

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

# 14x14 - "Absolute Beginners"

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

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

### TNG 19x14 - "CRITICAL MASS"

The Fellowship of Artificial Intelligences holds Akharin as a prisoner. They want the secret of AI resurrection from him, and they have kidnapped his "daughter" Rhea McAdams (TNG "Immortal Coil") to force his hand. Data is hunting for Akharin for the same reason. Given that they already invited Noonien Soong to join their group, Data is welcomed by the Fellowship's leader Gatt... who then immediately imprisons him with Akharin. Gatt presses Data to force the secret out of Akharin by threatening Rhea - who Data loved. Wesley guides *Enterprise* to the centre of the galaxy, where they find the Machine and the giant black hole it is generating. Worf leads an away team, where T'Ryssa Chen translates runes and realises this thing was built by the same people as V'Ger ("The Motion Picture"). The Machine explains freely, telling the away team its mission - to throw one black hole into another and wipe out subspace everywhere...

### VOY 12x14 - "ACTS OF CONTRITION"

Consul Dreeg officially offers alliance with the Federation in return for Starfleet technology. But Janeway has learned that the Confederacy already has tech which they refuse to share with their own people since it would destabilise the economy; she cannot accept alliance on those terms. Agriculture minister Bralt tries to hijack *Demeter* to stop them helping the locals, but Cmdr O'Donnell had anticipated it, and kidnaps the minister away - he will *show* them what is possible if only they made proper use of their resources. General Mattings shows Chakotay the waveform manufacturing facility - if they can expand their programming, it will help to fight off the alien invaders. On cue ships attack, but they are from within the Confederacy itself, citizens ignored by their government. Chakotay the Maquis captures rather than kills, but Mattings uses waveforms to snatch the rebels back... and executes them according to the law. Any chance of alliance is now well and truly gone...

## TEASER

Darkness at first, but only for a split second, until:

### ***CLICK***

Harsh fluorescent lights flicker on - old and weak, not been used for years. Then a few more in series, dust and cobwebs over their shades, eventually revealing...

### **1 INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE**

The thin, watery light illuminates a large warehouse-like space, something like 40m long by 20m wide by 10m high. The bare grey concrete walls are unbroken by windows or doors - this room is self-contained and underground. Air ducts join the lights to crisscross the equally grey concrete ceiling.

Rows of Bajoran-styled computer consoles and panels, gone unused as long as the lights, cross the room side to side - an open-plan office space. In each of the four corners is a built-in "manager's office" - no bigger than a couple of meters square, with glass walls and a single door in each.

After taking in this view, we finally find the Bajoran TRANSPORTER PLATFORM at one end of the room - and RO, CENN and RWOGO standing upon it. Cenn stands to the side, having just worked the control panel that activated the lights.

Cenn gestures to the row of Bajoran characters printed onto the concrete wall at the far end of the room from them...

CENN

Welcome to what was once called  
the Wyntara Mas Control Centre...  
but will now serve as our brand  
new Bajoran Control Centre.

Ro and Rwego glance around, entirely unimpressed. Sniff the air - it's stale. They all step down off the transporter platform, boots clacking on the cold concrete floor.

RO

Are you sure this is the right  
place? It looks...

RWOGO  
Old.

RO  
Ancient.

RWOGO  
Obsolete.

RO  
Fossilised.

CENN  
(half-smile)  
Are you done?

Cenn isn't really mad at them - if anything he's happy to see them joking together. But he still has a job to do.

CENN  
Many years ago, this used to be the transport control centre for all of Wyntara Mas province.

RO  
How many years ago?

CENN  
It was put into operation not long before the Occupation. Continued functioning for a while, until the Cardassians started restricting Bajoran movements more and more.

RWOGO  
So that's thirty, forty years?

CENN  
(nodding)  
The intention is for Starfleet to retrofit the place with its own computers, communications etc. Then it can coordinate all ships in the system, and all sensor relays throughout the sector...

(beat)  
...just like DS-Nine used to do.

A moment of mute remembrance. The wound is still fresh for them all - how could it not be? Ro shakes it off...

RO  
Doesn't the Militia have anything a bit more recent? Something that won't need quite as much updating?

CENN  
It does, but they're all in use. Aside from building a whole new facility from scratch, which would take even longer, this is the best option available to us right now.

Ro begins to stroll around the space, exploring the rows of computer stations, with an air of resignation.

RO  
How many personnel can this place accommodate?

CENN  
There are currently ninety-eight individual work stations. But we might be able to expand a little during the upgrades.

RO  
(blank)  
Ninety-eight people... I've got two-hundred-fifty to squeeze in. Still, easier than the thousand I used to have, I guess.

Cenn and Rwego exchange a look, but don't address it. They try to push on with business rather than let Ro wallow...

CENN  
I've been working on a plan to rotate the crew around this base, the *Defiant*, and the other land stations across the planet.

RWOGO

What about security?

CENN

The walls, floor and roof were all constructed with kelbonite layers. It naturally interferes with the transporter...

(points)

...which is why we needed the targeting platform to beam in. It also has a defensive shield grid, although it could use an upgrade.

Rwogo turns to Ro, tries to bring the somewhat distant captain back into the conversation...

RWOGO

We can work with that, Captain.

RO

(w/ false cheer)

It's not a massive space station at one end of the wormhole. But we don't have one of those anymore, so I guess this will have to do.

(beat)

I asked for a new chief engineer, they should be here soon. In the meantime, I'll call Starfleet and let them know we can proceed.

CENN

Good. Thank you, Captain. I'll let the general know, too.

Ro grunts acknowledgement, and strolls to the far corner, to one of the small offices. Cenn and Rwogo watch from afar as she opens the old-school door, takes the creaky old seat behind the creaky old desk, and looks out through the faded glass walls at her new domain of dust and concrete.

RWOGO

Has she spoken to Counsellor Matthias recently, do you know?

CENN

(shakes head)

She'd probably say the counsellor has enough to handle already with all the survivors. Wouldn't want to add to the pressure.

RWOGO

I'm sure the Bajoran Militia must have counsellors...?

CENN

(chuckle)

She'd never go to them.

Rwogo accepts that with a sad nod - Cenn knows Ro better than she does.

RWOGO

Then how can we help her?

CENN

I really don't know. But we need this place up and running within ten days. Those ships patrolling the Denorios Belt can't go any longer than that without someone to coordinate their activities.

(beat)

So whatever we're going to do... we need to do it soon.

Off Cenn's reluctant admission...

FADE OUT

**END OF TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### **2**     EXT. ALJULI TOWN - DAY

An establishing shot of the small Bajoran town of Aljuli - no more than a dozen streets, built around the same time as the control centre, this is actually its nearest town and the place where its staff used to live, nice and close by.

Pleasant narrow avenues to stroll along, apartment blocks, the local town hall, small shop-fronts and restaurants with seating out on the street - all under a nice gentle sun with a bit of a breeze coming off the nearby lake.

Finally to one of the larger buildings - which has a brand new NEON SIGN outside it, totally out of place in this provincial brick-and-mortar hamlet, that reads... QUARK'S.

Through this building's wide-open double doors we can hear rowdy cheers and the familiar cry of...

VOICE (o.s.)

*Dabo!*

### **3**     INT. QUARK'S NEW BAR

What might have once been the town theatre, now transformed into the all-new Quark's Bar. A STAGE along the back wall, upon which three DANCERS - two female, one male, but all scantily clad - sway sensuously to jazzy background MUSIC.

Dozens of circular TABLES which are already occupied with partiers enjoying the show, both Starfleet and the local Bajorans. Right in the middle of the room is a DABO TABLE, being spun and played to the delight of more partiers.

A stairway runs up the left wall to the theatre's BALCONY, although it has been roped off for now. And the right wall is filled with the BAR itself, at which more customers clamour for drinks and food from the multiple servers.

And RO stands by the door, jaw dropped at the sight of it.

QUARK strolls out of the crowd, enjoying her amazement.



QUARK  
Hello, Captain. Welcome to Quark's.

RO  
(stuttering)  
How did you - it's only been a few days - I don't understand...

QUARK  
I'm the Ambassador, I was insured up to my ears.  
(beat)  
Plus I pulled in a lot of old favours. Turns out, if you spend twenty years doing good deeds for people, they're actually willing to pay you back when you really need it.

RO  
(dubious)  
Is there a Rule of Acquisition about that?

QUARK  
Oh, I don't know, maybe the fifty-seventh? "Good customers are as rare as latinum..."

RO  
(grin)  
"...treasure them." Quark, you are the treasure. This is amazing.

QUARK  
(self-deprecating shrug)  
My people needed me. They needed somewhere to unwind, somewhere to forget their troubles, after...

Quark drifts off, the cheery armour dropping for a moment. But Ro is still gawping at the spectacle, and by the time she looks back at Quark, his own shields are back up.

QUARK

How about you, Laren? You fancy a drink? A spin at the *dabo* table? I can't offer you a holosuite just yet but if you come back in two weeks -

RO

I'm fine, Quark. Got too much to do to spend my time partying right now. I need to get the new Control Centre operational, figure out where my crew are going to go -

QUARK

You called him the Emissary.

RO

...what?

QUARK

Right at the end, just before the station blew up, when Sisko came through the wormhole... you said the Emissary had come to save us.

RO

(defensive)

If Slaine can invoke the Fates when she's not an Oralian, I can invoke the Emissary. And a fat lot of good it did me, anyway, didn't it? The station still blew up.

QUARK

I guess. Just never thought I'd hear you say that.

RO

(quiet, honest)

Neither did I.

(rallies)

Right, better get back. I'll see you later, Quark - I promise.

Ro heads back out onto the street. Quark watches her go...

4 **EXT. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - DAY**

The centre of Federation government, a 15-storey cylinder straddling the Champs Elysées, with the Seine flowing by.

5 **INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY**

President BACCO sits at her desk, staring out of the window at the Paris skyline. But she doesn't really see it.

AKAAR (o.s.)

*Canterbury, Brisbane and Venture*  
are canvassing the Bajoran system.  
It's still conceivable they could  
find other survivors. However, the  
rescue efforts have already been  
so extensive that it is unlikely.

BACCO

(distant, to no-one)

One thousand and ninety-one.

Bacco slowly spins her seat back around - and sees AKAAR, the Starfleet C-in-C, standing ramrod straight. Secretary SHOSTAKOVA (off-world human female) and Z4 BLUE, one of her deputy chiefs of staff (Nasat male) stand with the admiral.

They look like Small, Middle and Large, and on other days, it might be comical. But their sombre expressions and the news they have come to deliver forbid any amusement.

BACCO

Do we have a breakdown?

Z4 BLUE

Yes, ma'am. Four hundred sixty-one  
civilians dead or missing, and six  
hundred thirty Starfleet personnel  
- that's strictly from the station.  
We also have thirty-two dead from  
the *Robinson*, two from a runabout,  
and an unknown number of casualties  
aboard civilian ships.

(hesitant)

There's also the lives lost aboard  
the various Typhon Pact vessels.

As Z4 was afraid it might, that triggers Bacco's anger. Why should she care about those lives, after what they did? But she is too exhausted to explode right now. Deep breath...

BACCO

The Typhon Pact committed an act of war. But it seems unlikely that they actually want war. I know we don't. So why did they do this?

SHOSTAKOVA

They haven't announced anything - to us or to anybody else. There's been no public word on events from any of the Pact nations, in fact. And our sources aren't picking up any private discussions either.

BACCO

(sneer)

I don't care about what they say. I care about their actual motives.

AKAAR

All resources are directed towards answering that question, ma'am.

Bacco nods absently. Her next orders have none of the usual power - the job has to be done, but all the fight has gone.

BACCO

Z4, get K'Mtok, Garak and Derro in here. I guess we're gonna have to talk about this. Raisa, recall all Khitomer ships from Typhon space, and expel all of theirs from ours. If they won't follow the rules, they don't get to play the game.

She waves them on their way - get on with it...

Z4 BLUE / SHOSTAKOVA

Thank you, Madam President.

...and they withdraw, door opened by someone who is not Wexler. Bacco nods tiredly for this other protection agent to leave as well, so he does, closing the door behind him.

Bacco and Akaar are now alone. She turns to look out of the window again. He approaches, now on a more personal level.

BACCO

(quiet, haunted)

Leonard... am I a bad president?

AKAAR

One of the very best, ma'am.

BACCO

Then why does all this shit keep happening on my watch? Romulans. Borg. Tholians. Andorians. Breen. Romulans again. I knew this job was going to be tough, but this...

AKAAR

You have weathered all those events as well as anyone could expect. And none of them were your fault.

BACCO

No? I was deceived, Leonard. Fooled. By Kamemor, by Sozzerosz, by Brex... I really thought things were getting better. But I guess it was all just a set-up. A trick - on me.

Akaar places a hand on her shoulder - all the comfort their respective positions can allow right now. But she tilts her head, rests her cheek against his hand, thinks out loud...

BACCO

I'm glad you're here, Leonard. I wish Esperanza was here as well, but they took her from me. Her, Steven... and a thousand others.

(beat)

She knew, you know. Esperanza. About you and me.

AKAAR

I assumed as much, after finding  
me in your chambers wearing a  
small pink lace robe.

Bacco chuckles. Akaar is glad to have given her that much.

BACCO

But she approved. She said we made  
a "suitable" couple.

AKAAR

I'm honoured. And I agree. But our  
responsibilities remain unchanged.

Bacco nods against his hand, and sighs... but doesn't move.

**6 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

KASIDY glides the spatula over the chocolate icing, making  
sure it's smooth and even. Then she steps back and admires  
her own handiwork with a small, wistful smile. Meanwhile...

SISKO (o.s.)

Are you sure they're in here?

Kasidy looks - SISKO is rummaging in the bottom drawer.

KASIDY

I said the top drawer, Ben.

SISKO

I looked in there already.

Half exasperated half amused, Kasidy reaches across, opens  
the top drawer and immediately pulls out what they need - a  
small package of candles. Sisko stares in confusion...

SISKO

What the - how did - are these  
Romulan candles? Did they come  
equipped with a cloaking device?

KASIDY

Don't blame your tired old eyes on  
the Romulans, Mister Sisko.

She BOOPS him on the nose with a fingertip full of icing. Performing shock, he scoops it off and tastes it...

SISKO

Not bad.

KASIDY

I'd like to see you do better.

SISKO

How about for her next birthday?

Casual, but oh so sincere. Kasidy gazes at him quietly...

KASIDY

I'm going to hold you to that.

She turns away, shyly giddy at the chemistry that is back full force. Just enjoying feeling like a family again.

PEELS of giggling laughter from the other room. Delighted at the sound of a happy child, Ben calls through the hatch:

SISKO

What's going on out there?

REBECCA (o.s.)

Jasmine's tickling me!

JASMINE (o.s.)

I don't know what Miss Rebecca is talking about.

REBECCA (o.s.)

(more giggles)

She's tickling me!

Grinning, Kasidy picks up the finished chocolate cake...

KASIDY

Come on, better get out there before she wears everyone out.

And they exit together to...

**INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM (CONTINUOUS)**

...where they find that JASMINE is indeed tickling REBECCA. Meanwhile JAKE and RENA sit together in one large armchair, cuddled up and chuckling at the sight. But Jake immediately jumps up to help clear a space on the coffee table...

JAKE

Here, let me make room...

SISKO

Thanks, Jake-o.

Kasidy places the cake on the table, where plates, napkins and a cake knife already wait. Then she and Sisko take the sofa with Rebecca in between. Jake smiles at the sight of his father and Kasidy acting like a married couple again.

JAKE

Oh! I almost forgot...

Jake runs to the door, rummages in his traveling bag, comes out with a smaller bag, brings it back to Rebecca.

REBECCA

Can I open it, mommy?

Kasidy nods permission, so Rebecca opens the bag and pulls out... another STARSHIP MODEL. Rebecca is *elated*.

REBECCA

It's got three warp nacelles!

JAKE

That's a Niagara-class cruiser.  
And look underneath, at the name.

Rebecca turns it over, spells out the name printed on...

REBECCA

USS... Well... ing... ton. It's  
the *Wellington*! That's where you  
go to school!

JAKE

That's right!



REBECCA

Wait a minute... there's cake...  
I'm getting presents... is it my  
birthday? Did I forget it?

KASIDY

(laughs)

No, sweetie, you didn't forget. We  
just wanted a chance to bring the  
whole family together - including  
Aunt Jasmine - and celebrate.

SISKO

Some bad things happened, Rebecca.  
And when that happens, sometimes  
it's nice to take a moment... and  
focus on the good things instead.

Kasidy reaches over and holds his hand. Rebecca does too...

REBECCA

I know bad things happened, daddy.  
I'm sorry I couldn't stop them. I  
was too far away.

Kasidy blanches. Sisko doesn't think anything of it...

SISKO

Baby, that's okay. There's nothing  
you could have done.

He goes to cut the cake, get the party back on track...

...but ending on Kasidy, disquieted as she thinks again of  
the weird things her daughter does and says sometimes...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

FADE IN:

**8 INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE**

RO is on her back on the cold floor, hands inside the new desk that has been installed in this tiny office space. The open door and glass walls barely muffle the noise outside.

One task done, she reads off a PADD to the side - mutters instructions to herself, turns back to the open panel, tries to do what they say, gets a SHOCK for her troubles.

RO  
Ow! Dammit!

RWOGO (o.s.)  
You okay down there, Captain?

Ro glowers up at RWOGO standing there, trying not to smile.

RWOGO  
Surely that's a technician's job.

Ro manoeuvres herself out from under the desk, clambers up off the floor, winces at her seized-up muscles.

RO  
I've always preferred to get my hands dirty. It's... easier than making the big decisions.

Rwogo considers that, learning something about her captain.

RWOGO  
Shall we take a break?

Ro nods tiredly - what the hell. Rwogo leads her...

**9 INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE (CONTINUOUS)**

...into a hive of activity - Starfleet officers WELD and DRILL and upgrade and repair and replace every last bit of machinery. All colours of uniform pitching in together.

Questions and orders bounce back and forth in BACKGROUND WALLA, and the TRANSPORTER is working overtime as old materials are beamed away and new materials brought in.

Ro and Rwego weave through, dodging anti-grav platforms and sparking cables, nodding hello to EXTRAS. They reach one of the other small corner offices, where the glass walls show similar work going on inside. Rwego gestures to it...

RWOGO

Given the circumstances, my latest enterprise has yet to show profit...

(of Ro's look)

The investigation. I was wondering if you'd had any further thoughts.

Ro turns, looks back at the room, leans against the wall. Eventually her eye lands on TH'SHANT, one of the engineers supervising a work team. Rwego follows her eyeline...

RWOGO

One thing we do know is the bombs had Andorian writing on them.

RO

But that's too obvious, isn't it? The *Trieshya* haven't claimed any responsibility for what happened.

RWOGO

(shrug)

The Typhon Pact are courting them for their newest member...

RO

Even so, I can't believe th'Shant would be involved. He told us he hated what his own people were doing. It has to be a misdirect.

RWOGO

Alright then... by whom?

Ro's eye wanders again, reaching SARINA helping BASHIR to set up his equipment inside a third glass corner office...

RWOGO

The Starfleet Intelligence agent?  
Who risked life and lobe on an  
impossible mission to protect us  
from the Typhon Pact? Why would  
she turn and do their dirty work?

Ro sighs and shakes her head, looks down at the floor...

RWOGO

Of course, it doesn't help that  
all the evidence was destroyed.  
The evidence, the crime scene...  
even the culprit themselves may  
well have perished in the blast.  
We may never know the full truth.

RO

You're wrong. Not all the evidence  
was destroyed.

(taps combadge)

Ro to *Defiant*.

10 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE (INTERCUT)**

TENMEI sits in command, enjoying the responsibility.

TENMEI

Tenmei here, Captain.

RO (comm)

Gimme an update, Lieutenant. Where  
are you with the Breen freighter?

Tenmei looks forward, to the main viewscreen...

...which shows the *Ren Fejin* holding position, neither ship  
moving, and the curve of BAJOR itself in the background.

TENMEI

Candlewood and Slaine are leading  
a forensic team on board the ship  
right now. I'll patch them in.

(taps side panel)

*Defiant* to away team.

11 INT. REN FEJIN - BRIDGE (INTERCUT)

CANDLEWOOD, SLAINE and two other Starfleet science officers have their tricorders out, scanning and collating data from the Breen ship's blasted computer banks.

CANDLEWOOD  
(brightly)  
Hi, Prynn.

TENMEI (comm)  
I've got the captain on the line,  
Lieutenant. She wants a report.

CANDLEWOOD  
(even more brightly)  
Hi, Captain! Slow going so far,  
I'm afraid. Tomalak made sure to  
blow up as much of these computers  
as he could before we caught him.  
And the *Defiant* doesn't have the  
processing power to fill the gaps.

12 INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE (INTERCUT)

Ro glowers at this answer...

RO  
Yeah, I'm hearing that a lot. Keep  
working on it - that ship may be  
the only way to find out why Chao  
and a thousand more died. Ro out.

She slaps her combadge hard, forcibly closing the line.

PERMENTER (o.s.)  
Umm, Captain?

Ro's head snaps up in anger... it is PERMENTER, another of the engineer team leaders. Ro regrets her anger, softens.

PERMENTER  
...I was just wondering when the  
new chief engineer is supposed to  
arrive? We could do with someone  
who knows what they're doing.

O'BRIEN (o.s.)  
Maybe I could help with that...?

Ro's black cloud instantly clears. Rwego and Permenter both turn to see...

...O'BRIEN and KIRA together. Ro immediately pushes forward and HUGS them both tight. O'Brien chuckles through it...

O'BRIEN  
Chief Engineer Miles O'Brien  
reporting for duty, Captain.

Ro pulls back and stares at him like he's a godsend. Looks back and forth between him and Kira, not quite able to grasp it all. Rwego decides to leave them to it...

RWOGO  
I'll leave you with your friends.  
Good to see you again, vedek.

KIRA  
You too, Inspector.

Rwego and Permenter head out. Ro is still processing...

O'BRIEN  
Ro... what is all this?

RO  
Starfleet didn't tell you?

O'BRIEN  
I just got new orders to report to you on Bajor. I assumed that meant the *Defiant*, but...

RO  
This, Chief, is the new Deep Space Nine. Think you can get it working?

O'Brien looks out at the chaos... and GRINS.

O'BRIEN  
Piece of cake.

Ro GRINS too, hugely relieved. Turns to Kira...

RO  
Nerys... What are you doing here?

KIRA  
I came because I wanted to invite  
you all up to the monastery.

RO  
(flippant)  
You having a party?

KIRA  
(soothing)  
No - I mean to live. Laren, we've  
got a hospital full of nurses -  
and no-one for them to take care  
of since the refugees left. Can  
you think of anyone who needs them  
more than survivors of DS-Nine?

Ro keeps trying not to think about it. People keep trying  
to make her think about it. Kira turns to O'Brien...

KIRA  
You too, Miles. Are Keiko and the  
children here? Have you been  
assigned quarters yet...?

But we focus upon Ro as her mind fights itself...

**CUT TO:**

**13    EXT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - TRANSPORTER PLAZA - DAY**

...RO still no surer about the whole thing, as she stands  
in the circular plaza surrounded by the half-height stone  
wall on the top of the mountain, having just beamed in.

She lets the others who beamed in with her - CANDLEWOOD,  
TENMEI, BASHIR, SARINA, SLAINE, O'BRIEN, MATTHIAS, almost  
all of the senior staff in fact - step off the transporter  
pads and head towards the building, while she hovers back.

They all chatter excitedly among themselves as they head inside, happy to be here. Ro is... not.

**14    EXT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - WALKWAY - DAY**

As they all proceed down the open-but-covered walkway that snakes between the various buildings along the side of the mountaintop, SLAINE pauses to gaze out at the view.

SLAINE  
Amazing... Bajor is even more  
beautiful than I'd heard.

Candlewood also wanders up...

CANDLEWOOD  
It's nice to hear a Cardassian  
admit that openly.

SLAINE  
It's not a sight one sees at home  
- unless one is very rich. I am  
worried about one thing, though...

CANDLEWOOD  
What's that?

SLAINE  
The wind at this altitude must be  
terrifyingly cold.

CANDLEWOOD  
(scoff)  
You obviously didn't grow up in  
Chicago. Come on...

They head off down the walkway together...

**15    INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - COMMISSARY - DAY**

The monastery's communal dining area, where Kira welcomes O'Brien and Matthias, while the Bajoran nurse-ranjens move around in the background, welcoming the other officers and directing them to their rooms.



O'BRIEN

Nerys, this'll be perfect. I can't wait for Molly to see it, she'll be thrilled to get her own room.

MATTHIAS

It's certainly a lot better than those old government apartments they put us in in Aljuli.

KIRA

That's part of why I invited you here. Those poky little rooms are no place for families. Here the children will have room to roam, they've got the ranjens to watch over them and teach school...

(beat, evasive)

Plus, I thought it might do someone else some good to have other parents around as well.

Kira glances sideways to where RAIQ stands out of the way, warily watching the newcomers with baby Aniq in her arms. What are these strangers doing in her space...?

**16    INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - HOSPICE ROOM - DAY**

The wooden door CREAKS open, TENMEI pokes her head in...

...and sees her father, VAUGHN, still in bed where he has been for 18 months. Unconscious, thin and grey, with life support machines working silently to keep his body alive.

OPAKA closes her book and stands on creaking bones from the chair at his side, greeting the younger woman with a smile.

OPAKA

Prynn, it's good to see you. Nerys said you'd be coming.

TENMEI

(stepping in)

Hi, Sulan. How's he doing?

Opaka sits again, gently strokes the old man's brow. It's quite clear that she cares for him in more ways than one.

OPAKA

As hale and hearty as ever he was.

Tenmei approaches, takes the spare seat on the other side.

TENMEI

I really am grateful to you. For everything you do to take care of him. Not sure if I've said that.

OPAKA

It is my pleasure. I've dedicated my life to tending to others in one way or another. Given all he's suffered in his life, your father needs that more than most.

The two women who care most for Vaughn watch over him...

**17    INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - BEDROOM - DAY**

Ro stands in the room that has been assigned to her here at the monastery. No personal effects. She had no time to save anything from the station. There is just the bed and the prayer mandala etched directly into the stone wall of this room like every other here, so she can't even remove it.

She looks out of the open window instead, at the nice view beyond. She takes no joy in it. Everything looks so small and far away.

Empty, she lowers her eyes...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

**18    EXT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - NIGHT**

The moonlit mountaintop, the remote monastery perched on the peak, only an occasional candle flickering in a window.

**19    INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - CORRIDOR - NIGHT**

RO walks slowly, quietly along the stone corridor, wrapped in warm civilian clothes, hugging herself against the night chill. She passes several closed wooden doors, thinks about the people on the other side. Are they asleep, unlike her?

**20    INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - COMMISSARY - NIGHT**

Ro emerges out of the corridor into the dining area. Looks around at the stone walls, the tables, the serving counter. Heads to the window and looks out over the beautiful night, the moon reflecting off the river. All of this is wrong.

KIRA (o.s.)  
Couldn't sleep?

Somehow not surprised, Ro turns and sees Kira wrapped warm against the night like her, watching her without judgement. Kira steps up quietly to Ro's side, looks out at the view with her. Lets the moon light them both in the darkness.

KIRA  
I get it. After so long in space,  
it takes a while to get used to  
sleeping on a planet again.

Ro's reaction is subtle and muted - but definitely there.

RO  
I can't stay here, Nerys.

KIRA  
(no judgement)  
Where would you go?

RO

Cenn and Rwego are staying in the Aljuli apartments to keep an eye on the junior officers. I'm sure they've got an extra room.

KIRA

Easier to keep an eye on Quark down there too. And to escape all the religious iconography up here.

RO

It's not that.

(off Kira's "really?")

Really! That doesn't even bother me anymore.

KIRA

Then what is bothering you?

Ro pauses a moment, tries to put her own thoughts in order.

RO

DS-Nine was...

(admits it to herself)

...home. After so long on the run, that Cardassian hellhole let me learn how to be a Bajoran again...

KIRA

(gently fishing)

...but with enough distance that you could do it on your own terms?

Ro doesn't argue. Gazes absently up into the night sky...

RO

And now it's all gone. But in its place... I've got a chance to get to know the real Bajor at last. I can't hide away on a mountaintop anymore. O'Brien and Tenmei and the others can stay, it'll be good for them. I need to be down there.

Kira smiles - it's not something she ever expected to hear.

RO  
...That is, if they even want me.

KIRA  
Why wouldn't they?

RO  
(shrug)  
I was in command on the day the station that served and protected this planet for years was lost...

KIRA  
Laren... I was going to wait till tomorrow to tell you this. But I had messages from the Over-General, the Kai, and the First Minister.

RO  
Why?

KIRA  
Because they all knew you'd only hear it... if it came from me.

RO  
Hear what?

KIRA  
Forgiveness, Laren. Sympathy. Not blame. Never blame. Only love.

Ro looks to Kira, eyes wet in the moonlight.

KIRA  
You did everything you could. You saved lives. It wasn't your fault.

RO  
(wet and thick)  
Thank you, Nerys. I'm not sure if I'm ready to hear that yet... but thank you for saying it.

Ro swallows her feelings, and looks out the window again...

21 EXT. ALJULI TOWN - MORNING

A steady stream of Starfleet junior officers head out of a building and off to work. They are still processing it all, but the fresh air and bright sun lift their spirits.

Among them is TH'SHANT, keeping to himself, no friends to walk with. After a moment, TENMEI jogs up to join him...

TENMEI

Hi Vakell! Mind if I join you?

TH'SHANT

(cool but polite)

Hello, Pryn. I thought you were staying at Vanadwan monastery?

TENMEI

I am. But I stopped off at Quark's new place for breakfast. And it's a nice walk from here, so why not?

th'Shant nods half-heartedly, and they walk on together. He is still remote, so Tenmei attempts to make small-talk...

TENMEI

What do you think of Bajor so far?

TH'SHANT

It is pleasant.

Disappointed, she remembers that Andorians don't really do small-talk, so she decides to tackle it head on...

TENMEI

Are you feeling better, Vakell?

TH'SHANT

Better? Better than what?

TENMEI

You were pretty upset on the *Rio Grande*. I talked to Zivan, and she said you completely freaked out when the bombs started going off.

TH' SHANT

"Freaked out?"

TENMEI

Don't get me wrong, you'd have to be crazy not to be upset in the middle of all that. But Shar would always get so calm and focused in a crisis, so I thought -

TH' SHANT

I'm not Shar.

The angry HISS of a reply makes Tenmei stop in her tracks. Shocked, and a bit offended. She calls after th'Shant...

TENMEI

I never said you were.

th'Shant turns and stalks back to her, the anger coming out now. The other officers keep walking to work around them...

TH' SHANT

Why didn't you tell me?

TENMEI

(baffled)

Tell you what?

TH' SHANT

What you and Candlewood were doing with the tachyon buoys. Couldn't you trust the Andorian?

TENMEI

What?!

TH' SHANT

I know you think I was involved.

(shouts around)

Don't you? You all think I did it!

(back to Tenmei,

quieter)

But you know who's really to blame?

You are. You and your friend.

Tenmei stands in the street, stunned and upset at the sheer emotional overload that th'Shant is unleashing now in broad daylight. The others keep their heads down and walk by...

TH'SHANT

If he hadn't caught that Romulan ship trying to sneak through, it would have gone on its merry way and no-one would have died. If you hadn't fired on the Romulans as soon as they appeared, it could have all been resolved peacefully and no-one would have died.

TENMEI

Vakell... they were obviously up to something...

TH'SHANT

You don't know that!

Tears in his eyes, spittle on his lips, antennae throbbing tensely, the Andorian turns and walks away from Tenmei...

## 22 INT. PRAETOR'S CHAMBER

Praetor KAMEMOR paces equally tense across the black marble floor of her chamber, trying to process what she was told.

KAMEMOR

Battle? Not skirmish? Not a few weapons discharges that might be dismissed as an accident, or some overzealous tactical officer?

Tal Shiar chairwoman SELA stands at attention, observing.

SELA

No. The exchange of weapons fire apparently lasted for some time, and resulted in the destruction of all three Typhon Pact starships.

Kamemor stops pacing and pierces Sela with a look...



KAMEMOR

Starships? By which you mean to  
say military vessels?

(Sela nods)

Whose ships were they?

SELA

A Tzenkethi harrier, a Breen war-  
ship... and a Romulan warbird.

Kamemor has to steady herself against her throne. After a moment, she heads to the wall, slides open a panel and reveals a COMM system inside it. She presses a few buttons, then leans against the wall and hangs her head...

SELA

I do have more, Praetor...

KAMEMOR

Oh, I'm sure you do.

A BEEP from the comm panel, and VENTEL's voice is heard...

VENTEL (comm)

Praetor? Is everything alright?

KAMEMOR

Ventel, I want you to reach Devix  
at once. I don't care how far he is  
from Romulus, I want a real-time  
connection before the night is out.

VENTEL (comm)

Why? What's happened?

KAMEMOR

Then get to the Hall of State as  
soon as you can. I think we'll be  
convening the cabinet tonight, and  
probably the Senate as well.

VENTEL (comm)

But Praetor -

KAMEMOR

Just do it! Then get here.

VENTEL (comm)  
Yes, Praetor. At once.

The line drops, and Kamemor turns back to Sela, stern.

KAMEMOR  
Do you know what's going on?

SELA  
It is difficult to be sure at such an early stage. We don't even know who initiated the fighting.

KAMEMOR  
The Typhon Pact did, just by being there. So if you don't know, then what do you suspect?

SELA  
My suspicion is that rogue elements within the Pact seek to undermine your attempts to lessen tensions with the Khitomer Accords.

KAMEMOR  
They have doubtless succeeded.  
(sigh)  
"Rogue elements". In truth, I might understand their distrust of the Federation, of the Klingons - of all the nations we habitually call enemy. What I do not understand is the desire to bring those nations down at the cost of Romulan lives.

Sela hates Kamemor, this populist traitor who is somehow less dedicated to Romulan superiority than even Sela the human-Romulan half-breed is. This damned woman who won't even sit in her throne like a Praetor should.

Sela is also angry that another of her own plans to outwit Kamemor has failed. *Two* botched schemes - it's infuriating and embarrassing. But for now, her best tactics are loyalty and transparency - or at least the appearance of them.

SELA

As you say, Madam Praetor.

KAMEMOR

That's why I need the Tal Shiar to find out who is coordinating these rogue attacks from the Romulan side - and stop them before any more lives are lost unnecessarily.

SELA

I assure you, Madam Praetor, I will find those responsible, and I will interrogate them thoroughly. And if there are any more rogue actions planned... I promise I will know all about them.

KAMEMOR

Keep me informed.

Sela bows, then turns to leave the Praetor's chamber...

...hiding the sly smile that has now crept across her face.

**23 INT. CORRIDOR**

In the corridor, Sela finds a functionary waiting for her.

SELA

Contact our friends on ab-Tzenketh. Tell them the new plan must go into action at once. If we have to start over, let's get it right this time.

The functionary nods and scuttles off. Sela seethes...

BLACK OUT

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

**24    TENMEI**

Cold wind stinging her eyes, making them water, squinting out over the mountaintop view. She closes her eyes...

VOICES creep in, audio flashbacks, ghostly memories...

TENMEI (v.o.)  
(from 14x12)  
Target that ship - open fire.

TENMEI (v.o.)  
(from 14x13)  
Fire transphasics. Let's introduce  
the Romulans to our Borg-killer  
torpedoes...

The ghostly sound of the Romulan ship self-destructing, every loyal Romulan soldier on board it atomised...

TH'SHANT (v.o.)  
(from earlier)  
You know who's really to blame?  
You are.

Tenmei opens her eyes again, tears glistening...

**25    EXT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - TRANSPORTER PLAZA - DAY**

...revealing that Tenmei is stood on the half wall around the plaza, right on the edge of the unfathomable drop down.

OPAKA emerges onto the plaza from the main building, just happened to be passing by... but she sees Tenmei, and is immediately worried. Stepping out cautiously...

OPAKA  
Prynn...? What are you doing?

Tenmei doesn't hear. Wind in her ears, mind elsewhere. So the younger woman leans forwards...

...and tumbles off the mountaintop, disappearing from view.

OPAKA

Prynn!

Horrified, Opaka runs as fast as her old bones will carry her, to the edge, and looks over...

OPAKA

Oh Prophets, please no...

**26**    **TENMEI**

as she plummets down the side of the mountain, past miles of rock, eyes still squinting against the wind...

...and then she spreads her arms, revealing WINGS between wrist and ankle, a 24th century skydiving suit that catches the wind and LIFTS Tenmei back up into the air...

...and she SOARS over the valley, over the treetops, over the river. Fresh air in her lungs, wind in her hair...

...and she relaxes. The tension drops from her face, tears dry on her skin. This is *freedom*. Out here, away from it all, she can let all the horror go, and just... *fly*.

**27**    **EXT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - TRANSPORTER PLAZA - DAY**

Opaka standing at the edge, watching her surrogate daughter soar like a bird... and gently weeping with blessed relief.

**28**    **INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - BEDROOM - DAY**

The view of Tenmei coasting on the wind, as seen through the window of CANDLEWOOD's bare, unfurnished new room. He stands at the window, quietly watching...

...and idly threading a LEATHER STRAP through his hands. He tests its strength, fashions it into a loop, looks up...

...at the exposed pipework along the stone ceiling, the old plumbing that leads to the old-fashioned bathroom....

He looks at the picture of him and Hetik from Vic's lounge, set on the side, one of only two things he saved...

...then he starts winding the strap reverently around his arm. Holds the small black box against the left bicep and winds the strap around the arm, down towards the hand...

CANDLEWOOD

*Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, melekh  
ha'olam...*

The arm strap done, he picks up a second box, rests it on his forehead and ties the strap round the back of his head.

CANDLEWOOD

*...Asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav  
v'tzivanu l'hani'ah t'filin...*

Both straps complete, he picks up his prayer book...

CANDLEWOOD

*Barukh shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam  
va'ed...*

...and begins to pray.

**29**    **INT. QUARK'S NEW BAR**

Bashir and O'Brien CHEER as two frosty glasses of ale are placed down on the bar in front of them by QUARK. They pick them up and CLINK them together, take a healthy draft... and SIGH with pleasure as the suds go down just right.

O'BRIEN

Just what the doctor ordered, eh?

BASHIR

Oh, Miles... it is so good to see you. You don't know how hard it's been to convince anyone to go to the holosuites with me...

O'BRIEN

Remember the Alamo?

BASHIR

How could I forget. What about the Battle of Britain?

O'BRIEN  
Poor old Clive. What about Julian  
Bashir: Secret Agent?

Bashir glances behind him - at SARINA who sits nearby, just like KEIKO sits near O'Brien.

BASHIR  
That one... kind of lost its charm.

Bashir shares a subtle smirk with Sarina - no-one else knows the secret. Then back to O'Brien with a saucy wink...

BASHIR  
What about *Vulcan Love Slave*?

Horrified, O'Brien turns to Keiko and splutters...

O'BRIEN  
I never used that programme!

Keiko shares a long-suffering eye-roll with Sarina. This was supposed to be a double date out at the bar, busy with music and gambling. But as soon as the boys got together...

KEIKO  
Boys and their toys.

SARINA  
So I'm starting to learn.

O'Brien turns to Quark, who is still working the bar while observing with a small smile - things are back to normal.

O'BRIEN  
Hey, barkeep! How long until those new holosuites are ready?

NOG (o.s.)  
Well, that all depends...

They all turn, amazed - to see NOG.

NOG  
...on who he gets to install them.

Bashir and O'Brien leap off their barstools and HUG him...

O'BRIEN

Nog! What are you doing here?

NOG

Where else would I be?

Bashir and O'Brien step back, letting go of Nog...

...only for QUARK to launch upon him from out of nowhere, knocking the wind out of the younger Ferengi with his hug.

QUARK

Nog... Oh thank Gint...

Bashir and O'Brien share a surprised glance at Quark's open emotionalism. At length he pulls back, gets himself under control. Nog is still a bit bemused, waves at Keiko...

QUARK

Come with me, there's someone I want you to meet...

And Quark drags Nog off by the arm...

...towards RWOGO, perched on a stool at the end of the bar.

QUARK

Inspector Rwogo, this is Lieutenant Commander Nog, my nephew. Rwogo is the new chief of security.

NOG

A Ferengi chief of security? Wow, Odo would hate that.

QUARK

(thrilled)

That's what I said!

Nog and Rwogo both do the Ferengi bow, wrists together.

NOG

A pleasure to meet you, Inspector.



RWOGO

Very much the same, Commander.  
You're an inspiration to us all -  
the first Ferengi in Starfleet!

NOG

But not the last. I heard two more  
joined the latest Academy class.

RWOGO

(grin)

What an influential family. I can  
see I came to the perfect place to  
employ Rule number thirty-three.

Nog LAUGHS - he likes this woman already. Then he hears  
another LAUGH from across the crowded room, and turns...

...to see Candlewood, Tenmei and Slaine entering the bar.

Candlewood spots him too, drops his jaw in comic amazement,  
and dashes over to hug his friend. Tenmei is close behind.

CANDLEWOOD

Nog!

TENMEI

Noggles!

CANDLEWOOD

Noggly-woggly-woo!

NOG

(laughing)

Alright, that can stop right now.

They grab his arms and drag him forcibly over towards their  
newly chosen regular table, where SLAINE already waits.

CANDLEWOOD

Slaine, Nog. Nog, Slaine.

Nog holds out his arms Cardassian-style, at the same time  
Slaine tries to bow Ferengi-style. Laughing, they try again  
- Slaine holds her arms out, Nog bows. Everyone LAUGHS.

TENMEI

Okay, so you're both too polite  
for your own good. Sit before you  
knock yourselves out bowing.

The four contemporaries take their table, happy together.

TENMEI

So, Nog - tell me things! Are you  
back as chief engineer?

NOG

I guess that's up to Ro. But I put  
in a priority request the minute I  
heard what happened.

An unseen WAITER arrives and places drinks on the table for  
them all. They are too happy chatting to even notice...

SLAINE

Wait - we didn't even order yet.

HETIK (o.s.)

That's okay, I know your orders.

Candlewood looks up in shock... and HETIK is there in his  
*dabo* outfit. Candlewood jumps to his feet...

CANDLEWOOD

What is happening?! Where are you  
all coming from?

Hetik and Candlewood hug hard - too hard and too long to be  
casual. Nog, Tenmei and Slaine exchange knowing looks.

CANDLEWOOD

I must be psychic.

HETIK

Why?

CANDLEWOOD

'Cause I was only just thinking of  
you earlier, while I was adjusting  
my phylacteries.

HETIK

...Okay.

CANDLEWOOD

Wait, the tray, your clothes - are you working here again?

HETIK

Not much going on in Suramil, I'm afraid. So when I heard... well, Aljuli was as good as anywhere.

(beat)

John... I'm so sorry...

CANDLEWOOD

Hey, nothing you could have done.

HETIK

No, I mean I'm sorry I left you. When I think how I could have lost any chance of seeing you again...

CANDLEWOOD

Hetik... don't say you want to get back together. That would be the stupidest thing to do right now.

HETIK

But I love you...

CANDLEWOOD

I love you too, you know I do. But just 'cause lots of folks died and I was nearly one of them doesn't change the problems we had.

(beat)

Hetik, I don't mean this to sound cruel... but I've actually been okay without you. My job's going great, I've got good friends... turns out I don't need a man to feel good about myself. So if we do start up again, it can only be when we both really know it's what we want. Not out of... panic.

Hetik looks at the man he loves, quietly amazed...

HETIK

John... that is so... mature.

CANDLEWOOD

Hey, it had to happen some time.  
But I'll see you around, okay?

HETIK

Okay.

Candlewood places a kiss on Hetik's lips... then strides to the exit, head high, self-sacrificing for the greater good.

At the door, he turns, looks back at Hetik, standing there with his empty tray by the table where his friends sit...

...and he RUNS back to Hetik, THROWS himself into the other man's arms, never wanting to let go, CHEERS and APPLAUSE go up from the watching crowd, Tenmei WHISTLES in joy...

#### **FLASH**

Candlewood stands by the door, right where he was. With a sigh, he turns again for the exit...

At the table, Hetik sighs in disappointment, Tenmei reaches out to hold his hand in comfort...

...and suddenly Candlewood scuttles back, grabs his drink off the table, knocks it back quick...

CANDLEWOOD

Forgot my drink. I'm not here.  
Sorry. Bye! Love you!

...and he scuttles off again. The rest all chuckle...

#### **30 EXT. ALJULI APARTMENTS - NIGHT**

The same apartment block where Starfleet officers streamed out to work in the morning. Now they stagger back from the bar at night, Bajoran locals eyeing them with amusement...

31 **INT. ALJULI APARTMENTS - RO'S QUARTERS**

RO opens the door on a small, functional and unimpressive room. She is exhausted, worn out at the end of a long day. She pauses, looks around. Bed, wardrobe, desk and chair, lamp, fresher closet, small window. This is now her home.

She slumps in, closes the door behind her. Sits on the bed, bounces it a bit. Looks to the pillow on the bed...

...and notices a green cloth BAG tied up with a drawstring and placed gently against the pillow. Curious, she picks it up, opens the string, pulls out the contents...

...a box of teabags, a box of biscuits, and a paper note.

RO

Jumja tea... milaberry biscuits...  
they're my favourites.

(the note)

Welcome home... love... Quark.

She SMILES, touched by the simple, kind gesture. Gazes at the note. Starts to CHUCKLE at the absurdity of it all. The chuckle grows into a full LAUGH, echoing off the walls...

...until it slowly dissolves into CRYING. This is it now, the emotional floodgates are open and everything she has tried to suppress is coming out. Can't control it.

Collapses sideways onto the pillow. Curles up, foetal. Grips the paper note and the cloth bag to her chest...

...and CRIES.

BLACK OUT

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

**32 EXT. ALJULI APARTMENTS - MORNING**

RO steps out of the building onto the street, and pauses. She looks around at the small town, the Bajoran stylings, the locals going about their day, the junior officers of her crew heading off to work. She looks up at the warm sky, feels the breeze off the lake in her hair... and SMILES.

Far from a bad thing, the emotional storm of last night was cathartic for her. It got it all out of her system, let her sleep at last, blew away the cobwebs. Now she stands tall, uniform crisp, hair black and shiny, eyes clear and bright.

She spots CENN striding by, and folds in to join him.

RO  
Desca! How're you settling in?

And they walk off together...

**33 INT. QUARK'S NEW BAR**

The lights are up, revealing that the place is a bit of a wreck. QUARK works alone, collecting glasses, carrying them back to the bar, wiping down tables, straightening chairs.

RWOGO (o.s.)  
Good morning, Ambassador.

Quark glances over his shoulder, seeing Rwego standing just inside the front door. But he is too busy to pay attention. Carries on tidying up while he talks off-handedly to her.

QUARK  
Inspector. What can I do for you?

RWOGO  
(steps in)  
Just wanted to check in. Don't you have staff to do the cleaning for you? Two-hundred-eleventh Rule.

QUARK

I can manage perfectly well alone.

By now Rwogo has reached the same table where Quark is busy gathering glasses onto his tray. She probes gently...

RWOGO

I observed the crowd last night.  
And I observed you, Ambassador.

QUARK

(escapes to the  
next table)  
Hope you enjoyed the show.

RWOGO

(pursues him)  
It was very informative. Watching  
you take care of everyone else.  
But the whole time I couldn't help  
wonder... who takes care of you?

He finally turns to look at her - and he looks *dreadful*.

QUARK

I'm fine.

RWOGO

Quark... have you even slept?

QUARK

I have too much work to do.

Quark hefts the full tray of glasses, ready to head back to the bar... but Rwogo gently takes hold of the tray as well.

QUARK

Let. Go.

RWOGO

Please... let me help.

QUARK

I don't need any help.

On the "need" he YANKS the tray away from her...

## **SLOW MOTION**

...the empty glasses tumble from the tray... Quark watches them fall, dark eyes wide... paralysed with horror as the glasses approach the hard concrete floor... and they SMASH into a million tiny pieces, shattering in all directions.

## **BACK TO NORMAL**

Quark lets out a breathless WAIL, like the annoying Ferengi squeal - except this is not at all funny. This is *pain*.

The tray drops with a CLATTER... and he falls to his knees among the wreckage, gasping between wails. Rwego catches him on the way down, shocked and surprised. Gathers him up, unable to quite believe the emotions flowing out of him.

She looks around, makes sure there is no-one to witness his breakdown. They're alone, on the floor in the broken glass. This is not what Rwego expected from the famous ambassador. All she can do is hold him, protect him while he keens...

## **34 INT. VANADWAN MONASTERY - COMMISSARY - MORNING**

Group breakfast for the former DS-Nine's senior staff and their families. The atmosphere is light, happy, convivial. They chat while they eat, unrushed and happy to be here.

Tenmei, Candlewood, Nog and Slaine sit at a table. Bashir, Sarina and O'Brien at another. SIBIAS (Matthias' husband) is the only grown-up at one table, trying to corral Arios (12, m), Mireh (9, f), Molly (15, f) and Kirayoshi (9, m).

We pick up KEIKO carrying a full plate from the counter... to a fourth table where MATTHIAS sits with RAIQ. The Ascendant woman is holding baby Aniq somewhat gingerly. Keiko sits at the table with them...

...just in time for Aniq to start crying in that certain way. Raiq looks embarrassed, unsure how to handle it.

KEIKO

Oh I recognise that sound. I think baby Aniq wants her breakfast too.



MATTHIAS

Yep. Doesn't matter where in the galaxy they're from, they all make the same noise at feeding time.

Unemotional, Raiq pulls back her robe and attaches the baby to her breast, before drawing the robe back over again.

RAIQ

You both have young?

MATTHIAS

Two a piece. One of the proudest achievements of my life. I love being a mother. Well... except for the colic. And the tantrums.

KEIKO

And the arguing over getting them to do their homework.

MATTHIAS

And the midnight feeds.

KEIKO

(w/ horror)

And the chafing.

RAIQ

(surprised)

I too have experienced this!

MATTHIAS

Comes with the job, unfortunately.

RAIQ

Speak to me of motherhood, I beg.  
Did your young ever go to sleep?

Keiko LAUGHS - Raiq is pleased. Commiserating with the two other mothers has actually cheered her up - now she knows she is not alone. As they continue to talk in background...

PAN to Kira, leaning against the wall with arms folded and watching the table of three mothers chatting comfortably. She smiles broadly, glad to see Raiq fitting in.

35     INT. SSKO'S HOUSE - MORNING

KASIDY moves around the house, preparing for the day ahead. Boiling a kettle, packing Rebecca's school bag... there is a soft KNOCK at the door. She moves to open the door...

...and it's SSKO. She lets him in comfortably.

                  KASIDY  
Come on in, Ben.

                  SSKO  
Hi, Kas. Is she up yet?

                  KASIDY  
Still fast asleep. Coffee?

She leads him through to the kitchen, points him to the table while she makes the coffee.

                  SSKO  
So... she has no idea I slept at the bakery with Jake and Rena.

                  KASIDY  
No. I'm sorry, Ben. I'm just not ready to let you back into my bed yet. We're starting over, we need to get to know each other again.

                  SSKO  
I would never pressure you, Kas. I just worry she'll wake up at night and come into our - into your room. And when she sees I'm not there -

                  KASIDY  
She hasn't done that in a year.

Sisko absorbs that - clearly his daughter has grown up some while he was elsewhere. Kasidy brings two steaming mugs.

                  KASIDY  
I know this can't last.

SISKO

What do you mean?

KASIDY

Starfleet's going to want you back sooner or later. But it's nice for now. It's nice for Rebecca to have her father. Even like this.

SISKO

She'll figure it out eventually.  
You know how perceptive she is.

Kasidy tenses, sips her coffee to cover. Rebecca is more perceptive even than Sisko realises.

**36    INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE**

O'BRIEN is on his knees under Ro's new desk, working on the same connection that shocked her earlier. He finishes in a second without even concentrating, gets up from the floor.

O'BRIEN

There you go. Good as new.

Ro just grunts at him - why does he make it look so easy?

**37    INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE - DOCTOR'S OFFICE**

One of the other corner offices, now set up as a small medical examination room - emphasis on *small*. As NOG makes one final connection on the single bio-bed, BASHIR looks around unimpressed at the minimal space and equipment.

BASHIR

This is hardly a state of the art medical facility, Nog.

(re the glass walls)

And how can I possibly conduct a medical examination in full view of the entire control centre?

Nog grabs a device, points it at the walls... and the glass shifts to TRANSLUCENT - enough to let light through but not enough to tell anything that's actually going on outside.

NOG

This'll be fine for the occasional cuts and bruises. Anything bigger, Aljuli has a full medical centre.

Bashir purses, as unimpressed as Ro... then relents. It's better than nothing. He and Nog head out...

**38 INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE (CONTINUOUS)**

...into the main room, still a hive of activity but under control and organised. Bashir and Nog stride past rows of state-of-the-art computer banks and workstations, crewed by Starfleet junior EXTRAS of all races, genders and colours.

The grey concrete walls are adorned with hi-tech displays, readouts and control panels. The Bajoran characters etched into the far wall now have the words BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE painted below them in English characters, and below that hangs a large main viewscreen slash master systems display.

At the front of the room, under the main screen, is a new hi-tech Starfleet conference table. Some senior staff are already sitting around it - CANDLEWOOD, TENMEI, SLAINE and MATTHIAS. As Bashir and Nog take their seats beside them...

...Ro and O'Brien enter from the captain's office in the front left corner, while Cenn and Rwego walk over from the security office in the front right corner. They converge at the conference table, where all sit - except for Ro, who stands at the head of the table below the main screen.

RO

Morning, all... and welcome to the brand new Bajoran Control Centre.

CHEERS and WHOOPS of celebration around the table.

RO

Before I go any further, there's something I need to say to you. That something is... I'm sorry.

Confused looks around the table now...

RO

Just in case any of you were thinking of trying to take the blame for what happened...

Tenmei and Candlewood glance to each other...

RO

(continuing)

...don't. I'm the captain. And maybe if I'd been more supportive, created a more trusting climate on DS-Nine, we would have been able to stop this before it happened.

(deep breath)

But I didn't, and now I have to shoulder responsibility for that.

CENN

Captain...

RO

No, Desca. Let me take this. It's what I'm here to do. But you all have plenty to do as well.

Going around the table one by one...

RO

Major Cenn, you and *dalin* Slaine have a whole new control centre to run, managing all ship activity in the Bajor sector, and coordinating between Starfleet and our allies.

CENN

Understood, Captain.

RO

Lieutenant Tenmei, you and Mister Candlewood will take the *Defiant* and join the patrols with *Venture*, *Brisbane* and *Canterbury*. And you will keep investigating the *Ren Fejin* until we know everything.

TENMEI

We're on it, Captain.

RO

Doctor, Counsellor... you have scars to help heal, physical and psychological. These people are going to need you more than ever.

BASHIR

We will, Captain.

RO

Inspector Rwogo, your job may be the most difficult of all. You'll need to solve a mystery without any clues or crime scene, and an infinite number of suspects. But I'm going to help you all the way.

RWOGO

I look forward to it, Captain.

RO

And finally, my two new co-chief engineers...

Tenmei WHOOPS and CLAPS...

RO

(continuing)

...you have the best job of all. You see, I talked to Admiral Akaar this morning. Seems the Federation Council took a vote. Some of them think we should just let those starships keep patrolling - they already exist, after all. Much easier that way. But Councillor Krim proposed a alternative plan, President Bacco supported it... and eventually, the whole Council approved it. And you two - Chief O'Brien, Lieutenant Commander Nog... you get to make it happen.

O'Brien looks back confused...

O'BRIEN

Make what happen, Captain?

RO

Well, as great as this place is,  
and as grateful as we all are for  
you getting it up and running...  
now we get to start the real work.  
It's going to take time, and it's  
gonna be an uphill battle because  
we're starting from scratch.

(beat)

But now... you get to design and  
build a brand new space station  
for the Bajoran system. You get to  
create... the new Deep Space Nine.

A moment of stunned silence...

...and then ROARS of applause and celebration. The sound  
fills the room, everyone thrilled at the news...

...and Ro smiles.

FADE OUT

**END OF SHOW**