot boast the same relationship with Starfleet.

KIRA

I don't understand.

NECHAYEV

Your crew failed to prevent the murders of more than two-hundred Bajoran citizens, Captain. Hardly the best first impression.

KIRA

The culprits were caught. Iliana Ghemor is dead.

NECHAYEV

And unable to face justice. Much like your Jem'Hadar "observer", who you curiously allowed to go free after he facilitated that very massacre by sharing your own reports, and then brutalising multiple members of your crew.

KIRA

I of all people am very aware of what Taran'atar can do, Admiral.

(beat; rubs chest)

But he is a free man now, with the ability to make his own choices, and he chose to go home. I have no authority to deny him that.

NECHAYEV

What you have is a responsibility to Starfleet, Captain. Taran'atar represents an enormous tactical opportunity for us. Thanks to him, we have proof that the Jem'Hadar's genetically engineered loyalty to the Founders can be overcome.

The other admirals all look uncomfortable at this, while Kira bites her tongue and speaks low...

KIRA

Using brainwashing techniques created by Cardassian torturers?

NECHAYEV

This is no time to be squeamish.

AKAAR

Admiral, I must say I agree with the captain on this. Starfleet should be far above condoning torture, even of our enemies.

KIRA

The Dominion isn't our enemy.

NECHAYEV

Of course they are.

Off Nechayev's stern expression...

27 INT. EVEN ODDS - SHUTTLE BAY

...to Taran'atar glaring down at Glessin, not worried in the least. Glessin holds his weapon on Taran'atar, scarred hands trembling with emotion. No-one else dares move...

DEZ

Glessin... what are you doing?

GLESSIN

What you won't. I don't know why you let this animal on board. He was on one of those ships!

TARAN'ATAR

What are you talking about?

DEZ

He means... it was Jem'Hadar who attacked us in the first place.

TARAN'ATAR

Why? They would not have done so without reason.

DEZ

We... reclaimed... some items from a world that is under Dominion control, on behalf of a client.

TARAN'ATAR

You stole from the Dominion. You are the ones who seek to die, not me. Perhaps I should help you on your way and destroy you myself.

GLESSIN

You see? He's a murderer! He killed them all. Neane, Coamis...
(tearful)
...everyone on the *Danasket*... the entire Obsidian Order fleet... a billion Cardassians...

TARAN'ATAR

(sneer)

Then kill me in futile revenge, if you have the courage. I suspect you do not.

GLESSIN

I never hurt anybody, I was just a medic, just out of the Institute, and you killed them all!

TARAN'ATAR

Do you imagine I should apologise to you? That fleet's mission was to destroy the Great Link. You all deserved your fate.

DEZ

You're not helping, Taran'atar.

Taran'atar ignores Dez. Steps forward, focuses on Glessin, who looks back up at him, tears in his terrified eyes...

TARAN'ATAR

You were insects... trying to look gods in the eye. The Dominion can never be destroyed. The Link is forever, and I am its forever loyal servant.

Off Taran'atar's blazing certainty...

28 INT. DS9 - WARDROOM

...to ROSS picking up the thread, if reluctantly...

ROSS

Two runabouts lost. Three senior staff almost killed, two juniors murdered. Negligence, leading to environmental disaster for your own planet. Relieving your own executive officer of duty. It's a remarkable record, especially for a captain's first year in the job.

Confused by this hostility, Kira looks towards Batanides...

KIRA

All the mitigating circumstances are there in my reports...

But Batanides gives her nothing back, friendly face of the admiralty no longer. Feeling betrayed, Kira turns back...

NECHAYEV

We're looking into those reports, Captain. Very closely into them. And what caught my attention was that, not only did you let your Jem'Hadar return to the Dominion, you let the Founder Odo return to the Dominion as well.

KIRA

He's a foreign dignitary, Admiral.
Do you normally imprison foreign
dignitaries after the function?

NECHAYEV

He's a source of intelligence. But
you let him go without so much as
a debriefing. One of a series of
decisions that seem to favour the
Dominion over the Federation. One
is almost tempted to wonder why.

Kira darkens at the accusation. Ross and Batanides look
quietly shocked. Akaar speaks up carefully...

AKAAR

Clearly, my colleagues and I have
some matters to discuss, Captain.
We'll let you know our decision.

KIRA

Decision regarding what, Admiral?

AKAAR

Your position as captain, Captain.
Dismissed.

Unsure how to handle this, Kira stands slowly. Hesitates...

KIRA

I don't lie in my reports. Any-
thing you may want to know is
already in there. If that's not
enough for you... then I don't
know what else you want from me.

She heads for the door. But with her back to the admirals,
it's clear she is afraid...

29 INT. EVEN ODDS - SHUTTLE BAY

...as is Glessin.

DEZ

Glessin... give it to me.

Dez reaches out slowly and takes the gun. Glessin lets go easily enough, but can't take his eyes off Taran'atar.

Prees appears to gently guide Glessin away, while Taran'atar looks down at the unconscious Brad...

TARAN'ATAR

Your security officer is pitiful.
She can be knocked unconscious
with one blow.

DEZ

We don't have a security officer.
Brad is our jewellery specialist.
But most people are usually easily
intimidated by a Dosi with a gun.

FACITY (comm)

Dez! You there? We got a problem.

DEZ

Facity? What's wrong?

FACITY (comm)

It's the Jem'Hadar.

DEZ

(look at Taran'atar)

What about him?

FACITY (comm)

Not him. Them. They're back. There's
a Jem'Hadar ship on the sensors, and
it's coming right for us.

On Dez's newly panicked expression...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

30 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

DEZ stands on his bridge, staring at the viewscreen, which shows the ominous image of a Jem'Hadar ship bearing down on them. His crew are terrified. In their ruined state, there is nothing they can do to defend themselves...

DEZ
(whisper)
Why are they just sitting there?
Why don't they just shoot?

He turns to TARAN'ATAR, still with Brad on guard...

TARAN'ATAR
Let me speak to them.

FACITY
Dez, that's not a good idea.

TARAN'ATAR
I am an Honoured Elder among the
Jem'Hadar. They will listen to me.
I may be able to save your lives.

Dez looks back and forth, trying to decide. Finally...

DEZ
Srral... open a channel to them.

SRRAL (comm)
Channel open.

TARAN'ATAR
Even Odds to Jem'Hadar vessel.
I am First Taran'atar of the
Jem'Hadar. I wish to speak with
the Vorta. Please respond.

A pause... then the screen changes to show the Vorta VANNIS (9x16 "Olympus Descending") wearing one of their headsets.

VANNIS (screen)
First. Explain your presence on
this vessel. Records indicate you
are assigned to Deep Space Nine.

TARAN'ATAR
I was returning to the Dominion
when this vessel was attacked. I
responded to their call for help.

VANNIS (screen)
(suspicious)
Why?

TARAN'ATAR
I believed it was the right thing
to do.

VANNIS (screen)
Well... that's certainly a
conversation for another time.
The attack on this vessel was
not authorised by the Founders.
I regret any deaths it caused.

TARAN'ATAR
(confused)
But... these people stole from a
Dominion world. That is a crime.

VANNIS (screen)
I do not disagree. But it is the
Founders' wish that all Jem'Hadar
vessels refrain from battle for
the time being. The other squadron
ignored those orders. We destroyed
them for disobeying the Founders.

DEZ
Then you haven't come to kill us?

VANNIS (screen)
(cheery)
Surprisingly, no. But I would
suggest you refrain from stealing
from Dominion worlds in future.

TARAN'ATAR
(warning glance)
I assure you they will comply.
(back to screen)
May I join your squadron? I have
news for the Founders. There are
things... they deserve to know.

On Taran'atar's pensive, worried face...

TENMEI (v.o.)
So where were you last night?

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

The evening after-dinner crowd. On a higher level, VAUGHN
and TENMEI sit together, waiting for their drinks...

VAUGHN
What do you mean?

TENMEI
I popped by your quarters just
after twenty-two hundred. I was
having a get together with my old
friends from the *Sentinel* and I
wondered if you wanted to join us.
But you didn't answer the door...

VAUGHN
Twenty-two hundred? Pryn timer, baby,
that's way too late for an old
fart like me. I was fast asleep by
that time. Sorry.

TENMEI
Eh, that's alright. You need your
beauty sleep. We're still on for
dinner tomorrow, though, right?

VAUGHN
Count on it.

QUARK finally arrives, with a big schmoozing smile and a
tray of drinks...

QUARK

Commander, Lieutenant, how are you this evening? Having a wonderful time, I hope.

(hands out drinks)

Here are your favourites - a Berengarian ale for you, and a Tilamin froth for you. Enjoy!

TENMEI

You're in a good mood.

QUARK

There's a whole extra Starfleet ship and crew on the station. More people means more opportunity, and more opportunity means more profit. It's basic math. And if there's one thing I've learned from living alongside Starfleet all these years, it's that after a visit from an admiral, everybody needs a good stiff drink.

TENMEI

Can't argue there. Thanks, Quark.

Quark heads away, and Vaughn and Tenmei both take a sip...

TARAN'ATAR (v.o.)

What will happen to him?

32 INT. EVEN ODDS - TRANSPORTER ROOM

Taran'atar and Dez enter the room together...

DEZ

He'll get better. We'll help him.

TARAN'ATAR

Even though he defied your authority?

DEZ

We don't kill people just for having issues to work through...

DEZ (cont)
Thank you for not killing him
either.

TARAN'ATAR
I chose not to.

DEZ
And what have you chosen now?

Taran'atar looks at the transporter pad, pausing to verify
his decision to himself, then steps up onto the platform...

TARAN'ATAR
To return to the Founders, and
leave my fate in their hands.
Perhaps I did falter for a moment,
but this is as it should be.
(stands tall)
First Taran'atar to Jem'Hadar
vessel. I am ready.

Dez nods, and Taran'atar dissolves in a transporter beam...

KIRA (v.o.)
I thought they'd never leave.

33 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Vaughn and Tenmei look up from their drinks...

...to see KIRA shuffling towards them, distracted.

VAUGHN
Captain? You okay?

KIRA
I suppose. Captain Amalfitano just
told me that the *Sentinel* is due
to leave first thing tomorrow.

TENMEI
Don't let Quark know.

Vaughn pulls out a chair for Kira - she slumps into it...

VAUGHN

I guess that means the admirals
have had enough of us.

KIRA

Guess so. Akaar's gonna stick
around a bit longer, I think.

VAUGHN

Captain, seriously. What's wrong?

KIRA

(sigh)

Well... the review, for one thing.

TENMEI

Nog and Julian said it went well.

KIRA

Nog and Julian aren't the ones who
have to take... accountability.

BATANIDES (o.s.)

May I join you?

They turn to see BATANIDES standing nearby. After her lack
of support in the meeting, Kira is not pleased to see her.

KIRA

Admiral. Of course, please. I
don't think you've met my first
officer, Commander Vaughn...

Vaughn stands, holds out his hand, a polite smile to cover
his alarm - he said they shouldn't be seen together. But as
Batanides reaches across the table to shake his hand...

...she knocks Vaughn's glass over, sending his beer flying
all over Tenmei, who SHRIEKS and leaps to her feet...

BATANIDES

Oh my goodness, I'm so sorry...

TENMEI

Don't worry, Admiral... Quark!

...and Tenmei runs off to get help and clean up. Batanides watches her go, wincing in embarrassment... then she takes the spare seat. Vaughn settles back, knowing perfectly well that Batanides engineered all of that to get rid of Tenmei.

BATANIDES

I wanted to let you know, Captain,
we've finished our discussions,
and made our recommendations.

KIRA

And, did it all... work out fine?

Batanides accepts Kira's pointed dagger gracefully...

BATANIDES

Yes, sorry about that. I just --

KIRA

"A remarkable record, especially
for a captain's first year". I
spent that first year constantly
asking myself if I was making the
right decisions. If I was giving
the right orders... If I was good
enough to be a Starfleet captain.

BATANIDES

I'm glad to hear it, but --

VAUGHN

And I told her she was one of the
strongest captains I'd ever known.
Especially for her first year.

Batanides turns to Vaughn, his quietly pointed look...

BATANIDES

(placating)

And I agree.

(back to Kira)

Captain, the fact that you did
question yourself, that you wanted
to be sure, that you didn't let
arrogance take over, is precisely
why you are a strong captain.

BATANIDES (cont)
And why I overrode Admiral
Nechayev's concerns and insisted
you remain in command of Deep
Space Nine.

KIRA
(quiet surprise)
You did?

BATANIDES
With the agreement of admirals
Ross and Akaar. Crew assignments
are my responsibility, after all.
This station needs you, Captain.

Kira allows a small smile of gratitude. Batanides stands...

BATANIDES
I'll leave you to your drinks.
Commander, apologise again to the
Lieutenant for me, would you?

VAUGHN
Of course, Admiral.

Batanides walks away, leaving Vaughn and Kira alone...

VAUGHN
There, that must make you feel
better, surely?

KIRA
About the review, I guess. But...

VAUGHN
(gently)
What else do you have to feel not
good about?

KIRA
(sigh)
Iliana. I told everyone she was
dead. That she blew herself out
the airlock on Terok Nor.

VAUGHN
Were you lying?

KIRA
No, not exactly. All the evidence
points to her being gone for good.
It's over, it's done with. But...

VAUGHN
But...?

KIRA
But I can feel she's alive. I've
got no logical reason to think it
at all, but I just know... she's
still out there somewhere.

Off Kira's worried, sombre face...

34 EXT. SPACE - FOUNDERS' WORLD

The Jem'Hadar ship pulls into orbit over the golden world.

VOICE (comm, v.o.)
Dominion vessel two-eight-eight,
you are cleared to enter orbit.
Welcome home.

VANNIS (comm, v.o.)
Thank you. Entering orbit now.

35 EXT. FOUNDERS' WORLD - SURFACE

CLOSE on Taran'atar's face as a Dominion transporter signal
deposits him onto the rocky islet. We don't see much else
around him for now, but shock slowly registers on his face.

PULL BACK, and where we are used to seeing the planet-sized
lake of the Great Link, there is just an empty, rocky hole.
Dry stone stretches away into the distance.

After a few moments, there is the rustling sound of a
Founder shape-shifting, and Taran'atar turns to see ODO
just solidifying behind him on the islet.

Taran'atar is so confused and surprised that he forgets to react with the proper deference. He just goes straight to the questions...

TARAN'ATAR

Founder... the Great Link. What happened to it? Where are the other Founders?

ODO

The Link is gone, Taran'atar. The Founders left.

TARAN'ATAR

But the Dominion. The Jem'Hadar. What will happen to us without the guidance of the Founders?

ODO

What will happen... is what's been happening. The Dominion is in chaos... and the Jem'Hadar are on the verge of civil war.

As Taran'atar and Odo look out forlornly over the empty link...

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW