

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x16 - "I Will Survive."

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. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING**

All is well from the outside. The *Defiant* is parked in its usual spot, but we're mostly focusing on the Promenade.

**2     INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

A normal day on the Promenade, with the usual stuff going on. Quark's bar is middling busy.

The doors of the Infirmary open, and ETANA KOL walks out. She strolls along a bit, nods hello to one of the many extras. She's heads to the Security office, and goes in...

**3     INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)**

...but stops short when she realises Major CENN is sat behind the desk. He looks up at her entrance.

ETANA  
(surprised)  
Oh. Hello.

CENN  
Hi. Can I help you, Sergeant?

ETANA  
I was looking for Laren - it's twelve hundred. Time for our regular physiotherapy session.

CENN  
The Lieutenant's not here, I'm afraid.

ETANA  
Well, yeah, I see that. Where is she?

CENN  
Kel-Artis, apparently. I woke up this morning to new orders that

I'm covering as security chief  
until she gets back.

ETANA

Kel-Artis? What's she doing all  
the way out there?

CENN

(shrug)

Starfleet tactical seminars, she  
said. Or the message said, anyway.  
I haven't actually spoken to her  
in person.

ETANA

Well, I wish she'd told me. If I  
knew she was going to blow me off,  
I could have made other plans.  
Like maybe have something to eat  
at lunchtime like normal people  
do.

CENN

I'm no wiser than you, Sergeant.  
It must have been a pretty vital  
seminar for her to run off and  
leave me in charge.

ETANA

Maybe they had somebody who needed  
yelling at, and wanted the best  
yeller in Starfleet.

CENN

(chuckle)

I'm sure that must be it. I can't  
really complain, anyway. Now we've  
got Commander Dax back, I was  
starting to feel a bit like a  
fifth wheel in Ops.

The main door opens again, and QUARK enters. He takes one  
look at Cenn and Etana, and purses, unimpressed.

QUARK

Where is she?

CENN

Not here.

Quark grins sourly, baring his pointed scraggly teeth.

QUARK

She wouldn't leave the station without saying goodbye to me. So where is she?

ETANA

We're as surprised as you are, Ambassador. But apparently there was an urgent seminar at a space station half-way to Earth that demanded her attention more than a polite "See you soon."

QUARK

Polite?! Wait, we are talking about Ro Laren here, right?

They all chuckle again.

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

Also a normal day in Ops. KIRA and DAX are both at the main Ops table, with SHAR and NOG at their regular stations.

The turbolift rises into Ops, carrying PRYNN. She steps off and heads down the stairs towards the table.

PRYNN

Ummm... Captain?

Shar's head pops up from his screens at the sound of her voice. He watches her, blank-faced and inscrutable. Nog also looks up, seeing Shar's reaction. Silently watching the other two. Meanwhile, Prynn has reached Kira.

KIRA

Lieutenant. What can I do for you?

PRYNN

I was just wondering if you know where my dad is? We usually meet for lunch, and he didn't show.

KIRA

Oh, Prynn, I'm sorry. He's got meetings all day. The commander of the recruitment centre down in Musilla, the security chief there, they're talking about setting up a training annex as well, I think... Sorry. He's gonna be tied up all day. He didn't tell you?

PRYNN

I guess not.

KIRA

I'm sure he meant to. Tell you what - when I see him, I'll give him a slap just for you.

PRYNN

(chuckle)

Thanks.

Prynn turns away - and sees Shar looking at her. He looks away, as if caught out. But then he tentatively looks back again. She's still looking at him, a mix of longing and regret and apology. Unable to express any of that, however, she simply aims a stiff nod of acknowledgement his way. He does likewise. They both turn back to their own business.

Nog has seen the entire silent exchange. As Prynn leaves Ops, he shakes his head with an exasperated sigh. Hew-mons. Why do they have to make everything so complicated?

Prynn having gone, Dax turns to Kira and speaks *sotto*.

DAX

I didn't know about all that. I thought Vaughn hated meetings - I'm surprised he didn't try to palm them off on me.

KIRA

(smirk)  
Are you saying you want them?

DAX  
Gods, no.

There's an alert on her panels - Dax checks it, and frowns.

DAX  
There's a Trill transport just entering the system. They've requested permission to dock.

KIRA  
Are we expecting anyone?

DAX  
Not that I know of. Vannis's ship is due in an hour, but nobody said anything about a Trill transport. Evidently today is "let's not tell anybody what we're doing" day.  
(new alert)  
They're hailing.

KIRA  
Okay, put them through.

Dax presses controls, and they turn to look at the main viewscreen. It comes to life with the image of HIZIKI GARD. The Trill man looks out at them with calm professionalism.

GARD (screen)  
Captain Kira. Lieutenant Dax. A pleasure to see you again.

DAX  
(pursed lips)  
It's Lieutenant Commander Dax now, thank you Mister Gard.

GARD (screen)  
(small smile)  
My apologies, Commander.

Dax is obviously not happy to see him. Kira is rather wary too, since the last time he was here, he killed Shakaar.

KIRA

Mister Gard... What can we do for you?

GARD (screen)

I'd like to come aboard, if I may, Captain. And bring a guest with me.

KIRA

A guest?

GARD (screen)

Yes. I'm afraid it's a rather delicate situation, and only Lieutenant Commander Dax can help me to resolve it.

Kira and Gard both look to Dax for her response. Her face reveals that she's not looking forward to this...

FADE OUT:

**END OF TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

FADE IN:

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

A Trill transport (like the one seen in 8x21 "Lesser Evil") has now docked at the station.

**6     INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR**

Dax waits uncertainly as the airlock rolls open. It reveals Gard, wearing a smart but functional suit. He looks down at Dax, fully aware that this will be an uncomfortable meeting for her. But he bears her no malice.

GARD

Dax.

DAX

Gard. You said you had a...  
situation?

GARD

I do. Allow me to introduce...

He steps aside to reveal another man behind him, another Trill. Youngish, in a plain drab jumpsuit, looking downcast and distant. His hands are also bound together in front of him with metal handcuffs. His name is KINJER ODAN. A third man hovers further back, keeping watch - Trill security.

GARD (cont)

...Kinjer Odan.

DAX

Odan?!

The three men by now have stepped down into the corridor - Odan still only half-there and being gently guided.

GARD

Yes.

DAX



Is he... drugged? And why is he handcuffed?

GARD

For his own good, Commander. For his own safety. And I'd rather not talk about it in a corridor, if you don't mind.

Dax frowns, very unclear on all this. But eventually she nods her reluctant assent and leads them down the corridor.

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

Dax leads the group towards a set of quarters. The security man gently guides the shuffling Odan along behind her, with Gard taking up the rear.

As they reach the door and it opens, Dax pauses to let them enter. She looks at Odan, worried for him, compassionate. Gard by contrast is straightforward and professional. He nods at the security man, who stays out in the corridor as the other three enter.

**8 INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Gard leads Odan towards the couch area, and gently sits him down. Odan does it with no protest - he's going through the motions, barely any sign of intelligence in there. Dax is rather disquieted by his condition.

With Odan comfortable, Gard looks around the room. It looks like temporary quarters, with no personal effects or sign of having been lived in.

GARD

You're not staying?

DAX

No. Just waiting until my next assignment comes up.

Gard nods, considering that.

DAX

Get to the point, Gard. Odan is one of the oldest and most respected symbionts I know of. What have you done to him?

GARD

I haven't done anything at all. He's... sick.

Gard looks over to Odan, slumped on the couch, barely aware of where he is. Gard seems genuinely sorry for him.

DAX

Then why bring him all the way here? Surely all the doctors you need are back on Trill.

GARD

Not that kind of sick.

Dax looks over to Odan... and realises what Gard means.

DAX

Are you saying... he's a bad joining? Like Joran?

GARD

Nothing that dangerous yet. He hasn't hurt anybody. Well... anybody but himself, at least.

Sympathetic and worried, Dax goes over to the couch, sits next to Odan. She brushes the hair off his face, feels his dull, lifeless skin. He seems at least slightly aware she is there, and grateful for the comfort.

DAX

That's why you restrained him?

GARD

It's my job, Commander. I handle aberrant joinings - those rare mistakes where symbiont and host do not mesh the way they should.

(beat)

Kinjer is a member of the Trill Homeworld Defence. He received the Odan symbiont around two years ago, after its previous host died when your friend Verad poisoned the water supply.

DAX

Hadn't he been through all the training? The checks, the scans, the psych evaluations?

GARD

Yes. He was perfectly healthy and suitable for joining.

DAX

Then what went wrong?

GARD

We don't know. He started self-harming about six months in. At first we thought it was a reaction to the mass deaths of so many symbionts from the Neo-Purist attacks. He'd been off world at the time, so we thought maybe, survivor's guilt. But it kept going. Getting worse.

DAX

(realising)

He tried to kill himself?

GARD

Several times. None of our people can seem to help him. So I brought him to you.

DAX

Why me? What can I do that all of Trill can't?

GARD

All of Trill is oversensitive to anything to do with joining right

now, Commander. There are so few of us left, we're almost becoming like celebrities. It's easier to be away from home. As for you... well, you know Odan. You know me. And you've been in an aberrant joining yourself.

DAX

(bitter)

I know you because you killed me to end that joining.

GARD

(calm)

As I said... that's my job.

DAX

Look - I'm not the counsellor anymore. I switched to command track in case you didn't notice. I can set you up with Commander Matthias -

GARD

Not Commander Matthias. You. I'm asking for your help, Dax.

Dax doesn't really want to work with Gard. But looking at the pitiful figure Odan has become, she can't help but feel sympathy for him.

9 **EXT. SPACE - FREIGHTER SHIP**

A random clumsy freighter ship travels at low warp through open space.

VAUGHN (v.o.)

I am grateful for your help, Ro.

RO (v.o.)

I know. You don't have to keep saying it.

10 **INT. FREIGHTER - CARGO BAY**

A dingy, dirty, messy cargo bay. Low tech, lights are dark, the space is crammed full, and no money has been wasted - certainly not on cleaning.

VAUGHN and RO are both in grimy civvies, jammed in between various boxes and crates, and urgently working together at an open panel in the bulkhead. Only about a foot square, it bristles with pulled out wires and blinking lights.

RO (cont)

Although I wouldn't object to knowing precisely what it is I'm trying to accomplish here.

VAUGHN

Oh yes, sorry. I guess I'm not used to explaining things to people. Once you've got access to the freighter's transponder array, I'm going to piggy-back an additional signal onto it - send a message.

RO

They won't detect it?

VAUGHN

There's a very subtle way of manipulating the signal to insert a new message into the already existing medium. Only someone who knows what to look for would see it.

RO

Alright. Then what?

VAUGHN

Our contact will pass it on to Julian. In the meantime, I have my own contacts who will help us trace L'Haan's movements since her ship vanished.

RO

And what about Julian?

Awkward pause. Vaughn concentrates on his work. But Ro pushes for an answer.

RO  
Commander?

VAUGHN  
We'll see.

Suddenly Ro turns, slams her back against the open panel, hiding it from sight. She grabs Vaughn fiercely and yanks him towards her, mashing his face into hers. She makes out with him ferociously - he's too surprised to argue.

Out of the corner of our eye, we can now see another figure in the cargo bay - the freighter's alien PILOT. Without looking at him, Vaughn senses his presence as well, and responds to Ro's advances. She lifts up both legs and wraps them around his waist as he grinds her into the wall.

PILOT  
Ahem.

Vaughn and Ro both turn their heads to look at him, annoyed to have been interrupted. The Pilot sneers salaciously.

PILOT  
Little old for you, isn't he?

RO  
Screw you.

VAUGHN  
I paid plenty to get on this ship.  
What we do to pass the time is  
none of your business.

PILOT  
I suppose not. Although I do  
appreciate the entertainment  
value. Thought you might want to  
know we're nearing orbit.

Ro caresses the side of Vaughn's face lustily.

RO

Then we'll be sure to make the most of our time.

PILOT

Oh, please... do carry on.

Vaughn and Ro both glower at him menacingly. With a roll of the eyes, the Pilot turns and leaves the cargo bay.

Once he's gone, Ro lowers her legs and Vaughn steps back. Both of them recover their composure. There's no point in being bashful - it was necessary.

VAUGHN

Good ears.

Ro stretches her back out, and steps away, revealing the open panel again.

RO

Good reflexes too. Let's get back to work.

They both turn back to the open panel, and work on it more urgently than ever.

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

Now joining the *Defiant* and the Trill transport is Dominion Vessel 288, parked at an upper pylon.

**12 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE**

Kira is sat behind the desk, working. She looks up and sees VANNIS approaching the door through Ops. Kira presses the control to open the door and Vannis strolls in. Kira stands to greet her.

KIRA

Thank you for coming, Vannis.  
Please take a seat.

Vannis perches in the seat opposite Kira, her legs crossed haughtily. Kira sits back down again.

VANNIS

(slight edge)

Always a pleasure to meet with our  
honoured Bajoran allies.

KIRA

Straight to the point, I see.  
Alright then... What are we going  
to do about Taran'atar?

VANNIS

"Do," Captain? What makes you  
think there is a need to "do"  
anything?

KIRA

(sympathetic)

Come on. We both know that he's  
blocking the alliance for some  
reason. Odo would want us to work  
together. It's one of the main  
reasons he returned to the Great  
Link in the first place.

VANNIS

Odo placed First Taran'atar as the  
Dominion Ambassador. Not me, or  
you, or himself. It is  
Taran'atar's decision to make.

KIRA

Ambassadors are still supposed to  
follow the instructions of their  
governments.

VANNIS

Taran'atar no longer has the  
instinctive need to follow the  
commands of the Founders.

KIRA

But he promised he would. He  
thinks he should, whether he has  
to or not. Or at least he used to.



This is all awkward for Vannis. She actually agrees with Kira, but she's in a bind here. She can't openly say so.

VANNIS

Captain, we've been through this already. I was ordered by the Founder to follow Taran'atar's commands. I must obey.

Kira sags. There has to be a way to figure this out.

KIRA

Can you contact Odo directly? Or give me the transmission codes to contact him myself?

VANNIS

No. Taran'atar has ordered me not to contact the Founder, or to allow anyone else to do so either. He is the officially appointed ambassador of the Dominion. I must obey. To be frank, you and I ought not to be having this conversation at all without his presence.

Vannis stands abruptly.

VANNIS

I'm sorry, Captain.  
(w/ feeling)  
Please believe me - I am sorry.  
But there's nothing I can do.

Vannis turns and leaves the room, heading back out into Ops. Kira is left disappointed and defeated.

But then she hardens. They have another plan. She just has to hope it works.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### **13** INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Quark is busy haranguing a nameless Ferengi waiter in the doorway of his bar, as the usual crowd goes on around him.

QUARK

How many times have I told you? No  
free samples. Evah!

The waiter slinks away with his tail between his legs.  
Quark turns and sees...

Dax coming down the promenade, leading Gard and Odan. Odan is no longer restrained, slightly more clear-headed, but still being led along. The trio heads into the Infirmary...

### **14** INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Crossing the threshold, Dax calls out...

DAX

Julian -

SIMON TARSES looks up from the CMO desk. Dax stops short.  
Awkward moment. She grits her teeth at her own *faux pas*.

DAX

Simon. I am... so sorry. Just  
force of habit.

TARSES

That's alright, Commander. It'll  
take us all a while to adjust.

Gard observes this all with some interest. Where has Bashir gone? And what happened between him and Dax?

DAX

Mister Gard, this is Doctor Simon  
Tarses, DS9's new Chief Medical  
Officer. Simon, this is Hiziki

Gard, a "special agent" of Trill  
Homeworld Defence.

Gard has noticed Dax's use of quote marks around his title.  
The two men nod their acknowledgements.

TARSES

Mister Gard. What can I do for  
you?

GARD

I'd like you to run a full medical  
scan on Mister Odan here, please.  
With particular attention to the  
condition of his symbiosis.

Curious, Tarses gives Odan a once over.

TARSES

Alright. Nurse, prepare a bio-bed  
for a full scan, please.

Etana emerges from another room at Tarses' summons. But as  
she enters the main room, she spots Gard, and stops dead.

#### **FLASHBACK - 8x20 "TWIST OF FAITH"**

At the first Federation signing ceremony in the Wardroom,  
Gard raises the Trill superweapon and fires it at Shakaar.  
The weapon basically obliterates half of Shakaar's head.

#### **BACK TO SCENE**

Etana tightens, cold and sneering.

ETANA

What is he doing here?

DAX

It's alright, Kol. I'll vouch for  
him - for the moment at least.

Gard isn't offended by Etana's outburst, but he's not about  
to apologise either. He'd rather just get on with it. Etana  
moves into the surgical suite and begins to boot up the  
bio-bed. Tarses guides Odan into the room behind her.

TARSES

He's clearly on some pretty heavy  
sedatives. I won't get a clean  
reading with all that stuff  
running through him.

He leaves Dax to handle Odan, while he heads back to the  
infirmary pharmacy. Once there, he begins searching through  
the rows of silver metallic canisters on the shelves.

He picks one up to check its contents, but pauses. Shakes  
it a bit. It's empty. He puts it down and picks up another  
- also empty. And a third. Confused, he calls out...

TARSES

Etana?

Etana reappears at the threshold of the surgical suite...

ETANA

Yes, Doctor?

TARSES

Why are all these asinolyathin  
canisters empty?

ETANA

I didn't know they were.

TARSES

I need you to keep the pharmacy  
stocked at all times, Nurse. Never  
know when we'll need it.

ETANA

I know, Doctor. And I filled up  
the entire stock only last week. I  
could have sworn I did.

TARSES

Well, apparently not. Just keep an  
eye on it in future, yeah?

ETANA

(baffled)

Of course, Doctor.

Tarses eventually finds the canister he was looking for, opens it and pulls out one of the drug capsules. He slots the capsule into a spare hypospray and returns to the surgical suite, where Odan is now lying on the bio-bed.

TARSESES

Alright, this should cancel out the effects of whatever sedative you gave him.

Tarses injects Odan with the hypo, then switches on the bio-bed and lets it do its work. Gard and Dax stand to the side. Tarses goes over to the screens to read the results.

TARSESES

The symbiont - it looks slightly different to yours, Commander.

GARD

The symbionts continue to grow with age, Doctor.

DAX

Odan is much older than me. He was already on his eighth host when I was only on my first.

TARSESES

Interesting. And what about you, Mister Gard? How many hosts have you had?

GARD

(secretive)

More than probably any other Trill you've ever heard of.

TARSESES

If it keeps growing, doesn't that get uncomfortable for the host after a while?

GARD

That's the price we pay, Doctor.  
There is a limit at which even the  
most suitable host simply cannot  
physically accommodate the  
symbiont anymore. But Odan should  
be a long way off that.

TARSES

(off readings)

Neuro-chemical connection looks  
strong enough... Isoboramine  
levels are stable. No physical  
trauma... although there is some  
interesting scarring on the wrists  
and neck.

He looks to Gard for an explanation. Gard gives him none.

TARSES

Alright. Well, if you insist  
there's something wrong with him,  
I can only tell you that it's not  
physical.

GARD

So, psychological then.

Tarses and Gard look to Dax - this is her playground now.

On the bio-bed, Odan's brain is starting to un-fog from the  
sedatives. His eyes are clearer, and we can see the pain in  
them as he stares up at the ceiling.

**15 INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Odan sits on the couch in Dax's almost empty-quarters. He's  
not sedated anymore, but still uncommunicative. Dax sits  
nearby - but not too near - trying to get through to him.

DAX

Kinjer? Can you hear me?

ODAN

(small)

Of course I can hear you.

DAX

Sorry. It's just you haven't said anything since I brought you back from the Infirmary.

ODAN

When everything you say makes them drug you into a stupor, you learn not to bother.

DAX

I'm not going to sedate you, Kinjer. I want to hear whatever you want to say. I want to try and help you.

Odan subtly shrugs, but doesn't really answer. He's sullen, withdrawn. Eventually, he looks up at her. Still doesn't raise his voice.

ODAN

You're Dax?

DAX

That's right.

ODAN

You've changed.

DAX

(small smile)

Three-hundred years and eight different bodies will do that.

ODAN

Do you remember her? Lela?

DAX

I remember. And I remember you too. You were...

(racks brains)

...Darzen Odan then, right?

ODAN

I remember them all. Every... single... one.



DAX

Why is that a bad thing? Isn't that how it's supposed to work?

ODAN

Do you remember every little thing from those three hundred years? Aren't there some parts you wish you could forget, even for just a moment?

DAX

Everyone has parts of their life they don't like to think about. That's just normal.

ODAN

(scoff)

Normal. I wish. I can't forget it, Dax. Not any of it. I kept telling them. I tried to explain, over and over. They didn't hear me. You know how the Symbiosis Commission likes to...

(sneer)

...mess with your mind. So I took care of the problem myself. What else could I do? Only they wouldn't let me. They made sure I kept... remembering.

DAX

Nobody wants someone else to kill themselves, Kinjer. You can't blame them for that.

ODAN

What if that's all I can see? What if that's all there is?

DAX

What do you mean?

ODAN

Death. All of it. Constantly. I  
can't forget.

Dax thinks she might understand what the problem is now.

DAX  
You remember your deaths? All of  
them?

ODAN  
Every... single... one.

Odan withdraws back into the couch. Dax slumps back too,  
worried and disturbed - this isn't supposed to happen.

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

Dax is confronting Gard.

DAX  
Why didn't you tell me, Gard? He  
remembers his deaths. That's not  
supposed to happen!

GARD  
It's hardly impossible, Dax. It's  
simply that most joined Trill  
repress such memories for the sake  
of their own sanity. And it's  
certainly no reason to try to kill  
yourself and end one of the  
precious few joinings that still  
exists. The only question  
remains... how are you going to  
fix him?

DAX  
He's got bigger psychological  
problems than I can handle here.  
Take him back to Trill, tell them  
to pay attention to what their  
patient is trying to tell them,  
and leave me out of it.

GARD  
So you're refusing to help?

Is that what she's doing? Don't like the sound of that.

17 **INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS**

TARAN'ATAR looms threateningly, thundering over Vannis...

TARAN'ATAR

You spoke to Kira without my permission?!

VANNIS

We are trying to resolve this issue! Kira wants to work with the Dominion, whereas you are as stubborn and disobedient as ever.

TARAN'ATAR

I do not obey Kira, or you! I obey the Founders only!

VANNIS

You do not even do that! The Founder instructed you to work towards closer relationships with the Alpha Quadrant, not to squander our hard-won respect on a petty and inexplicable grudge!

TARAN'ATAR

I am the Ambassador! I do not need to explain myself to you.

VANNIS

What explanation could possibly be sufficient for disobeying the Founder so flagrantly? You are a failure, Taran'atar, and you have always been a failure from the moment you were given this assignment.

(sneer)

I should have killed you when I had the chance.

Taran'atar looms ever closer, growling deeply.

TARAN'ATAR  
Are you threatening me?

VANNIS  
(incensed)  
You are a Jem'Hadar. I am the  
Vorta. That is the order of  
things!

Taran'atar grins sourly, reaches out sharply and SNAPS  
Vannis's neck. The Vorta slumps to the deck, dead on the  
spot. Taran'atar turns away with a sneer.

TARAN'ATAR  
Taran'atar to station security.

CENN (comm)  
This is Major Cenn. Go ahead,  
Ambassador.

TARAN'ATAR  
Send a maintenance crew to my  
quarters. I need someone to take  
out the trash.

As Taran'atar nonchalantly returns to his desk and switches  
on the computer...

BLACK OUT:

**END OF ACT TWO**

### ACT THREE

FADE IN:

#### **18** INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

A stretcher is carried out of Taran'atar's quarters into the corridor by two Starfleet extras. On it lies Vannis's obviously dead body. The eyes are closed in rest, but there's obvious bruising and torn flesh around the neck.

Overseeing the removal are Tarses and Etana. Tarses is concentrating on the job. Etana sends angry, scared glares back into the room, at Taran'atar. Major Cenn holds back a half dozen civilians who have gathered at the commotion.

Taran'atar watches all of this, outwardly defiant and uncaring. But inside, he's worried. Why did he do that? He knows he shouldn't have. He knows something is wrong with him. But what? And why can't he say anything about it?

Dax is out in the corridor, watching the procession with a clenched jaw. Gard stands beside her. They both watch as Vannis's dead body is carried past them to a turbolift.

GARD

Did you know her?

DAX

Only in passing. I never really took the time. I should have.

Tarses, Etana and the extras disappear into the turbolift with the body. Taran'atar lets the door to his quarters close. Cenn shoos the civilians away - nothing to see here.

#### **19** INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

The door opens and Dax strides in. And she is pissed.

DAX

Nerys, what the hell is going on on this station?

Kira looks up from the desk. She knows what's happened, and she hates it. But she's in a bind too.

KIRA

What do you mean?

DAX

I mean Taran'atar. Do you know what he just did?

KIRA

I know.

DAX

And what are you going to do about it?

KIRA

There's nothing I can do, Dax. Diplomatic immunity. Internal Dominion politics.

DAX

Oh, that's bull and you know it. If Quark killed one of his own waiters, you'd be on him like the very dogs of hell. So what is different about this?

KIRA

It's not his fault.

DAX

How many does it take before it is his fault, Nerys? He beat the crap out of Vaughn and Tenmei. He nearly killed you and Ro. Half the security on this station have been in the infirmary because of him. And now he kills his own assistant? What does it take to make him responsible for his own actions? Or is this all because he's your own little piece of Odo?

KIRA

(coldly furious)

You stop right there.

Dax realises she went too far. She slumps into the seat.

DAX

Is there something going on,  
Nerys? I guess I can't say I know  
Taran'atar particularly well. But  
his reactions lately, even with  
all the crazy stuff that's  
happened to him, they just don't  
make sense.

Kira bites her lip. She's going to have to do it. She opens  
a hidden flap on her desk, and presses a button inside it.

In the very corners of the room, where the bulkheads meet  
the ceiling, lights burst into life. Blue lights, like  
those at the top of Vaughn's special transporter inhibitor  
modules. They bath the office in a dim blue glow. At the  
same time, all the office doors audibly lock down.

Dax watches this happening with shock and confusion. What  
the hell? She looks back to Kira, more confused than ever.  
Kira looks back sadly, the weight of the world on her.

KIRA

It does make sense... if you know  
what I know.

Kira gets ready to spill it all...

**20    EXT. SPACE - VULCAN ORBIT**

Appropriately golden and sandy, even from space. The grungy  
freighter is in orbit, along with a few other ships and one  
of the giant mushroom-shaped Starfleet space stations.

**21    INT. VULCAN CAVES**

Dark and shadowy, but not cold. In fact it's quite warm,  
and Vaughn and Ro are suffering slightly from all the dust  
and sweat. They lurk silently in an alcove, waiting.

Finally there's the sound of boots on the rocky surface.  
They tense, wary. The footsteps get closer, and closer,  
and then stop. A calm, measured voice speaks...

SAKEEL (o.s.)  
These passages are more complex  
than the brain of a human.

Vaughn relaxes, almost smiles. It's code. He steps out of  
the shadows into the cave passage proper, and Ro follows.

Standing there inspecting the stone walls is a Vulcan male,  
SAKEEL. Middle-aged, uniformed, as exact and unemotional as  
any other Vulcan. Vaughn replies with a mischievous grin...

VAUGHN  
But nowhere near as much fun.

Sakeel turns to look at Vaughn, makes note of Ro.

SAKEEL  
Elias.

VAUGHN  
Sakeel. This is Ro Laren, a new  
associate of mine. Ro, this is  
Sakeel. A useful man to know.

Ro gets the subtext - one of them. She notes the uniform.

RO  
You're V' Shar.

SAKEEL  
Correct.

VAUGHN  
Having a man inside Vulcan  
Homeworld Security has been very  
handy. Not least now.

SAKEEL  
I am motivated to help. However I  
must inform you my search has been  
unsuccessful. No woman such as you  
described works for the regional  
government in Shi'al Province, nor  
has one ever done so. Neither is



there any record of such a woman existing at all.

RO

She obviously exists. We met her. I saw the records.

SAKEEL

I believe you. Consequently, I must conclude that Section 31 were more successful in their mission to purge those records than I was in retrieving them.

RO

There has to be something! A birth record, a school report -

VAUGHN

Ro, if Sakeel says he's checked, then believe me, he's checked. It was a long shot anyway.

SAKEEL

I concur. On the second matter - I have spoken with a contact among the junior adepts to the Elders of Gol. They confirm that no-one has come to them for the removal of a *katra* in some years.

RO

She's still got it? Why would she do that?

VAUGHN

Who knows? Maybe she thinks she can use it for information on the alternate universe. I wouldn't put it past them.

SAKEEL

I regret I could not be of more service on this occasion, Elias.

VAUGHN

That's alright, Sakeel. I'm grateful that you tried. Come on Ro - we should be going.

With a nod of thanks, Vaughn turns to walk away into the caves. Ro follows, but turns as Sakeel calls after them.

SAKEEL

It has been agreeable to make your acquaintance, Miss Ro. I anticipate further mutually satisfactory interactions.

RO

(nonplussed)

Back at ya.

Vaughn and Ro leave in one direction, Sakeel in the other.

## 22 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Nog is at the Engineering console as usual. In the absence of anyone else, Shar is working the central Ops table.

Kira's office door opens, and Dax emerges. She's reeling from everything Kira has told her. Totally shell-shocked. Nog sees the stunned look on her face, and approaches.

NOG

Ezri...? Are you okay?

She blinks, realising she's being too obvious. She schools her features to hide the shock she's feeling.

DAX

Oh hey Nog. Sorry, yeah, I'm fine. Just the... uh... the Vannis thing. Kinda hard to get my head around it.

NOG

Sorry to say, I'm not shocked at all. It was just a matter of time if you ask me.

DAX

I didn't ask you.

Nog blinks in surprise at the harsh tone. Dax winces again.

DAX  
Sorry, Nog. Just... bad day. As  
you were.

Nog nods and returns to his station. Dax walks around the upper level of Ops to the turbolift, and climbs aboard. We go aboard with her, and the lift carries her away...

**23 INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT (CONTINUOUS)**

Alone now, Dax looks up to the turbolift's ceiling, filled with fear and concern. She mutters to herself.

DAX  
Oh, Julian... what kind of mess  
have you got yourself into now?

She continues to worry for his safety...

**CUT TO:**

**24 INT. STARFLEET BANQUET HALL**

The loud POP of a champagne cork as it bursts from its bottle. The frothy drink bubbles over, to the great amusement and celebration of the gathered crowd of high-level Starfleet officers, all in pristine white dress uniforms.

Among them, laughing and celebrating with the rest, is BASHIR. Welcome to the annual Admirals Dinner Party. Or at least the cocktails portion of the evening.

The server pours the champagne over a pyramid of glasses, the liquid tumbling down in a waterfall. Bashir turns away and wanders into the party. Pockets of people of various species, all small-talking and getting along.

Bashir turns towards the buffet table, overflowing with delicacies from across the Federation. He browses up and down, trying to decide what to eat. Just as he chooses a simple bread roll, a friendly voice comes from beside him.

BATANIDES (o.s.)  
You shouldn't fill up on bread,  
you know. There's a whole six  
course meal to come yet.

Bashir turns to see Admiral BATANIDES browsing the table  
alongside him. He smiles warmly to see a familiar face.

BASHIR  
Admiral Batanides. Good to see you  
again. Enjoying the party?

BATANIDES  
I am, thank you. And you? I hope  
you're feeling suitably honoured.  
It's very rare for anyone lower  
than a captain to be invited to  
this thing.

BASHIR  
I guess that's what friends in  
high places does for you.

BATANIDES  
To friends in high places.

She clinks her own glass of red wine to his of champagne.  
Together, they grab plates and begin to pick bits of food  
from the table, chatting as they do.

BATANIDES  
Did I hear you have an eidetic  
memory, Doctor?

BASHIR  
As a matter of fact, yes I do.

BATANIDES  
Oh, I would love to have that. To  
remember every little thing -  
like, oh what's his name, the  
captain of the *Musashi*. I should  
know, I put him there...

Meanwhile, Batanides is struggling to manage her plate and her glass and pick up food as well. Bashir watches her...

BASHIR

You alright there, Admiral? Need a spare hand?

BATANIDES

I know! Where's a Triexian when you need one, right?

Bashir chuckles, just as Batanides' valiant struggle fails. The plate slips from her grasp, the glass tips over and red wine pours all down the front of her clean white uniform.

BATANIDES

Damn it!

Bashir immediately moves to help her - puts down his own glass, takes hers, grabs napkins, passes them to her. She dabs away at her uniform - it's only making it worse. With an exasperated sigh at her own clumsiness, she grabs her own combadge off her uniform and hands it to Bashir.

BATANIDES

Hold this for me, will you?

She proceeds to strip off the uniform jacket to the grey undershirt - the stain has already started to seep through.

BATANIDES

Oh, hell. The quartermaster's mad enough at me already after the commemorative plate fiasco. I'm gonna have to go and change...

She turns and walks away through the crowd, leaving Bashir with her combadge. He tries to call her back...

BASHIR

Admiral, your combadge...

But she's gone. Amused and befuddled, he slips the combadge into his pocket and turns back to the buffet table. After another moment, another voice comes from the other side, rich and authoritative.

ROSS (o.s.)

Ah, Marta. She's a delightful woman, but I wouldn't be at all surprised if she manages to set off a photon torpedo in her own living room someday.

Bashir turns to find Ross gazing off after Batanides from the table. He nods his acknowledgements to Bashir.

BASHIR

She seems harmless enough to me.

ROSS

Perhaps. I'm glad I ran into you, Doctor. Our mutual friend sends his regards.

Bashir pauses, and looks plainly at Ross. This is it.

BASHIR

I don't know that I'd use the word "friend," exactly. For one thing, I've been waiting for him to get in touch for weeks.

ROSS

As it happens, I'm meeting him for drinks later tonight, after dinner. You're welcome to tag along, if you like.

BASHIR

Thank you, Admiral, I'd like that a great deal.

Ross turns and mingles back into the party. Bashir watches him go, and takes a deep breath. Steadies his nerves. This is where it all starts.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

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

Having left once, Dominion Vessel 288 is just now returning to the station.

**26 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR**

Dax waits by the airlock, her mind a million miles away. She's still having trouble grasping everything Kira told her. After a moment, the airlock rolls open, and Vannis stands there, waiting to come aboard.

Or strictly speaking, this is VANNIS-4, the next clone. She is just as troubled as Dax - after all, she did just die.

**27 INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Dax has invited Vannis to sit with her in her quarters. The Vorta nibbles unenthusiastically from a plate of nuts and berries, while Dax sips a rokassa juice.

DAX

How are you handling it?

VANNIS

This is not my first death, Commander. Although it is the first time I've been killed by one of my own soldiers.

Vannis frowns to herself, trying to figure it all out. Dax is sympathetic, gives her time to adjust.

VANNIS

I do not understand. Through all my lives, I have always strived to serve the Founders. Not just to the best of my ability, but to the best of any Vorta's ability.

DAX

That's a noble goal.



VANNIS

But I have to admit... this is the hardest assignment I have ever received. I must not fail at it, but...

(shakes head)

Jem'Hadar should obey Vorta. That is the order of things. But he... he does not obey me. He is like no Jem'Hadar I have ever met. I don't know how to relate to him.

(gallows humour)

Clearly my last approach was unsuccessful.

DAX

Vannis, can I ask you something? It might be a bit personal.

VANNIS

You have been kind to me. What would you like to know?

DAX

Do you remember it? The moment when you died?

VANNIS

Of course. All Vorta remember. A learning experience - how not to make the same mistake.

DAX

Trill aren't supposed to remember. We're trained to suppress it - to concentrate on the memories of life, not of death. Or at least, most Trill are trained for that.

VANNIS

Not you?

DAX

I didn't get the full training before I was joined. Most of the

time I can put it out of my mind,  
but sometimes something will jog  
my memory...

On Dax as she remembers...

**FLASHBACK - 1x01 "EMISSARY"**

Wizened old Curzon lies on the operating table as the Dax symbiont is transferred to Jadzia...

**BACK TO SCENE**

Dax closes her eyes, pushing away the memory. When she opens them again, Vannis is gazing at her, curious.

VANNIS

Who would have ever imagined that  
Vorta and Trill would find  
something in common?

Dax is a bit surprised... but realises Vannis is right.

DAX

We both die, but keep living.  
(thoughtful)  
But what about that moment in  
between? When the first body has  
died, but the second body  
hasn't... "activated" yet? Do you  
feel anything?

Vannis stops to ponder the question.

DAX

I mean for us, without a host to  
interact with the world through,  
the symbiont is left blind and  
deaf. We're aware, but incapable  
of anything. It's quite a  
disturbing experience. That's one  
of the reasons we like to get the  
symbiont into a new host as soon  
as possible, or else back to the  
pools.

VANNIS

For Vorta, there is nothing. No awareness, no sensation. We die, and know nothing else until we reawaken in the cloning tanks. There is nothing else. When we are not serving the Founders... we do not exist.

That's rather disquieting. Dax has more on her mind...

DAX

There was a time recently, when I thought I was going to die. There was an incident on the Trill homeworld... terrorists attacked. They murdered almost all the symbionts.

VANNIS

And you feared you would be one of them.

DAX

No, that's not what I mean. At the time, I never questioned if I'd survive. I've been through a lot. I just assumed I'd get through this too. And being one of the few left... that just made me all the more special.

VANNIS

Vorta are not special. Kill one, make another. Clean and simple. But if that is not when you feared death... when was it?

DAX

The *Luna*. I was full of that same arrogance, convinced I could do anything. That I was following my grand destiny as a life-form almost unique in the galaxy. But then there was the accident in engineering... I ran. I saved

myself. In that second, I thought - I'm too important. I can't die here. I have to save the symbiont, one of barely a few hundred left in existence. And even though the thought passed in an instant... I haven't been able to look at myself in the mirror since.

VANNIS

I do not regret dying if it is in the service of the Founders. I do not regret saving myself either, if that would be in the service of the Founders. Mourn your dead if you must, but do not doubt that you deserve to live. There is always more you can do for your leaders.

Dax ponders quietly.

DAX

People I know, people I care about, they're out there right now risking their lives to do the right thing. The least I can do is face my own demons.

**CUT TO:**

**28    INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Dax now sits opposite Kinjer Odan, on the couch in her quarters. Since she has no official therapy space anymore, this will have to do.

DAX

Tell me everything, Kinjer. Start at the beginning, and don't leave anything out.

Odan prepares to do exactly that. Dax prepares to face her own doubts and do what she can to help.

**29    INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Odan is asleep on Dax's bed, suffering restless dreams. Dax herself stands in the doorway of the bedroom, watching him toss and turn. Then she turns back to the main room...

GARD

Thank you for agreeing to help him.

DAX

You were probably more right than you know, bringing him to me. I might be the only one who can understand how he feels. And... I need to help someone.

**30    INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Dax sits opposite Kinjer as he talks.

ODAN

I loved a Starfleet woman once. Across three bodies I loved her. But I lost her. I died. I could have been happy... but she couldn't handle it.

The things he's saying spark Dax's own memories...

**FLASHBACK - 6x26 "TEARS OF THE PROPHETS"**

In the Bajoran shrine, Jadzia judders and shakes as the possessed Dukat uses *pagh-wraith* energy to kill her...

**FLASHBACK - 7x03 "AFTERIMAGE"**

In a corridor, Worf completely blanks Ezri, leaving her surprised and hurt.

**BACK TO SCENE**

Ezri tenses against the memory, but allows it to come, allows it to inform her sympathy for Kinjer.

**31    INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Gard and Dax discuss...

GARD

I'm glad. I was afraid there might be some personal issues between you and me that could have affected your decision.

DAX

Oh, don't get me wrong - I'm still holding a grudge against you. I haven't forgiven you for killing Minister Shakaar. Not completely. Or for killing me, for that matter.

**FLASHBACK - 8x05 "REFLECTIONS"**

Joran Dax has his arm hooked around a woman's neck and a jagged piece of glass to her throat. An angry Trill police man - an earlier host of Gard - holds a weapon on him and shouts to let the woman go. Gard fires, Joran goes down...

**BACK TO SCENE**

DAX (cont)

Or that you snuck around as a part of a secret underground spy organisation to do it.

GARD

I'm not going to apologise for removing threats and saving lives, Dax.

DAX

I'm not asking you to. Even if I don't like that you did it, I do understand why you did it. Plus... it's been made clear to me recently that being part of a secret spy group doesn't necessarily make you "evil."

Somewhere on Earth - London maybe? Ross and Bashir walk together in awkward silence over the old-fashioned cobbles. Bashir takes note of the location, the gently swirling mist, the classic old street-lights casting a weak glow.

As they walk, Bashir readies himself for the meeting that is to come...

**33**    **INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Gard and Dax...

GARD  
How flattering.

DAX  
Everyone's got their problems.  
Doesn't mean they shirk their  
responsibilities.

**34**    **INT. VULCAN CAVES**

Vaughn and Ro are working their way determinedly through the labyrinth of caves. Ro is dirty, sweaty, tired, and in a distinctly bad mood. They pass an opening into a small, unlit cavern - little more than a bolt-hole really.

Ro pauses, looks into the hole. She indicates to Vaughn to stay where he is while she goes inside. Vaughn is confused - why? She gestures exactly why. Vaughn gets the message - bathroom. Vaughn turns his back and leaves her to herself.

Ro clammers through the opening and into the small, dark space. She hunkers down on her haunches. Silently, she lets out all the tension and shakes that she's been hiding from Vaughn. Breathing deep, she reaches into her boot. And yes, there's a hypospray in there.

Looking at it with hunger, she raises it to her neck and injects the painkillers. She gives herself another moment as the drugs flow through her, lets the shakes subside.

Outside in the main cave, Vaughn is waiting. At the sound of Ro emerging, he turns to greet her. She seems happier and more relaxed now. Together, they carry on their way.

**35    INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Gard and Dax...

DAX

So I want to help Odan if I can.  
And even if I can't, I just want  
him to feel like there's someone  
who will actually listen and not  
just dismiss him out of hand.

GARD

Is that what you think I'm doing?

DAX

I think you're doing the same  
thing the Symbiosis Commission is  
doing - the same thing I was doing  
before I came to my senses. We're  
all so worried about the  
symbionts, about saving them no  
matter what, that we're not seeing  
the obvious solution.

GARD

Which is?

Dax moves back to the bedroom doorway, looks in on the  
still fitfully sleeping Odan. She's not happy about her  
idea, but it seems like the best of bad options.

DAX

Break the bond.

As Gard realises with resignation what she means...

**36    INT. COLE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM**

Old mahogany panelling, comfy leather armchairs, paintings  
and sculptures on the walls, a roaring fire in the hearth.

There's a knock at the large wooden double door, followed  
by the whine of old hinges as it creaks open. Admiral Ross  
enters, his face like death. He really doesn't want to be  
here or to be doing what he's doing.



Behind him is Bashir, still mentally recording everything.

One of the armchairs is turned to face the fire, hiding its occupant. Ross finds this especially rude.

ROSS

He's here. I've brought him. And don't even think of using me as your errand boy ever again.

COLE

(still hidden)

I appreciate your feelings, Admiral. Thank you for your help. You can go now.

That the man would just dismiss him like that, without even talking him to him face to face, makes Ross furious. But even so, he does as he's told, and turns to go.

As he does, he exchanges a look with Bashir - one that says "you'd better have a damn good reason for this."

With Ross gone and the door closed, the chair's occupant finally deigns to stand - of course it is COLE (last seen 8x08 "Abyss"). He seems resolutely normal, not in any kind of uniform or threatening in any way. He seems almost as apprehensive about this as Bashir.

COLE

Doctor Bashir. I have to say - I never expected to see you again. And I'm very curious as to why I'm seeing you now.

As Cole and Bashir face each other across the room...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

**37    EXT. COBBLED STREET - NIGHT**

The mist swirls, the moon peeks out...

**38    INT. COLE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM**

Bashir has taken a second chair by the fire. Cole is back in his own chair, the flames crackling between them. Cole sips a mug of hot tea. Bashir has a mug also, but he sniffs at it warily. Cole sees this and chuckles.

COLE

Doctor, please. If I wanted to kill you, would I have had the admiral bring you all the way to my own home?

BASHIR

Maybe that's precisely why you brought me here - because you don't plan on letting me leave. You know I'll remember every step of the way here from the dinner party.

COLE

I do know that, yes. And I'm glad you're not bothering to pretend otherwise. But you'd have figured out the location wherever I met you. So why go to any extra trouble?

Accepting that logic, Bashir sips at the drink. To his surprise, it's actually quite pleasant.

BASHIR

I've been waiting for weeks, you know. Just keeping myself occupied with debriefings and conferences and writing papers. And beginning

to wonder if you would ever respond to my hints.

COLE

I'm sure you can understand my caution, Doctor. After all, how many times exactly have you called us an abomination on the face of the galaxy, or a pox to be stamped out, or some other equally pithy yet overdramatic epithet? And now here you sit, begging to join the party?

BASHIR

Begging?! I don't beg, Mister Cole. But as I've indicated in my logs, a certain situation has arisen on Deep Space Nine that, in all good conscience, I find I cannot be a party to.

COLE

Yes, this whole Ascendant thing. Kind of a mess, isn't it? What I'm not clear on, however... is why you imagine my organisation should care one way or the other.

BASHIR

You once told me, and I quote, "People die all the time. It's simply a matter of who, how, and how many." As much as it pains me to say it, if anyone has to die, then I'd rather it be the Eav'oq, and not the people I've sworn to protect on Bajor and DS-Nine. Especially since the Eav'oq don't seem to care if they die anyway. And since you claim your *raison d'être* is to protect Federation lives, I thought that might appeal to you. Or am I wrong?

Cole takes a moment to think it all over. He sips at his tea, quite content to take his time and not rush anything. He may be outwardly calm, but there's many layers inside.

COLE

So you'll betray your friends in order to protect them?

BASHIR

That's not what I'm doing.

COLE

I'm not judging, Doctor. It's all semantics anyway. I just want you to grasp how they'll see you once this is over.

BASHIR

I don't want them to know.

COLE

You're afraid of tarnishing your good image? I shouldn't worry. They're hardly a bunch of angels on that station, are they?

BASHIR

They're good, honest people.

COLE

Really? I know things about your sainted Captain Sisko that would curl your hair. But that's by the by. If I agree to work with you on this - to commit resources and personnel and capital - what will you give me in return?

BASHIR

I'm giving you me. Isn't that what you've always wanted?

COLE

I'll grant that we've expended considerable effort to convince you we can work together. That

alone makes me suspicious as to why those efforts should have suddenly borne fruit.

BASHIR

I'm not going to pretend I've converted, if that's what you mean. You wouldn't believe me if I did. I'm only saying that there's a cause that's dear to my heart, and I need your help to see it through. It doesn't mean I'm working for you full time from now on.

Cole sips his tea, and chuckles to himself.

BASHIR

What?

COLE

You've been working for us for years, Doctor. You just refuse to admit it to yourself.

Bashir goes quiet, refusing to confirm. Cole takes silence as assent.

COLE

You realise, of course, that I'm going to be keeping a very close eye on you? Testing you constantly?

BASHIR

I'd expect nothing less.

COLE

Alright. Let's say you've convinced me. What next?

Bashir's mind is racing for what to say next, all while he has to look like he's nervous to be here...

BASHIR

Next... we work out a plan for how to stop Kira from pulling us all into another war.

Cole smiles modestly. He knows so much more than Bashir...

**39**    **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Starting on Kira...

KIRA

Are you absolutely sure?

Revealing that she's talking to Dax, Gard and Tarses in the main room of the Infirmary. Behind them in the surgical suite, Etana is tending to Odan, who sits on a bio-bed.

GARD

I agree with Commander Dax's conclusion, Captain. I think a controlled separation is the best chance for the continued health of host and symbiont.

KIRA

(to Tarses)

And you... you're sure about this serum of Julian's?

TARSES

It was never tested. It's still officially experimental. But Doctor Bashir's notes indicate that it worked in the field, on a statistically significant number of patients. I'm prepared to use it - with the patient's consent, of course.

KIRA

Can he give consent? If he's as messed up psychologically as you say, is he legally capable of it?

DAX

I think he's made his wishes clear, Captain. He's been trying to end this joining himself for a while, just in a more extreme way. This way would allow both of them to survive and get on with their lives.

Taking that all on board, Kira steps through into the surgical suite. Odan sits on the bio-bed, visibly suffering but clear-headed nevertheless, not drugged or sedated.

KIRA

Mister Odan, I'm Captain Kira. I'm in command here. Before we go through with this, I need to ask you - are you absolutely certain? From the little I know on the subject, this isn't the kind of thing you can change your mind about later.

Odan looks up at Kira. He knows she's being sympathetic, takes no offence. He's tries to explain himself clearly.

ODAN

Captain... I appreciate your concerns. But I have seen and felt nothing but death for two years. Constantly dying, but never able to actually die from it? Had I known this was even an option, I would have done it a long time ago. So yes, I'm ready. I consent to this in the strongest terms.

Kira can't really empathise with what he's going through, but she can sympathise. She nods to Tarses.

TARSES

Alright. Clear the room, please. I need to prepare for surgery. Nurse...?

Etana comes back and begins to gently guide Odan back onto the bio-bed. Kira, Dax and Gard all move back to the main

room. Before they go, Dax turns and looks back at Odan. He's looking back at her, a serene smile on his face, a silent thank you. She nods, and turns to leave.

KIRA

So how are you handling it?

The tone and look make it clear Kira is talking about more than just Odan. She's talking about Julian. Dax understands that, and with a deep breath, replies equally cryptically.

DAX

I'll be fine. Just gonna take a little getting used to. Seeing someone else in that room.

KIRA

It'll all work out.

Again - Bashir, not Tarses. Not that Gard gets any of that. Kira moves to leave.

KIRA

Mister Gard.

GARD

Captain.

And she's gone, leaving Dax and Gard alone to watch.

GARD

Are you alright? Considering this was your idea, you don't seem overly happy about it.

DAX

That's cause I'm not. Look at us, Gard. You and me... we get to keep our symbionts. Again. All around us, joinings are ending. I'm destroying another Trill symbiosis right now. But not us. We just keep going.

(bitter)

I guess we're... "special."



GARD

You made the right choice, Dax.

DAX

I know. I understand it. But I don't have to like it.

40 **INT. DS9 - TARAN'ATAR'S QUARTERS**

The door opens, and Vannis enters from the corridor. Tense but professional. Not looking forward to facing Taran'atar again, but it has to be done.

Taran'atar is waiting for her. He can't apologise for what he did... as much as he might want to.

VANNIS

Ambassador. What is your wish?

TARAN'ATAR

Return to the Idran system.  
Continue to manage and compile information about the current activities of the Ascendants... and about the state of the Dominion. I will call for you if I need you.

VANNIS

Yes, Ambassador.

She turns to leave, but he calls her back.

TARAN'ATAR

Vannis... thank you. For your assistance.

It's as much of an apology as she's going to get. She calmly considers her response, resigned to her role.

VANNIS

It is... the order of things, Ambassador.

And she leaves.

41 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR

Gard's unnamed security agent is gently carrying a portable symbiont pod (seen in previous episodes) into the airlock, the slosh of the liquid audible as he goes.

Dax stands nearby, observing. She turns to see Gard gently leading Kinjer (no longer Odan) towards the airlock.

Kinjer is walking cautiously, still a little tender after the operation. Gard is gentle and considerate with him. Dax smiles, pleased to see that Gard can be a nice guy.

DAX

Kinjer. How are you feeling?

KINJER

Still a bit spacey right now, Commander. And weirdly light. But I'm looking forward to getting my own mind back.

DAX

Keep in touch.

With a warm goodbye, Kinjer heads into the airlock and away. Gard pauses, turns back to Dax.

GARD

Dax... I've been thinking. If you really feel strongly about protecting the symbionts and getting Trill society back into joining shape, then come back with me.

DAX

Come back... to Trill?

GARD

You said you weren't planning on staying here. Just waiting for your next assignment. This could be it. Come home, join the Starfleet contingent on the homeworld, and work with me to

help the symbionts. That's what  
I've been doing, you know.

Dax smiles uncertainly - Gard is surprising her.

DAX

That sounds like a wonderful idea,  
Gard. But I can't.

GARD

Why not?

Dax pauses to think it through. What is she allowed to say?

DAX

Friends of mine are in danger  
right now. I can't leave until I  
know they're safe. But thank you  
for the offer. And I hope you'll  
hold it open for me.

Gard is curious about that, but knows he shouldn't ask.

GARD

Then until next time.

He steps into the airlock and away. Dax watches the airlock  
roll closed, and with a thoughtful nod, she turns to leave.  
Walking down the corridor alone, she worries about Bashir.

**42    EXT. COBBLED STREET - NIGHT**

The same general area on Earth as before, but a different  
street, enough to signify that we are not at Cole's house.

**43    INT. BASHIR'S BEDROOM**

A small bedroom with a single bed and the usual furniture.  
Earth-style, not Starfleet. Basic but cosy. Bashir stands  
by the bed, unpacking from his travelling bag.

In the midst of unpacking, he glances over his shoulder,  
making sure the door behind him is closed. Satisfied that  
it is, he turns back to his bag, and pulls out what looks  
like a simple flask, a travel mug for coffee or soup.

Opening the lid of the flask, he reveals a portable version of Vaughn's special transporter module inside. With a press of a button, the blue light at the top shines, casting a no signals, no weapons, no transporters field over the room.

That done, he reaches into his pocket and brings out Admirals Batanides' combadge.

**FLASHBACK**

Batanides hands the combadge to Bashir...

BATANIDES  
Hold this for me, will you?

**BACK TO SCENE**

Bashir sits on the edge of the bed. Gently prises the cover of the combadge away, revealing the technology inside it.

**FLASHBACK**

As Bashir and Batanides browse the buffet table...

BATANIDES  
Oh what's his name, the captain of the *Musashi*...

**BACK TO SCENE**

With a tiny metal tool, he works at the miniature controls inside the badge. He spells the name out as he does it.

BASHIR  
Terapane...

Nothing happens. Bashir frowns, thinks a bit more.

BASHIR  
Okay... Alexandros.

He inputs the letters... and there's a positive bleep. He smiles with childish pride. And then Vaughn's voice sounds, small and tinny but filled with determination and portent.

VAUGHN (comm)

I hope you're well. You should know... we are coming.

**44**    **EXT. SPACE**

The Trill transport we saw earlier is warping through space on its way home.

**45**    **INT. TRILL TRANSPORT - QUARTERS**

Darkened for ship's night. A door from the corridor opens, revealing Gard. He pokes his head in...

GARD  
Kinjer? Are you asleep?

No response. He steps in further.

GARD  
Just wanted to check on you, see how you're doing.

Another step in. Then he sees something shrouded in the shadows... a pair of boots, swinging loosely in the air.

GARD  
Gods damn it!

Gard rushes in to the body, hanging from a sheet tied into a rope and slung over a ceiling beam. He pulls a knife out of his back pocket and slashes at the rope, and catches the body before it can fall. He lowers it gently to the ground.

GARD  
Oh gods, no...

But it's too late - Kinjer is clearly dead. Gard notices a piece of paper crumpled up in his hand. He pulls it out, flattens it out to read it. It's hand-written, and says...

I CAN STILL REMEMBER

Gard slumps to a sitting position on the floor, next to the body. He hangs his head and sighs.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW