

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

12x03 - "I Can Live With It."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

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

TNG 17x03 - "RESISTANCE"

The *Enterprise* is repaired, recrewed and ready to launch. New security chief Lionardo Battaglia, new counsellor T'Lana of Vulcan, new ops manager Miranda Kadhata. First officer is of course Worf... except that he refuses the position. They have a nice gentle diplomatic mission to get acquainted, but then Picard hears the voice of the Borg. Admiral Janeway insists that the Borg are crippled, but Picard knows she is wrong. He follows his senses to Sector 10 and finds a dormant Borg cube, cut off from the rest of the collective. Picard sends an away team to destroy the ship, but finds that the surviving Borg drones now kill first and assimilate later. Picard realises why the change in behaviour - they are working on creating their own Queen and will kill to protect her. Picard decides that the only way to get close enough to the Queen to destroy her is to go in disguise - as Locutus.

TTN 1x03 - "DEAD MAN'S SHOES"

After Spock's 'kidnapping', Colonel Xiomek launches a full Reman uprising. With Donatra's fleet missing, and the Klingons taking the Remans' side, it's a tinderbox... which then explodes. The battle kills *Titan's* chief engineer, so Dr Ra-Havreii takes over the position. Keru is left in a coma, so Tuvok takes his place at tactical. Riker manages to get Xiomek to stand down, but Tal'Aura and Tomalak want to retaliate. Riker gets them all on the screen together and announces the deal he just made - Remus is now a Klingon protectorate, until such time as they can find their own homeworld. With their enemies so close, the Romulans will have to work together. The immediate crisis managed, Spock returns to Earth aboard one of the other Starfleet ships, while *Titan* joins Donatra to search for her missing fleet. Instead they fall through the same hole in space that the fleet did...

VOY 10x03 - "THE NEXT GENERATION"

Paris takes leave from *Voyager* and returns to Earth, where B'Elanna and their daughter Miral have been hiding out. There is tension, as Paris has told everyone that he and B'Elanna broke up. But it is all part of a long plan to hide Miral from

the Klingon cults who want to either kill or worship the girl ([VOY 7x14 "Prophecy"](#)). Meanwhile Janeway attends meetings with the other admirals. Seven is teaching at the Academy with O'Brien, and when Janeway hears about the dead Borg cube, she sends Seven to help Picard. But Picard has gone before Seven gets there, leaving Janeway steaming. The Doctor is at Jupiter Station working on holographic advances with Barclay and Zimmerman. B'Elanna is singlehandedly building a small slipstream vessel that can get them all away, and no-one else knows - not Janeway, not Chakotay, not Kim. Paris wants to protect his family, so he goes back to work, pretending he *has* no family.

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. / INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - DAY

REBECCA SISKO (3 years old) runs around the garden on a warm and sunny day, laughing with delight as JASMINE TEY (human woman, Malaysian, early 30s) playfully chases after her. They are both having a great time.

JASMINE

I'm gonna get yooooouuuuu!

REBECCA

Nooooooooo!

PULL BACK

...until we see BEN SISKO, sat on the wooden steps of the veranda with a mug of coffee in his hands, watching his baby daughter and the young woman play in the garden.

Far from enjoying the view, Sisko is haunted, staring after his daughter, never taking his eyes off her for a second.

REBECCA

hides behind the big tree in the middle of the Sisko homestead's large back garden. Jasmine pretends not to be able to find her, making a big meal of wondering where the little girl has gone.

SISKO

tries to control his horror at seeing this - at the idea of somebody not being able to find his daughter.

After a few moments, a giggling Rebecca jumps out from behind the tree in a big display. Jasmine playfully feigns surprise, and then they run off across the grass again.

Sisko lets himself breathe a little easier at the simple security of being able to see his daughter.

PULL BACK

...through the glass rear door of the Sisko house, until we find KASIDY stood at the door and watching her husband through the glass.

She can see how troubled he is, and is torn between wanting to dig out the root of it and giving him his privacy. Eventually making her decision, she grabs her own mug of coffee off the counter, opens the door and steps out.

Quietly approaching, she lowers herself and sits down next to Ben, joining him in watching Rebecca and Jasmine play.

KASIDY

If we weren't all human, I'd thank the Prophets for sending Jasmine to us. Rebecca's completely smitten with her.

This was the wrong thing to say to Sisko, but he absorbs it with no more than a tensed jaw. Kasidy knows her husband well enough to see the reaction, and is concerned by it.

SISKO

Do you see it?

KASIDY

See what?

SISKO

Rebecca. There's something... fake about it. The laughing, the smiles... she's covering.

KASIDY

Ben, she's three. I don't think she has the psychological sophistication to cover anything just yet.

SISKO

You think childhood experiences don't have a lasting effect?

KASIDY

Of course they do, but -

SISKO

(quiet)

So what effect do you think being kidnapped by a madman, dragged halfway across the planet, flown around the system in an alien spaceship shooting at people and being shot at, until she finally gets throttled by someone whose hands can turn to fire will have on our daughter, hmm?

KASIDY

Ben -

Out on the grass, Rebecca TRIPS and falls to the ground. Ben immediately FLINCHES again, and Kasidy feels it.

Rebecca gets up and keeps running without a second thought, but Jasmine stops and looks back towards Ben and Kasidy, as if checking that it's okay to continue. Kasidy nods her permission, and Jasmine turns back to play-chasing Rebecca.

Kasidy saw Sisko's flinch. He knows she saw. She knows he knows. Thinking it might be better not to keep pushing it, Kasidy instead takes Sisko's coffee mug off him.

KASIDY

You want another?

He shakes his head no. She gets to her feet, places a kiss on his head, and turns back to re-enter the house. Sisko has never taken his eyes off Rebecca.

2 INT. SISCO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Kasidy enters the house, closing the back door behind her. Placing the two coffee mugs back on the kitchen counter as she goes, she passes through into the main body of the house, turns and enters a room to her left.

3 INT. SISCO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

This room serves as both Rebecca's bedroom now that she is a bit older, and an office for Kasidy's shipping business, with a computer terminal set on a desk before the window.

Kasidy sits at the desk, glances out of the window to see that Rebecca and Jasmine are still playing, and then thumbs on the computer.

KASIDY

Computer, contact Janir Monastery.
I want to speak to Kira Nerys.

The computer BEEPS affirmatively, then Kasidy sits back to wait for a moment, looking out the window while she waits.

Outside, Rebecca runs close to the house, passing right by the window where Kasidy sits. Without looking, she waves hello to Kasidy through the window...

REBECCA

Hi, mommy!

...then keeps on running. Kasidy blinks, a bit confused. How did Rebecca know she was there? She hadn't even looked in through the window to see her.

Before she can wonder any more about that, the computer BEEPS again, and the screen changes to show KIRA, against the stone backdrop of the monastery walls, wearing the typical Bajoran religious robes.

KIRA (screen)

Kas! Is everything okay?

KASIDY

Hi, Nerys. I hope I didn't interrupt anything important?

KIRA (screen)

Oh no, just more studying. It's no problem. So what's going on?

Kasidy looks out of the window again, seeing Rebecca continuing to run around perfectly care-free.

KASIDY

Nerys... I think we have a
problem. And I'm going to need
your help.

The worry on Kasidy's face is clear. Kira can see it, and
as the concern spreads to her own expression...

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN

4 EST. DEEP SPACE NINE

The usual establishing shot of the station...

5 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

The door opens, and JULIAN BASHIR and PHILIPPA MATTHIAS (DS9's counsellor) both enter together. Commander RO LAREN awaits them, beckoning them inside warmly.

RO

Doctor, Counsellor - thanks for coming. Come on in.

They do - and see that Major CENN DESCA and Kira are already there, waiting in the lounge area.

BASHIR

Nerys! I didn't realise you were here.

KIRA

Hi, Julian. I just came in on the last shuttle.

CENN

The prylar has a request to make.

MATTHIAS

"Prylar"? Congratulations.

KIRA

Yep. I actually graduated from novice status. I couldn't quite believe it myself. I was sure I would have got myself attainted again by now.

RO

(chuckle)

Believe me, there are worse things. Take a seat, everyone.

Major Cenn purses unhappily, unseen by the others. They move to the seats - Cenn and Kira on one side, Bashir and Matthias on the other, Ro leaning against the desk.

RO

Go ahead.

KIRA

So there's actually two reasons I came. Pure coincidence that they happened at the same time -

BASHIR

But you may as well kill two birds with one stone.

CENN

(frown)

That's horrible.

MATTHIAS

(smile)

It's just a figure of speech, Major.

KIRA

Both things are kinda sensitive, so I want to ask for discretion. I can't order you -

RO

(pointed)

But I can.

BASHIR

Understood, Commander. Please, Nerys, whatever you need.

KIRA

Okay. Well, problem number one is that Vexh has woken up.

Cenn takes a deep breath, again a little uncomfortable. The others continue regardless, not noticing him.

MATTHIAS

Vexh? That's the other last Ascendant, right? The one you found in the Gamma Quadrant?

KIRA

Right. Ever since we brought him back to Bajor and told him that...

(beat)

...that he missed the Ascension, and that his entire race is dead except for him and Raiq, he's been in seclusion at Janir. Just praying, meditating, whatever. Barely eaten. Hasn't spoken to anyone, not even Raiq.

BASHIR

That's understandable, Nerys.

MATTHIAS

But now he's come out of that seclusion? And you want me to talk to him?

KIRA

Actually, no offence Counsellor, but I wanted Julian for that job. I don't want to overwhelm Vexh with too many new people, and he did already meet Julian.

BASHIR

It's probably best I give him a check-up, see how his body's adjusting to his new status quo. We saw how Raiq reacted, wouldn't want the same to happen to him.

KIRA

Exactly. Thanks, Julian.

MATTHIAS

Okay, so why do you need me?

KIRA

For problem number two. I had a call from Kasidy Yates. She said that Ben is worried about Rebecca, and a professional psychiatrist might be able to help.

MATTHIAS

I'm happy to do whatever I can. I have a couple of appointments today, but I can ask Knezo to cover for me.

RO

Okay then. The *Brahmaputra's* available. Major, you can drive.

CENN

(uncomfortable)

Aye, Commander.

RO

Is that a problem, Major?

CENN

No, no problem. I can have the *Brahmaputra* ready to leave within the hour.

Off Cenn, hiding his real emotions...

6 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

STOCK FOOTAGE of a runabout lifting off from the station.

7 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Kasidy opens the front door, and Kira, Cenn, Bashir and Matthias enter. As they file into the house, Sisko emerges from the kitchen, leading Rebecca by the hand. Rebecca smiles wide and runs to Kira, grabbing her in a big hug.

REBECCA

Aunt Nerys!

KIRA

Hi, Rebecca. How are you feeling?

REBECCA

I'm fine -
(quick check
with Kasidy)
- thank you for asking.

Kasidy smiles proudly. Kira lets go of Rebecca, so Kasidy introduces Matthias, who knows how to deal with children.

KASIDY

Rebecca, honey, this is Philippa.
She works up on the space station,
and she has two children just a
little older than you.

REBECCA

Hi.

MATTHIAS

Hi, Rebecca. I also used to work
for Aunt Nerys, and I still work
with Doctor Julian now.

REBECCA

Are you a doctor too? You're
wearing the same clothes.

Bashir shares an impressed glance with Kasidy - Rebecca is certainly observant for one so young.

MATTHIAS

I'm a different kind of doctor.
Julian is a doctor for diseases
and broken bones. I'm a doctor for
what's going on in your head - for
when you're upset or sad.

REBECCA

I'm not sad.

MATTHIAS

Well, I was hoping you and I could
talk for a while. Just to make
sure you're feeling okay about
everything that happened to you.

REBECCA

Sure, I guess.

(off Kasidy's look)

That would be fine, thank you.

KASIDY

Good girl.

(to Matthias)

Her bedroom's just through here.

MATTHIAS

Lead the way.

Kasidy takes Rebecca by the hand, and the three of them head off into Rebecca's bedroom.

With them gone, Sisko turns to Kira, Bashir and Cenn.

SISKO

Thanks, Nerys. I know she puts on a brave front, but...

KIRA

(light joke)

Rebecca? Or Kasidy?

(no reaction)

Honestly, I would have called Dax. But Ro says she's on a new ship now. And Kasidy said Jake and Rena are back on Earth, visiting your father?

SISKO

Yeah. I just... something's wrong. I can feel it.

BASHIR

After everything that happened, it would be a rare person indeed who didn't have some kind of trauma to work through.

KIRA

I'll tell you what I'm worried about - Vexh.

SISKO

The Ascendant? Why? Is he dangerous?

KIRA

I don't know. Raiq told me he was ready to come out of seclusion, but what will he be like when he does? You saw him in the Gamma Quadrant, Major - he was practically suicidal.

CENN

(quiet, haunted)

Well, that can happen when you lose your entire world.

KIRA

Yeah. But what if... I don't know, he's become more like Axno? What if he comes out determined to kill every Bajoran he can find? What if he blames me for what happened?

SISKO

Nerys... I know Raiq helped us save Rebecca. But I'm not ready for another fight with another grief-crazed Ascendant.

KIRA

It won't come to that, Benjamin. Trust me.

But none of the four of them seem very convinced...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

8 EXT. RUNABOUT

The runabout now flies through the atmosphere on a nice sunny day...

9 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Cenn is in the pilot seat, with Kira beside him. Bashir is in the back cabin. After a few moments of silence...

KIRA

So... how are you and Ro getting along these days?

CENN

(sigh)

You saw that, huh? I've been trying my best to hide it...

KIRA

(caught off guard)

Hide what?

CENN

Well, you heard her. "There are worse things than being attainted" - like she would know. I'm sure she says that stuff just to annoy me sometimes.

KIRA

Actually, I was just going to say you two seem to be getting along better than ever lately.

CENN

Really? I mean, we are. Just that... she's always going out of her way to point out how not religious she is.

KIRA

(puzzled)
Well, she's not.

CENN
I know, but does she need to make
such a big deal out of it?

KIRA
I didn't think she was. Not saying
Ro's not capable of the occasional
cutting remark. I've been on the
sharp end of a few myself.

CENN
So I should just bite my tongue?
Is that what you did with Sisko?

KIRA
Oh... Ben and I barely ever talked
about religion. At least not at
first.

CENN
But... he's the Emissary!

KIRA
And it took five years before
anyone could say that to his face
without him shrinking away and
changing the subject.

CENN
At least he was polite about it.

KIRA
Ro's... getting better.

CENN
You think she'll find the Prophets
eventually? Like Sisko did?

KIRA
That's not what I meant. She's not
looking for Them. And that's okay.

CENN

But you're a prylar. Don't you want her to find the Prophets?

KIRA

(smile)

Of course I think she'd be better off with the Prophets in her life. I wish everyone could have the faith we have, Bajoran or not. But for their sake, not for mine.

(shrug)

And if that's not the path they choose, it doesn't take anything away from me. Ro has to walk her own path.

CENN

Fine, she walks her own path. But does she have to spit on those of us who do follow the Prophets?

KIRA

(amused exasperation)

You have to look at it from her point of view, Major. She knows how people look at her - like there's something that needs to be fixed. You just did it yourself. Can you really blame her for reacting badly?

(Cenn doesn't respond)

She's not trying to insult you. She's just describing the world as she sees it. Don't take it so personally. Who knows - give it time, you might even be friends.

Cenn accepts that calmly - it gives him food for thought. He is about to say something else, ask Kira a question.

But then the rear door opens and Bashir enters, causing Cenn to reconsider and clam up.

BASHIR

Right, I've checked through all my various devices and supplies - twice. Short of a full systems breakdown, I should be able to tackle anything Vexh throws at me.

KIRA
Thanks, Julian.

Bashir comes to stand between the chairs, gazing out of the window. Cenn doesn't look any less uncomfortable.

10 **EXT. BAJOR - JANIR MONASTERY**

The small monastery tucked away in a valley by the winding river. The runabout flies into the valley...

11 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY - CHAPEL ANTEROOM**

Kira, Cenn and Bashir enter from one direction - Vedek YEVIR is just entering from the other to greet them.

YEVIR
Prylar Kira - welcome home.

KIRA
Vedek Yevir - you know Doctor Bashir and Major Cenn.

YEVIR
Of course, of course. However, I'm afraid you may have all made a wasted journey - Raiq tells me Vexh is not ready to speak to others.

KIRA
Oh for... let me talk to them.
(to Bashir and Cenn)
You may as well settle in, this could take a while.

Kira heads off with Yevir, leaving Bashir and Cenn to hover uselessly, basically abandoned. They look to each other with a shrug of "Okaaay..."

12 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY - VEXH'S ROOM**

One of the small stone-walled chambers that the acolytes live in. The wooden door opens and Kira enters - to find herself confronted with RAIQ.

The tall, silver-skinned Ascendant woman stands blocking Kira's way, hands at the ready but not yet aflame. But when she sees it's only Kira, she relaxes and lowers her hands.

RAIQ

Kira. It is good that you have returned.

KIRA

(smile)

You missed me?

RAIQ

Your presence is... familiar.

She steps aside, and Kira can now see VEXH, the other last Ascendant, sat on the simple single cot, staring out of the window to the valley beyond. He seems far away.

RAIQ

Vexh - Kira is with us.

Vexh doesn't respond, so Kira slowly rounds the bed and approaches him, crouching down gently by his side.

KIRA

Hello, Vexh. It's good to see you out of bed. Would you like to come and join us in the commissary, maybe get some food?

VEXH

I seek no sustenance.

KIRA

I understand. But I've brought someone to see you - someone you've met before.

VEXH

I seek no company.

KIRA
He's a healer - Bashir, the man
who helped you when we first
brought you to the space station.

VEXH
I seek no healing.

Sighing, Kira shares a glance with Raiq, then tries again.

KIRA
We don't always get what we seek,
Vexh. And we don't always seek
what we get. Sometimes we just
have to take it, and move on.
(beat)
I'll be back soon, and I'll bring
Bashir with me.

She stands and heads for the door, exchanging a comforting
arm grab with Raiq on the way.

13 EST. SSKO'S HOUSE

Establishing shot of the country house on a pleasant day.

14 INT. SSKO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Rebecca sits on the bed, propped up against cushions and
playing with her toys. Matthias sits opposite her, also on
the bed, cross-legged and also playing with Rebecca's toys.

Sisko stands in the doorway, hovering on Matthias' shoulder
in sense if not action. She is very aware of his presence.

MATTHIAS
Which one is your favourite?

REBECCA
(holds up a
small spaceship)
This one.

MATTHIAS
You like spaceships?

REBECCA

My mommy and daddy used to fly in them. Now they stay here and look after me.

MATTHIAS

You've been in space too. Do you remember?

REBECCA

I went to the space station where mummy and daddy used to live.

SISKO

(mutter)

Thanks to the Prophets sucking her into a damn Orb.

Matthias does not like Sisko interrupting her counselling session. But she keeps calm, for now.

MATTHIAS

(to Sisko)

That's not the time I mean.

(back to Rebecca)

There was another time you went into space. Do you remember?

REBECCA

Yes.

MATTHIAS

Do you ever think about that?

SISKO

(quiet, background)

She was almost killed, of course she does.

MATTHIAS

(deep breath)

Rebecca? Do you think about that time you got taken into space?

REBECCA

Sometimes. I don't like to think about it too much.

MATTHIAS
Why's that?

SISKO
(louder now)
It's obvious why, isn't it?

Matthias controls her reaction, but that is enough.

MATTHIAS
Rebecca, I'll be back in a moment, okay? I just want to talk to your daddy.

REBECCA
(shrug)
Okay.

Matthias gets up, heads to the door, and gently leads Sisko away, quietly closing the door behind them.

15 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

With the door closed, Matthias prepares to discipline her superior officer - gently.

MATTHIAS
Captain, I realise you're worried for your daughter. But I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

SISKO
I beg your pardon?

MATTHIAS
Any counselling session should be private and confidential. It's inappropriate for anyone else but the patient and the therapist to be in the room.

SISKO
She's my daughter!

MATTHIAS

And she's safe with me. Patients open up more to someone they don't know than someone they do, because they have no fear of being judged. I need Rebecca to be honest with me, and you answering questions for her and putting words in her mouth is not helping. I know you mean well. But frankly, I think your presence right now is only making matters worse, not better.

Sisko is struck silent with the horror of that thought. In an instant, this just became so much larger than it was. Sisko is no longer even listening as Matthias continues...

MATTHIAS

You just relax - out here - and I promise Rebecca is in safe hands.

Sisko has no response. He is thinking too hard. Matthias takes silence as consent, and quietly turns to re-enter Rebecca's bedroom, closing the door behind her again.

Left alone, Sisko stands staring into the middle distance for a moment, pondering the horror of what he has realised.

Then he walks to the front door, opens it and leaves the house, closing the door behind him.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

16 INT. SSKO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Rebecca remains on the bed, playing with her toys. But she is a bit downcast. She is worried she did something wrong, but she doesn't know what it is. Matthias sits on the bed, cross-legged again, talking gently and calmly.

MATTHIAS

You said earlier that you weren't sad. Were you being honest then?

REBECCA

Yes. I'm not sad.

MATTHIAS

Okay, that's good. I don't want you to be sad. But I do want you to know that if you are sad, it's okay to say so.

REBECCA

Okay.

MATTHIAS

You said you sometimes think about the time you went out into space. When you think about that, does it make you feel sad then?

REBECCA

Not really. I don't think about it very often.

MATTHIAS

Okay. What do you feel when you think about that?

REBECCA

Scared. I didn't like that man. He was mean to me. Daddy said they were friends, but I don't think he was very nice.

MATTHIAS

You're right, he wasn't very nice.
And your daddy isn't friends with
him anymore.

REBECCA

Is that why he's sad?

MATTHIAS

What do you mean, Rebecca?

REBECCA

Daddy's sad all the time now. Is
it because he's not friends with
that man anymore?

Again, Rebecca has struck the grown-up with her unexpected perceptiveness. Matthias has to think about that.

MATTHIAS

That is a very good question,
Rebecca. And I don't know the
answer. But maybe when I talk to
your daddy next time, I'll try and
find out for you. Okay?

REBECCA

Okay. Thank you.

Rebecca carries on playing with her toys. But she has given Matthias food for thought...

17 INT. SSKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Kasidy is at the door again, welcoming Jasmine Tey back to the house.

KASIDY

Hi Jasmine, come on through. I'll
get the kettle boiling.

JASMINE

Thanks, Kas. I could do with a
good cup of tea.

KASIDY

Well then, you're in luck. I just got a fresh delivery from Cestus two days ago.

Kasidy leads Jasmine back towards the kitchen, calling out loud as she goes:

KASIDY

Ben? Jasmine's here.

(no response)

Ben?

Still no response - that's odd. Abandoning Jasmine for a moment, she goes to the bedroom door and knocks quietly.

KASIDY

Ben? Are you in there?

Still no response, so Kasidy quietly opens the door and pops her head in. Rebecca and Matthias are as previous.

KASIDY

Hi - sorry to interrupt. I was looking for Ben, is he not in here with you?

MATTHIAS

He was, but I asked him to let me talk to Rebecca alone. He's not out there with you?

KASIDY

Not that I can see. I was going to ask if he wanted a cup of tea.

MATTHIAS

Maybe he went outside.

KASIDY

I guess. Everything okay in here?

Matthias looks to Rebecca, allowing her to answer.

REBECCA

We're fine, mommy. Love you.

KASIDY
Love you too, honey.

Kasidy pulls back, closing the door again. She goes to the back door, opens it, calls out across the back garden.

KASIDY
Ben? You out here?

No response again. She closes the door, turns to Jasmine.

JASMINE
You okay?

KASIDY
Just wondering where the hell my husband has disappeared to.

As Kasidy worries what's going on...

18 EXT. BAJOR - JANIR MONASTERY

Returning us to the small monastery in the valley...

19 INT. JANIR MONASTERY - VEXH'S ROOM

Vexh sits upright on the bed, as Bashir walks around him slowly, scanning thoroughly with a medical tricorder. Kira, Raiq and Cenn are also in the room, staying out of the way.

BASHIR
Everything looks good so far.

VEXH
Ascendants are the chosen of the True. We do not suffer sickness like the heathen.

BASHIR
Well, physically at least, that seems to be indeed be the case. But I'd like to take a blood sample, just to be sure.

RAIQ

Take from the throat, healer. That
is where the armour is weakest.

(off Vexh's look)

These people will not harm you,
Vexh. Kira vouches for them.

As Kira smiles quietly at Raiq's show of faith in her, Vexh
grudgingly nods permission to Bashir to continue.

Bashir quickly prepares a hypo, while Vexh turns to bare
his throat. Bashir draws the sample. Vexh eyes Cenn warily.

VEXH

I have seen you.

CENN

Yes. I was with Kira and Raiq when
we found you at the Hearth.

Vexh nods once. Bashir has finished, so he packs his stuff
away while Vexh turns back to stare out of the window.

BASHIR

Right. I'll get all this data back
to the runabout, where I can do a
full analysis, and I'll have the
results in just a few minutes.

Bashir hefts his medical bag on his shoulder and heads out
of the room. Kira and Raiq follow him out.

As often seems to happen, everyone has just forgotten about
Cenn, so they don't notice that he has stayed. He closes
the door behind them, leaving him alone with Vexh.

Cenn considers for a moment. He is about to make a big move
here, and he needs to steel his courage first. He takes a
small step towards Vexh, trying not to startle him.

CENN

I'm glad you remember me, Vexh.

Vexh turns to look at him - worried? Intrigued? Angry?

Kira, Bashir and Raiq enter from the bedroom area of the monastery. As they join Yevir, who has been waiting for them, Bashir separates and heads on towards the exit.

YEVIR

How is the poor man?

RAIQ

He is in perfect health.

KIRA

Physically, at least. Mentally...
I guess time will tell.

Suddenly Raiq reacts, instantly in defensive mode. Kira reacts in shock, but turns to see what Raiq has seen...

And there stands SISKO, having entered the anteroom. He is rooted to the spot, staring in sudden terror at Raiq's threatening posture, her hands out ready to throw flames.

As Sisko looks at those hands...

21 FLASHBACK - DS9 11x22 "PENITENCE"

Raiq's hand curls around Rebecca's throat, glowing hot enough to burn the little girl's skin, in the Endalla cave.

22 BACK TO SCENE

Sisko has to control his fight-or-flight. Kira steps in to gently defuse the unexpected tense situation...

KIRA

Raiq... it's okay. You can put
your hands down. It's just
Benjamin.

Raiq grudgingly lowers her hands.

RAIQ

Sisko. The... Emissary.

Sisko tenses all over again at that name.

KIRA

Vedek, would you mind taking Raiq out into the gardens?

YEVIR

Certainly. Come along, Raiq.

(small bow)

Emissary.

SISKO

Vedek.

Raiq allows Yevir to lead her away in a third direction. Meanwhile Kira turns to Sisko.

KIRA

Benjamin, what's wrong? Is it Rebecca?

SISKO

Oh no, she's fine. I need someone to talk to, Nerys. And Kasidy was right to call you - after Dax, you know me better than anyone.

(beat)

I think I need your help.

Seeing that he is genuinely in a bad place, Kira gently leads him over to the large stone archway that offers a view out across the valley. Kira sits them both down.

KIRA

Tell me.

SISKO

I'm scared, Nerys. I'm so scared for her.

KIRA

Rebecca?

SISKO

(nods)

Every little thing. She's out of my sight for a split second and I panic. She trips and skins her knee on the ground, same as any

other child, and I want to kill someone.

KIRA
She's your daughter.

SISKO
That's one thing I do know, Nerys.

KIRA
My point is, that's all this is. You are a parent. All parents feel this way about their children.

SISKO
No, it's more than that.

KIRA
Maybe. But it fits with your history. Jake lost his mother at a young age. He was at risk during the war. Now bad things have happened to your second child as well. I think this reaction is completely normal. Plus, you're the Emissary. The Prophets will protect you - and her.

Sisko tenses. Kira sees it. Sisko tamps it down again, turns to look out of the window rather than argue. Kira sees the reaction, knows what he's struggling with.

KIRA
Say it.
(no response)
It's okay. You won't offend me.

Sisko is not sure that's true, but it's an opening.

SISKO
I can't forgive them, Nerys.

KIRA
The Prophets?

SISKO

Any of them! Luka, Raiq... and yes, the Prophets. They brought the Ascendants to Bajor. They killed Prylar Eivos. They led me to B'Hala and Luka.

(furious hiss)

They put Rebecca in danger. And they could do it again whenever they want.

KIRA

A wise man once said to me, it's not the Prophets you need to make peace with. It's yourself.

SISKO

(suddenly angry)

So what are you saying? It's my fault?

KIRA

(caught off guard)

What? No, of course not. I just mean -

A SCREAM interrupts them - loud and angry and full of anguish and pain. It is accompanied by the CRASH of broken furniture and the SMASH of thrown pottery or glass.

Kira and Sisko stand immediately in shock - the sounds came from the bedroom area. Kira realises...

KIRA

Vexh.

She runs, with Sisko on her heels...

23 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY - VEXH'S ROOM**

Vexh stands, SCREAMING repeatedly to the heavens and FIRE blasting from his hands, scouring the stone walls.

Cenn COWERS back against the wall, surrounded by smashed furniture, blocked from the door by Vexh's fury and fire.

The door BURSTS open. Kira and Sisko are there, flinching back from the flames.

KIRA

Vexh! Stop! What are you doing?

The Ascendant just continues to ROAR in rage and anguish.

Cenn tries to inch towards the now open door, hoping to slip past Vexh - who is too busy screaming and shooting fireballs to notice him.

But no such luck - Vexh GRABS Cenn and pulls him close, pinning his arms and wrapping a hand around the Bajoran's throat. The Ascendant sneers at Kira and Sisko...

VEXH

I will kill him. I will kill you all. You will all die and burn.

Vexh's hand begins to GLOW, hot enough to burn the skin of Cenn's throat around which it is wrapped.

As Cenn stands immobilised and terrified, and Kira wonders what she can do... Sisko just looks at that hand again.

24 FLASHBACK - DS9 11x22 "PENITENCE"

Raiq's hand curls around Rebecca's throat...

25 BACK TO SCENE

Off Sisko's panic...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

26 INT. JANIR MONASTERY - VEXH'S ROOM

Picking up where we left it - with Vexh's burning hand around Cenn's throat, Kira unsure what to do about it, and Sisko paralysed with panic.

KIRA

Vexh... let him go. It's not his fault.

VEXH

Yes, it is. His, and yours. The Fire's. And the True's. They have all turned against us.

That catches Kira off guard again. She looks back and forth between Vexh and Sisko. Then Raiq and Yevir appear at the door, joining Kira and Sisko.

YEVIR

We heard - ...oh, dear.

RAIQ

Vexh! Explain yourself!

VEXH

These Bajorans, my sister... they are not to be trusted!

CENN

(choked)

You're right. It's my fault.

KIRA

What? Major -

CENN

I beg forgiveness. Please! I beg forgiveness!

RAIQ

We grant it. Do we not, Vexh?

She is trying to force Vexh to her will. Frustrated, the other Ascendant ROARS one last time and SHOVES Cenn away from himself. Kira catches him.

VEXH

Confess your sins, Bajoran! If
your gods will hear you.

Raiq glares at Vexh, unhappy with him for having threatened the Bajorans. Without looking at her, Raiq orders Kira...

RAIQ

Leave us.

Kira nods, and leads Cenn away. Sisko and Yevir join them, closing the door behind them to leave Raiq and Vexh alone.

27 INT. JANIR MONASTERY - CHAPEL ANTEROOM

Kira, Cenn, Sisko and Yevir enter from the bedroom area of the monastery. Bashir re-enters from the main exit...

BASHIR

What happened? I heard shouting...

KIRA

We're okay, Doctor. It's over now.
But I think Major Cenn could use a
dermal regenerator.

BASHIR

...Okay. I've got one in the
runabout. Come on.

Bashir turns back towards the exit again, none the wiser. Downcast and quiet, Cenn follows him out, cradling his throat gingerly. Kira turns to Sisko and Yevir.

KIRA

Well... nothing like a bit of
excitement.

SISKO

He blames the Prophets. For
everything that happened.

YEVIR

He has suffered greatly. It is common to cast blame upon ones gods when carrying such pain.

Sisko shares a look with Kira - Yevir doesn't know what they have been talking about.

28 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Cenn sits in one of the side seats as Bashir runs a DERMAL REGENERATOR over his neck, healing the burned skin. The runabout is parked on the ground, with the countryside of the Janir valley visible through the windows.

BASHIR

So what was that all about?

CENN

(quiet)

Nothing.

BASHIR

Something must have set Vexh off.

KIRA (o.s.)

Doctor...

They both turn to see Kira standing in the hatchway.

KIRA

How is he?

BASHIR

Physically, he's fine.

Kira nods. Just like Vexh. A lot of it going about. She approaches and reaches her hand out for the regenerator.

KIRA

Let me.

Bashir gets the subtext - leave me alone to talk to him. He hands over the regenerator.

BASHIR

I'll be in the back if you need anything.

Kira smiles in gratitude. Bashir EXITS to the rear cabin. Kira sits beside Cenn, begins to slowly and gently run the device over his neck. Cenn still hasn't really looked up.

KIRA

You know, Major... prylars have pretty much the same rules as Starfleet counsellors. Anything you tell me... anything you confess... stays just between us. I promise.

Cenn hears her. But he can't quite look her in the eye.

CENN

It is my fault.

KIRA

What is? What did you say to him?

CENN

I said that it was my fault. I told General Lenaris that we were going into the Gamma Quadrant to find another Ascendant.

KIRA

Okay...

CENN

And he ordered me to make sure that even if the Ascendant came back to Bajor... his ship didn't.

KIRA

(figures it out)
Vexh's ship. You sabotaged it?

The fiery meridian of the [Black World](#) swallows up Vexh's ship, forcing it to overload and explode. Vexh himself jolts in agony at the destruction of his lifelong home...

30 **BACK TO SCENE**

Cenn nods sadly. Kira keeps using the regenerator...

KIRA

You did it under orders. You're not to blame.

CENN

That's what I told myself. Vaughn had just left, Ro hadn't asked me to be her first officer yet... my loyalties had to be to Bajor. To General Lenaris. He didn't want another Ascendant ship on Bajor. And you can see why.

(beat)

But look what I did to him. To Vexh. I took away his home. His entire life. Everything he knew. How could I do that to someone else, after...

KIRA

So you told him what you did.

CENN

I wanted to confess my sins.

Kira has finished her work. She lowers the regenerator, and takes Cenn's hands in her own, forces him to look at her.

KIRA

You did right. The humans say confession is good for the soul.

CENN

But what if the Prophets can't forgive me?

Gently, so as not to startle him, Kira reaches out and grasps Cenn's earlobe. They stare into each other's eyes for a moment, and then Kira smiles and lets go.

KIRA

The Prophets have already forgiven you. They're just waiting for you to forgive yourself.

Cenn nods, not entirely sure he can do that, or if he even understands, but grateful for Kira's benediction.

CENN

Don't tell Ro, will you? She has enough reason to hate me.

KIRA

I promise, she won't hear it from me. But I have no control over what Vexh may or may not say.

Cenn nods, accepting that. What will happen, will happen.

31 INT. JANIR MONASTERY - CHAPEL ANTEROOM

Sisko stands looking out of the archway onto the valley.

JASMINE (o.s.)

Mister Sisko?

Sisko turns, and sees Jasmine has arrived, standing there in her Bajoran Militia uniform. He is alarmed.

SISKO

Sergeant Tey? What are you doing here? Is something wrong?

JASMINE

Yes, something's wrong. You left the house without telling anyone, not even your wife and child, where you were going.

Sisko absorbs the clearly annoyed sergeant's admonition.

SISKO

How did you find me?

JASMINE

I just asked myself who you would go to if you needed someone to talk to.

SISKO

Well... congratulations.

JASMINE

This may not be my place, Mister Sisko. But right now, I don't give a damn. I have better things to do than hunt for a grown man who ran off in a tantrum. I am here as a favour to Kasidy. She may be your wife, but she is my friend. I care a great deal about her, and your daughter. And you hurt them both.

Sisko turns back from the view to look at her, his face blank and empty, none of the anger one might expect.

SISKO

I know I did. And that's exactly the problem, Sergeant Tey.

Off Sisko...

32 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

The front door opens, and Sisko enters, Jasmine following him. Kasidy immediately launches upon him, hugging him. He gratefully receives it.

KASIDY

Ben! Where did you go? We were worried.

SISKO

I'm sorry. I just... I needed to talk to Kira.

KASIDY

What about?

Sisko pulls back from the hug, unwilling to reveal more. Still annoyed with him, Jasmine pushes.

JASMINE

Why don't you both get off your feet, and I'll make some tea. You two can talk.

Sisko and Kasidy both go to the couch and sit down. Jasmine heads towards the kitchen. Meanwhile the bedroom door opens, and Matthias exits, leaving the door open for now.

MATTHIAS

Ah, you're back. I thought I heard voices.

SISKO

Counsellor. How's Rebecca?

MATTHIAS

Perfectly fine, Captain.

KASIDY

Is she, really?

Matthias joins them, taking one of the single chairs.

MATTHIAS

In fact, yes. If you want my professional diagnosis, there's nothing wrong with your daughter. She's not happy with what happened to her, obviously. But she's put it behind her and doesn't seem overly traumatised about it.

(beat)

Honestly, she seems more worried about you, Captain.

SISKO

She's a very perceptive girl.

KASIDY

What do you mean, Ben?

Sisko turns to his wife, takes her hands.

SISKO
You knew all along, didn't you?

KASIDY
Knew what?

SISKO
That I was the one who needed
help, not Rebecca.
(beat)
The only one who's a danger to my
daughter... is me.

Off Sisko's miserable face...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN

33 INT. ENDALLA CAVERNS (11x22 "PENITENCE")

Sisko hesitates. He looks back and forth between Bashir and Kira and Vaughn, trying to get some sense of what he should do. Then he looks down at Rebecca, trembling in his arms.

RO (comm)
Captain... do we fire first?

SISKO
Yes. Kill him.

RO (comm)
...Understood, sir. *Defiant* out.

Everyone accepts the decision silently, if not happily. A few moments pass as Sisko continues to cradle Rebecca...

Raiq JERKS, gasping in pain as she feels the ship dying. Kira looks after her, Bashir runs to check on her.

Sisko watches, holding Rebecca, face like death...

34 INT. SISKO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Where we left it, with Sisko sat on the couch, Kasidy holding his hand, and Matthias in a chair to the side.

SISKO
And I knew it was over. When Raiq reacted like that, I knew that it meant... it meant Luka was dead.

MATTHIAS
(quiet, gentle)
I remember. I was on the *Defiant's* bridge when Commander Ro gave the order to fire.

SISKO

But she didn't. I did. Ro had a clear shot, but she didn't want the responsibility. She didn't want the blood on her hands. So I did it. I gave the order to fire on Luka.

(beat; verge
of tears)

And I killed my friend. I'm a cold-blooded murderer.

Off Kasidy and Matthias's reactions...

35 **INT. JANIR MONASTERY - CHAPEL ANTEROOM**

Kira is just entering from the main exit. Raiq is just entering from the direction of the bed chambers.

KIRA

(warm smile)

How is Vexh?

RAIQ

(furious hiss)

Is it true?

KIRA

Is what true?

RAIQ

Do not play games with me, woman!
Is your man responsible for the death of Vexh's vessel? For his now being trapped on your world and at your mercy as I was?

Kira takes a deep breath. There is no point lying now.

KIRA

Major Cenn told me he sabotaged the ship, yes.

RAIQ

He has taken action against the Ascendants. Will you punish him?

KIRA

I think he's punishing himself enough already. Besides, he had no choice. He was under orders from his superior officer.

RAIQ

You cite that sufficient reason?

KIRA

We all do some things because we believe the ones telling us to do them know better. It doesn't always turn out for the best. And then we have to live with that.

Raiq considers that possibility...

36 INT. JANIR MONASTERY - VEXH'S ROOM

Vexh stares out of the window at the valley beyond...

VEXH

I am damned.

Raiq stands behind him, watching him stare.

RAIQ

But if what the Bajoran told you is true...

VEXH

If what you have told me is true, then the Bajoran hobbled my vessel on the wishes of the Unnameable. And they did it to punish me.

RAIQ

I do not understand.

VEXH

I heard the call to gather at the Hearth. The Final Ascension was at hand. But I engaged the Jem'Hadar in battle. And I was damned.

RAIQ

The Jem'Hadar were heretics. They attempted to keep us from the Fortress. They deserved to die.

VEXH

But my actions kept me from the Fortress. Had I not fought them, had I not damaged my vessel, had I not delayed my arrival at the Hearth... then I would not be here now among these heretics and unbelievers.

Does that include Raiq? This is a difficult subject for her too. But she makes her choice, and she sticks with it.

RAIQ

You should trust her, Vexh. She carries the soul of the Fire.

VEXH

She is alien. Not of our blood.

RAIQ

As was the Fire herself. And yet we trusted her, because we knew she came to us from the True.

VEXH

The Fire left us behind.

RAIQ

I believed so at first. Now I believe... that she saved us. We have a chance no other Ascendant has ever had. Everything that happened was Their will. That absolves us both... of blame.

(pause)

And I believe... that Kira also came to us from the True.

Vexh turns to look at her, intrigued by this possibility...

Kasidy and Matthias absorbing Sisko's declaration...

MATTHIAS

Captain... I don't believe any legal principle in the Federation would hold you responsible -

SISKO

I'm not talking about laws, damn it! I'm talking about my soul. The Prophets handed my daughter over to a madman, sure. But that's not the worst of it.

KASIDY

It's over, Ben. She's safe.

SISKO

No, she's not! Because of me. Of what they turned me into. If I can kill my friend... if I can be that person, I'm a danger to everyone around me. To you, to Rebecca...

KASIDY

Ben, you're being ridiculous. You promised me years ago that you would do whatever it took to protect this family. And that's exactly what you did.

SISKO

But I ordered the *Defiant* to fire on that ship. I signed my friend's death warrant.

KASIDY

Yeah? Well, so did I.

SISKO

...What?

KASIDY

I wanted him dead too.

JASMINE

Standing in the kitchen, against the counter where the tea is half-made, unable to help overhearing everything.

KASIDY (o.s.)

When you and Jasmine went off to Endalla, I stayed at Militia Central with General Lenaris.

BACK TO SCENE

Where Kasidy continues, bold and unapologetic...

KASIDY (cont)

And I told him flat out that I wanted Luka Tirem dead. Ask him, he'll tell you.

SISKO

Kasidy, you can't mean...

KASIDY

I do. And I did. Listen to me, Ben. That man kidnapped our daughter. Never mind the hell he put us through, he hurt Rebecca. Any man who could do that is not your friend.

SISKO

But I killed him -

KASIDY

Good! He hurt our child, and as far as I'm concerned, he deserved to die. I'm sorry if you're not okay with that, but I am. And if that makes me a monster... well, I guess I'm okay with that too.

Sisko looks back and forth between Kasidy and Matthias, who is staying out of this for the moment...

KASIDY (cont)

(softer)

But I don't think it does. Our child was hurt, and you and I both did what we needed to do to protect her and punish the one responsible. I think that makes us good parents, not monsters.

REBECCA (o.s.)
Why is daddy crying?

They all turn in surprise, and see Rebecca standing at the doorway of her bedroom, holding one of her toys. Kasidy is embarrassed and worried what the girl might have overheard.

KASIDY
Rebecca, honey, it's not polite to listen in on other people's conversations.

REBECCA
But I heard you shouting. Did I do something wrong?

SISKO
Oh no, Rebecca. No, never.

Rebecca comes closer, joining her parents on the sofa.

SISKO
You haven't done anything wrong, nothing at all. It's all my fault. I trusted him, and he hurt you, and I'm so sorry.

REBECCA
(hugs him tight)
It's okay, daddy. It wasn't your fault. And I didn't like him very much, but I'm sorry you lost your friend too.

Sisko just hugs his daughter tight, amazed at the grace and forgiveness in the little girl. Kasidy joins the hug.

Matthias stands quietly from her seat and walks to join Jasmine in the kitchen, letting the family heal together.

At the couch, Rebecca wriggles out from Sisko and Kasidy's hug, problem resolved and onto the next distraction.

REBECCA

Come and play with me in the garden, daddy!

SISKO

I'll be there in a minute, sweetheart.

Rebecca runs off, through the kitchen, past Matthias and Jasmine. Kasidy calls after her, half-hearted...

KASIDY

Don't slam the door...

But too late - Rebecca SLAMS the back door open and barrels out into the garden at top speed. Sisko grins through the tears, and stands up, holding Kasidy's hand. They move to the kitchen, joining Matthias and Jasmine.

JASMINE

On the subject of listening in, I have a suggestion that might solve all our problems...

SISKO

What's that, Sergeant?

JASMINE

When I signed up with the Militia, it was a fixed-term contract. I'm used to moving around a lot, so I didn't want to tie myself down too much. It's coming up next month.

(shrug)

What if, instead of signing up again, I resign my commission and become a full-time permanent bodyguard... for Rebecca?

KASIDY

Would General Lenaris let you?

JASMINE

I'm a private citizen, I can do what I want. But come on - being the personal bodyguard to the Emissary and his family? What Bajoran would say no to that?

KASIDY

(full of ideas)

Rebecca would love it! And Ben, that's gotta put your mind at ease, surely. We could clear out the storage room, convert it into a bedroom for you...

Kasidy realises Sisko has not said anything.

KASIDY

Ben...? This is okay, right?

JASMINE

Captain, I certainly understand if you don't want a stranger moving into your house -

SISKO

I think it's a wonderful idea.

Sisko is almost in tears again - but this time at the nice gesture. He reaches out his hand to shake Jasmine's.

SISKO

Thank you. For everything.

JASMINE

You're welcome, Captain. Well! I'd better go and have a talk with the general, then.

KASIDY

That can wait - there's a little girl out there who's waiting for you to chase her round the garden.

Jasmine grins, and heads out into the back garden. Matthias joins her, again leaving Sisko and Kasidy alone.

SISKO
She's a good friend, Kas. A good
friend. You can trust her.

KASIDY
I do. And I trust you, too.

Taking his hand again, she leads him out into the garden...

38 EXT. SISKO'S HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

...and onto the veranda, where they watch Jasmine chasing
Rebecca around, both of them laughing in delight.

Sisko watches them for a moment, gradually letting his
worry go, shoulders relaxing, the darkness dissipating...

...until finally he can SMILE again.

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW