

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x20 - "Twist of Faith."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine
Mission Gamma Book 3 - Cathedral

by Michael A Martin & Andy Mangels

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

Busy busy busy with official ambassadorial transports, Bajoran shuttles and the usual freighters. The Starfleet USS *Gryphon* takes pride of place on an upper pylon, with the Cardassian ship *Trager* right next to it.

2 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

The Promenade is crowded with Starfleet, Bajorans, and various alien people. There is an air of anticipation - excitement for the coming events. Flamboyant decorations are starting to appear on the balconies and shop-fronts.

KIRA is trying to keep a low profile as she walks through. A couple of random Bajorans give her a nasty look as they pass. Gul MACET catches up with her. She is really not in the mood and keeps walking, but acknowledges him...

MACET

Colonel Kira, may I have a moment?

KIRA

Certainly, Gul Macet. What do you need?

MACET

I wanted to revisit our previous discussion. It's been two weeks since the negotiations between Cardassia and Bajor stalled. Since I had to ferry Ambassador Lang back to Cardassia empty handed.

KIRA

Yet you're back here, even without the Ambassador.

MACET

To do whatever I can to hasten the time when we will be invited back to the table.

MACET (cont)

I have been patient, Colonel,
while you have presumably applied
pressure to the Chamber of
Ministers. How much longer must
I wait? Must my people wait?

He is being deliberately provocative, but she is too fed up
and weary to rise to the bait.

KIRA

A while, I'm afraid. A very brief
while, if that's any consolation.

MACET

After Bajor officially enters the
Federation, you mean. The talks
resume only once the Federation
takes responsibility for them.

KIRA

I'm afraid so.

MACET

I am very disappointed to hear you
say that, Colonel. Especially
given your renowned influence.

KIRA

You're still giving me too much
credit. You know what it means for
a Bajoran to be Attainted. Even
the secular authorities don't have
much use for someone who's been
cast out of the faith.

MACET

You have no shortage of faith,
Colonel. It is as abundant as your
humility. The kind of faith that
can move entire worlds.

KIRA

Worlds are one thing. Ministers
are different beasts entirely.

Kira stops and looks wistfully out at the milling crowds, seeing the Bajorans and Starfleet crew mingling...

KIRA

Look - I know how much you need closure on this before the Federation takes over. I feel the same way. But the first and second ministers don't seem to see things with the same urgency we do. They are perfectly content to wait.

MACET

I don't need to tell you how desperate things are on Cardassia Prime. People are still homeless. Children are still starving. The ones who weren't killed wholesale, of course.

(pause)

For as long as I can remember, Cardassians have regarded ourselves as more advanced than Bajorans. Intellectually, politically, culturally - by any measure we could conceive. Now, after all we've been through, Bajor is exacting its revenge not through war, but through petty politics. Your ministers are not just keeping our worlds from attaining a lasting peace. They may also be confirming some of Cardassia's oldest and ugliest prejudices. Good day, Colonel.

He turns and walks away into the crowd. Kira sadly watches him go, knowing he is right but feeling powerless to do anything about it. She turns and continues walking.

Soon another pair approach her - a young Bajoran MAN and older Bajoran WOMAN - dressed in cleric-like robes, hoods up, but not the usual Bajoran style.

Kira prepares for the same frosty treatment she gets from most Bajorans...

MAN

Colonel Kira, may we have a moment
of your time?

KIRA

I'm late for an appointment.
Perhaps one of my officers could
help you.

WOMAN

A moment is all we ask.

The two Bajorans pull back their hoods - neither of them is
wearing an earring. This finally makes Kira stop...

MAN

We want to thank you for revealing
the truths of Ohalu to us. The
prophecies you disseminated answer
so many more questions. You helped
us along our own spiritual path.

WOMAN

The truth of the Prophets cannot
be monopolised by any one group.
And the truth has been hidden for
far too long. You helped to reveal
it. Do not mourn the loss of your
standing in the Bajoran orthodoxy.
Your *pagh* is stronger than that.

MAN

The Prophets are with you,
Colonel.

The two Bajorans move off, leaving Kira stunned...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. BAJORAN MONASTERY - ANTEROOM - DAY

A warm, sunny, stone room like many we have seen on Bajor before. A secretary sits behind a desk. She rises in deference when Vedek YEVIR enters. Slightly exasperated and harassed, she gestures to a young Bajoran woman sat nearby.

This is MIKA, the *pagh*-Wraith cultist from 7x09 "Covenant." She is suckling a baby hidden under her robes. With a nod to his secretary, Yevir turns to the guest, quite friendly.

YEVIR

Hello, child. Won't you come into my office?

4 INT. YEVIR'S OFFICE

Yevir leads the way in, Mika follows with head high. Yevir lays various documents on his desk, where we see the B'Hala JEVONITE FIGURINE he took from Kasidy's home...

YEVIR

You seem familiar, child. Have we met before?

MIKA

No, Vedek Yevir, we have not met. But you may know my face from the files that the Vedek Assembly very likely keeps on people like me. My name is Cerin Mika. I was once a member of the *pagh*-Wraith cult.

YEVIR

(cooling)

Yes, I remember you now. And I am familiar with the details of your experiences. I can't help think that Gul Dukat's attempt on your life couldn't be a clearer sign from the Prophets that it was a mistake to stray from Their path.

Mika shrugs, unoffended - she has heard worse.

MIKA

I was never completely satisfied with the orthodox teachings of Bajor. Dukat's actions have not changed that. A few months ago, my husband and I read the prophecies of Ohalu. We began to speak with others who had read them too.

YEVIR

It's a shame that Ohalu's heresies have replaced the true word of the Prophets in so many sad souls.

MIKA

Ohalu's teachings do not replace your words. Only supplement them.

YEVIR

That isn't so, child. Ohalu argues that the Prophets are not gods, but merely powerful, enigmatic beings. His teachings undermine the very basis of our society.

MIKA

If you have read the prophecies, Vedek, then you already know how many of them have come true. And not some vague premonition either, but reality. Truth.

Yevir grinds his teeth - that is a point that troubles him. But he will not give in...

YEVIR

Grey can resemble black or white, depending on the elements that surround it. So too can heresies seem to offer solace. The Bajoran people need their faith in the invariant will of the Prophets.

MIKA

Ah yes, placing our faith in all-powerful beings is tempting... It absolves us of all personal responsibility. Whatever happens is the will of the Prophets. But where were the Prophets during the Occupation? And why have those who claim to serve them been unable to establish peace with Cardassia?

YEVIR

(gritted teeth)

Is this why you came here today? To spout Ohalu's blasphemies?

MIKA

No, I have not come to debate theologies. Or even to convince you to respect our faith. But I have come to ask for your help.

YEVIR

(impatient)

With what?

MIKA

I - we believe that Colonel Kira Nerys has been done a great injustice by the Vedek Assembly. She is guilty of nothing more than allowing the Bajoran people the chance to ask questions, and to decide on their own which answers they will accept.

YEVIR

I will not rescind Kira's Attainder. Whether the questions Ohalu raises are valid is not a factor. Kira's decision to take matters into her own hands is unforgivable.

MIKA

You must hate her very much, Vedek. I am disappointed.

YEVIR

No, child. I have never hated Colonel Kira. I can understand how it might seem so. And I know the Attainder must be personally devastating to her. But actions such as hers are beyond my authority to forgive.

MIKA

Perhaps others in the Assembly will be less... inflexible. I hope one day the Prophets will lead you to forgiveness.

Mika begins to get up, but still bright, not deflated at all. As she stands, the baby's arm pops out, and it is grey, Cardassian-like. Yevir stands with a start...

YEVIR

May I see your child, Mika?

Unsure and wary, she pulls back the cloths covering the baby and reveals its face - half-Cardassian, half-Bajoran.

Fascinated, Yevir approaches and gently reaches to touch the baby's face, tracing the small Cardassian ridges, the Bajoran wrinkles. The child giggles - Yevir is delighted.

YEVIR

You have a beautiful son, Mika.
Thank you. I will consider your words. If you will consider mine as well.

(to the door)

Walk with the Prophets.

MIKA

And you.

She turns and leaves. Yevir returns to his desk, sits, picks up the jevonite figurine in thought. Like Mika's child, it has a Cardassian neck and a Bajoran nose.

He holds the golden statue, traces the figure's lines, his face full of amazement and sudden revelation...

5 **EST. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Just a moment to reestablish, with the many ships of various kind still surrounding the station...

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

Lieutenant RO stands nervously at Shar's quarters, unarmed.

She looks to one side, and sees Sgt SHUL a few doors down, weapon on his hip. She looks the other way, and there is Cpl HAVA likewise. She presses the door chime...

DIZHEI

(muffled)

Go away. Whoever you are.

RO

It's Lieutenant Ro. I'm here on official station business.

DIZHEI

(muffled)

Please, we do not desire visitors now. Anichent and I will contact you. When we are ready.

RO

I understand your grief, Dizhei. And I respect your customs. But I have regulations to follow, and reports to file. Certain things need to be resolved.

(no response)

Would Anichent be willing to speak with me? I'll only need a moment.

Still silence, long enough for Ro to start getting worried.

RO

Dizhei, open the door now. Please. I need to speak with Anichent.

Still nothing. Hating to have to do it, she gestures for Shul and Hava to approach, which they do, weapons drawn...

RO
Computer, security override at
the personal quarters of Ensign
Thirishar ch'Thane. Authorisation
Ro Gamma Seven Four.

The doors open and Ro steps in, taut and alert. Shul and
Hava stay at the threshold...

7 INT. DS9 - SHAR'S QUARTERS

The room is dark, lit only by a pair of large CANDLES. The
flickering light reveals an open Starfleet STASIS CHAMBER.
THRISS lies in a simple white gown, beautiful and cold.

Ro steps slowly towards ANICHENT and DIZHEI, who quietly
kneel before the coffin in nondescript robes. Dishevelled,
unwashed, with slashes and bruises visible on their skins.
Anichent is miles away, but Dizhei turns in irritation...

DIZHEI
Is this the kind of disrespect
we can expect from Bajor once it
joins the Federation?

RO
I apologise for barging in. But
I had reason to believe Anichent
might be in danger.

DIZHEI
Because we Andorians are such a
violently emotional lot, no doubt.

ANICHENT
(whispered, distant)
She saw it clearly. More clearly
than the rest of us ever could.

RO
What did she see?

DIZHEI
Th'se.

Anichent lowers his head again...

DIZHEI (cont)

Your men can lower their weapons,
Lieutenant. Anichent can barely
move, let alone attack you.

RO

Look, the station is swarming with
VIPs, I've got to stage manage the
Federation signing ceremony. It's
going to be a security nightmare
as it is. I can't afford to have
this case open and unresolved.

(no response)

I know this is a difficult time.
But surely two weeks is enough --

ANICHENT

Time... what is time when there
is no future?

Ro looks more closely at Anichent - empty and vacant...

RO

You've drugged him.

DIZHEI

To save his life.

RO

He should be in the infirmary.

DIZHEI

He is far safer here.

Ro seems to understand. She turns to Shul and Hava...

RO

Stand down.

They do, leaving. Dizhei stands and approaches Ro...

DIZHEI

Do you truly understand now?

RO

He's lost hope.

DIZHEI

No - it's more profound than that. He believes hope itself no longer exists. That Thriss's death is an augury for our entire species.

RO

Do you believe he's right?

DIZHEI

I cannot afford to think that way. If I did, we would all be lost. I will watch over Thriss until Shar returns. And I will do the same for Anichent, to keep him from following her over the precipice. Even if it kills me. Now, about that report you wanted...

RO

It will wait. Please forget I asked. And forgive me.

Ro leaves, feeling worse than ever...

8 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira sits behind her desk, talking to Macet on her personal screen. She still has trouble trusting him...

KIRA

Gul Macet, I understood the *Trager* was due to remain at the station for the next few days. I'm a little surprised at your request for immediate departure clearance.

MACET (screen)

I understand your reticence, Colonel. And I realise you have reasons to be wary. But please believe me, I have no sinister intentions. I've merely been recalled to Cardassia sooner than expected. This is nothing but a simple scheduling change.

Kira looks unsure, still not entirely convinced...

MACET (screen)

If nothing else, Colonel, I would think my ship's absence would make your life easier, considering the momentous events your staff are currently preparing for.

KIRA

Alright, Macet. I'll clear you for departure. But please try not to give me any more surprises for a while, okay?

9 INT. TRAGER - BRIDGE

A standard Cardassian bridge layout, a little messy and run down, with visibly patched makeshift systems and some dead panels. Macet sits in the centre chair, talking to Kira on the viewscreen...

MACET (screen)

Thank you, Colonel. You've just made my own life immeasurably easier. *Trager* out.

With a curt nod, Kira's face disappears from the screen. His smile disappearing, Macet turns in his seat to face --

-- Vedek Yevir, stood on his bridge out of the viewscreen's line of sight, waiting in his full vedek's regalia.

MACET

I am loath to do anything to undermine Colonel Kira's trust, Vedek Yevir. You have no idea how difficult it was to gain whatever small measure of it I may have just squandered.

YEVIR

I understand. Neither trust nor true faith comes easily to Kira.

Macet tenses, insulted on Kira's behalf...

MACET

Yet still you insist on this...
subterfuge.

YEVIR

I regret these deceptions every bit
as much as you do. And I assure you,
if our pilgrimage fails, I alone
will assume responsibility before
your superiors and my own.

MACET

(wry smile)

You know as well as I do that you
have no superiors to report to,
Vedek. And I'm still not certain
what exactly you imagine I can do,
beyond providing transportation.

YEVIR

Oh, there's a great deal you can
do, Gul Macet, with the right
help. Get the ship underway, and I
will explain everything during the
voyage.

On Yevir's excited face...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

10 EST. DEEP SPACE NINE

Trager is now gone, but a large, important-looking Bajoran ship is just settling into its place on the pylon...

11 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR

Kira and Ro wait nearby with security. Kira yawns...

RO
Late night, Colonel?

KIRA
Always. Everything under control?

RO
Yes. There'll be no surprises
during this ceremony if I have
anything to say about it.

The airlock wheels open and SHAKAAR steps out, ASAREM close behind him. Kira puts on her best fake smile to welcome the First Minister, although she is still quite angry with him.

SHAKAAR
Ah, Colonel Kira, thank you for
coming to greet us.

KIRA
First Minister, Second Minister,
I hope you had a pleasant flight.

ASAREM
The flight went without incident,
Colonel. It gave us both time to
meditate on the historic nature of
tomorrow's ceremonies.

They both step out into the corridor, and begin to walk down the deserted halls, lined with discreet security, including Sgt ETANA. Kira gestures towards Ro...

KIRA

You both know Lieutenant Ro Laren,
DS-Nine's head of security. She's
in charge of making sure all the
dignitaries have a safe time.

RO

If you'll follow me, Ministers,
I'll take you to your quarters.
And of course you both know the
way to the Wardroom, and the
station's shrine.

SHAKAAR

Yes, we plan on going there to
commune with the Prophets later
this evening.

Kira knows this was aimed directly at her. She stews as
Shakaar steps into the turbolift, still not looking at her,
keeping a happy face. Asarem follows him, throwing a
subtle, sympathising look Kira's way...

12 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Pretty busy with various humans, Bajorans and aliens. QUARK
bustles happily behind his bar, while HETIK, TREIR and
Quark's numerous other Ferengi staff are also working hard.
TARAN'ATAR lingers uncomfortably nearby.

QUARK

In or out, Taran'atar. You'll
scare off the paying customers.

TARAN'ATAR

I wish to have the same drink you
made for me last time. The brown
and white one.

QUARK

Ugh, the root beer float? I can't
figure out what humans see in that
stuff, never mind you.

TARAN'ATAR

I have found they energise me.

Quark serves the root beer float, and Taran'atar takes a hearty chug. Quark tries not to laugh at the ice cream clinging to the Jem'Hadar's upper lip...

TARAN'ATAR

During my last holosuite exercise,
I encountered something strange.
A man appeared, a human. He wore
black, and had silver hair. He
called me 'pallie.'

QUARK

Oh, that's just Vic. He's a lounge
singer from Las Vegas.

TARAN'ATAR

He sings lounges? I'm not familiar
with that musical form.

QUARK

He sings in a lounge, Trannie. But
he can also pop up wherever he
feels like. He's probably taken an
interest in you. He helped Kira
and Odo get together, and he saved
Nog's life last year.

Taran'atar chugs the last of his drink in one go, and
pauses to consider what Quark has said...

TARAN'ATAR

Then I have two requests, Quark. I
would like to book some holosuite
time today, to see this Vic.

QUARK

He's on full time. Just clear out
by twenty-hundred, and try not to
kill anything while you're in
there. What's your second request?

He leans forward, coming uncomfortably close to Quark...

TARAN'ATAR

Never address me as Trannie again.

Quark gulps as Taran'atar straightens, turns and heads towards the holosuites.

At a table on the ground floor, Ro sits reading a padd. Treir approaches, placing a steaming drink on the table.

RO

Thanks, but I didn't order this.

TREIR

It's a gift. From tall, dark and joined over there.

The dabo girl wiggles her eyebrows mischievously. Ro looks over to the bar, where the charming and handsome Trill security agent HIZIKI GARD offers a "cheers" and a smile.

Pleasantly surprised, Ro beckons him over. The Trill gets up and takes a seat opposite Ro. There is gentle flirting going on during all this - Gard smiling and eyes twinkling, Ro giggling with flattery. Quark sees this, and glowers...

GARD

I'm not sure, but I get the sense your Ferengi friend doesn't like me very much.

RO

What gave it away? The frown, the loathing stare or the bared teeth?

GARD

Ah, I see you have as many years of detective training as I've had.

RO

Oh, Quark's just got a mild self-esteem problem. So, do you prefer being addressed as Hiziki or Gard?

GARD

My joined name is fine, except in professional situations. I've heard all the jokes, believe me. Over more than one lifetime.

RO

You've had many previous hosts?

GARD

Oh yes. And I've worked in law enforcement or security for most of them. It seems the Symbiosis Commission has stereotyped me.

RO

Most of my experience with Trills has been with Ezri Dax. I believe her previous hosts were quite a diverse lot.

GARD

Yes, I've met Dax.

(off Ro's look)

Let's just say one of her earlier incarnations ran into a spot of trouble with the law. Her lives probably make mine look dull in comparison.

RO

So, what can I do for you? I don't imagine you came here to let a relative stranger interrogate you about your previous lives.

GARD

You're hardly a stranger to me, Lieutenant. I wouldn't be doing my job if I hadn't studied the files on all of you. I was particularly interested in your time with the Maquis, and your Starfleet mission to Garon Two before that.

RO

(stiffly)

If you've researched me so well, you know there were extenuating circumstances on Garon Two.

GARD

Don't get me wrong, Lieutenant.
I'm not criticising. In fact, I'm
quite impressed. But I do have
some concerns about the security
for tomorrow's treaty signing.

Ro is about to kick off, insulted at his insinuations...

GARD (cont)

Please do not misinterpret me. I
was merely hoping we might review
the security plans together. This
evening, perhaps? Over dinner?

She smiles - he is smooth. She regrets having to say no...

RO

Thank you for the offer, but I've
already made dinner plans.

She looks over to where Quark is still glowering in their
direction as he cleans glasses. Gard follows her eye-line,
then looks back, nodding with understanding.

GARD

Considering the quality of his
dinner companionship, I'd say
Quark's ego is needlessly fragile.
Tomorrow at oh-six-hundred, then?

She nods, and he gets up to leave. Ro watches, flattered
and intrigued. Quark is still wishing death upon him...

13 INT. VIC FONTAINE'S LOUNGE

The lounge is middling busy with drinkers and diners in
period dress. VIC greets Taran'atar at the door...

VIC

Well, you're certainly not one of
my regular customers. What brings
you to my establishment today?

TARAN'ATAR

I walked.

VIC

And they say Frank was the greatest straight man to play Vegas. Well, at least you're wearing black. What can I get for you? Quark says you got a thing for root beer floats.

TARAN'ATAR

He is correct.

Amused, Vic signals to a waitress for the drink...

TARAN'ATAR

Many of the station's residents have come to value your advice.

VIC

I tell them what I see. It ain't always what they wanna hear.

TARAN'ATAR

I've been told your intervention prevented Lieutenant Nog's death.

VIC

I just helped bump him back into the real world.

TARAN'ATAR

(confused)

You don't lay claim to any special psychotherapeutic talents. Yet others believe you possess those talents.

VIC

Everybody's gotta have faith in something. You have faith that the Founders are gods, don't you?

TARAN'ATAR

(considers it)

...No. That belief requires no faith on the part of a Jem'Hadar. The Founders are gods.

VIC

Ask a silly question...

Just then, a figure approaches from out of the crowd - it is Adm AKAAR, dressed in a tuxedo. He is the only humanoid to ever be able to stand with Taran'atar eye-to-eye.

VIC

Have you two met? I think you may have a fair amount in common.

AKAAR

Tell me, Mister Taran'atar, what compels a soldier of the Dominion to sample the historic delights of ancient Earth?

TARAN'ATAR

I have been instructed to learn all I can about the peoples of the Alpha Quadrant.

AKAAR

Indeed. My aged ears overheard your discussion of faith. Do you know why I have come to this station, Mister Taran'atar?

TARAN'ATAR

You are one of several dignitaries who will bear official witness to Bajor's entry into the Federation.

AKAAR

An action that, in itself, is an act of faith.

TARAN'ATAR

I do not understand.

AKAAR

I have faith that Bajor's recent years of transformation have prepared it to integrate itself into our coalition of worlds.

AKAAR (cont)

I have faith that an indissoluble
bond will be born tomorrow.

TARAN'ATAR

But is not faith required only
when no other factual basis exists
for believing in a thing?

AKAAR

Precisely. We cannot know what
will happen in advance, no matter
how much we prepare. Take Bajor
again - some believe it should not
enter the Federation until it can
make peace with Cardassia. Others
believe that Bajor is ready for
membership now, just as she is.
Both sides are acting on faith.

TARAN'ATAR

On which side have you placed your
faith, Admiral?

AKAAR

It is not my nature to advocate
waiting over action. No Capellan
who has lived as long as I have
believes peace is inevitable. But
I have faith. Therefore I do not
need to know for certain.

With a raise of his glass, Akaar melts back into the crowd.

VIC

I hope that cleared things up.

By Taran'atar's face, it certainly doesn't look like it...

14 EXT. CARDASSIA - ESTABLISHING

The dark, broken cityscape as in 8x09 "A Stitch in Time."
Dirty fog fills the sky, and wind howls around the crumbled
buildings.

A Cardassian SHUTTLE descends to the surface...

15 **EXT. CARDASSIAN LANDING PLAZA - DUSK**

The shuttle settles to the ground with a wheeze of gasses and a creak of un-maintained supports. It blows up DUST all around the empty landing plaza. The shuttle's hatch opens.

A female Cardassian military GLINN steps out first, holding out a scanner. MACET, YEVIR and two armed guards follow cautiously, looking with dismay at the shattered ruins.

GLINN

Six life signs approaching, sir.

As Macet's group tenses, six Cardassian figures emerge from the darkness. They are led by an older woman, EKOSHA, and include a teenage boy who stares coldly at Macet.

EKOSHA

Welcome to Lakarian City. What's left of it. You are Gul Macet?

MACET

I am. This is Vedek Yevir. Your message said there would be five in your party, Cleric Ekosha, and yet there are six?

EKOSHA

My apologies, Macet. When the young man heard you were coming, he insisted on joining us. His father never managed to find the time to bring him here himself.

MACET

I'm sorry to hear it. A man should make time for his family.

At that, the teen SPITS at Macet with hatred, turns and runs away into the darkness. Ekosha sighs with sadness...

MACET

Well, now that the introductions are made, we should get on with business. Our time is short.

EKOSHA

When you first contacted me, Gul Macet, I was suspicious. Centuries of religious persecution have made the Oralian Way rather wary.

YEVIR

Gul Macet arranged this meeting at my request, Cleric. I am deeply troubled by the diplomatic impasse that now exists between Bajor and Cardassia. If you and I can broker peace between our peoples now, before the Federation takes such matters out of our hands, think of the good it will accomplish.

EKOSHA

Not least for the two of you. You want to be Kai of Bajor, and if what I've heard is true, you're willing to suppress an offshoot religion to do it. Whereas Macet wants to finally emerge from the shadow of a man whom all of Bajor hates. Not to mention those of us who haven't forgotten who began our slide into destruction.

Slowly, deliberately, Yevir reaches up and removes his earring, dropping it on the ground. Then he begins taking off his robes of office, one by one, until he is left in a simple, unmarked white tunic. He speaks with conviction...

YEVIR

I don't deny I might personally benefit. But I come among you not as a candidate for Kai, nor as a representative of any religion. I am here with one agenda only - to bring our people together without any force or coercion.

(re clothes on ground)

If the price of such a peace is that I throw all of this away, then I will do it gladly.

EKOSHA

How do we broker a peace agreement
when even our most accomplished
diplomats have failed?

YEVIR

The Prophets will provide, Cleric.

GARAK (o.s.)

I think I may have a suggestion.

Out of the dust emerges another figure - ELIM GARAK. He
approaches them with his usual wide, welcoming smile...

GARAK

Gul Macet, always a pleasure. You
are looking well - not to mention
familiar. Please forgive your
nephew. I believe he was simply
expressing his profound regret
that Skrain Dukat never brought
him here while the amusement park
was still in operation.

(turns to Yevir)

And Vedek Yevir, how nice to meet
you finally. Although I didn't
expect to see a member of the
Bajoran clergy in such a state of
undress. At least not since I left
the trade myself. My name is Elim
Garak, and I believe I have a
solution to your problem.

On Garak's mysterious smile...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

16 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Quark enters, in his finest suit. He looks around - MORN is holding court for a handful of rowdily laughing aliens. HETIK is working his adoring masses at the dabo wheel.

Treir offers Quark a WOLF-WHISTLE from behind the bar. He glowers at her, then heads towards the spiral staircase to the holosuites, nervously excited...

17 INT. VIC FONTAINE'S LOUNGE

He walks into the lounge, which is swinging with a fairly busy crowd of drinkers, many dancing and enjoying VIC and the band's rendition of "Let's Get Away From It All."

Quark looks around apprehensively, then spots RO perched on a stool at the bar. She is wearing a tight black cocktail dress and looking fantastic, if a little uncomfortable.

Meanwhile, Vic has finished his song and drifted over to Quark and Ro, insinuating himself in smoothly. Ro is a little bemused by the environs and the old-fashioned lingo.

VIC

Quark, you old dog. You gonna keep
this vision to yourself?

QUARK

Vic, meet Lieutenant Ro Laren, the
station's new chief of security.
Ro, Vic Fontaine.

Vic reaches over and gently takes Ro's hand, raising it to his lips for a light kiss. She is completely confused. He clicks his fingers for a waitress, who brings a tray...

VIC

First round's on me.

RO

Spring wine?

VIC

No can do. I may be self-aware,
not to mention dashing handsome,
but I'm also period specific.
Still, Dom Perignon ain't too bad
a consolation prize.

Vic raises his glass for a toast - Ro and Quark copy him...

VIC

To the future.

Ro's face drops into anxious thought. Quark realises -- Vic
has got right to the point again. The singer drifts away...

VIC

I'll leave you two love birds to
your evening. Enjoy the show.

QUARK

Still bothering you, isn't it?
What we talked about. The future.

RO

It'd help if you could convince me
there's going to be a future.

QUARK

Why, is there some new classified
Starfleet crisis that's about to
end the universe as we know it?

RO

Things like that come and go. The
future is something else entirely.
You're stuck facing it every day
the universe doesn't end.

On stage, Vic is singing "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?"
and answering himself, "I don't." Quark frowns...

QUARK

Well, that's just offensive.

He takes her hand and leads her onto the dance floor...

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

Kira looks up from her work, surprised to see Bajoran Militia General LENARIS (3x24 "Shakaar") entering her office. She greets him warmly, genuinely.

LENARIS

Working this late is a bad habit,
Colonel.

KIRA

Holem! I mean, General.

LENARIS

I'll never get used to colonels
leaping to attention for my sake.
Especially not you, Nerys.

KIRA

Well if you won't take a salute,
then how about my congratulations?

She guides him over to the lounge area of her office,
grabbing two steaming mugs from the replicator...

LENARIS

I nearly turned it down, you know.
After Europa Nova, it felt like
they were deliberately snubbing
you by offering these general's
bars to me.

KIRA

Turning down a promotion wouldn't
have made the Militia any nicer to
me, Holem. Besides, you've earned
it many times over.

LENARIS

I don't know about that. But I did
realise I'd have a better chance
of changing their attitudes as a
general than as a colonel. Which
brings me to the reason for my
visit... Ten days ago, I decided
to follow the path of Ohalu.

KIRA
(nods sadly)
It's not exactly a secret.

LENARIS
You should join us.

KIRA
(spits out drink)
What?!

LENARIS
It was your actions that inspired
the movement. And your Attainder
that gave it drive and purpose.

KIRA
My actions drove a wedge into the
Bajoran faith!

LENARIS
That's Yevir and his cronies
talking. I think Kira Nerys knows
better. Are you really prepared to
spend years on your knees begging
for their forgiveness?

KIRA
I never asked for any forgiveness.
I didn't do anything wrong.

LENARIS
Exactly. You don't have to play
their game. And you have nothing
to lose by supporting Vedek Solis
Tendren, our nominee for Kai.

KIRA
I'm Attainted. I'd be worse than
useless to you.

LENARIS
The people don't agree. Attainted
or not, you're a hero to many on
Bajor. A hero in war and in peace.

KIRA
I never asked to be a hero. Let
history make that choice. Not me.

LENARIS
Nerys, you are history. You
introduced us to Ohalu's truth.

KIRA
Only to let people make up their
own minds! I admit, it's tempting
to use the Ohalavaru as a weapon
against Yevir. But that's not fair
to me, or to him, or to you.

(beat)
I'm sorry, Holem, I could never
join you. Ohalu doesn't believe
the Prophets are divine. I do.

Sadly, but with understanding, Lenaris relents and they
look at each other over their hot drinks...

19 EXT. BAJOR - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The same standard city shot as always will be fine...

20 INT. VEDEK ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS

As seen in 8x01 "Avatar pt 1," but much busier. A nearly
full meeting of the Assembly is in progress. Yevir is not
present, but all the other Vedeks seen in 8x01 are. One in
particular, Vedek BELLIS, is tying up the session...

BELLIS
Is there any final business?

An older male Vedek, SOLIS, stands up slowly and places his
hands on the table to be heard. Bellis would rather not
hear from him, but protocol demands politeness...

BELLIS
Yes, Vedek Solis?

Solis takes a moment to prepare himself - this is his big
moment, and he has to get it right.

SOLIS

Here on Bajor, the belief in our Prophets is what drives our people. Even our very planet is named after our religion. If history had gone differently, we might be Perikians or Endtreeans now. But we are Bajorans. Our faith defines us. But how do we define our faith?

Some Vedeks are listening intently. But Bellis is fuming...

SOLIS (cont)

Every sentient species on each of the planets in the Federation has a history, a tradition, a set of old ways. Some believe in a single god who created everything. Some in a pantheon of gods. Others that there are no gods, and others that they might one day become gods themselves. We do not proselytise to them about the Prophets, because we recognise that their beliefs differ from our own. And are just as valid as our own. If we have accepted this, is it so difficult to accept that there may be those of us here who also hold different beliefs, and that those beliefs might also be valid?

BELLIS

(can't hold his tongue)

We know that you lead the Ohalu movement, Solis. Your liberal platitudes may have a place on the street, but they are heresy in these hallowed halls.

SOLIS

Is your faith in the Prophets so fragile, Vedek Bellis, that you cannot hear an opinion that might diverge from your own?

SOLIS (cont)

I know one person whose faith remains strong, as strong as any of us here. Kira Nerys is one of the best of us. I am humbled to know her. Only weeks ago, the wife of the Emissary all but cast Vedek Yevir from her house, even as she welcomed Kira to stay and recuperate from the wounds we inflicted upon her.

(beat)

I implore you, my fellow Vedeks, to rescind the Attainder of Kira Nerys. I know that she has not lost faith in the Prophets. Please don't allow the people of Bajor to lose their faith in us because of our unjustly harsh actions.

He sits down, hoping he has done his best. Bellis grumbles somewhat as the other Vedeks mutter between themselves...

21 **INT. VEDEK ASSEMBLY ANTE-ROOM**

The vedeks stream out of the oval archway right past MIKA, who stands waiting with her baby. Solis is one of the last out, approaching her heavily, on the verge of tears...

MIKA

Uncle, you did your best. All who heard your words were moved.

SOLIS

I won't let the matter drop, Mika. I will bring it up again at the next session, and the next, and the next. I will persuade them.

MIKA

That will take years. I owe Kira my life, and the life of my son. We both owe her for preserving the prophecies of Ohalu. Now is the time to act directly.

SOLIS

Please don't do anything foolish.
You have a child to consider.

MIKA

Don't worry, uncle. What needs to
be done will be done. I owe Kira
and the Prophets no less.

Off Mika's determination...

22 **EXT. CARDASSIA - ESTABLISHING**

Just a moment to re-establish...

23 **INT. CARDASSIAN TUNNEL**

A wide mineshaft cut through dark and damp rock. GARAK,
MACET, YEVIR and EKOSHA climb cautiously down metal ladders
nailed to the walls, shining the way with electric torches.

The SKITTERING noise of some small creature scuttling in
the darkness makes Yevir jump. Garak chuckles...

GARAK

Don't worry, Vedek. The *utoxa*
can't smell you, and the *scottril*,
well - a phaser will stop them.
Usually. If we see them before
they see us.

EKOSHA

The destruction seems to intensify
as we descend. Are you certain
anything has survived?

MACET

We have only the word of Elim
Garak to rely on. And our faith.

GARAK

I must say I find your belief in
me encouraging, Macet. There might
be a place for you in the Orialian
Way after all - if only you
weren't so ugly.

Macet and Ekosha both CHUCKLE again, although Yevir is not in a laughing mood.

Finally Garak JUMPS off the ladders and onto a ledge, by a large metal door in the shaft's side.

GARAK

I believe we have arrived.

As the others hesitantly join him on the ledge, Garak pulls out a small DEVICE and plugs it into a rickety old computer console set in the wall. The console sputters to reluctant life and Garak presses various buttons...

GARAK

Ah. Here we are.

The doors open, and a bright WHITE LIGHT surges out. We don't see the source. As the light washes over him, Yevir smiles blissfully, his mission fulfilled...

WHITE OUT into:

24 INT. DS9 - SHRINE

...the spotlight over the Orb box, placed on its plinth at the head of the shrine. Vedek CAPRIL stands at his lectern, preaching quietly and soothingly to a capacity-plus crowd.

CAPRIL

Bajor is poised at a precipice,
metaphorically speaking. But that
need not frighten her faithful. We
must embrace the glorious future
the Prophets have laid out for us.

He has not finished, but a rustle amongst the crowd catches his attention...

The young man who spoke to Kira at the top of the episode stands up and strides to the front of the room. He turns to the crowd, grasps his earring and drops it to the floor.

MAN
For Kira Nerys.

Capril is beside himself with surprise, but the crowd at large is not best pleased.

The woman from earlier stands, comes to the front, and takes off her earring.

WOMAN
For Kira Nerys.

Another stands, and does the same. And another.

The crowd becomes more and more agitated as others stand, cast off their earring and chant Kira's name. The last is MIKA, holding her half-Cardassian baby openly...

MIKA
We are the Ohalavaru, and we do
this in the name of Kira Nerys,
the Truthgiver.

There is a dozen of them now, all ages, all standing and calmly chanting. The crowd is getting angrier and angrier.

Capril realises -- this could explode at any moment...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

25 INT. DS9 - STATION SHRINE

Where we were, with the Ohalavaru serenely standing and chanting Kira's name. The crowd grows ever more angry, starting to push and jostle the peaceful protesters...

CAPRIL

Children of the Prophets! Violence here will solve nothing! Turn your passions towards the Prophets, not these intruders!

Capril sees SHAKAAR and ASAREM at the back of the room, gesturing for security officers to enter. One of them is RO, which Capril does not consider an improvement...

RO

What's the problem, Minister?

ASAREM

Followers of Ohalu are treating us to a little demonstration. At the behest of your commanding officer.

SHAKAAR

I want those people arrested. Drag them out of here and make an example of them.

The crowd continues to turn into a melée, pushing and shoving as the Ohalavaru stand their ground and chant. Vedek Bellis pushes out of the throng and towards Ro...

RO

That could lead to violence. You also run the risk of turning them into political heroes.

BELLIS

Of course, you would argue that. You're hardly fit to deal with a crisis in our temple.

Ignoring Bellis, but with a glance at the nearby Etana to follow, Ro leads her team up to the front of the shrine...

RO

Those of you who are disturbing
this shrine must leave now. If you
do not leave voluntarily, we will
take you into custody. This is
your final warning.

While the crowd exhorts the security staff to arrest them,
the Ohalavaru just keep standing and chanting as one...

OHALAVARU

For Kira Nerys, the Truthgiver.
For Kira Nerys, the Truthgiver.

KIRA (o.s.)

That's enough!

The mantra stops as the whole room turns to see --

-- KIRA's shadowed form standing in the door, taking care
not to step in the shrine. She has everyone's attention...

KIRA

That's enough. You've made your
point. I'm asking you to exit the
shrine now with our security
staff. I ask that you all move in
a quiet and orderly fashion.

The Ohalavaru all look to Mika, who softly nods, bends down
to pick up her earring and walks calmly to the door.

The rest all follow her, the security staff keeping pace...

They pass Kira on the threshold and reach out to touch her
in reverence and support. She doesn't respond, but she is
not exactly angry either...

RO

I'll leave a detachment of guards
posted outside in case there's any
further disturbances, Minister.

BELLIS

Perhaps if they weren't on the same station as their leader...

SHAKAAR

I don't believe that Colonel Kira has either endorsed or allied herself with the Ohalavaru, Vedek Bellis. Now come, let's renew our devotion to the Prophets.

He throws arms around Bellis and Asarem and leads them back into the shrine, deliberately snubbing Kira once again.

Kira turns and leaves, and Ro watches her go with sympathy, then begins issuing orders to her staff...

26 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira curled up on the windowsill, staring out at the stars, tears in her eyes.

The doors open -- Ro steps in, walking on eggshells, not wanting to add to Kira's burden...

RO

I'm glad you showed up when you did. You saved what could have been a very distressing scene.

KIRA

Did you know there were similar demonstrations in every province on Bajor? All because of me.

RO

You should be glad for the support of so many passionate people. It says good things about you.

KIRA

I knew the Prophets were testing me. Taking away everything I care about... to see what I'm made of. But I don't know how much more of this I can take.

RO

Colonel... Nerys... The people of Bajor used to have two choices. Join up with the faithful, or become outcast agnostics like me. You gave them a third path to follow. They're just trying to give you that choice in return. The Ohalavaru are telling all of Bajor that if you choose to follow the Prophets, then you should have every right to do that.

KIRA

I hadn't considered that before. There's just so much going on.

RO

Well... I know this won't make things any easier, but you deserve to know. Once Bajor signs the Federation charter, I'll be resigning my commission.

KIRA

What? Why? Ro, I know we got off on the wrong foot, but if this --

RO

No, Colonel. You know my history with Starfleet. I'll never have a place in the new order. I'd rather bow out gracefully now.

KIRA

I'll fight for you to stay.

RO

I appreciate that. But it won't do any good. Once the party's over, I'll be moving on.

Ro stands quietly and walks away, leaving Kira alone. She looks down at the drawer containing Sisko's baseball. She looks at the shelves - a lower one holds Odo's old bucket. She turns back to the stars and begins softly crying...

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

Morning. The big day has arrived...

28 **INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

The WALL SCREEN shows alternating floor plans and scans of the station, with clear paths indicated. Deputies SHUL and ETANA stand at the top nearby, but Ro is chairing the final meeting for all the security staff, including Gard...

RO

Okay people, this is it. The big one. Nothing can be allowed to go wrong. You all know your places, and I'm depending on every one of you. Now, with Mister Gard's kind help earlier this morning --

A flirting smile passes between them - Ro blushes a touch, before forcing herself back to professional matters...

RO (cont)

-- we've retuned the scanners to the highest possible levels. There should be no weapon in existence that can get past them. But that is no excuse for carelessness. Be on the lookout for changelings, shrouded Jem'Hadar, anything that might be suspicious.

HAVA

What about the Ohalavaru?

RO

Most of them have left the station already. Even so, they were making an isolated political statement, and Vedek Solis assures me they have no intention of interrupting the proceedings today. But good question. Any other questions?

The various operatives all shake their heads or grunt "no."

RO
We'll go over it one more time.
Etana, why don't you take it?

To Etana's surprise, Ro steps aside for her deputy to run the meeting. She is trying to subtly prepare Etana to take over once she's gone. But Ro's combadge suddenly signals...

VOICE (comm)
Ensign Selzner to Lieutenant Ro.

RO
(taps to answer)
This is Ro. I'm in a meeting.

VOICE (comm)
Sorry, Lieutenant, but the colonel wanted me to tell you - the *Trager* has just returned without calling ahead. Vedek Yevir is aboard, and he and Gul Macet are awfully excited about something.

Ro's face drops in astonishment, and the buzz passes around the room. She looks up to the ceiling as if to say, "Why are you doing this to me?"

29 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

CROWDS of people of all races push forward on all sides and both levels to see what's going on, more energised with anticipation than ever. Among the signing-day decorations, priests and Militia hurriedly set up a small stage.

Ro strides forward with frustration, glaring angrily. Kira emerges on the upper level. Vedek Solis quietly stands next to her. She glances at him, not quite comfortable with him.

Opposite her on the upper level, Shakaar and Asarem push through. Shakaar looks with downright fury at the crowd.

Akaar is also there on the lower level, with Captain MELLO of the *Gryphon* (8x11 "Gateways"), Trill Ambassador GANDRES (8x16 "Baby Steps") and Andorian Councillor zh'THANE, all looking surprised and not happy to be so.

AKAAR spares an annoyed frown for Ro. Quark peers out of his bar, with Treir, Hetik and Morn. Basically, everyone.

A circular Promenade door cycles open and more security step out -- followed by Yevir, glowing with satisfaction. Gul Macet, Cleric Ekosha and other Orallians follow him (but no sign of Garak).

Vedek Bellis and others from the Assembly meeting rush up to Yevir to ask MOS what's going on, but he reassures them all and steps up the stage.

The crowd hushes, and he speaks out without a microphone...

YEVIR

Greetings to all assembled here on this historic day. Over the past month, First Minister Shakaar and Second Minister Asarem have worked with Cardassian Ambassador Natima Lang to foster peace between our two worlds. Unfortunately, those plans have failed. Bajor's joyous Federation Day might also have sounded the death knell for an honest peace. But I know that the people of Bajor and Cardassia will not let that happen.

He reaches into his robes and brings out the JEVONITE FIGURINE, holding it up for the crowd to see...

YEVIR (cont)

Kasidy Yates, wife of the Emissary, recently gave me this statue, taken from the ruins of the holy city of B'Hala. The figure's face is carved to reveal Bajoran and Cardassian features. It is many thousands of years old, yet it is composed of jevonite, a mineral previously found nowhere else except Cardassia.

He pauses, giving the crowd a moment to absorb the implications of this...

YEVIR (cont)

How can this be possible? Ages before Bajor and Cardassia were known to have crossed paths, a statue depicting a union between our two peoples was brought from there to here. I can come to only one conclusion. Clearly, these things all show the guiding hand of the Prophets.

Various reaction shots from around the crowd...

YEVIR (cont)

Some say that politics is the art of the possible. But to bring into being that which has been called impossible requires faith. To ensure the future of both our worlds, I have joined my voice to those of a small but influential group of Bajoran Vedeks and Cardassian Clerics.

He gestures to Ekosha and the other Cardassians with her...

YEVIR (cont)

Cleric Ekosha leads the Oralian Way, the greatest denomination of the faithful on Cardassia. She has already provisionally agreed to an exchange of spiritual ambassadors, Bajorans and Cardassians who will go to their former enemy's homeworlds to help build a sincere, uncoerced and enduring peace.

Yevir turns to the other Oraliens, who bring forward four small anti-grav sleds carrying boxy objects, with cloths thrown over to hide them. They wait for Yevir's signal...

YEVIR

Like myself, Ekosha understood that building trust is paramount.
(more)

YEVIR (cont)

So together we combed Cardassia's ruins, hoping to recover at least one of Bajor's most significant spiritual artefacts, the Tears of the Prophets, taken from us during the Occupation. Imagine my surprise when our search yielded all four of the missing Orbs!

The Oraliens dramatically remove the cloths, revealing four ORB BOXES. Reaction throughout the crowd is immediate.

Some of the older Vedeks faint away. People burst into tears, cheer loud, or get on their knees to pray, or just stand amazed. Shakaar especially is completely bog-woggled.

YEVIR (cont)

Because peace is too important to be thwarted by failures of leadership, the people of two worlds have taken direct action of their own. This is no mere stunt or gesture. This is real. Children of the Prophets, on this Federation Day, Cardassia returns to you -

He gestures to each Orb, naming them in turn...

YEVIR (cont)

- the Orb of Truth, the Orb of Destiny, the Orb of Souls, and the Orb of Unity. It is my fervent hope that we will keep these four precepts in our minds as we face Bajor's new future. As long as our faith remains strong, there is no goal we cannot achieve.

Yevir turns to Ekosha, and the two of them embrace on the small stage...

...and the crowd reacts. Upstairs, Kira is trembling with emotion. It's everything she wanted - peace with Cardassia, the return of the Orbs - but that it was Yevir who achieved it, and that she can't be involved, makes it bittersweet.

For the moment, the sheer power of the moment overwhelms Kira and she turns to the equally shaken Solis beside her.

He pulls her into an embrace, and she weeps against his shoulder. He covers her with his robes, trying to give her what little privacy he can as the crowd celebrates....

CUT TO:

30 INT. DS9 - SHAKAAR'S QUARTERS

A glass SLAMS hard against the wall, SHATTERS and spills liquor all over. It was thrown by Shakaar, who paces the room alone, in a seething fury.

He goes to a drawer in his desk and takes out the small silver box we saw in 8x18 "This Grey Spirit." He caresses it tensely, but then the door CHIME signals.

He checks the image on his SCREEN, which shows Minister Asarem waiting outside in the corridor. Quickly placing the box back in the drawer, he turns to the door...

SHAKAAR

Come in.

The door opens and Asarem enters, worried...

ASAREM

Edon, I don't mean to intrude, but we really should confer about how these latest developments might affect today's signing ceremony.

(notices his state)

Are you alright?

SHAKAAR

Why wouldn't I be alright? Just because of one of our religious leaders has made a fool of me by doing the very thing we would not?

He realises how he must look to her, and makes an effort to calm himself for appearance's sake...

SHAKAAR

Of course I'm ecstatic to have the Orbs returned. And perhaps we can turn this to our advantage. We can prove to the Federation just how well Bajor's religious and secular authorities can work together. Even despite decades of Cardassian oppression.

Shakaar's anger and bitterness is coming through loud and clear, and it only worries Asarem all the more...

ASAREM

I agree. I should also inform you that I received a communiqué from Ambassador Lang. She is eager to resume the talks.

SHAKAAR

(derisive snort)

I expected as much. We have other things to prepare for right now. Our biggest responsibility to the people of Bajor is in the signing ceremony this afternoon.

(sneer)

There will be plenty of time to deal with the Cardassians later.

Not reassured in the slightest, Asarem nods and leaves the room. As she goes, the frustration, confusion and fear are clear on her face.

Something is very, very wrong with Shakaar...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

31 INT. DS9 - WARDROOM

Small, floating automatic camera DRONES buzz unobtrusively around the room, broadcasting this major event.

Bajoran tapestries and pieces of Ziyal's ARTWORK, Bajoran ICONS and Federation FLAGS decorate the walls. A MUSICAL TRIO plays pleasant classical music to accompany the mood.

The many notables and their security are all dressed up in their finest. A male dignitary is completely smitten with his date, the elegantly dressed Treir; a female dignitary likewise with Hetik.

Taran'atar keeps a low profile in the corner, observing as ever; Shul keeps a wary eye on him just in case.

Kira and Ro stand together at the rear of the room, in their full Militia dress uniforms...

RO

Everything's going smoothly.

KIRA

So far. Let's hope we've seen the last of today's surprises.

RO

Captain Yates couldn't come?

KIRA

She wanted to, but it's getting tough to travel now. She's getting closer to term all the time. Plus, I think it would be difficult to be here... without Benjamin.

(wistful moment)

I wish the *Defiant* crew could be here. Especially Dax and Bashir. They were with us from the start. Doesn't feel right without them.

Kira heads forward to chat with Councillor zh'Thane. Ro spots General Lenaris and Mika together, and approaches...

RO

General, Mika. Are you enjoying the event so far?

LENARIS

A little too much pomp for an old warhorse like me, but I suppose I can stand it for one day.

MIKA

I'm grateful to you and your staff for releasing us in time to attend the festivities.

RO

I'm sure the decision won't sit well with certain vedeks. Perhaps you should avoid the more unhappy-looking ones. I trust there won't be any interruptions of today's ceremonies, as we discussed?

MIKA

Certainly not. Today is not a day to air religious differences or questions of faith.

RO

Glad to hear it. Excuse me.

She has spotted Hiziki Gard, looking very dapper in his fancy swashbuckling outfit, with sash and epaulettes and big flouncy sleeves. He grins wide as Ro approaches...

RO

You look... quite dashing.

GARD

Thank you, Ro.

(exaggerated bow)

And you look as beautiful as a woman could in a Bajoran Militia dress uniform.

RO
Thanks. I think.

Across the room, Ro spots Quark watching the pair with a sour look. Excusing herself from Gard, Ro heads over...

RO
Hello, Quark.

QUARK
Him again?

RO
We're both working here, Quark.

QUARK
So am I. What's that got to do with anything? I just don't like him, that's all.

RO
Okay, so he's flirting with me. Are you going to react this way to anyone who pays the least bit of attention to me?

QUARK
No... it's not that. There's something... he makes me nervous.

RO
I'll keep an eye on him. The same way I'm keeping an eye on everyone here. Including you. Now, let me do my job while I still can, and I'll let you get that wine delivered to wherever it's going.

Councillor zh'Thane leaves Kira, takes her place behind a small table at the head of the room, standing with Admiral Akaar and Ministers Shakaar and Asarem.

In response, the room comes to attention.

Akaar dramatically unfurls a roll of long, ceremonial paper, printed with the Federation seal...

AKAAR

On this truly auspicious day, the
United Federation of Planets
welcomes the world of Bajor as its
newest member!

Kira smiles - it's finally happening, after all this time.
She still can't quite look Shakaar directly in the eye
though, nor Vedek Yevir.

Elsewhere in the room, Gul Macet and Cleric Ekosha watch
with rapt attention...

Kira looks back over to Ro, who smiles encouragingly, and
gestures that Kira should be concentrating up front...

SLOW MOTION, ON SHAKAAR

As the First Minister raises his hands and firmly presses
his thumbs to an ink-pad on the table, beside the document.
Smiles all round as Akaar smoothes out the paper for him...

ON KIRA

...as she notices a little movement out of the corner of
her eye. She turns to see...

HIZIKI GARD

...shaking his arm as if to get the blood flowing. A small
object tumbles out of his sleeve and into his hand.

It's the SECRET TRILL WEAPON, the one General Cyl used
against Verad in 8x10 "Divided We Fall." He raises the arm
up straight and FIRES the silver projectile directly at...

SHAKAAR

...who is raising his thumbs, ready to press them onto the
document, totally unaware...

THE PROJECTILE

...flies through the air, right past Kira as her eyes go
wide. The small, serrated blades on its sides pop out...

KIRA

...starts to shout a warning to...

SHAKAAR

...who is smiling, lowering his thumbs to the paper just as the weapon HITS him, right in the throat. We snap back to

NORMAL SPEED

...as the weapon TEARS into Shakaar's throat, releases its PHASER charge, obliterates the lower half of the minister's head. He JERKS, eyes wide with simple surprise...

BLOOD flies into Asarem's face - she SHRIEKS.

Security pull their weapons - Shul LEAPS over the table, pulls Asarem to the deck, throws himself over her.

Akaar reaches into his uniform, pulls out a ceremonial BLADE. Kira starts towards Gard, determined to catch him.

But the Trill throws an apologetic look towards Ro, then disappears in a spontaneous TRANSPORTER BEAM.

Ro slaps her combadge, urgently yells for a full station lockdown. Kira turns and heads back to the top table, reaching for Shakaar...

But the First Minister has collapsed over the table, blood flowing over the Federation document and staining it red.

Shakaar is well and truly dead...

BLACK OUT:

THE END