

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x11 - "Harmony."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE

The starfield...

...and then a JEM'HADAR SHIP shudders across the screen, under heavy fire from somewhere off screen. Weapons hit the ship hard along the port nacelle...

2 INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1

The bridge of the Jem'Hadar ship. Vorta male GELNON (last seen 6x15 "Honour Among Thieves") and the Jem'Hadar First TARAK'ALON in the centre, wearing their eyepiece headsets. Other Jem'Hadar EXTRAS staff the various stations.

The ship SHUDDERS under the attack. A couple of panels EXPLODE in sparks and flame. Gelnon staggers against the railings, but Tarak'alon is steady on his feet.

TARAK'ALON

Third! Return fire!

Jem'Hadar THIRD hits panels - we hear a weapons discharge.

THIRD

Direct hit, First. Their rear
drive section has been
compromised, but not fatally.

Gelnon struggles to right himself, furious and embarrassed.

GELNON

First Tarak'alon... I want those
traitors destroyed.

TARAK'ALON

With pleasure.

3 EXT. SPACE

The first Jem'Hadar Ship (#1) turns quickly and heads back the way it came...

...heading for a second Jem'Hadar Ship (#2) with weapons blasting. The two ships are heading for a collision...

...until Jem'Hadar Ship #2 twists aside at the last second.

4 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #2**

Another crew, featuring Vorta male SEJEEL (last seen 8x26 "Unity, pt 3") and Jem'Hadar First TUGOL'ATAG plus extras. The crew grip onto hand-holds as the ship's inertial dampers struggle against the sudden turn...

SEJEEL

Are they insane?! They'll kill themselves along with us!

TUGOL'ATAG

They will kill no-one! Victory is life!

ALL JEM'HADAR

(chorus)

Victory is life!

The crew goes back to work, guiding the ship...

SEJEEL

(furious mutter)

I will not be the first to go down, Tugol'atag.

TUGOL'ATAG

Then stay out of the way and let me save your life.

5 **EXT. SPACE**

The two ships continue to dart round each other, exchanging fire and scoring hits...

6 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Gelnon and Tarak'alon's ship. Panels spark and soldiers fall. Gelnon is getting progressively more annoyed.

TARAK'ALON

Second! Control those fires! Third
- aim for their central shield
emitters.

The Third fires again...

7 **EXT. SPACE**

Ship #1 fires its main forward weapon, and hits Ship #2's shield bubble right at its apex point. The energy bubble visibly sputters and fails.

8 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #2**

Sejeel and Tugol'atag. More exploding panels.

SECOND

First! The shield emitter is
destroyed! ...And there is a
signal for the Vorta.

The Vorta pulls himself together, tries to appear tall and calm. He presses a control on the side of his headset...

SEJEEL

What do you want, Gelnon?

9 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Gelnon stands smugly on his bridge, talking on his headset.

GELNON

I want to give you the chance to
beg the Founders' forgiveness
before I destroy you, Sejeel.

10 **POV - HEADSET IMAGE**

Sejeel's image appears on Gelnon's headset viewer, glaring in loathing, as the business of Ship #1 goes on underneath.

SEJEEL (screen)

I have done nothing to beg
forgiveness for!

11 INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #2

Sejeel stands speaking as forcefully and confidently as he can manage into his own headset, as his crew watch...

SEJEEL (cont)

Those Rakhari pirates deserved to die, as do any who rebel against their Dominion rulers. That is the order of things!

12 INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #1

Gelnon is not impressed. First Tarak'alon grins nastily - a sort of "My Vorta's better than your Vorta" sneer.

GELNON

You received no orders to attack the Rakhari, Sejeel. I would know if you had, because I would have received them too. We are, after all, part of the same squadron.

(w/ finality)

You disobeyed the Founders by attacking without authorisation. That is punishable by death, for you and all your soldiers. I only hope your next clone has the sense you did not.

Suddenly, Gelnon's headset fritzes as the signal overloads and disappears in static. Gelnon turns to the Third...

THIRD

(confused)

First... the other vessel... it has been fired upon!

GELNON

(furious)

I did not order you to fire yet!

THIRD

It was not me!

Confused and annoyed, Gelnon retunes his headset...

13 **POV - HEADSET IMAGE**

The headset now shows an external view - Jem'Hadar Ship #2 suffering more weapons hits from somewhere else off screen.

14 **EXT. SPACE**

The two ships sitting together in space, both showing significant damage... but Ship #2 is under heavy fire.

Widen to reveal the attacker - JEM'HADAR SHIP #3. It zooms into the area, firing constantly at ship #2...

15 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #2**

Sejeel, Tugol'atag and all their soldiers SCREAM and bellow as their ship is destroyed around them, fires and sparks and collapsing bulkheads...

16 **EXT. SPACE**

Having no shields, Ship #2 has no chance. Its warp core buckles, and the entire ship EXPLODES in a burst of flame, until there is just a field of tumbling debris.

Jem'Hadar ship #3 swoops around, avoiding the debris, and comes to a stop nearby.

17 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Gelnon is incensed at this interloper in his territory...

GELNON

First! I want to speak to the
Vorta of that vessel. Now!

The First nods to the Third, who works his panels...

18 **POV - HEADSET IMAGE**

The headset comes back to life... and reveals VANNIS, smiling insincerely to camera.

VANNIS (screen)

Gelnon. How nice to see you.

19 **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #1**

Gelnon forces his best insincere smile back at her.

GELNON

Vannis. Always good to spend time with a fellow loyal Vorta. But I assure you, I had things entirely under control here. Your help was not required.

20 **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #3**

A third crew, featuring Vannis at the centre and Jem'Hadar First REKAN'GANAR (last seen 9x17 "Olympus Descending 2"), plus extras. Vannis is smooth and silky, in total control.

VANNIS

I'm glad to hear it, Gelnon, because I'm not here to offer help. I'm here to destroy you.

21 **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #1**

Gelnon is stunned.

GELNON

What?! Why would you do that? Over Sejeel? We attacked that worthless fool for disobeying the Founders!

22 **INT. JEM' HADAR SHIP #3**

Vannis smiles back. She knows she's got him.

VANNIS

And he deserved to die. But it was not your place to kill him.

23 **POV - HEADSET IMAGE**

Vannis smiles as she delivers Gelnon's death sentence.

VANNIS (screen)
(continuing)

Really, Gelnon... what kind of Vorta are you if you have to resort to exchanging weapons fire to solve your disputes? Vorta should not be fighting Vorta, nor Jem'Hadar fighting Jem'Hadar. You and Sejeel... you're both an embarrassment to the Founders.

(to the side,
blasé)

First Rekan'ganar, if you would please...

24 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #1**

Gelnon is beginning to panic...

GELNON

Wait -

But it's too late - the ship ROCKS under fire.

25 **EXT. SPACE**

Ship #3 fires and fires and fires on Ship #1...

...until Ship #1 finally is destroyed. The debris adds to the already drifting remains of Ship #2.

26 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #3**

Vannis smiles - genuinely this time - satisfied with a job well done.

VANNIS

First... set a course back to the Idran system and engage at full warp.

The Jem'Hadar soldiers follow their orders...

27 **EXT. SPACE**

Jem'Hadar Ship #3 swoops around, leaving the debris field behind, and jumps away into warp.

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

Just a moment to bring us home. The *Defiant* is berthed in its usual spot, and the USS *Aurora* (Nova class, last seen 10x04 "Easy Come, Easy Go") is at an upper pylon.

29 **INT. DS9 - UPPER DOCKING PYLON CORRIDOR**

The docking hatch is open, and a collection of Starfleet EXTRAS stream into the corridor. These are new transfers carrying travelling bags, or *Aurora* crewmembers delivering requisitioned materials, guiding heavy boxes on anti-gravs.

NOG and VAUGHN are in the corridor, directing the arrivals.

VAUGHN

Welcome to Deep Space Nine,
everyone. I'm Commander Vaughn,
Executive Officer. Deliveries,
please go with Lieutenant Nog. New
crew transfers, with me.

Further down the corridor, BASHIR struggles to squeeze down the corridor past the crowds of milling people. He is quite urgent, even hopeful. Excited about this.

BASHIR

(calling out)
Commander.

VAUGHN

(turns to him)
Doctor.

Bashir has finally reached Vaughn and Nog...

BASHIR

Any sign?

VAUGHN

Not as yet.

Bashir scans the faces of all the new crew, not seeing what he is looking for. The last of the new arrivals are now out of the airlock and into the corridor. Vaughn pushes his way past the crowd, calling out as he does.

VAUGHN

Alright, that's everyone. Let's
go. Follow me.

Vaughn leads the crowd down the corridor and away, with Nog taking up the rear. Bashir is left alone at the airlock, confused, hopes dashed. He looks back and forth between the departing crowd and the empty airlock - what went wrong?

There is the sound of boots on deckplates. Bashir rushes to look into the airlock - there is EZRI DAX, leaving the ship with her travelling bag. Bashir sags in relief to see her.

BASHIR

Ezri... Oh I'm so glad you're
safe. When I heard about the
Luna...

He reaches out for a welcoming hug. But Dax walks on past him, with nothing but a simple nod and acknowledgement.

DAX

Julian.

And then she's gone, heading off down the corridor to join the receding crowd with Nog and Vaughn.

Ending on Bashir, amazed and not a little heartbroken...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

30 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY

Bright blue sky, rolling green hills, clear running streams and ponds. This is a bucolic and peaceful paradise, with the distant sound of soft, choral SINGING in low, rumbling voices. FIGURES move down the stone paths, between gleaming white marble buildings.

These are EAV'OQ - two metres tall, almost tubular in shape, off-white and slightly furry, lolloping languidly on eight pinkish ribbon-like limbs that seem too flowing and flimsy to support the weight.

They go about their business, greeting each other in slow, smooth movements, curling their large single eye in serene smiles, moving on with a rolling, bouncing Mr Soft gait.

In the foreground, two more figures walk along a path together - the Eav'oq male, ITU (from 8x23 "Rising Son") and OPAKA. The two are quite companionable and friendly, enjoying the beautiful day and the peaceful surroundings.

ITU

I must admit, sister Sulan, it is a great sadness to us that the torment of the Ascendants is sure to return. We hoped to escape their fire by hiding. But we can hide no longer.

OPAKA

They may never come, Itu. You must not lose your hope.

ITU

No. I know it. The way is open to them, and they will find their way upon it. I feel it within me. Do you not feel it also, sister?

Opaka doesn't like to dwell on unpleasant thoughts, but...

OPAKA

Yes, I feel it. Perhaps it is a sense we share, through our mutual bond with the Prophets. Forgive me - the Siblings.

ITU

Do not apologise, Sulan. The Siblings and the Prophets are surely as one, have no doubt.

They continue to stroll along in companionable silence for a few moments. But Itu is clearly troubled.

ITU

I recognise that for you, many aeons have passed since the Ascendants' last great crusade.

(pause)

But for us, the fire has been quenched for less than two turns. Its embers fall over us still.

OPAKA

(delicately)

Will you tell me about it, Itu? I know it is difficult for you. But my friends and I are hoping to find a way to avoid fighting the Ascendants. Anything you can tell us would be useful.

Itu stops, seems to sag. He doesn't want to think about it.

ITU

They cannot be stopped. They cannot be avoided. You will see that for yourselves soon enough. But I have held the tale from you too long. It is time to tell it.

Opaka is relieved - it's the information she needs, but at the same time, Itu obviously needs to unburden himself.

As Itu's single eye stares sadly into the distance...

31 **INT. EAV'OQ TEMPLE**

The great chamber that we saw in 8x23 "Rising Son," but it is now in chaos. A dozen Eav'oq rush back and forth - as much as they can in their strange way - as the building shakes to the rumbling of bombs and explosions outside.

ITU (v.o.)

It had begun more than a hundred turns before, as isolated attacks and solitary murders. We heeded the lessons of the Siblings, and they told us the attacks would only grow more frequent.

The Eav'oq panic, stumbling against the shaking ground...

32 **EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

As Itu relates the tale to Opaka...

OPAKA

But why you? Because of your connection to the Siblings?

ITU

To them, the Siblings are known as the True, the Unnameable Ones. Any who dare to speak their name aloud commit the greatest sacrilege and must be put to death. It had been this way with countless before us... but with the Eav'oq, there was something more. They knew that our connection was more than misguided belief. It was real.

(pause; w/ wonder)

We had been gifted with the Eyes of Light.

33 **INT. EAV'OQ TEMPLE**

As the buildings continue to shake around them, Itu himself kneels in some weirdly Eav'oq way in front of a marble BOX. It is of a completely different, alien design from the Orb boxes of the Bajorans, but clearly serves the same purpose.

The box's doors are open, a shining silver LIGHT streaming out, enveloping Itu. He gazes into the light, hypnotised.

Finally the light recedes into the box, letting us see the ORB spinning slowly inside. Itu gently closes the doors. He found what he sought. He stops another passing Eav'oq...

ITU

I understand now. You have to
gather everyone. Gather them all,
before it's too late.

The other Eav'oq's eye widens with alarm, then he bows in assent and moves off.

34 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY

Opaka and Itu are talking...

OPAKA

But if they knew you had the Eyes,
why wait a hundred years?

ITU

I think... it confused them. That
others might possess that which
plainly should be theirs... They
tried to capture the Eyes. We hid
them away. That only made the
Ascendants more vicious still.
Until at last the final day came.

35 INT. EAV'OQ TEMPLE

All the Eav'oq are now gathered together in the temple,
lined up in rows like a choir. Eyes closed, ribbon limbs
flowing loosely, and humming their low, hypnotic music.

ITU (v.o.)

The Eyes conveyed the lessons of
the Siblings... and they taught us
that, rather than hide the Eyes,
we should use them... to hide
ourselves.

36 **EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

Panic outside the city. Fiery BOMBS fall from the sky. Great RUMBLES shake the ground. One Eav'oq crouches by an Orb box, meditating over it. Elsewhere, a second Eav'oq crouches over another box. A third in another location...

ITU (v.o.)
Many sacrificed themselves to
bring it to pass. My brother Alu
was among the lost.

Focusing on one particular Eav'oq, presumably ALU, praying hard over his assigned Orb...

ITU (v.o.)
We placed seven Eyes around the
Temple, and the eighth within...
and we sang.

37 **INT. EAV'OQ TEMPLE**

The gathered Eav'oq SING - a rich, harmonic, powerful sound. On the floor in the middle is the Orb box, open on all sides, the Orb spinning calmly in the chaos...

The Orb SPINS faster and faster, silver LIGHT beginning to bleed out of it in a great swirl of power...

38 **EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

Alu opens his Orb box... its light flows out... Another Eav'oq opens another box... then the next... The light of each Orb reaches out to connect to its neighbour...

HIGH ANGLE

With bombs and fires still falling from the sky, growing heavier and heavier... the light of seven Orbs begins to create a CIRCLE around the marble temple.

39 **INT. EAV'OQ TEMPLE**

The central Orb's light grows to fill the Temple as the Eav'oq continue to sing...

40 **EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

The RING OF LIGHT around the city BURSTS open, throwing a massive WAVE of energy out in an ever-expanding circle, wiping away everything in its path...

41 **EXT. SPACE - IDRAN ORBIT**

The Idran planet hangs in space. All around it we can see a gathered fleet of thousands of ASCENDANT SHIPS (as seen in "Rising Son") - small and silver and deadly.

The great swirling ENERGY WAVE blooms up from the surface of the planet, growing in power and force, sweeping all the Ascendant ships aside, filling the screen until we...

WHITE OUT

After a moment, **FADE IN** to

42 **EXT. EAV'OQ PLANET SURFACE - DAY**

...but as we first saw it in 8x23 "Rising Son" - a blasted rock with no signs of life at all. Grey stone, grey sky...

...and then an object lands out of the sky, smoking like a meteorite. A small CRYSTAL, fist-sized and glittering. An Eav'oq crystal... the remains of an Orb.

ITU (v.o.)

We knew no more... until you
brought us from our sleep.

43 **EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY**

The more peaceful present, as Itu and Opaka talk...

OPAKA

Amazing to think that the Orbs
have such power...

ITU

The Orbs are power. They are the
Eyes of Light. But we have their
power no longer. And there is no
other way to hide from the fire.

There is a TWINKLING SOUND in the air. Opaka and Itu turn to see a Dominion transporter deposit Vannis. Rekan'ganar is beside her, his rifle held at the ready just in case.

VANNIS

Ranjen Opaka. Are you ready?

OPAKA

I believe so, Vannis, thank you.

(back to Itu)

Your words have been enormously helpful, Itu. Thank you. I will see you again soon, but for now I must bid you goodbye.

ITU

Goodbye, my sister.

Opaka goes to stand with Vannis and Rekan'ganar. Without any signal, the transporter forms again, and they are gone.

44 **EXT. SPACE - IDRAN ORBIT**

The Jem'Hadar ship pulls away from orbit of the Idran planet. It zooms quickly out of the system.

The Gamma exit of the WORMHOLE blooms open in its giant blue flower of energy. The Jem'Hadar ship dives inside, and the wormhole closes up behind it.

45 **INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP #3**

Vannis stands in the centre, letting Rekan'ganar run the crew. Opaka is there, feeling a little intimidated but basically willing to give them the benefit of the doubt.

OPAKA

(tentative)

Vannis? Is everything alright? You seem a little out of sorts.

VANNIS

I was just wondering when my life was reduced to ferrying Bajorans through the anomaly.

OPAKA

(oops)

I'm grateful for your help.

VANNIS

(shrug)

It's the Founder's will.

OPAKA

What did you do before?

VANNIS

My most recent assignment before this involved welcoming a new world into the Dominion.

OPAKA

(encouraging)

That sounds like an important responsibility.

VANNIS

Very much so. It was a vital mission. Another member race had recently suffered a famine, so I offered the Rindamil the protection of the Dominion in exchange for their food.

OPAKA

(unsure)

All... their food?

VANNIS

Their royals resisted at first. But I ordered the Jem'Hadar to threaten and kill their citizens to force the point.

OPAKA

(horrified)

Why would you do such a thing?

VANNIS

Because a Founder ordered me to.
Why else?

OPAKA

But you stole a people's food. You
killed innocents.

VANNIS

(simply)

It was necessary.

OPAKA

I refuse to believe that.

VANNIS

You believe in gods, do you not?
Would you not do anything they
asked of you, no matter how
distasteful you found it?

OPAKA

My gods would not ask me to kill.

VANNIS

Are you so sure of that?

OPAKA

What do you mean?

VANNIS

I read through the Dominion's
intelligence file on you in
preparation for this assignment. I
know of your activities with the
Bajoran resistance against the
Cardassians.

OPAKA

(offended)

We fought to defend ourselves, not
to conquer.

VANNIS

Ah, of course. How foolish of me.
That little technicality makes all
the difference.

(beat)

But then what of the Ascendants?
If the Dominion's files on them
are correct - which of course they
are - then they worship the same
gods you do. And they certainly
believe they must kill in their
name.

This gives Opaka pause for some unpleasant thought - a fact
which Vannis absorbs with amused smugness.

REKAN'GANAR

We are exiting the anomaly.

Vannis moves her headset viewer into position...

46 POV - HEADSET IMAGE

Vannis's view shows the trailing edges of the wormhole's
open mouth as the Jem'Hadar ship emerges into normal space.
In the distance but growing closer, Deep Space Nine itself.

The image segues into...

47 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

As we move in closer, we see the *Defiant*, the *Aurora*, a
Bajoran shuttle, and at least one random freighter docked.

48 INT. DS9 - FREIGHTER HOLD

The large cargo hold of the freighter. The last few crates
are being manoeuvred out by workers. Remaining in the hold,
however, are Lieutenant RO and Ensign ALECO. Once they are
alone, they draw their weapons. Aleco also has a tricorder.

ALECO

An anomalous bio-reading from
inside the cargo hold. Life signs
indicate a humanoid.

RO

So we're thinking stowaway?

ALECO

That's what Captain Rionoj assumed. But her people don't have any security training. That's why she left it to us to do anything about it.

RO

Then let's do something.

Aleco's tricorder leads him to a bulkhead in the hold's wall. At Ro's signal, he puts the tricorder away and gets ready to thump the wall panel. Ro aims her phaser...

Aleco thumps the panel and it clangs to the floor. Huddled inside, looking dirty and dishevelled... is Vedek YEVIR.

Aleco gasps in recognition. Ro folds her arms, unimpressed. Yevir looks bashfully out at them...

YEVIR

Lieutenant... nice to see you again. I wonder if I might speak with Captain Kira...?

Ro harrumphs. "You're gonna have to do better than that." Yevir struggles to wrestle his way out of the wall. Aleco instantly rushes to help him. Ro rolls her eyes.

YEVIR

Please tell her it's important. Tell her... I believe I've discovered something that will change Bajor forever.

Despite her dislike of Yevir, Ro is curious. Finishing on Yevir's hopeful, determined face...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

49 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Business as usual. CENN at the central table, BOWERS at tactical, SHAR at sciences. Bashir hovering near the door to Kira's office. Nervous, fidgety, trying to seem neither.

He peers through the door - Dax is in the guest seat, being debriefed by KIRA. After a moment she gets up and readies to leave. Bashir prepares himself...

The door opens; Kira and Dax emerge. Kira nods at Bashir and carries on to the turbolift. Dax stops short, sighs a bit to see Bashir. Doesn't really want to deal with him.

DAX

Hi, Julian.

BASHIR

Ezri, look... I know we didn't part on the best of terms. But I just want to say I'm glad you're safe, and there's no -

DAX

Julian, I've had a bad few days and I really don't want to get into this with you right now. People I knew have died. Just give me some space, will you?

She walks past him again, without waiting for a response. She heads to the turbolift and joins Kira.

KIRA

Docking ring, section twelve.

The turbolift lowers out of sight. They are gone. Bashir gapes after Dax, amazed that she blanked him again.

50 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR

Plenty of security EXTRAS. Vaughn and TARAN'ATAR wait on their best behaviour for the airlock to roll open...

The door cycles open - Vannis and Opaka emerge, with their own phalanx of soldiers. Taran'atar snaps to attention. Opaka takes Vaughn's hands in a warm and friendly gesture.

OPAKA

Elias...

VAUGHN

Sulan.

Vannis rolls her eyes - she honestly couldn't give a toss. Then Kira walks around a nearby corner. With her are SISKO (in civilian dress), Kai SOLIS and First Minister ASAREM.

KIRA

Ah, good. Everyone's here.

VAUGHN

(warmly)

First Minister... Eminence...

(coolly; at Sisko)

...Captain.

Opaka can't help notice the frosty tone in that one word.

OPAKA

It is good to see you again,
Wadeen, Tendren. I trust your
journey went smoothly?

ASAREM

Perfectly, thank you Ranjen.

SISKO

Can you imagine the security with
the three of us on board the same
shuttle?

SOLIS

I think they checked my eyeballs.

Kira chuckles. Vaughn grinds his teeth in pique, disliking what sounds like Sisko boasting about his importance.

Kira turns to lead everyone down the corridor, the security keeping a polite distance...

KIRA

Well, I'm glad you're here. The meeting's scheduled for sixteen hundred in the Ward Room. Should be interesting.

RO (o.s.)

Captain!

Everyone turns in surprise to see Ro emerging from the nearest turbolift...

RO

I'm sorry, Captain. He insisted on seeing you immediately.

Kira is baffled... and then Yevir steps out from behind Ro, still dirty and dishevelled. All are suitably surprised. Kira sighs, rubs her brow. There's always complications.

51 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira stands behind her desk, leaning forward onto it, trying her best to be polite... but failing.

KIRA

Vedek Yevir. I'm sure you have many fascinating tales to tell. But they will have to wait. I have a very important meeting that people have come all the way across the galaxy to attend.

YEVIR

I understand that, Captain. But my news is of vital importance to Bajor. As you know, I spent more than a year on Cardassia, where I studied the traditions of the Orialian Way. I believe -

KIRA

Vedek, perhaps I'm not making myself clear. I don't have time for this. If you want to talk to me, make an appointment.

YEVIR

I realise you may have reasons to dislike me, Captain. But please don't dismiss what I have to say so easily.

KIRA

I'll take the risk. Excuse me.

She walks out of the office, heading back to the meeting. He can do nothing but follow her out.

52 **INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

The meeting is under way. Kira at the head, with Vaughn, Sisko, Asarem, Solis, Taran'atar, Vannis and Opaka.

TARAN'ATAR

The situation is deteriorating rapidly. Dominion member races rebel at an increasing rate. The Jem'Hadar move closer to full civil war every day.

Everyone is disquieted to hear it stated so bluntly.

KIRA

Is there nothing Odo can do?

VANNIS

(snippy)

The Founder has the situation under control, Captain.

TARAN'ATAR

Clearly not.

Holy crap - is Taran'atar criticising a Founder? But he pushes on, seemingly unconcerned.

TARAN'ATAR (cont)

The Dominion is too vast for one Founder to control alone. Only today, Vannis destroyed two crews for fighting over his instructions.

VAUGHN

How is you destroying them any better than them destroying each other?

VANNIS

They were squabbling. I was executing.

ASAREM

And how does executing your own people help the Dominion maintain its stability?

VANNIS

(shrug)

The Vortas' next clones will be activated. More Jem'Hadar will be bred in birthing chambers.

Opaka's good will towards the Dominion is being shaken.

TARAN'ATAR

The reports from the other Vorta suggest that the uprisings are being fuelled by rumours. The word "Ascendant" is heard more and more frequently.

KIRA

News of their attack on the Dominion must be leaking out.

TARAN'ATAR

Indeed, Captain. Member races are no longer confident that the Dominion can protect them when the Ascendants return.

KIRA

Maybe they won't return.

OPAKA

The Eav'oq are convinced they will, Nerys. And they are the ones with the experience.

SISKO

What did the Eav'oq tell you?

OPAKA

That the Ascendants will not be dissuaded, not for any reason. All they care about is reaching the Celestial Temple... and destroying anyone who gets in their way.

ASAREM

Kai Solis, if I were to propose an alliance between Bajor and the Ascendants, do you think the Vedek Assembly would support me?

SOLIS

I'm not sure they support me, First Minister. Bajor has made great strides in accepting alternative religions over the past two years, but this might be pushing them further than they're willing to be pushed.

KIRA

What about General Lenaris? Having one of the most senior and respected officers in the Militia as a follower must be good for something.

SOLIS

He's offered his public support. But I can just see my opponents painting it as some kind of combined military-religious

dictatorship out to oppress all right-thinking Bajorans. His private support will have to do.

KIRA

Well, we need to do something to help the Eav'oq. They're helpless out there.

She looks over to Sisko. He smiles back, encouraging.

SISKO

It's your show, Nerys.

She looks curiously at him...

FLASH

Suddenly it's like a vision - over-exposed and strange. All the same people are there, gazing at Kira like Prophets.

VAUGHN

Our hand must act of its own will.

OPAKA

Our hand must shape the future.

FLASH

Everything is normal again. Kira blinks, disturbed. What just happened? Did she imagine it?

SISKO

Nerys...?

Kira comes back to herself. Looking around at everyone, waiting for her decision... she makes it.

KIRA

I think... we need to make an attempt to contact them. The Ascendants, I mean. Maybe if we can talk to them, we can find a way out of this mess before it goes any further.

TARAN'ATAR

And what of your alliance with the Dominion, Captain?

KIRA

Well, if we can make peace with the Ascendants, they won't be a threat to the Dominion anymore. And that can only help Odo's efforts to get things under control.

Taran'atar ponders for a moment.

TARAN'ATAR

My mind is now clear of external influences, Captain. And I am grateful to you for that. It allows me to see more clearly... and what I see is that the Ascendants caused the exodus of the Founders, and led directly to the chaos we now face. So I must inform you, Captain, that any alliance between Bajor and the Ascendants will seriously damage your friendship with the Dominion.

On Kira's disquieted reaction to that...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

53 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira, Ro and Sisko sit comfortably in the lounge area, drinking coffee or *raktajino* or whatever.

RO

So what did Yevir say?

KIRA

Don't know. I didn't give him a chance before the meeting, and by the time I came out of the meeting he'd already hitched the first ride back to Bajor.

RO

How do you think he got out of Cardassia? It's supposed to be quarantined.

SISKO

Cardassian security is stretched to the breaking point as it is. I'm sure all he needed was a word in the right ear.

RO

But what about the disease?

KIRA

I had Julian give him a good thorough scanning just to be safe. He's clean.

CENN (comm)

Cenn to Kira. It's starting, sir.

They have been expecting this. Knocking back her coffee...

KIRA

Shall we?

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

Kira, Ro and Sisko emerge onto Ops. Cenn is at the central table - he directs their attention to the main view screen.

It comes to life with an image of the open-air public speaking platform on Bajor we have seen Yevir and Solis use before. But this time Asarem is behind the microphone, with the suggestion of many press people and public nearby.

ASAREM (screen)
Citizens of Bajor...

55 **EXT. BAJOR - PRESS PLATFORM - DAY**

Asarem on the podium, speaking to the press and public...

ASAREM
Many things have been asked of us in recent years. Many changes have been thrust upon our people. From hatred of the Cardassian people, to friendship and pity for them. From distrust of the Federation to fellowship in their number. From brutal war against the Dominion to peace and even alliance. And from the monolithic strength of one singular religion to a new freedom of choice to worship.

56 **INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

The usual crowd of officers, aliens and civilians. QUARK is working his bar, and Asarem's speech is on the screens.

ASAREM (screen)
You have absorbed all of these changes with grace and dignity. It makes me proud to lead you.

At a table under the stairs, Vaughn sits sharing lunch with TENMEI. He is looking down at his plate, not really eating.

TENMEI
Dad? You okay? You're not eating.

VAUGHN
Sorry, baby. Just distracted.

TENMEI
You're thinking about Opaka,
aren't you?

He chuckles a bit - she sees right through him.

VAUGHN
Some of it. But there's a lot
going on at the moment.

TENMEI
Anything you can talk about?

VAUGHN
(sigh)
Oh... I don't know. This thing
with Sisko...

TENMEI frowns, doesn't know what he's talking about. Vaughn keeps talking, probably saying more than he should...

VAUGHN (cont)
Holding a grudge like this. Makes
me feel so juvenile. I should be
long past this kind of nonsense.

ON SCREEN

Asarem continues her speech...

ASAREM (screen)
But there may yet be more changes
we must face together.

UPPER LEVEL

Bashir is sat at a table alone, looking down at the main floor, watching the screens. He senses a presence... and looks up to see DAX hovering awkwardly. She half-smiles tentatively and hopefully at him, silently asking if she can join him. He smiles, relieved. Of course she can.

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

Kira, Ro and Sisko watch the screen. Cenn, Nog, Shar and Bowers are also at their positions. Everyone is watching.

ASAREM (screen)

Opaka Sulan told us all of the Eav'oq, a people from the other side of the galaxy, but who have also been touched by the Prophets. But now it is time you knew of a third people who have been touched by Them.

Kira takes a deep breath of nerves and tension - this is where everything could go wrong.

58 **EXT. BAJOR - PRESS PLATFORM**

Asarem continues her speech. She has to play this right.

ASAREM

These people are known as the Ascendants. We know little about them, only that their own love of the Prophets has placed them at odds with the Eav'oq in the past. We Bajorans have faced this dilemma ourselves, struggling to reconcile traditional worship with new, alternative views. We came through those struggles as we have all the others.

59 **INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

Bashir and Dax sit across the table from each other on the upper level of the bar.

DAX

I'm sorry I ignored you. I guess I was just embarrassed. I made such a big deal out of moving on and making a new start. And barely three months in, it all blows up in my face. Literally.

BASHIR

I don't mind admitting I was terrified for you when I heard about the accident. But in a way, I'm almost glad it happened.

DAX

What the hell does that mean?

BASHIR

Nothing! Just... that it's nice to have you back. Whatever the reason.

DAX

I'm not... "back." I just didn't have anywhere else to go.

BASHIR

But... I thought the tour on the *Luna* would have got it all out of your system, and now you'd come back and settle down here, where you belong.

DAX

You do not get to say where I belong, Julian!

ASAREM (screen)

It is my hope that in this way, Bajor can serve as an example, as proof that religions need not be enemies.

60 **EXT. BAJOR - PRESS PLATFORM**

Asarem's speech continues...

ASAREM

Just as the Prophets sent us their Emissary so that we might better understand one another, so Opaka has lived among the Eav'oq, learning about their ways of life,

building a relationship based upon our commonalities. Now I have put forward the suggestion that we continue on this path, by meeting with the Ascendants. Their ways may be different from ours, but I believe it is our similarities that can bring us together.

She pauses to let the audience absorb her words.

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

As the crew watches the screen:

RO

Sneaky. She goes directly to the people, getting them on her side, so the Vedek Assembly has no choice but to agree, or risk looking childish and petulant.

SISKO

(grin)

Maybe we should start calling that "The Kira Manoeuvre."

Kira is a bit bashful, a bit flattered. It was her idea.

62 **INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

The bar patrons are also watching. Vaughn and Tenmei are still sitting together under the spiral staircase...

VAUGHN

Prynn, I've seen the way you look at him when you think he's not looking. You can't tell me you're not interested.

TENMEI

Dad, I've told you before. He's a married man. Thia is carrying his baby.

VAUGHN

I don't think it's Thia you're worried about at all. You've known all along Shar doesn't have any real feelings for her.

TENMEI

I don't know...

VAUGHN

You do know. You're a smart girl, Prynn. So I think you're fixating on Thia as your rival for Shar's affections to avoid looking at the real challenge - Thriss.

TENMEI

Dad... Thriss is dead.

VAUGHN

And thus perfect. Shar can keep her in his memory, his ideal, never changing. How could you possibly compete with that?

Tenmei can't deny he might have a point.

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

On Shar, as he watches Asarem draw to her conclusion...

ASAREM (screen)

To this end, I have petitioned the Federation to send a fleet of ships into the Gamma Quadrant, with the aim of making peaceful contact with the Ascendants. I ask for your support and your strength in this endeavour. We can all walk with the Prophets, whichever path we choose to take.

Kira watches from outside her office...

KIRA

Hopefully that'll do the trick.

64 **INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

Bashir has been watching the speech on the screens, as a way of avoiding more arguments with Dax if nothing else.

BASHIR

I don't see why we need to bother with the Ascendants at all. Or the Eav'oq for that matter.

DAX

What are you talking about?

BASHIR

Well, it's none of our business, is it? The Federation doesn't go around sticking its nose into other people's affairs. Or at least it shouldn't.

DAX

But the Eav'oq are defenceless.

BASHIR

So are a lot of other people. And to be perfectly honest with you, Ezri, I'm not sure I have it in me to care anymore.

Dax sits amazed at what Bashir just said...

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

On the screen, Asarem has finished. Among the clamour of journalists firing questions, she makes a dignified exit.

But then the sound picks up - the journalists are excited. Kira turns to see... Yevir taking the stage, back in his full vedek regalia. The press and public are all buzzing...

YEVIR (screen)

I have an announcement to make...

KIRA

Son of a bitch!

All the Bajorans have gone crazy at Yevir's appearance, but Dax and Bashir are engaged completely in each other.

DAX

Why are you being such an ass?

BASHIR

I'm not being an ass. Being an ass is when your former lover only wants to tell you he's glad you didn't die, and you just walk past him like he's invisible.

DAX

I told you, I was embarrassed.

BASHIR

I'm embarrassed right now.

DAX

We've known each other ten years, Julian. You've gone from playful flirting, to giving me up as a lost cause, to getting a second chance, to screwing up your second chance, to becoming possessive and controlling. I don't think I like the change.

BASHIR

I don't know why you have to be so deliberately hurtful, Ezri. Jadzia would never have said the things you do.

DAX

You know what else Jadzia never did? Sleep with you.

With disgust in her eyes, Dax shoves her chair back, stands and stomps off.

On the lower level, Tenmei and Vaughn have heard the raised voices. They watch, disturbed, as Dax stalks away.

67 **EXT. BAJOR - PRESS PLATFORM - DAY**

Yevir stands before his adoring crowds...

YEVIR

Thank you for your warm welcome,
my children. It is a blessing to
be home, among you again.

He reaches inside his robes and pulls out the JEVONITE
FIGURINE. He holds it up reverently for the crowd to see.

YEVIR

You may recall my showing you this
object once before. It was found
at the great lost city of B'Hala
by the tireless workers there,
passed on to the wife of the
Emissary, and finally to me. It
clearly shows the features of both
Bajorans and Cardassians, combined
into one figure. As you may know,
I have spent more than a year on
Cardassia, studying the traditions
of the Oralian Way. While there, I
had cause to visit their own newly
unearthed ancient city, the
Hebitian stronghold of Gardat.

FLASHBACK - 10x06 "THE DREAM BOX"

Inside the Hebitian caves, he looks at the Oralian figures
carved out of jevonite, caresses them in astonishment...

YEVIR (v.o.)

And there I found many identical
figures, in the very heart of the
Oralian Way.

A close-up of the figures - they show Bajoran nose ridges
and Cardassian neck bones.

BACK TO SCENE

Yevir himself gazes out into the crowd, almost overcome with wonder himself at what he is saying...

YEVIR

This is the proof I have been seeking, my children. Proof of a connection between our worlds that is far more ancient than the Occupation. I have already joined my order to the people of the Oralian Way in the name of this connection. But now I must do more. A brave woman named Ekosha risked hatred and violence to bring the word of Oralius to Bajor. But she was lost to us in the recent unpleasantness on Cardassia.

68 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Kira watches, absolutely livid with fury at Yevir.

YEVIR (screen)

In honour of Ekosha's courage, I hereby announce...

(pause for drama)

...that I will bring the word of Oralius to Bajor in her place. A new religion must come to our world, my children... and I will lead the way.

Hearing this, Kira's jaw drops. Everyone else's too. On the screen, we can hear the journalists begin to buzz...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

69 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

Focusing on the *Defiant*, berthed on the docking ring...

70 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Vaughn is sat in the central chair. Tenmei at helm, Nog at engineering, Bowers at tactical, Bashir just hanging out.

VAUGHN
Standard protocols, Lieutenant.

Tenmei turns to acknowledge from her position at helm, but as she does, she is caught off guard to see Shar, who has just entered the bridge, taking his position at sciences.

TENMEI
Aye, sir.

Tenmei exchanges an awkward look of acknowledgement with Shar, then turns back to her helm console.

VAUGHN
Defiant to Ops. Permission to disengage.

71 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Ro stands at the top of the stairs outside Kira's office. Dax is stood nearby, arms folded, still smarting after the argument with Bashir. Extras elsewhere as needed.

RO
Acknowledged, *Defiant*. Stand by.

She nods to Cenn, who works the central table.

72 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The *Defiant* disengages from the docking ring, slowly turns away. This is the first time *Defiant* has left the station all season, so let's make a fairly big deal of this.

As it pulls further away, Vannis's Dominion ship disengages from its place on a lower pylon, turns and pulls away.

The two ships follow each other away from the station. The wormhole bursts into life, and they both dive inside.

73 **INT. DEFIANT - MESS HALL**

Kira, Sisko and Opaka sit together at one of the tables - the room is otherwise deserted.

KIRA

Any word from the Council?

SISKO

Krim's still trying to convince them. They're not making it easy. But having the approval of the Chamber of Ministers and the Vedek Assembly will help.

KIRA

So we've got the ministers and the vedeks, and we're working on the Federation. Now we just need to make arrangements with the Eav'oq. Then, once the fleet's in place, we'll be in a better position to negotiate with the Ascendants.

OPAKA

The Eav'oq are insistent that the Ascendants will not be negotiated with, Nerys.

KIRA

That doesn't mean we don't try. We're all the children of the Prophets, you said so yourself. That has to mean something.

(sags,
thoughtful)

Still can't believe that jerk Yevir. Who does he think he is?

OPAKA

Nerys, isn't it a good thing? That he has become so open to the idea of other religions that he is willing to become the representative of one?

KIRA

Exactly! Of course it's a good thing. The jackass. He couldn't have had his epiphany two years ago, could he? Oh no, he has to throw me out of the church and humiliate me in front of the whole of Bajor, and then come over all noble and admirable.

SISKO

(chuckles)

Look at it this way, Nerys. If you hadn't gone through what you went through, he wouldn't have changed the way he has. You helped him come to his senses.

KIRA

Yeah, that makes me feel so much better.

(beat)

But it is good, what he's doing to honour Ekosha's memory. At least it feels like he's doing something to help Cardassia. I just feel... useless.

As Kira gazes into the middle distance...

74 **EXT. CARDASSIA**

A broken cityscape under a grey and overcast sky. A hint of fires in the distance. We're watching a man picking his way carefully across rubble ground - Cardassian doctor PARMAK.

PARMAK

Elim...? Elim!

No answer. Parmak continues to clamber across the rubble, trying not to break an ankle. Eventually he comes to Garak's memorial - the towers of rubble he had built out of the remains of his house (8x09 "A Stitch in Time"). The area has clearly been vandalised, the towers pushed over.

Parmak comes to the rickety little shed, still miraculously intact. He tentatively looks inside, and GARAK sits there, gazing gloomily out at the mess through the open door.

PARMAK

I thought I might find you here.

GARAK

It seemed appropriate.

PARMAK

Elim... you mustn't wallow like this. It helps no-one. Besides, you're doing good work.

GARAK

Am I? I try... but I'm not so sure I'm making a difference. Tell me again why they offered their help, and we said no?

PARMAK

Pride. Fear. Stubbornness. The usual. But I thought you believed the Federation had promised its help regardless.

GARAK

Not the Federation. Julian. In the Vinculum, he told me he'd be there for me, and he's a good man. I believe him.

PARMAK

(small smirk)

My, how you've changed, Elim.
First you become a democrat...

Garak almost instinctively recoils...

PARMAK (cont)

And now, if I didn't know you better, I'd say you're getting religion.

GARAK

I'm a pragmatist, Parmak. If help is offered, why not accept it, whatever the source?

PARMAK

I have nothing against accepting help, Elim. But where you are a pragmatist, I am a physician. A man of science. I trust in what I see with my eyes, touch with my hands. This virus, I can measure. I can see it in my microscope, I watch its effects on its victims. I'm afraid I'm not convinced that placing your hopes in some supernatural fantasy helps anyone.

(beat)

The others want to meet.

GARAK

That helps no-one either. More meetings. Meetings are the enemy of getting anything done.

PARMAK

At least they're trying, Elim.

GARAK

Then why isn't it working? Why is it that democracy works for other people, but not for us?

PARMAK

Perhaps it's not meant to work for the likes of us.

GARAK

The Oralian Way doesn't conduct meetings. They have no leader. And yet they're the only ones who seem

capable of actually achieving anything here. Makes one wonder if they know something we don't.

PARMAK

Perhaps they do. But I'll tell you what I know. Sitting here feeling sorry for yourself will get you nowhere.

Garak looks at his friend, his encouraging half-smile... and nods. He has regained his resolution.

GARAK

Alright then, my friend. Let's cast ourselves back into the breach, shall we?

He follows Parmak out of the shack, locking the door behind him, and then the pair walk off, back into the gloom.

75 EXT. SPACE - IDRAN ORBIT

The *Defiant* and Vannis's Dominion ship share orbit of the Eav'oq's planet.

76 EXT. EAV'OQ CITY - DAY

Eav'oq lollop peacefully about upon the stone paths, among the trickling streams. Nearby, Starfleet security officers and Jem'Hadar soldiers awkwardly keep watch together.

77 INT. EAV'OQ TEMPLE

Rows of Eav'oq sit in their pews, Itu front and centre. Facing them from the middle of the floor are Kira, Sisko, Vaughn, Opaka and Vannis. Kira is a bit frustrated.

KIRA

I just don't understand why you wouldn't want to defend yourselves.

ITU

We did defend ourselves. We hid. But that is no longer possible.

KIRA

So fight. If you really believe the Ascendants are coming to kill you, why just lie down and take it? It doesn't make sense!

SISKO

(gently; calming)

Nerys.

(louder; to Itu)

Itu, what we're having trouble understanding... is that you don't seem to want to save your own lives. Are we wrong?

ITU

We wish to live as much as any other. But not at the cost of our souls. I find your doubt confusing - you have known the Siblings yourself. I feel their sight upon all of you.

(re Vannis)

Except for that one. She knows nothing of the Siblings.

VANNIS

(sneering)

I follow the Founders. Your Siblings are nothing to me.

VAUGHN

Itu, we're not asking you to go out into the galaxy and conquer people. But if someone does choose to attack you, no amount of compassion or love can stop those bombs in mid air. You've built a beautiful society here. It's not wrong to want to protect it.

ITU

This is still not our way. We are not the same.

KIRA

Yes we are! We worship the same gods. We may call them different names, but they're the same. I know they are. And I know that if I was in danger, the Prophets would never want me to just give up. They'd want me to survive!

ITU

We do not worship the Siblings as gods. We revere them as teachers. And they have taught us that violence is never to be allowed. We heeded their lessons.

OPAKA

You followed their path.

Itu's great single eye smiles, approving Opaka's words.

ITU

Bajorans may believe that the Prophets are happy to watch them extinguish the lives of others. The Eav'oq do not. We will not take life, for any reason.

Opaka exchanges an uncomfortable look with Vannis... who smirks a little, knowing what Opaka is thinking. Opaka takes a deep breath, prepares herself...

OPAKA

And we will not force you to.

VAUGHN

Sulan...

OPAKA

No, Elias. The Eav'oq have shown us great patience. And they have made their decision. Unless you intend to force the issue, that is an end of it.

Opaka is resolute. Off Kira's downcast reaction...

The group leads out of the Eav'oq Temple and into the sunshine, where their respective soldiers keep watch.

KIRA

I can't believe the Eav'oq are kicking us out.

OPAKA

They're not kicking you out. They simply don't accept your attempts to take over control of the situation. And frankly, I agree with them.

SISKO

I just don't understand. This isn't how I thought things would go. It's not what the Prophets showed me...

VAUGHN

(gritted teeth)

Oh, will you give it a rest! I am sick of hearing about you and your damned "visions!"

SISKO

And I am sick of you fighting me every step of the way. I'm trying to help, Commander.

VAUGHN

You're trying to show off! Look at me, I'm the great Emissary of the Prophets, I'll tell your fortune for thirty pieces of silver!

OPAKA

Elias, please...

KIRA

Both of you, shut up! Now! I am tired of this childish bickering

between you two. I don't want to hear another word out of either one of you that isn't helping me figure this out. Clear?

Vaughn and Sisko look suitably chastened - for the moment.

KIRA

This doesn't change anything. I'm not going to let the Eav'oq commit suicide. I'm going to get that fleet, find the Ascendants, and save everyone's lives. I'm not going to let one race blow another to pieces. Not again.

Kira sends a pointed look at Vannis. Vannis honestly couldn't care less what Kira thinks of her.

OPAKA

You must do what you feel is right, Nerys. But I will not be a part of it. I respect the Eav'oq's decision, and I will stay here with them.

VAUGHN

Sulan... are you sure?

OPAKA

The Eav'oq are creatures of peace, Elias. And so am I. All my life I have been prepared to sacrifice my own flesh and blood to save others. With the Cardassians, with the Ennis... this is where that path leads.

(turns to Kira)

You should all leave.

KIRA

Fine.

Kira and Sisko walk a few steps away. Vaughn follows, and speaks to Kira *sotto*.

VAUGHN

Captain... let me stay here. Maybe
I can help to persuade the Eav'oq.
I'm more use to you here than I am
on the *Defiant* right now.

He tries not to glance at Sisko, but Kira sees it anyway.
He doesn't want to be around him. She is too harried to
argue right now.

KIRA

Call us if you need anything.

(taps combadge)

Kira to *Defiant*. Two to beam up.

Kira and Sisko disappear in a Starfleet transporter signal.
Vaughn and Opaka look across to Vannis - she smiles back at
them and then disappears in a Dominion transporter signal.

Vaughn turns back to Opaka...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

79 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

Ro, Dax and Cenn are all together at the central Ops table.

CENN

(off panels)

Rising neutrino levels. The
wormhole's opening, Lieutenant.
It's *Defiant*. They're hailing.

RO

On screen.

The viewscreen changes to show Kira sat in the chair on the
Defiant's bridge.

RO

How'd it go, Captain?

KIRA (screen)

Not great. But I like to think
there's still cause for hope.

RO

Well, I can break that silver
lining for you. We had a call from
First Minister Asarem. She says
that the Federation Council wants
to hear from you directly.

KIRA (screen)

Me? Why? Isn't that what Krim
Aldos is for?

RO

Maybe. But he's been using your
name, your standing as the most
senior Bajoran in Starfleet, to
put the weight behind the plan.
Now they want to hear it from the
pylchyk's mouth, so to speak.

Kira sighs. One more complication.

KIRA (screen)

Fine. If I've been officially summoned, then I guess I can't decline. Looks like you'll be in charge a little longer than you planned, Lieutenant.

RO

What? Why? Where's Vaughn?

KIRA (screen)

We left him behind with Opaka to keep working on the Eav'oq. You're the second officer, Ro. It's your job. I'll see you in a few days.
Kira out.

The signal drops, leaving Ro rather shell shocked.

80 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

Kira turns in her command chair, to where Sisko has taken a seat out of the way towards the back of the room.

KIRA

I think I'll just go insane. It would be easier.

SISKO

You can handle it, Nerys. And I'll be right by your side.

Unhappy but resigned, Kira turns back to Tenmei at helm.

KIRA

Lieutenant Tenmei, set course for Earth. Maximum warp.

TENMEI

Aye, Captain.

The ship moves to warp. Across the bridge, standing apart from everyone else with his arms folded, is Bashir.

BASHIR

I still say this is a complete waste of time and effort.

SISKO

(tense)

I beg your pardon, Doctor?

BASHIR

This whole Eav'oq and Ascendant thing - it's nothing to do with us. Isn't it breaking the Prime Directive to interfere in their business? Especially when they don't even want your help.

SISKO

(command voice)

Your captain has made her decision, Doctor. And you have a duty to support her and keep your misgivings to yourself.

BASHIR

Oh, I have been, believe me.

KIRA

That's enough, Doctor. You're dismissed.

Unimpressed, Bashir turns and leaves the bridge. Everyone else - Nog, Shar, Tenmei, Bowers - exchange confused and uncomfortable glances. Of course they overheard it all.

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

At the central Ops table, Ro is clearly not happy about being left in command. Dax sees her state, and takes pity.

DAX

Ro... You'll do fine. I'm here to help if you need anything.

RO

You could help by taking charge. You are the senior officer.

DAX

Maybe I am... but this is your command now, not mine. I don't intend on sticking around this place any longer than I have to.

Ro takes a deep breath, trying to steady her juddering nerves. It doesn't work. She's still shaking.

RO

Will you at least stick around long enough to cover Ops while I grab a drink?

DAX

I think I can manage that.

Ro turns and jogs up the stairs, into Kira's office.

82 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Ro heads for the lounge area, hidden from sight. She sits, reaches down into her boot, and pulls out a hypospray.

She pushes it to her neck, injects the drugs, and relaxes, breathing deeply again. She looks down at her hand, sees the shaking gradually lessen, lessen, and finally stop.

83 EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT

The *Defiant* flies at warp.

84 EXT. FEDERATION COUNCIL BUILDINGS - DAY

Stock footage of grand, advanced buildings on Earth.

85 INT. FEDERATION COUNCIL BUILDINGS - CORRIDOR

Kira strides down the corridor, as confident as she can make herself, dressed in full white dress uniform. Sisko walks just behind her, in smart civilian clothes.

Ahead of her, waiting by large ornate doors, is Adm ROSS. He is just as nervous about this as Kira and Sisko are.

ROSS

Good to see you, Captains. Are you ready?

KIRA

As I'll ever be.

ROSS

They're in session already, but they said to bring you in the moment you arrived.

KIRA

Then let's get it over with.

She takes a deep breath. Ross pushes the door open, Kira steps through...

86 INT. FEDERATION COUNCIL HALL

...and is awed by the sight of the massive government chamber as seen in "The Voyage Home" and 9x01 "Unjoined 1." More than a hundred different representatives sit in banks along both sides, all of different species, some humanoid, some not. More sit in spectator benches on higher levels.

Ross directs Sisko to the spectator benches. With an encouraging nod to Kira, he goes.

Kira stares down the length of the room. At a podium at the far end of the room is ZIFE, a Bolian male, the Federation President (seen 9x01). Standing in the middle of the room is KRIM, the Bajoran representative (2x02 "The Circle"). Krim is debating with the Tellarite representative, GLEER.

KRIM

Starfleet has undertaken this kind of mission many times before, Councillor Gleer. Why is this time so objectionable?

GLEER

Perhaps because I remember the last time we tried to say a cheery hello to invaders from the other side of the galaxy.

ZIFE

To attempt peaceful contact is exactly the Federation's way, Councillor. Are you saying we should attack on sight?

GLEER

I am saying we should stay out of it altogether!

Then Zife looks up, and notices Kira and Ross.

ZIFE

Ah, Admiral Ross, Captain Kira. Thank you for joining us.

ROSS

Thank you, Mister President.

Kira walks nervously down the length of the room, aware that everyone is watching her. Krim tries to encourage her.

KRIM

My honoured friends, Captain Kira has come today to answer your questions about the motion before us - whether to approve a diplomatic fleet to contact the Ascendants. First Minister Asarem has made it clear to me that as the most senior Bajoran officer in Starfleet, Captain Kira represents all of Bajor in this matter. She is to be shown all due respect by this Council, and you may take her words as those of all of Bajor.

No pressure. As Krim retires to his own seat, Kira looks up at Sisko in the stands. Then out at all the waiting faces.

ZIFE

Perhaps you would begin, Captain, by explaining your reasons for this mission in the first place.

KIRA

Gladly, Mister President.

(deep breath)

As you all know, the people of Bajor worship the Prophets, the entities you may refer to as the Wormhole Aliens. To us they are gods. But we are not the only ones who believe. In fact, it has recently come to light that there are three of us.

FLASHBACK - 9x24 "HA'MARA"

In the wormhole, Kira stands in a circle of three Kiras - herself, Iliana Ghemor, and the Mirror Iliana.

BACK TO SCENE

Kira blinks, surprised by the force of the memory. Or was it more? She looks up to Sisko again. He looks back, worried for her. She steadies her nerves and starts again.

KIRA

The Eav'oq live on the other side of the wormhole. They are peaceful, opposed to violence of any kind. But there are also the Ascendants, and according to all reports, they are not so peaceful. They are searching for the wormhole, and they will destroy the Eav'oq to reach it. I have requested this mission to try to meet the Ascendants in peace before that happens, and save the Eav'oq's lives.

The various councillors mutter among themselves. Vulcan's representative, an ancient wrinkled female called T'LATREK, speaks up first.

T'LATREK

If your intentions are peaceful, why take a heavily armed fleet?

KIRA

For precisely the reasons that concern Councillor Gleer. While we may wish to meet in peace, the Ascendants may have no such intention.

GLEER

I still do not see why we ought to concern ourselves with this at all. Why defend a world that is not a member of this body? It goes against everything the Federation stands for.

Kira looks up to Sisko again - exactly what Bashir said. The African-styled human representative, MAZIBUKO, speaks.

MAZIBUKO

Captain, there are wars going on all over this galaxy every day. The Federation does not involve itself in every little conflict. It cannot afford to do so.

KIRA

Little conflict? Like Cardassia versus Bajor, you mean? That was one "little" conflict the Federation decided it couldn't afford to get involved in.

Mazibuko tenses in anger and humiliation at Kira's rebuke. T'Latrek tries to recover the diplomacy in the room.

T'LATREK

Perhaps what my colleague meant to say is that our legal remit to intervene militarily does not extend past the Federation's borders. However, for myself, I see no reason not to at least attempt peaceful contact with these Ascendants. It is no more than Starfleet's many explorer vessels do on a daily basis.

The Betazoid councillor, a middle-aged male named ENAREN, speaks up.

ENAREN

I agree, Councillor T'Latrek. Perhaps we should even go as far as full alliance with these Ascendants. After all, they have presented no threat to us, and they have already attacked an enemy of the Federation.

KRIM

The Dominion is not an enemy, Councillor Enaren. Bajor has enjoyed a full and peaceful diplomatic partnership with them for months now.

ENAREN

(pointedly)

The Federation... has not.

It is clear that Enaren has some personal issues with the Dominion, but then, he is Betazoid.

T'LATREK

If I may, Mister President, I propose that now is the perfect time for this body to follow Bajor's example. Consider this - the only two changelings presently directing events in the Dominion are Odo and Laas, both of whom hold views quite contrary to the other Founders. Indeed, neither would consider themselves Founders at all. If there is any time to work with the Dominion, it is now.

GLEER

There can be no alliance with the Dominion! They are the anti-Federation - a group of worlds under the heel of one ruling

species, not working together equally in common cause. And the Jem'Hadar are nothing but bloodthirsty animals.

T'LATREK

Was there not a time when your own people said much the same about the Andorians, Councillor? Or for that matter, when my people said the same about the humans? And yet, here we all are.

ZIFE

(breaking in)

That is an argument for another time, my friends. For now, let us return to the point. The Federation has defended member worlds in their conflicts with other races before. The Delta versus the Carreon, for example. Why not now?

GLEER

Because this is not Bajor's conflict!

KIRA

We believe it is. The Eav'oq are a sister world to Bajor. We consider it a matter of conscience to help them.

GLEER

The Federation does not. We do not consider one planet on the other side of the galaxy to be a Federation member, especially when even they do not.

KIRA

Even if that's true, Councillor, wouldn't you help simply because a member world asked you to?

GLEER

The Eav'oq do not want our help,
Captain. And more than that, they
have no right to expect our help.

KIRA

Well, if the Federation will not
assist in what Bajor considers to
be a vital matter of life and
death for an entire race...

She glances up to Sisko again, looking for strength and the
determination to go through with her final gambit.

KIRA (cont)

...then maybe Bajor should not be
a member of the Federation.

On everyone's amazed reaction, not least Sisko's... and on
Kira's face of determination...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW