

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x04 - "The Officers' Club."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the short story

"The Officers' Club"
by Heather Jarman

appearing in

Star Trek: Tales From the Captain's Table

and incorporating elements from

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine:
Gateways Book 4
Demons of Air and Darkness*
by Keith RA DeCandido

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE WORMHOLE

The wormhole bursts open in its customary display. A small DOMINION ship flies out, calmly heads towards camera...

2 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

KIRA and VAUGHN exit her office, hover at the top of the stairs. SHAR, DAX and BOWERS are at their stations. The turbolift disgorges ODO, in Bajoran Militia uniform, comes to stand with Kira. Extras elsewhere. All watch the screen nervously - the ship is expected, but it's a tense moment.

KIRA

Yellow alert only, Lieutenant. And
keep the shields down.

BOWERS

...Aye, sir.

A signal bleeps on Bowers' panel, making him jump...

BOWERS

They're hailing, sir.

KIRA

Put them through.

The screen changes to show the face of WEYOUN. The Vorta bows to Odo before acknowledging anyone else. He is polite and friendly - Kira responds likewise for diplomacy's sake.

WEYOUN (screen)

Founder. It is gratifying to see
you safe. Captain Kira, I thank
you for allowing us to approach
Deep Space Nine without incident.

KIRA

You're welcome, Weyoun. If you'll
relinquish control to Lieutenant
Dax, we'll bring you in.

WEYOUN (screen)
A pleasure, Captain. I'm looking
forward to visiting the station
again. It's been a while.

The signal ends. Kira shares a nervous look with Vaughn,
then nods to Dax to begin docking procedures. Kira walks
with Odo back to the turbolift...

3 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

NOG exits a turbolift and walks along, engrossed in a padd.
As he passes the door to Quark's bar, he spots TENMEI sat a
table. Alone, and fidgeting as if she has been stood up.

A Ferengi waiter asks her MOS if she wants anything - she
politely declines. Nog understands that Tenmei wouldn't
want pity, and so he carries on unnoticed.

4 INT. DS9 - UPPER PYLON CORRIDOR

Kira and Odo walk companionably along, arm in arm...

KIRA
I've been meaning to ask - why
Weyoun? Didn't you get enough of
him during the war?

ODO
I suppose I just wanted a familiar
face. I know Weyoun, he knows me.
It saves me from having to explain
my point of view every time I want
to get something done.

KIRA
Plus... we know that at least one
Weyoun was capable of questioning
the hardcore Dominion doctrine...

ODO
Something like that. It's a small
step, I know. But if I can do with
the Vorta what I've been trying to
do with Taran'atar...

KIRA
Speaking of which...

They arrive at the airlock, where Weyoun waits with two armed Jem'Hadar guards and four Starfleet security.

TARAN'ATAR is also there, in his black coverall, standing slightly apart from the others. Weyoun bows again and the Jem'Hadar stiffen as Odo approaches...

WEYOUN
Founder, welcome. We are ready to return you to the Dominion at your convenience.

ODO
Thank you, Weyoun. Nerys...

With a last grip of her hand and warm glance, he leaves Kira and steps into the airlock. Kira steps back to let the group pass, but Taran'atar pipes up unexpectedly...

TARAN'ATAR
Founder...
(Odo turns)
...I wondered if I might speak with you... before you leave.

WEYOUN
(shocked)
Remember your place, First.

ODO
No no, Weyoun, that's alright. You go on ahead, I'll be perfectly safe with Taran'atar.

Weyoun is not pleased, but he is incapable of refusing. He bows and leads the soldiers back through the airlock. They give mildly disapproving glances at Taran'atar as they go.

Kira subtly leads the Starfleet security a few steps away, trying to give Taran'atar and Odo their privacy...

ODO
What is it, Taran'atar?

Taran'atar has to pluck up his courage for this, it's a major step for him...

TARAN'ATAR

Founder... I want to go with you.

ODO

(sympathetic)

Taran'atar...

TARAN'ATAR

I do not understand my mission here. I have never understood it. I am useless here. I do nothing but train for a battle that these people hope will never come. You asked me once what I would do if I had the choice. This is my answer. I would return to the Dominion. I would come with you.

Odo feels sorry for Taran'atar who is obviously struggling. He tries to give the Jem'Hadar some encouragement...

ODO

You do much more than that. Your role here is vital to the future of the Dominion. You are here to learn about life in the Alpha Quadrant. And if you learn, hopefully you will understand.

TARAN'ATAR

I have learned, Founder. I have observed them at work, and have learned to predict their actions with accuracy. I have observed them at rest, and learned that they are infinitely less efficient than Jem'Hadar. I have memorised the cultural idiosyncrasies of more than thirty species and I still do not see how any of it can be of benefit to the Dominion.

ODO

Then trust me to see what you cannot. I want you and the other Jem'Hadar to understand why these people's ways of life deserve to exist as they are, without being controlled. And you are already learning that. Here you are, asking me for what you want - you would never have done that before. I'm only sorry I can't give it to you. As I've said to Captain Kira, I still have work to do in the Dominion... and you still have work to do here.

Realising that Odo will not budge, Taran'atar bows his head and takes a step backwards. Odo is sympathetic...

ODO

I hope one day you will come to understand, Taran'atar. Just... keep trying.

TARAN'ATAR

Yes, Founder. I will obey.

Sadly, Odo turns, and with a last glance back to Kira, he steps into the airlock and towards the ship.

Kira watches him go, and watches Taran'atar also glance at her before turning and walking the other way...

5 INT. DS9 - UPPER PYLON CORRIDOR

Kira walks along alone, saddened. As she turns a corner, she realises that BENJAMIN SISKO is walking towards her, in civilian clothes, a big playful grin filling his face...

SISKO

You're a difficult woman to find, Captain.

KIRA

Benjamin!

Cheering slightly, she hugs him in welcome...

KIRA

What are you doing here? Is Kasidy okay?

SISKO

She's fine, Nerys. I came because I needed to see you.

KIRA

Why, what did I do?

SISKO

You made Captain, that's what. And that means it's time to introduce you to a tradition all Starfleet captains have gone through for centuries. I did it, Bill Ross did it, and now it's your turn.

KIRA

A "tradition?" Benjamin, I don't know...

He puts his arm around her, begins to lead her back down the corridor...

SISKO

Don't worry, Nerys. You're gonna love it. It involves drinking.

Off Sisko's mischievous grin...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

6 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Kira and Sisko exit a turbolift and make their way towards Quark's bar. Bajorans everywhere gaze adoringly and defer to Sisko - he takes it politely and modestly. They enter...

7 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR (CONTINUOUS)

...just as Tenmei has given up waiting and is on her way out. She nods politely to Kira and Sisko as they pass...

TENMEI

(to Kira)

Captain.

(to Sisko)

Captain.

KIRA

Ensign.

(to Sisko, sotto)

Still weird.

He smiles just as QUARK bustles up in full host mode...

QUARK

Captains! Welcome to Quark's Bar,
Grill, Embassy, Gaming Hall and
Holosuite Arcade.

KIRA

That's quite a mouthful.

QUARK

I'm a full-service establishment.
I'm just trying to reinforce that
image among the station populace.
Now what I can get for you?

SISKO

Actually we're heading up to Vic's
lounge, if that's okay with you,
Mister Ambassador.

QUARK

Eh, no skin off my ears. Whatever you spend in there goes into my pockets anyway. But wouldn't you rather spend your time here in the bar, among your friends and crew?

KIRA

You mean where everyone can see the station's captain and the Emissary of the Prophets enjoying your facilities, and might be motivated to do the same?

QUARK

Is that so hard?

While Kira rolls her eyes, Sisko smiles warmly...

SISKO

We appreciate the offer, Quark. But Vic's is more appropriate for this particular celebration.

QUARK

A celebration?! Oh, you should have said! I can get Treir to...

But Sisko and Kira have already walked on, letting Quark talk to himself...

8 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

Dax stands with Vaughn at the central Ops table, as the extras, who feature more Bajorans in Starfleet uniforms than usual, continue to move around.

DAX

DS-Nine to Dominion vessel Nine-Seven-One. You are clear to depart. Safe journey.

(closes comm,

turns to Vaughn)

Sir... permission to leave Ops. I need to meet with Doctor Bashir regarding his... request.

Vaughn knows what she really means, and sympathises, but also understands her desire to keep it professional...

VAUGHN

Permission granted, Lieutenant.
Take all the time you need.

Grateful, Dax nods and trots up the stairs to the lift...

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

Nog and SHAR sit on the deck, working on cables and panels, right by a large window, their usual friendly vibe.

Out of the window, they see Odo's Dominion ship streak away from the station, out into space. The wormhole bursts into life, the ship dives in, and the wormhole closes up again. Nog gazes out into space with a look of awe and pleasure...

NOG

Isn't it the most beautiful thing
you've ever seen? I think the
first time Jake took me to the
Promenade to watch the wormhole
opening was the first step on my
road to joining Starfleet.

SHAR

For me, it was the sheer thrill
of scientific discovery. I was
determined to find a solution to
my people's problems. We searched
our own world for centuries with
no answer, so I decided it must
lie out there, among the stars.

NOG

Not to mention it was a chance to
get away from your mother.

SHAR

(changing subject)

You speak of Jake often, Nog. It
must have been difficult for you,
not knowing if he was safe in the
Gamma Quadrant.

NOG

Well, yeah, I guess. We grew up together here on the station, so it's always odd not having him around. Now he's gone again, off doing this big walkabout thing on Bajor. It was the same when I went to Earth to attend the Academy --

(catches himself)

-- and I'm catching on to your tricks now, Shar. Whenever anyone gets into personal territory, you change the subject. I wish you'd just quit it. You don't have to do that with me anymore.

SHAR

(hangs head)

You're right, Nog, I'm sorry. I suppose it has become habit. And you are right... it was a chance to escape zhavey and her constant talk of obligations and things I should be doing. Being here on the station... I missed my bondmates terribly. But my friendships with you, and Laren, and Prynn... they were a great refuge for me.

NOG

And now?

SHAR

Now, they are a refuge from an altogether new pain. Delegate Keren said something that means more to me now than it did then.

NOG

Keren - your Yrythny friend?

SHAR

Yes... She said that to choose to leave your home was one thing. But to know you will never be allowed to go back... is quite another.

NOG

Well, then. If your friends here
are so important... why did you
stand up Prynn for lunch again?

Shar starts - he did not realise Nog knew about that...

SHAR

The Dominion ship was due. It was
T'rb's shift, granted, but I felt
the senior officer should --

NOG

(gently)

Shar. Stop it.

Still battling against his natural tendency to secrecy,
Shar is hesitant to talk about it, but forces himself...

SHAR

Nog, you must understand... I have
expected to bond with Anichent and
Dizhei and Thriss all my life,
since I was old enough to know
what the word means. To even think
of another... is very difficult.

Although his shame suggests that he definitely is thinking
about it anyway. Nog almost regrets bringing it up...

NOG

Shar, I know you loved Thriss. And
I know you still love Anichent and
Dizhei. But if you really have
left that life behind, you can't
cling on to it. You have to move
on. You like Prynn, don't you?

SHAR

Yes, but --

NOG

Then take the chance. In Ferengi
terms, she's offering you a prime
opportunity, and she's waiting for
you to seal the deal.

NOG (cont)

Just because one contract fell
through doesn't mean you shouldn't
take a chance on another. I'm not
saying to do anything drastic.
Just let yourself be open to the
idea. And see where it leads you.

Shar goes back to his work, thinking hard about that...

10 **INT. VIC'S LOUNGE**

A normal afternoon crowd in the 1962 Las Vegas lounge. Kira
and Sisko perch at the bar, the only "real" people there.
Kira a little melancholy, Sisko excited about passing on
his tradition. A waitress brings two glasses of something.

KIRA

So what's this tradition? And how
humiliating is it?

SISKO

Don't be so paranoid. We call it
the Captain's Table, and it's
really very simple. Once an
officer makes captain, his or
her... "mentor" takes them to the
nearest bar, and they drink.

Sisko hands a drink to Kira, *clinks* his to hers...

SISKO

The drinks are on the house --

KIRA

Don't let Quark hear that.

SISKO

- and the only payment is a story.

KIRA

Benjamin... you know I don't have
much of an imagination when it
comes to stories. You grow up just
fighting to survive, and you don't
have much time to be creative.

SISKO

Nerys, you've told me about working with Shakaar, liberating Gallitep, discovering the truth about your mother... I know there's more. It doesn't have to be new, doesn't even have to be true. Just has to be worth the price of a drink.

KIRA

Well... let me think about it.

(changing subject)

Did you hear they're going to let me name our next new runabout?

SISKO

(laughing)

They're still giving you those things? This station must keep the whole runabout industry afloat.

KIRA

Hey, don't blame me for that. You started that tradition yourself. We've got the *Euphrates*, the *Nile*, the *Rio Grande*, the *Brahmaputra* and the *Missouri*. The last one is coming in a few months, and as Starfleet's chief representative in the Bajoran sector, I get to name it after a Bajoran river.

SISKO

About time too. Any ideas?

KIRA

The *Yolja*, of course.

(Sisko smiles)

Speaking of, any news from Jake?

SISKO

He sent me a message to say he was fine. With him away, and my dad and Judith gone back to Earth, it almost feels quiet. Even with a new baby in the house.

KIRA

(wistful)

I envy you. You have more family than you know what to do with. My mom's dead, my dad's dead... Keiko and the chief took Kirayoshi back to Earth, and now to Cardassia...

SISKO

Didn't you tell me you had two younger brothers?

KIRA

Yep, Reon and Pohl. Both gone. It's just me now.

SISKO

Nerys... I'm sorry.

KIRA

(faux blasé)

It's just my life. Pohl died of malnutrition in the camps. And Reon... Reon was...

She drifts off, remembering. She gazes into the crowd of milling '60s lounge-goers, and gradually, as if in slow motion, the crowd changes.

Cardassian soldiers in uniform begin to wind their way through the crowd, drinking and relaxing, playing tongo, being served by scantily clad Bajoran comfort girls.

Kira watches them go about their business, regretful...

SISKO

You've found your story, haven't you?

KIRA

I think so. It was towards the end of the Occupation.

(realises)

Wow - only ten years ago. Feels like a whole other lifetime.

(deep breath)

KIRA (cont)

Shakaar assigned me to infiltrate one of the most powerful organised crime syndicates on Bajor. Doblana Base managed critical pieces of Cardassian infrastructure, like communications. The Plin Syndicate ran their operation right alongside it, what they called The Officers' Club. But Shakaar told me that all the gambling, drinking and... companionship... didn't account for a tenth of their revenues. That was just the foam on the *raktajino*. A cover for their real business - a major Alpha Quadrant black market. Bajorans, using the suffering of their own people as an opportunity to make profit. I despised them all. And my brother Reon stood at the top of their festering ranks.

Kira grits her teeth, watching the Bajorans flirting and debasing themselves before the Cardassians.

Then out of nowhere, a FIST swings towards her and PUNCHes her hard in the face. **MATCH CUT** to:

11 INT. DOBLANA BASE - HOLOSUITE

Occupation-era Kira falls to the floor from the punch. She is in dirty, ripped clothes, long hair wild and loose...

...and she is *furios*. With barely a second to catch her breath, she looks back up at the Cardassian SOLDIER who is standing over her with a sneer, and she bares her teeth...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

12 INT. DOBLANA BASE - HOLOSUITE

Occupation Kira gets to her feet, swings a wild, desperate blow back at the Cardassian. Her face is bruised, her teeth are brown and rotten, and her body is thin and unfed.

As Kira and the dispassionate Cardassian trade blows...

KIRA (v.o.)

My mission was to worm my way into this nest of traitors and kidnap Glinn Gundar. He'd designed some upgrade to the Cardassians' comm network and we needed his "help" to stop it going online. Nothing to do with Reon. Didn't even have to see him. Not that I hadn't seen his face on every Bajoran collaborator I'd ever killed.

The Cardassian gets a good shot in. Kira has adrenaline and sheer hatred fuelling her - she rushes him with a furious flurry of punches.

KIRA (v.o.)

Straightforward enough. I just had to get through the job interview.

One last vicious PUNCH from Kira - the Cardassian crumples to the floor. She catches her breath, watches the soldier fizzle out of sight - a hologram.

A door behind her opens, and she turns to see LIAWN, a male Bajoran functionary. While Kira still seethes, holding her wounds, he seems unimpressed,...

LIAWN

Peri will fix your teeth and attend to your wounds. I've provided you with enough credits to get anywhere on Bajor. Go with the Prophets.

KIRA

(incensed)

I mopped the floor with that guy.
What do you want from me? How dare
you turn me away! I need this job!

LIAWN

I'm almost persuaded. Why do you
really seek employment with Plin
Patra? Who are you working for?

Kira sags, realising she will have to play this different.
She lies as convincingly as she is able...

KIRA

I admit, I helped the resistance
before. But I can't take any more.
Any belief, any dream I had that
we could end this occupation...
I'm exhausted. I want to get out
of the cold and the mud and the
starvation. While I still can.

Another Bajoran woman steps into view, making a show of
clapping politely. She is PLIN, the middle-aged but elegant
and whip-smart leader of this operation.

PLIN

Well done. I don't believe a word
of it, of course, but our members
might. Change your clothes, let
Peri fix your wounds, then come
to my office and we'll talk.

Then Plin turns and walks away. Liawn waits disapprovingly
for Kira to follow them...

KIRA (v.o.)

Plin Patra. We'd never met face
to face, but I knew her from the
Cardassian news feeds. They loved
to parade Plin's warm relations
with them as proof that they could
work and play well with Bajorans.

As Kira follows them out of the holosuite...

13 **INT. DOBLANA BASE - PLIN'S OFFICE**

Plin sits confident and relaxed at her desk. It is simple and unostentatious - she doesn't want to push any buttons.

The door opens and Kira enters - better clothes, a bit cleaned up from earlier, but she remains suspicious and tense. Plin motions for her to take the seat opposite...

KIRA

You're not worried my scrubbing
brush skin will snag your fabric?

PLIN

Reon said you had a sense of humour.

KIRA

I'm sure Reon's had a lot more fun
than me over the last ten years.

PLIN

On that we agree.

Plin looks Kira up and down, notes her tense posture...

PLIN

You don't trust anyone. Good. That
will make this easier. You don't
want a job. You're not leaving
the resistance. You're here on
assignment from the resistance.

KIRA

Do you read minds as well?

PLIN

I read people. That's my business,
and I'm very good at business. In
twelve years in the resistance,
you have never once faltered in
your loyalty. All of those in my
circles keep a close eye on you,
looking for vulnerabilities in
that impenetrable moral armour,
wondering when we'll wake with
your knife at our throats.

KIRA

So why am I sitting here and not
in a transport back to Dakhur?

PLIN

Because I share your loyalties.
We fight for the same side.

KIRA

(derisive snort)
You can do better than that.

Plin gets up, leans in close, whispers directly into Kira's
ear. Kira's face drops in total surprise. Plin returns to
her seat, a smug and satisfied smile on her face...

KIRA

How do you --

PLIN

Can you imagine a better cover for
a resistance cell? Look beneath
the dabo, and the Cardassians with
their comfort girls on their arms,
and you'll see how perfect our
set-up is. You can work here, but
there are no solo operations in
the Officers' Club. I won't allow
you to blow our cover, Kira, even
inadvertently. I need to know the
details of your op.

KIRA

You honestly expect me to tell
you that? You may have lobbed an
authentic-looking grenade in my
lap, but I still don't trust you.

PLIN

(chuckling)
Excellent. You shouldn't. But we
work together, or you're on that
transport back to Dakhur, and no
apology to Shakaar. Fair?

Kira nods, but still uncertain. Plin brings it to a close.

PLIN

Good. I'll give you back to Liawn and Peri, get you started on your improvement regimen. I have much higher expectations of those who work for me than Shakaar does.

As she dismisses Kira back out of the room...

KIRA (v.o.)

So I'd passed the first test.

14 MONTAGE - KIRA

-- in a restorative cream bath

-- on a primitive biobed as Liawn removes her scars with a dermal regenerator

-- in a staff dining room, eating real meat and vegetables and drinking protein shakes

-- in front of a mirror, healthier and cleaner. Inspects her clear skin, shorter hair (now in "1x01 Emissary" bob style), runs a tongue over her brand new sparkling teeth

15 INT. DOBLANA BASE - OFFICERS' CLUB

Liawn leads the newly cleaned-up Kira into the main club area (redress of Vic's lounge). She is wearing simple but attractive clothes, and they keep to corners and shadows.

The room is all plush sofas, velvet curtains, tables packed with desserts. Cardassian officers gamble and carouse with Bajoran dabo girls, comfort women. Servers flit with trays of drinks, trolleys for cleaning, trying not to be noticed.

LIAWN

The Officers' Club does not have customers, it has members. Members do not transact for services, they receive benefits. Understood?

Kira watches a young, beautiful, barely clothed comfort girl slink past, pour herself around a dumpy Cardassian male. Kira tries to control her habitual sneer...

KIRA

I suppose there's a pecking order.
Senior guls and legates receive
the companionship of someone like
her. And lower officers have to
make do with the likes of me.

Liawn looks askance at her, and his formerly stiff face
bursts into raucous LAUGHTER. Kira is insulted...

LIAWN

Oh forgive me, forgive me. It's
entirely my own fault. My dear,
you are not fit to provide
benefits to our members.

KIRA

(angry)

I'm not fit to *frinx* a Cardassian?!

LIAWN

You would be repugnant to them!

KIRA

Like it would be the highlight of
my life to be pawed by those cold-
blooded, lizard-skinned murderers?

LIAWN

(suddenly dark)

I advise you to stop there if you
want any hope of serving them.

Kira is about to explode with indignation, pulls herself
under control for the sake of her mission...

KIRA

So what exactly will I be doing?

LIAWN

Housemaid.

Liawn leads Kira on along one side of the room, staying out
of the way. Kira observes the crowd closely as she goes,
watching how the servers are ignored as the Cardassians pay
all their attention to the fawning comfort girls.

KIRA (v.o.)
Not good enough to sleep with
them, only good enough for their
garbage. But as I watched them, I
thought about what Plin told me.
I saw the comfort girls pouring
kanar, sitting in their laps and
giggling, filling them full of
kalava seeds. The Cardassians did
all the indulging, sure, but the
Bajorans enabled it. Plin's people
held all the power here, and the
Cardassians just gave it to them.

Kira's pique gives way to intrigue and admiration, as she
begins to understand how the system works...

16 **INT. DOBLANA BASE - KIRA'S QUARTERS**

Kira has been assigned a small, bare cabin, shared with one
other. She is sitting on her bunk, resting and thinking,
when TEARA enters - the gorgeous comfort girl from earlier.

TEARA
Hey. Nice to meet you.

KIRA
Nerys. Kira Nerys.

TEARA
Plin Teara. Let me be the first to
give you a tip as your official
welcome to the club. You won't
make credits like this -
 (shakes coins
 from her bosom)
- until you become a companion.
But play nice and you should get
to the gambling tables quick
enough. Only took me a season to
advance out of house-keeping when
I started. I can show you around
the place later, if you want.

KIRA
Yeah, thanks. That would be great.

17 **INT. DOBLANA BASE - OFFICERS' CLUB**

Kira is now in her housemaid's uniform, cleaning away used plates and glasses, putting them in her trolley. She keeps her head down, gets on with her work, watches every move...

KIRA (v.o.)

Plin Teara. I knew she would be reporting to her mother often enough. Still, she was good as her word, and within days I knew my way around the club like a natural, including all the secret passages that let the staff work undetected by the Cardassians.

A tall handsome Bajoran man emerges, in a good suit and a confident air - management. He deals with a Cardassian officer, smoothing over a minor concern with the help of a large handful of gold coins and a near-naked dabo girl.

Kira notices him, almost recognises him. A few moments of observing, and she realises -- this is her brother REON.

KIRA (v.o.)

I caught my breath. I hadn't seen him once since I got there. I wasn't sure I was seeing him now. Maybe I was imagining it. But his eyes, his smile, seemingly so sincere... and so much like my mother's. Reon, my brother, the collaborator. But was he, really? Or was he pretending, like Plin?

Reon's business with the Cardassian is over. He puts a finger to his ear - he doesn't look happy. He turns to leave; Kira has to stop herself from calling after him...

18 **INT. DOBLANA BASE - CORRIDOR**

Kira emerges into a corridor, pushing her trolley before her, just in time to see Reon disappear around a corner.

She quickly stores her trolley in an alcove and follows him, taking care to stay a discreet distance...

19 **ANOTHER CORRIDOR**

Kira turns another corner -- a door is just closing, one of a series. Each door has a light; some green, some yellow. The one above the door Reon just vanished through is RED.

When a couple of other Bajoran workers have passed her and paid no attention, she pulls open a control panel, begins disconnecting wires and moving isolinear rods... until the light over her door changes from red to yellow.

Kira stands, checks around to make sure she's alone. Pulls out her housekeeper's ID, slips it through a sensor by the door. It opens, and she quickly steps inside...

20 **INT. DOBLANA BASE - GUEST SUITE**

Kira creeps in... Faint voices ahead of her in the darkness seem agitated, worried. She takes a few steps further in...

...and a hand clamps over her mouth, YANKing her head back. Another arm around her waist, pinning her arms. A darkness-shrouded mouth whispers into her ear...

TEARA
(angry whisper)
Don't make a sound.

Kira's attacker pushes her away, into the main body of the suite, where she stumbles and collapses onto a couch. Kira looks up to see that it is Teara, worried and tense...

TEARA
Stay out of this, Nerys.

On Kira's surprise and fear...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

21 INT. DOBLANA BASE - GUEST SUITE

Kira looks to the side, where she sees Reon crouching over a collapsed and unconscious Cardassian, scanning him with a basic tricorder. He glances up, not surprised to see Kira. Near them is a smashed bottle, brandy spilling out onto the carpet. Teara, in a slinky silk robe, stalks over to Reon.

TEARA

Well? Will the overdose kill him?

REON

Definitely not. In fact he could regain consciousness any minute. We have to move him.

TEARA

(to Kira)

Muss the bed so it looks like it's been used.

Kira does, still confused by whatever is going on here.

REON

Nerys, help us get him onto the bed. He can't wake until he's had a memorable encounter with Teara.

Kira does that too, still without a word.

TEARA

At least I'm already undressed, thank the Prophets for small blessings.

Teara throws off her robe, revealing barely legal lingerie. The Cardassian begins to groan his way to consciousness.

TEARA

He's waking up! We have to get him undressed. Now, Nerys!

With a grimace, Kira helps to pull off his boots and pants. Teara climbs onto the bed, draping herself over him.

Reon opens a secret panel and pulls out a small device. He attaches it to the Cardassian's forehead and presses a few buttons. The Cardassian settles back into blissful sleep...

REON

There. That should keep him out
long enough to get this mess
cleaned up.

Then he turns to Kira, his face breaking into a big grin...

KIRA

What could you possibly find
amusing about this?!

REON

You. Always off on some stupid
nosy quest to save the world. You
haven't changed in ten years.

KIRA

Well, you're pretty much a
stranger to me at this point.

TEARA

Could you possibly have this
family reunion another time? You
nearly ruined this op, Nerys.

Reon is chastened, becomes a bit more stern with Kira...

REON

She's right. But since you insist
on being nosy, I might as well
tell you what was going on. That
brandy that's currently staining
the carpet was laced with a little
something that loosens our beloved
members' tongues. Teara was trying
to find out when Gundar is meant
to arrive. Unfortunately somebody
added three times the normal dose,
and he had a seizure.

KIRA
(fake innocent)
Who's Gundar?

TEARA
Oh please. You've been waiting for that information since the day you got here. And don't bother with the innocent act because it's the only thing worth risking an operative of your calibre for. I know exactly who you are, Nerys.

KIRA
In that case, why not use Gundar yourselves?

TEARA
I asked my mother the same thing. She said you were doing her a favour and she was letting you have Gundar in return. Although I can't imagine what you can do that we can't.

This is news to Kira - what favour is she doing, exactly?

REON
(off tricorder)
He's starting to come round.
Teara, get ready to welcome him back from happy land. We'll just throw a rug over the stain.

TEARA
I'm sure we had a wonderful time.
Find out who doctored that brandy, Reon. It nearly killed him.
(tenderly)
I'll see you later?

Nodding, and with a tender smile, Reon takes Teara's hand for a moment. Kira sees the look that passes between them - she realises with a start that they are a couple.

Then Reon grabs Kira's arm and drags her out of the room...

22 INT. VIC'S LOUNGE

Where current-day Kira and Sisko sit at the bar, as she relates her story...

KIRA

That was the first time I'd seen
my brother in ten years. Quite the
get-together.

SISKO

So he was with the resistance
after all? Just like Plin?

KIRA

(sad smile)

So it seemed.

Sisko notices the non-answer...

23 INT. DOBLANA BASE - PLIN'S OFFICE

Occupation-era Kira sits opposite Plin. A small device on the desk emits a LIGHT and a HUM - a jamming device. Kira is tense; they talk in hushed, conspiring tones...

PLIN

You're the only one outside my own
operation that's in a position to
identify the double.

KIRA

And what makes you think your
operation's been compromised?

PLIN

About six months ago, we got a
visit from a military medical
official, one who'd never been
here before. We were nervous why
he'd suddenly come now, so one of
my girls... loosened him up. He
let it spill that he was here to
follow up on a special patient - a
Cardassian who had been surgically
altered to look Bajoran.

Kira tenses - this is a very bad thing. Plin sighs sadly...

PLIN

We don't know any details. If it was a male or a female. We combed through every security recording. Talked with every witness. The only people we could specifically confirm him having contact with were my own senior operatives.

Kira puts it all together, doesn't like the answer...

KIRA

So there are two possibilities. Either the meeting happened and you didn't know about it... or one of your people is a plant.

(Plin nods)

And since I've never been here, I might be able to see something you can't because you're too close.

PLIN

Precisely.

KIRA

Teara's on the list, isn't she?

PLIN

(nods sadly)

As are Reon and about ten more of my most trusted agents. I don't know who I can trust anymore. I need you to tell me.

Kira sympathises, thinks about it for a moment...

KIRA

Alright, I'll do what I can. But my own operation comes first.

Plin has no choice but to graciously accept Kira's terms.

As Kira gets up to leave the room...

24 INT. VIC'S LOUNGE

Sisko shakes his head at the convolutions...

SISKO

A Cardassian infiltrator disguised
as a Bajoran resistance member,
disguised as a Cardassian
collaborator...

KIRA

They do love their intricate plans.

Sisko smiles, unable to deny that...

25 INT. DOBLANA BASE - CORRIDOR

...as Kira exits Plin's office and finds Reon waiting for
her outside. He sighs, looking into her eyes...

REON

So we meet again, Nerys.

KIRA

We wouldn't be meeting at all if I
hadn't followed you.

REON

I wanted to figure you out first.
See if you were still the bossy
big sister I remembered. Now that
you know what we're up against,
can you blame me?

Kira keeps quiet, not sure what she is allowed to say...

REON

I can't undo the past, Nerys. And
I won't apologise for my choices.
But we can start from now.

KIRA

Pohl died. This place, this life
you've led. You had the resources
to save him, and you didn't.

REON

I know that. I did what I had to.

Kira can still only glare at him, not ready to forgive him.
Not pushing it, Reon takes her arm and leads her away...

REON

Come on, Nerys. We'll talk more
over brunch. If you still hate me
when we're done, at least you'll
have heard my side of the story.
But we're on the same side now.

But are they? Kira can't be sure...

26 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

BASHIR moves busily around the room, making final checks
and collecting personal items, throwing them into a bag.
DAX stands to one side, watching him...

BASHIR

Doctor Girani has everything under
control, but now this is a fully
Starfleet facility, Medical wants
one of their own here as well. So
I've arranged for a Doctor Simon
Tarses to help out while I'm away.
He's supposed to be brilliant -
served on the *Enterprise* a few
years back as a med tech. And
Kristen knows what she's doing -
between the three of them they
should handle any problems.

DAX

Julian, are you sure this is the
right time to take a vacation?

BASHIR

It's the perfect time. It looks
like all the drama may finally be
over for a while, and I've got
tons of leave saved up. I haven't
been back to Earth in years...

(more)

BASHIR (cont)
...and after our experience with
the Cathedral - and some other
recent events - I think it's time
I see my parents and... talk about
some things.

DAX
(quiet, sad)
We were supposed to take that trip
together, remember?

BASHIR
I remember.

DAX
If there's things you need to talk
about, maybe we should both go and
see Counsellor Matthias, or --

Bashir steps closer to her, taking her hands gently...

BASHIR
Ezri, it's okay. Really. I'm fine.

DAX
I'm just afraid you're leaving
because of me.

BASHIR
Well... frankly, yes, I am. At
least partly. But not in a bad
way. If I have to get used to not
having you by my side twenty-six
hours a day, I may as well get
started sooner rather than later.
I won't say I'm thrilled about us
breaking up, but I'm okay. Okay?

DAX
yeah... I guess. Just... stay in
touch, alright?

BASHIR
I promise.

Zippering up his bag, he pecks her chastely on the cheek and walks out to the Promenade, leaving her a bit deflated...

27 INT. DOBLANA BASE - DINING HALL

Occupation-era Kira sits eating alone, minding her own business. Another cleaning girl, MENA, sits opposite her with her own tray of bland and boring food...

MENA

Hey, Nerys. Sorry to hear about your transfer.

KIRA

My what?

MENA

Oh... you didn't know? Yeah, I just checked the rosters, and you're not working the senior suites anymore. You're back down on junior suites. Guess you must have pissed somebody off, huh?

Kira sits there, suddenly very worried...

MENA

I don't know what Teara's problem is...

KIRA

Mena, what do you mean? Teara is responsible for this?

MENA

(shrug)

I wouldn't take it personally. She gets in these moods sometimes.

Mena carries on tucking into her food as Kira begins to worry even more...

28 INT. DOBLANA BASE - KIRA'S QUARTERS

Occupation-era Kira sits on her bunk, folding clothes...

KIRA (v.o.)

The change made no sense. I'd worked my way up the ranks, and more than that, I was expecting Gundar any day. I needed to be working the senior suites to get access to him. So I sent a note to Plin, just telling her I'd been reassigned. I guess she followed up on it.

Teara bursts into their shared quarters, raging at Kira...

TEARA

Keep my mother out of this!

KIRA

(calmly)

You stay out of my work, I'll stay out of yours.

TEARA

I don't know why she has so much faith in you. Her and Reon both. She's so desperate to protect our work, she's grasping at whatever thin hope she can. Never mind that your presence here puts us all at risk. But believe me, Nerys. I'll be watching your every step.

KIRA

No, you won't. Because I'll be behind you... watching yours.

As the two women stare each other down...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

29 INT. DOBLANA BASE - GUEST SUITE

Occupation-era Kira is in her cleaning uniform, fluffing pillows, straightening sheets, replacing empty bottles.

KIRA (v.o.)
So I was back on senior suites,
except that I added surveillance
of Teara and her clients to my
schedule. She kept a low profile
for a few days, until I noticed an
anomaly in the records.

30 INT. DOBLANA BASE - KIRA'S QUARTERS

Off-hours, Kira sits on her bunk in low lights, watching the screen of a portable data PADD, displaying a guest suite as seen from a hidden camera in a high corner.

TEARA is there, coquettishly curled on the lap of a large and ugly Cardassian soldier, GUNDAR. Kira is paying close attention, but also keeping an eye on her own door...

KIRA (v.o.)
I knew that one of the girls had
abruptly taken ill mid-shift. I
checked around, and discovered
that Teara had taken over for her.
But there was no mention of it in
the reports. And I couldn't go to
Plin without absolute proof that
Teara was hiding something - this
was her daughter. Then I found it.

Kira's face drops as she sees something bad...

31 INT. DOBLANA BASE - REON'S OFFICE

Even simpler and sparser than Plin's. Reon is sat behind his desk, doing paperwork. The door opens and Kira enters, extremely agitated and worried...

REON

Nerys?

KIRA

Can I talk?

Understanding the subtext, Reon presses a few buttons and a device on his desk, like Plin's, begins to glow and hum...

KIRA

She called him 'Father.'

REON

Who?

KIRA

Teara. I saw it on the visual feed from this afternoon. She called Gundar 'Father.'

REON

Gundar's here?

KIRA

Yes! Teara had him in the suites this afternoon.

REON

Are you sure you heard her right?

KIRA

No question.

REON

Nerys... our members have all sorts of weird sexual fetishes. Who's to say it's not just part of some perverted fantasy of his --

KIRA

(insistent)

She called him Father in Cardassian.

That's definitely not good...

32 **INT. DOBLANA BASE - OFFICERS' CLUB**

Another day in the main lounge. Kira cleans and tidies, ignored by everyone, but keeping a close eye on Teara as she flirts her way between the various officers...

KIRA (v.o.)

Without telling Plin, Reon gave me access to any surveillance feeds and data I wanted. Nothing I found bode well. I found out that Gundar did have a daughter, and that when she dropped out of sight two years earlier, some people thought she'd joined the Obsidian Order.

Gundar enters. Teara goes straight to him, beaming wide, arms outstretched. He swings her round in delight. Then she takes his hand and leads him off towards the suites.

Kira quickly finishes her work and pushes her trolley out towards the back corridors, determined to follow them...

33 **INT. DOBLANA BASE - KIRA'S QUARTERS**

Kira rushes into her quarters, pulls the padd out of a hidden cabinet, switches it on - just in time to see Teara lead Gundar by the hand into the suite. On the screen, Teara throws her arms around Gundar flirtatiously...

TEARA (screen)

I'm so pleased to see you again.

GUNDAR (screen)

And I you. I feel as though it's been a lifetime. Come, my child. Sit on my lap and we will talk as we have before.

Gundar drops onto a couch and pats his lap, inviting Teara to sit. Teara childishly does so - Kira cringes at the sight. Teara pulls a small medallion from her bosom and secretly shows it Gundar...

TEARA (screen)

I kept this since last time.

GUNDAR (screen)
What a thoughtful girl you are.
I hope I can repay your -

Then his face freezes as he recognises the object. It's a signal of some kind, and it worries him. Kira sees this...

KIRA
Computer, freeze image. Zoom in.

The image freezes and zooms in on Teara's hand, holding the medallion. Kira tenses. Then she moves the frozen image up to Gundar's face - barely concealed panic.

34 INT. DOBLANA BASE - CORRIDOR

Kira rushes down the corridor towards the suites, trying not to appear too suspicious to the other Bajoran workers, but definitely angry and terrified.

She reaches the suites, swipes her pass card through the sensor and the door opens. Pulls a weapon from a concealed holster, raises it, steps inside...

35 INT. DOBLANA BASE - GUEST SUITE

...only to find Teara waiting for her, her own weapon raised and pointed straight at Kira. Gundar sits to one side, completely caught off guard...

TEARA
Took you long enough. I thought
I'd have to start without you.

KIRA
I prefer a dramatic entrance.

TEARA
Put down your weapon or I'll kill
Gundar. What use will he be to
your cause then?

KIRA
You people never cease to amaze
me. You're right up there with the
Romulans when it comes to loyalty.

TEARA

I don't know what you're babbling about, but I'll be damned if I let you destroy my life's work.

Kira DIVES for Teara's legs, tackles her to the ground...

...just missing the SHOT from Teara's weapon as it fires wildly. The gun skitters from Teara's hand...

Gundar desperately reaches for it...

...but Kira aims a KICK at his bulbous belly, and he goes down coughing and spluttering.

Kira and Teara both get up, reaching for the phaser...

Kira reaches it first, just enough to knock it away into a corner. With nothing else to do, Teara charges --

-- but Kira catches her by the throat. Teara struggles and scratches, but Kira is the more experienced fighter. She THROWS Teara against the wall --

-- where her skull connects with a sickening CRUNCH, and Teara slumps to the floor, dead. A short and brutal fight, and it is over just as quickly.

Kira stands, looks over to Gundar, who is still wheezing...

KIRA

I didn't kick you that hard, you big baby.

Kira grabs a sheet off the bed, rolls it into a rope, ties Gundar's arms behind his back. Then she grabs a thin scarf off Teara's body and gags him with it.

KIRA (v.o.)

This whole thing had gone down so fast, I didn't have time to think about how I'd get Gundar out of there, or to signal Shakaar that he was on his way. One last time, I had to trust Reon to help me.

36 INT. DOBLANA BASE - GUEST SUITE

Some time later. Gundar sits shaking and terrified of Kira, while she paces the room impatiently in front of him...

Reon enters, agitated, pushing one of the cleaning trolleys in front of him. Kira smiles, impressed at his ingenuity.

Reon pulls out a hypospray and injects Gundar in the neck. The Cardassian slumps unconscious...

Between them, Kira and Reon manhandle him into the empty space inside the cleaning trolley.

That done, Reon's eyes drift sadly over to Teara's body...

KIRA
I'm sorry, Reon.

REON
So am I. Though I suppose I'm not entirely surprised. She's been acting strange for a while now.

KIRA
The real Teara might still be alive.

REON
You don't believe that.

KIRA
No, I don't.

REON
We should probably get going.

Nodding sadly, Kira begins to push the trolley...

REON
We probably shouldn't walk to the shuttle bay together. Management don't typically accompany housemaids on their rounds. You take Gundar - I'll meet you there.

KIRA
(re Teara's body)
What about -

REON
(quietly)
I'll take care of it.

37 INT. DOBLANA BASE - CORRIDOR

Kira walks alone down the corridor, pushing the trolley.
None of the other workers pay her much attention...

KIRA (v.o.)
I'd killed for the resistance
before. And more than a few of my
kills had been premeditated. I
wasn't squeamish about dealing
death when necessary. Why this one
felt different, I couldn't say.

38 INT. DOBLANA BASE - SERVICE ELEVATOR

A small boxy elevator, taking Kira into the depths...

KIRA (v.o.)
I thought back on my confrontation
with Teara... and it hit me. She
never actually admitted to being
the double.

Suddenly confused and worried, Kira pulls out a small comm
device and presses a few buttons. After a moment...

PLIN (comm)
This is Plin.

KIRA
Teara's dead... I killed her
because I had reason to believe
she was the double.

PLIN (comm)
You should have come to me first.
It didn't have to end like --

KIRA
Listen to me. I might have been
wrong. There's a chance Teara was
framed. Reon gave --

PLIN (comm)
We shouldn't be talking like this.
Why don't I meet you and we can --

KIRA
I'm gone, Plin. We're only having
this conversation because I want
justice.

She taps off the comm, puts it away, and waits...

39 INT. DOBLANA BASE - SHUTTLE BAY

An impressively large room, big enough to service this
entire base. Half a dozen Cardassian-design shuttles wait
behind a row of passcard checkpoints.

Elevator doors open and Kira tentatively steps out, pushing
her trolley. The area is deserted and ominous. Then Reon
steps out of the shadows, beckoning Kira to follow him...

REON
Come on. Follow me. I'll help you
secure Gundar. You've contacted
Shakaar for the rendezvous?

KIRA
I'll do that once we're away.

REON
Can you afford to wait that long?
We need to get out of here, fast.

KIRA
Why? What's wrong?

REON
I'll tell you once we're clear.

Unsure if she trusts Reon anymore, Kira warily pushes the
trolley after him...

At length they reach a shuttle. Kira and Reon haul Gundar's unconscious body up the short staircase into its cockpit. Just as they heave him across the threshold...

PLIN (o.s.)
You decided to throw a going away party without me? How unlike you.

Kira and Reon turn --

-- to see Plin standing behind them, angry and tearful, weapon in her trembling hand.

Kira inches back down the steps, wary and confused...

KIRA
Plin... what are you doing?

PLIN
I checked the logs. I know what you did. You made it look like she was the double, when she was just following your instructions.

Kira looks back and forth - who is she talking to...?

PLIN
You set Teara up. My daughter is dead because of you... Reon.

Kira's face drops, and she turns to Reon in horror...

...and Reon stares back. Is he a murderer after all?

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

40 INT. DOBLANA BASE - SHUTTLE BAY

Where we were. Reon shakes his head, chuckles sadly...

REON

So, you're back to believing I've
lived down to all your worst
expectations. Feeling morally
superior to your collaborator
brother about now, eh, Nerys?

She SPITS at him, and he flinches back, genuinely hurt...

PLIN

Shut up! We've only got a short
time before shift change, and then
this place will be streaming with
people. Nerys, take my weapon.
I'll secure Gundar.

Kira takes Plin's weapon, keeps it trained on Reon. Plin
trots up the steps, drags Gundar deeper into the shuttle.

Reon steps closer to Kira...

REON

This time your inability to let go
of the past will get you killed.

KIRA

Don't come any closer --

But he LUNGES forward, pulls her in tight, whispers
desperately into her ear...

REON

Listen to me. There is no double.
I scanned Teara's body. She's as
Bajoran as you and me. She was
set up, but I'm not the one who
did it...

Kira's eyes flare, more confused than ever. She struggles, but Reon holds her tight and continues...

REON

Plin is in trouble with the Cardassians, and she's using you to sell out Shakaar as some kind of loyalty test. Here's the proof. Check for yourself. But whatever you do, don't go straight to Shakaar. Go anywhere else.

He discreetly pops a comm chip into her uniform pocket. Then he pushes himself away, takes a step back...

REON

Aim your weapon.

Tears in her eyes, trembling, Kira does as he says. She speaks loud enough for Plin to hear, crying as she does...

KIRA

You won't get away with this, Reon - or whatever your name is. You can tell your Cardassian masters they'll have to do better than this if they want to break Bajor.

Plin appears, comes back down the steps to Kira...

PLIN

The shuttle's ready to go. I can help you through Cardassian security much faster than if you go on your own.

Kira looks nervously back and forth between the two. Which one is lying and which one is telling the truth? Reon holds her eyes, pleading, subtly shakes his head...

KIRA

No, you have to stay here, Plin. You have to figure out what damage Reon's done to your operation - for Bajor's sake.

Plin reaches across, gently takes the weapon from Kira's hand, keeps it trained on Reon.

Kira backs up the steps into the shuttle, never taking her eyes off Reon. They reflect determination, peace with his decision, and urging for her to get away while she can...

PLIN

Go with the Prophets, Nerys.

KIRA (v.o.)

I knew then that leaving Reon there would mean his death. If he was a Cardassian double, Plin would kill him in revenge for Teara. And if he wasn't, and Plin had betrayed the resistance to the Cardassians like he said, then she would kill him to protect herself. Either way, my brother was dead.

Kira clambers backwards through the shuttle's hatch... and it starts to slowly slide shut. At the last second before the hatch fully closes --

-- she sees Reon LUNGE at Plin, fighting for the weapon. The hatch seals shut, Kira hears the weapon FIRE...

...and she GASPS in tears...

41 EXT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - NIGHT

A small, weak sublight Bajoran shuttle (as in 2x03 "The Siege") flies through snowy skies over Bajor's surface...

42 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

Glinn Gundar is still tied up and slumped unconscious in the back seat of the shuttle...

...while Kira pilots, keeping a tight hold on the ship's controls. Refusing to let the tears out again, clinging to the certainty that she did what was necessary...

SISKO (v.o.)

Nerys... I'm so sorry...

43 INT. VIC'S LOUNGE

Sisko and Kira sit where they were at the bar. Kira gazes out at the milling crowd - no Cardassians or Bajorans now, just 1962 Las Vegas partiers. She is not crying now. She made her peace with this a while ago. It's just still sad.

SISKO

Did you ever find out for sure --

KIRA

No. The chip he gave me, it was a map of Cardassian patrols in the area and how to avoid them. It got me out of there alive. But nothing about doubles or secret agents or anything like that. So... whether my brother died as a hero, giving his life to get me to safety with the information Shakaar needed... or as a collaborator, rotting in a Cardassian prison while someone else walked around wearing his face... I never knew.

SISKO

Nerys, please forgive me. This was supposed to be a celebration, a happy time. I never meant to dredge up bad memories.

KIRA

No, Benjamin, that's okay. I guess I'm just a little maudlin today. I... get sad when people go away.

SISKO

Like to the other side of the galaxy.

KIRA

(sad smile)

You'd think I'd be used to it by now. The people around me have a tendency to go away. Lucky I don't have a fragile ego or I might take start taking it personally.

SISKO

I know what it's like to have to make the tough call. During the war, I made decisions I never dreamed I'd have to make. But the thing is... once you take that seat at the Captain's Table...

KIRA

(in other words)

Once you join the Officers' Club...

SISKO

(accepting that)

...then the buck stops with you. You can surround yourself with good friends, people you trust. But you're the one who's out there, making those decisions. Not your staff, not the admirals. You.

Kira nods, understanding what he is getting at...

SISKO

Nerys, don't misunderstand me. I will be here for you as much as I can. You can always come to me for advice. But in the end, it comes down to the decision you make. To run, to fight, to leave someone behind. And there's nobody else can bear that burden but you.

KIRA

No pressure.

SISKO

But that's why you need friends. You promise me, Nerys - call me, any time, if you need to talk.

She smiles, warmly this time, comforted by her friend...

KIRA

I promise. Now come on. We've been in here all afternoon.

KIRA (cont)
You've had your tradition. You've
got a baby to look after, and I've
got a station to run. So get.

He grins, and they jump lightly off their bar stools...

44 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Starting on the star field, as seen out of the oval window
that people always stop at to watch the wormhole...

PULL BACK to reveal..

...TARAN'ATAR looking out in that direction now, although
the wormhole itself has already gone.

People walking by on the Promenade almost absently give him
a wide berth, isolating him. Only RO heads specifically for
him, keeping it light and conversational...

TARAN'ATAR
(acknowledging)
Lieutenant.

RO
Taran'atar. I heard about what
happened this morning. I'm sorry
you're not happy here. I've had
trouble fitting in places myself.

TARAN'ATAR
I was foolish. The Founder has
given me an order. I must obey.

RO
It's not always that easy, I know.
It's time for dinner. I wondered
if you wanted to join me. You have
to eat occasionally, don't you?

TARAN'ATAR
Yes. In the absence of the white,
the Vorta gave me a replicator
pattern for a nutrient broth that
I must ingest once a month.

RO

Sounds tasty. I thought we could talk about some of your old missions for the Dominion. I'd be interested in hearing your tactical insights. I've had some interesting adventures myself.

TARAN'ATAR

(askance)

Ones in which you fought the Dominion?

RO

(delicately)

Some of them. But I do have other stories. So what do you say?

TARAN'ATAR

Lieutenant, I am a Jem'Hadar. I will not make small talk with you over cocktails.

RO

(amused)

And I'm not asking you to. We'd be exchanging tactical and cultural information while also ingesting vital nutrients for maintaining physical strength. That sounds efficient, doesn't it?

He turns to her, inspects her. She is trying to meet him on his own level, and he appreciates the effort...

TARAN'ATAR

It does. I accept.

He turns and walks towards the stairs, Ro following...

45 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

A usual evening meal-time crowd - pretty busy with eaters and drinkers, not so much with gamblers right now. Ro and Taran'atar approach a table, and she pulls out a seat for the Jem'Hadar...

...who looks at it curiously, baffled. Eventually getting the gist, he takes the seat, and Ro joins him.

QUARK steps up to them, still wary of Taran'atar, confused why Ro is socialising with him...

QUARK

Lieutenant. Good to see you.

RO

Hello, Quark. Can we see the dinner menu, please?

QUARK

Right away. And for your "friend"?

Taran'atar pulls out an isolinear rod from a pocket in his overalls and hands it to Quark without a word. Quark nods and scuttles off, still quite mystified.

Above them, Kira and Sisko make their way down the spiral staircase. Reaching the bottom, they spot Ro and Taran'atar together, and they all nod their acknowledgements. Kira is glad to see Taran'atar making an effort to make friends...

KIRA

(to Sisko)

Good friends. People you trust.

SISKO

Exactly.

They continue on their way out, and pass TENMEI, sat again at a table, alone. But as they exit to the Promenade, they pass SHAR on his way in...

The Andorian approaches Tenmei's table nervously - she looks up, relieved and glad to see him. They sit together, and look at each other nervously but hopefully.

PAN UP to the balconies, and we see --

-- VAUGHN, sat alone at a table, drinking and watching Tenmei from afar. She doesn't see him. He's happy she is making friends too, regretting that it's not yet with him.

46 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

Evening shift in Ops. DAX is in command, standing at the central Ops table. No crises, no problems, just a normal evening shift.

She looks around herself, at all the staff working their various stations. She doesn't know most of these people. They are crew - good people, but not friends.

She is sad about Bashir going away, sad about a lot of things. Feeling lonely in a crowd.

NOG is at his engineering station. He gives a polite toothy smile. She forces a polite but unfelt smile in return, and turns back to her work.

47 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Final closing shot...

FADE OUT:

THE END