

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x14 - "Against the Odds."

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Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

incorporating elements from

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Rising Son
by SD Perry

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. WADI STREETS - EARLY EVENING

Pick up exactly where we left it last time. JAKE, NOG and RENA have run into crew from the *Even Odds* - captain DEZ, first officer FACITY, and a human-looking teenage girl of about 16, named MEERA (who we have not seen before).

All are very surprised to see each other. But before they can explain, they are all surrounded by Wadi police, armed and ready to use it.

Inspector MUNAD is in charge, pointing his weapon right at Dez...

MUNAD

Zin Dezovrim, Facity Sleedow...
You're under arrest.

Dez and Facity grit their teeth - caught.

JAKE

Wait - Inspector, this must be a
mistake. Dez isn't --

MUNAD

Do you know each other?

JAKE

Yes.

DEZ

No.

They stare at each other.

Jake is offended - why would Dez deny knowing him?

Dez's eyes are pleading with Jake to stay out of it.

MUNAD

Do you want to try that again?

No-one knows what to say. Nog and Rena are on edge, not sure what's going on. Dez and Facity are tense, ready to move at a moment's notice...

MUNAD

I find this all very interesting. You kids say you're from the Federation, a supposedly good and just society. You fight so hard to get your ship back. You act so innocent and righteous. And then it turns out you're such close friends with the most notorious criminal gang in the sector that you'll try to defend them to me.

FACITY

"Notorious"? I like the sound of that.

Dez shoots her a look. But Jake has figured it out now...

JAKE

It was you? You're the ones who were going to buy our ship from Lebikow?

FACITY

Your ship?

MUNAD

Don't bother acting surprised, Mz Sleedow. You provided your old friend and colleague Mister Lebikow with the codes to break into the ship, after all.

DEZ

Jake, you have to believe me, I had no idea you had anything to do with this. What are you even doing here?

NOG

(breaking in)

We were on a road trip.

FACITY

A road trip?

RENA

What does it matter what we're doing here? We're not the ones being arrested.

MUNAD

That's still to be determined, young lady.

Under all of this, the young girl Meera is gazing at Nog, curiously, as if trying to place his face.

Meanwhile, all the Wadi police keep their eyes peeled, their weapons drawn. It's a very tense situation...

DEZ

Leave them out of it. They're innocent.

MUNAD

A heart, Dez? Maybe you're not as tough as the stories would paint you.

DEZ

You don't know anything about me, Munad.

MUNAD

Well, now I'll have plenty of time to learn. Boys...?

Dez and Jake both tense. Dez looks to the girl...

DEZ

Meera...

The girl smiles smugly, and MORPHS.

Her entire shape shifts into a ball of golden goo. SHOOTs out arms of protoplasm lightning fast, WHIPS the guns from the police's hands, KNOCKS them all in the heads.

In seconds, they are all unconscious on the ground. Then she reforms into the girl. Jake, Nog and Rena all gasp in surprise...

NOG
A changeling...

Dez looks at Jake, a bit embarrassed and guilty about all this. But Jake is only glaring at him accusingly.

Dez speaks into a wrist-comm...

DEZ
Dez to *Even Odds*. Get us out of here, now.

FACITY
Good to see you again, Jake. Take care of yourself.

And then the transporter signal takes them. They're gone.

Jake slaps his own combadge...

JAKE
Sisko to *Rio Grande*. Prynn, beam us up, and get ready to leave.

TENMEI (comm)
What's going on?

JAKE
Look for a freighter breaking orbit - we're following them.

Jake is pissed. Nog and Rena are mostly just confused. And then the transporter takes them too.

Ending on the unconscious bodies of Munad and his men...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 EXT. SPACE - WADI HOMEWORLD

All the freighters and tourist ships wait in queues. One ship ZOOMS out of the melée at right angles - the patch work freighter *Even Odds*, last seen 10x01 "Emancipation."

As it breaks through the lines and bolts out of the area, we see another ship chasing after it - the *Rio Grande*.

3 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

The doors open and Dez strides in, Facity close behind. Karemma chief engineer PREES runs the bridge, with Dosi security chief BRAD and Cardassian medic GLESSIN at other stations. All confused as to the change of plans...

PREES

What's going on?

FACITY

The usual. The job's dead. Just get us out of here.

BRAD

(off panels)

Dez... there's another ship following us.

DEZ

(small, tight)

Ignore it.

GLESSIN

(off panels; amazed)

Is that... Starfleet?

BRAD

They're hailing.

DEZ

I said ignore it!

FACITY

Dez... come on. This is Jake.

BRAD

(gasp)

Jake?

Dez doesn't want to deal with this. But under pressure from everyone else, he eventually caves and nods towards Brad.

The main viewscreen changes to show the cockpit of the *Rio Grande*. TENMEI is piloting, with Jake hovering over her shoulder, grim and determined. Nog and Rena stay back...

JAKE (screen)

Don't run away from me, Dez.

DEZ

Leave me alone, Jake.

JAKE (screen)

Dez, I swear if you don't pull over now, I will open fire.

On screen, the others look at him askance. What is going on here? On the *Even Odds* bridge, the crew is looking at Dez likewise confused. After more grinding of teeth...

DEZ

Fine. Rendezvous at the tenth planet in the system.

And then he stabs a panel at his side, cutting the signal. He nods reluctantly at Prees, who speaks out loud...

PREES

Srral, you heard the man.

At the otherwise unoccupied helm console, a SILVER LIQUID flows out of an open panel and across the surface...

4 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Shar emerges from the rear cabin, holding onto the wall against the runabout's movements. He spots Nog and Rena...

SHAR
What has happened?

NOG
All those stories Jake told us
about his adventures with a pirate
ship in the Gamma Quadrant -
apparently they were true... and
now we're chasing them.

Shar looks forward to Tenmei, wanting to speak to her...

5 **EXT. SPACE**

A small and rocky dwarf planet on the far edges of the Wadi system. The *Even Odds* sits in orbit, its large rear shuttle hatch open to space. *Rio Grande* is manoeuvring inside...

6 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

The view from inside the ship as we move into the *Even Odds* cargo bay. Tenmei is at the helm, Shar by her side...

SHAR
Prynn... I'm not sure what the
protocol is after nearly being
sick on a person.

TENMEI
No no, that's fine. What girl
doesn't dream of making a man
vomit just by kissing him?

Shar looks at her, confused - was that a joke?

TENMEI
That was a joke, Shar. Seriously,
it's fine. Don't worry about it.
In fact, up to that point I'd say
things were going pretty well.

She glances at him with a mischievous grin. He smiles back, relieved. Then she returns her attention to her helm...

Jake, Nog and Rena emerge from the rear cabin, having taken the chance to freshen up...

NOG
Alright then, let's meet these
legendary soldiers of fortune.

Jake is not looking very friendly, and Rena has noticed...

7 **INT. EVEN ODDS - HANGAR**

The runabout hatch opens... and Nog, Tenmei, Shar, Jake and Rena step out, a little nervously. The moment Jake appears, PIF launches upon him, a big ball of furry excitement with tail wagging furiously. Jake LAUGHS in delight...

PIF
Jake!

NOG
(flinch back)
Eeeee! Another flurble thing!

JAKE
Don't worry, Nog. This one's
perfectly safe. This is Pif. And
he's the fastest Aarruri in the
Gamma Quadrant!

Pif steps back, a little saddened. He lifts his front paw, which Jake now notices is slightly thinner and weaker...

PIF
Not anymore. My leg got broken
about half a cycle ago. Glessin
did his best, but it never really
healed right. So I'm out of the
running, as they say.

JAKE
Oh Pif, I'm so sorry. I know how
much it meant to you.

Jake recovers, and tenses a bit for the introductions...

JAKE
Everyone, this is Dez, the captain
of the *Even Odds*.

Dez nods but remains distant. Hulking Dosi woman BRAD grabs Jake in an enormous bear hug. Side-eyes all around...

JAKE
(trouble breathing)
Hi... Brad...

BRAD
Oh Jake, it's so good to see you,
I've been so worried...

Brad lets go, and Jake recovers with a deep breath...

JAKE
This is Bradahk'la - Brad for short
- the ship's jewel expert and part-
time security chief. And that's Feg
and Triv - accountants, shockingly.
Guys, these are my friends.
(in turn)
Prynn, pilot extraordinaire. Shar,
chief science officer. This is my
best friend Nog, son of Rom...

FEG and TRIV instantly launch on Nog, cower before him,
simpering obsequiously and chattering over each other...

FEG
You're the Grand Nagus's son?

TRIV
Oh, welcome, sir, welcome welcome
welcome...

FEG
If there's anything we can do for
you, anything at all...

TRIV
I'm a big fan of your father, big
big fan...

DEZ
Alright, guys, that's enough. Give
the man some air.

FEG

Of course, whatever you need...

As the Ferengi back away, Jake is amused at his friend's expense. With a love-struck smile he reaches for Rena...

JAKE

And last but not least, this is
Azeni Korena... my wife.

BRAD

Your... wife?

Cheers and congratulations all around. Pif trots up to Rena, gives her a playful sniff, nods wryly...

PIF

She'll do.

The others chuckle goodnaturedly. Brad smiles - a tense smile that hides her true feelings...

BRAD

Well, I hope you're very happy
together. Congratulations.

Tenmei sees the look on Brad's face, knows what it means - Brad is sweet on Jake. Tenmei glances over to Shar...

PIF

Can you stay? There's so many
things to catch you up on...

Jake looks at Dez, his gaze challenging him. There is still tension between them, despite the friendly cover.

DEZ

Fine. Just don't get in the way.
We have a schedule to keep to.

PIF

Yes! Come on, there's someone I
want you to meet.

And Pif is off, tail wagging. The others trail behind. But as Jake passes Dez, there is still a bit of a glare...

8 **INT. EVEN ODDS - CORRIDOR**

Continuing down the corridor, Rena catches up to Jake, whispers *sotto* to him...

RENA

What's going on with you? You told me these guys were your friends. So why are you treating Dez that way?

Jake doesn't want to answer. He glances behind him, where all the others are following. Dez hangs to the back. Nog checks the walls, with different designs and materials....

NOG

Why is everything so mismatched?

PIF

That's the *Even Odds* for you. It's a really old ship, maybe hundreds of years old. It's been rebuilt and patched over constantly with whatever the owners could find.

As the group passes an open panel of circuits in one wall, a STREAK of silver liquid shoots past across the circuits. A second STREAK of golden liquid chases it, with the oddly disembodied sound of girlish GIGGLING somewhere...

TENMEI

What was that?

PIF

Oh, that's just Srral and Meera. They like to chase each other through the ship. It's the first time Srral's had anyone to play with since he left home.

JAKE

Yeah, about that - how in the hell do you have a changeling on board?

DEZ

She's part of my crew.

NOG

I thought all the changelings had
vanished into the galaxy.

PIF

Dez has a thing for taking in
strays. Like Jake! And that
Jem'Hadar, whatever his name
was... Tarana-something.

NOG

What?!

TENMEI

Taran'atar was on this ship? When
was this?

PIF

About half a cycle ago. Saved us
from some other Jem'Hadar. He was
actually kind of a good guy. For a
Jem'Hadar anyway. I wonder what
ever happened to him?

NOG

He's back on Deep Space Nine. He's
an "ambassador" now.

PIF

Well good for him. Here we are!

9 INT. EVEN ODDS - QUARTERS

The door opens on cushions, toys, things to climb on - and
another Aarruri, a female. Her name is SETT, and she trots
over to greet Pif with an intimate nuzzling of snouts...

PIF

Sett, this is Jake, the human I
told you about. These are his
friends and his wife, Korena. Jake,
this is Settki Ganni... my wife.

JAKE

Pif, that's wonderful! I'm very
pleased to meet you, Sett.

SETT

You too, Jake. Pif talks about you
all the time.

PIF

You wanna meet the rest of the
family?

NOG

(cringe)

There's more?

Our gang files closer into the room. Pif leads them over to
a padded basket in the corner. Tenmei and Rena peek in...

...and it's filled with half a dozen tiny, wriggling green
BABY AARRURI. Rena and Tenmei explode from the cuteness...

RENA

Oh, Prophets, they're adorable!

TENMEI

Look at the tiny little noses! Can
I take one home with me?

JAKE

Pif, I can't believe you're a
father!

PIF

Well, after I hurt my leg, I
realised it was time to stop
gallivanting around, and settle
down and raise a family. I am
almost eight, you know!

(beat)

But it's good to see you, Jake.
And it's perfect timing that
you're here. It's an exciting time
to be on the *Even Odds*.

JAKE

How so?

SETT

Because of the Wa.

TENMEI

What's the Wa?

PIF

When I said the ship's really old?
Nobody really knows exactly how
old it is. But the Wa is the only
original part of the ship left.

SETT

It's what helps all the new
patches and repairs take hold.

JAKE

It also reacts to changes in the
local space-time. Pif - has
something changed in the Wa?

PIF

Kinda-sorta. You remember how I
told you to never ever touch
anything in there? 'Cause we
didn't know what would happen?

JAKE

Yeah...

PIF

...Somebody touched something.

On Jake's intrigued reaction...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

10 INT. EVEN ODDS - TURBOLIFT

The five Alphies, plus Prees and Pif are all crammed into the turbolift tightly, but Pif chatters away oblivious...

PIF

...so he said, since the Jem'Hadar worked out so well, why not give a changeling a chance? Facity had plenty to say about that, believe me. But it's Dez's ship, I guess. And she seems nice enough. A-ha!

The lift stops and the door opens...

11 THE WA

...onto a wide open WHITE SPACE, seemingly dimensionless. The turbolift door appears to open out of nowhere, into nowhere. Fascinated, our gang takes tentative steps...

TENMEI

What the... I... what?

JAKE

I know, right?

Tenmei has noticed the irregular coloured SMUDGES that seem to hang in mid-air at points. She reaches to touch one...

TENMEI

What are these?

PREES

Those are what you're not supposed to touch.

Tenmei yanks her hand away.

SHAR

But you said someone did touch them.

PREES

Yes, me. Completely by accident.
I... tripped and fell into one.

TENMEI

So what happened?

PIF

Try it and find out.

Tenmei looks to Jake - *do you trust them?* Jake nods to go ahead. She reaches slowly out towards one of the splotches, a warm purplish colour. Her fingers swim into the colour, and there is a big WASH of energy, taking us into...

12 INT. WA ENVIRONMENT ROOM

...another room, dark and small. The gang's all here, and floating in the air in front of them is a small fist-sized black BALL, doing nothing, just hanging there...

PIF

Oh good, I like this one.

TENMEI

What is it?

PIF

No idea. Step closer.

Tentatively, she does. In response the ball EXPANDS, starts humming, vibrating. It begins to SPIN faster and faster... HUM louder and louder... then it suddenly stops...

...and BURSTS into a ball of spikes, a tiny symbolic sun. Tenmei YELPS and steps back - the ball returns to its dormant state. Shar looks around, antennae reaching...

SHAR

This is fascinating. It seems to function like a holodeck, but I can't detect any transmitters. Perhaps some kind of telepathic imprint? I wonder if we all even perceive the same thing...

PIF

Every time you enter, it takes you
to a different place. The other
colours make other things happen.

RENA

Like what?

PIF

(spooky)

Press orange... and you hear voices.

TENMEI

And how do you get out?

PREES

You're the one who got us in. So
you focus on the central object in
the room - the ball in this case -
and just back away from it.

Tenmei concentrates on the ball... takes three steps
back... there is a big WASH of energy...

13 THE WA

...and we are back in the white space of the Wa.

SHAR

I would like to investigate more,
if that's acceptable.

PREES

Fine with me. But I spend all my
free time down here and I haven't
figured it out yet.

SHAR

I'll just get some equipment from
the runabout and begin immediately.

NOG

I'm gonna freshen up. I smell like
my uncle's store room...

Pif leads them back to the still-open turbolift door...

14 **INT. EVEN ODDS - QUARTERS**

One of the *Even Odds'* small and functional guest quarters. Nog emerges from the off-screen bathroom area into the main room, shirt off, patting his big bald head with a towel.

He JUMPS a bit as, in a lower corner of the room, Srral and Meera (in liquid form) chase each other out of one air vent and into another, the girlish GIGGLING following them.

Then the golden liquid creeps back out into the room again, as if curious about Nog. The blob of liquid MORPHS into the humanoid form of Meera - usual unformed changeling features and dress, but as a teenage girl. She peers at Nog...

MEERA

I know you. Starfleet Ferengi.

NOG

I thought I recognised you down on the planet. We rescued you from the crashed ship, right?

FLASHBACK - 8x22 "GREATER GOOD"

The teenaged Founder sits among the long-dead bodies of her Jem'Hadar crew in the canted, crashed Dominion ship...

MEERA

I was taught to believe solids can never be trusted. But I trusted my own kind to come for me, and here I have been for two years.

BACK TO SCENE

The changeling girl smiles warmly...

MEERA

I was grateful to you for that.

NOG

But how did you end up working here? On a pirate ship, taking orders from a "solid"... it's not very "Founder-ish", is it?

MEERA

I haven't felt very "Founder-ish" for some time. I had barely had time to reconnect with my people in the Link before they began chattering about the Progenitor, some almighty being they believed would save them from extinction. The older changelings, they took it as given. As you can see, I am still newly formed. I didn't understand. When they left, I went along with it, just out of companionship. But they wanted isolation. I wanted experience.

NOG

(small smile)

So you found some new friends.

MEERA

(bitter)

The other changelings are hypocrites. They talk about wanting to learn, but then they hide away, refusing to risk anything for that knowledge. I will never go back to them.

NOG

(gently)

Not all the Founders left, you know. Odo stayed behind.

MEERA

(curious)

Odo...?

NOG

He's been trying to hold the Dominion together all by himself. From what I've heard, he could use some help.

Meera almost considers it for a moment...

MEERA

No. This is my home now. I have seen and done more in these few months than half my people have in aeons. Let the Dominion fall. I don't care anymore.

With that, she MORPHS into a liquid and slips back inside the vent, leaving Nog alone...

15 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Dez in command, Facity and Glessin (plus others unnamed) at other stations. The lift door opens and Jake steps in...

FACITY

Jake!

Facity gets up and gives him a welcoming hug. Glessin offers a reserved but genuine handshake...

GLESSIN

Mister Sisko. Welcome back.

JAKE

Thanks Facity, Glessin.

He glances towards Dez, who has not even looked at him.

Facity shrugs in apology - she has no idea what's going on between the two of them. She gestures for Jake to go over.

Jake approaches. Dez glances up, and straight back to his work, teeth gritted. Doesn't want to talk to him.

JAKE

Hey Dez... why did you run?

DEZ

Did you miss the part where we nearly got arrested? I realise this may be outside your area of expertise, but in those circumstances it's generally accepted practise to run.

JAKE

I meant from me. Is it just because you were going to steal my ship?

DEZ

(defensive)

That was a misunderstanding. Look, there was no harm done.

He gets up and turns away, heads to the rear stations...

DEZ (cont)

If you'll excuse me, I have to get ready for the next job. We're due at Drang tomorrow.

JAKE

Drang? Didn't we do that already?

DEZ

You think we only go anywhere once? We go where the work is.

Dez buries his head in the work, ignoring Jake. Facity can only silently apologise again. Jake won't get anywhere...

16 THE WA

Shar stands in the Wa, surrounded by pieces of Starfleet technology, all beeping and chirruping. He holds out a tricorder, takes readings, compares the readings to the larger machines. He is quite content just working away.

In the middle of the flat white space, a HOLE opens up and reveals the turbolift, disgorging Rena. Shar looks up...

SHAR

Mrs Sisko. Do you need anything?

RENA

Rena, Shar - it's Rena. Nog went to wash up. Prynn's playing with the puppies. Jake went to talk to the captain... he's certainly not talking to me. So I thought I'd come and see what you're up to.

SHAR

I am analysing my readings of this environment. Prees gave me access to all her records - it makes for absorbing work.

Shar walks towards a coloured splotch of a fiery orange colour, points his tricorder at it...

RENA

Isn't that the one Pif said made you hear voices?

SHAR

It is. I thought perhaps to run it through our linguistic database. The work we did on the Cathedral artefact might help us translate the voices where Prees could not.

Tentatively, Shar reaches out and touches the splotch. His blue fingers SWIM into the amorphous orange colour...

...and the white formlessness around them dims to a gentle yellow-orange colour. Distant VOICES whisper... Rena is enchanted. Shar is just concentrating on his readings...

SHAR

It will take a few minutes for the translation to take effect.

RENA

Actually, there was something I wanted to ask you. Shar... have I done something to offend you?

SHAR

Of course not, Mrs Sisko. Why would you think that?

RENA

Well, for one thing, you won't even use my name. And this, right now - these are the first words you've said to me since we left DS-Nine. Do you just not like me?

Shar finally pulls himself away from his machines. He tries to figure out how to be honest with his feelings...

SHAR

Forgive me, Rena. I meant no offence. I am simply not sure of my place in this company. You and Jake are married. Jake's relationship with Nog takes precedence over mine. And Prynn and I...

He drifts off, not sure what more to say about that...

RENA

Shar, I'm more of an outsider here than you are. The rest of you all have so much in common already. I'm just a baker's daughter from a small fishing village. But you never get anywhere if you don't try. As for Prynn... I can see it's complicated. I think I heard you're married...?

SHAR

(evasive)

Andorian bonding rituals do not correlate directly to those of other races...

RENA

I've been where you are. I've felt attracted to one person while I'd made a promise to another. I took a chance, and it worked out. But I wouldn't go so far as to say that you should always take the chance. There's more to worry about than just your feelings.

SHAR

...I know.

Rena forcibly changes the subject...

RENA

So! Any theories on this place?

SHAR

Hundreds. None of them provable.
Elements of organic technology
help the ship's many divergent
systems to work together. There
must be sub-spatial sensitivity,
as it responded to the folding of
space that concealed the Eav'oq.
And there is the question of its
indeterminate age.

RENA

It reminds me of how the vedeks
describe the Celestial Temple.
Warm white light, no dimensions,
whispering voices...

SHAR

With respect, Rena, I do not
believe the *Even Odds* turbolift
system opens onto the Bajoran
afterlife.

She pouts, wryly amused at the joke. Then, amongst the many
voices, one word comes through loud and clear in English...

VOICE

...proof...

Shar and Rena stop, listening closer...

RENA

Did you hear that?

SHAR

The translator has found enough
repetition to begin its work.

Shar works his tricorder... Rena listens closely as more
words begin to emerge out of the mass of sounds...

VOICES

...dare... do they?... must...
fools... destroy...

Shar and Rena look to each other, alarmed. More words...

VOICES
...assignment... signs...

Words are becoming clearer still, forming into phrases.
With every one, Rena and Shar become more worried...

VOICES
...signs are clear... there can
be no question... what are they
called?... does it matter? ...
they are called the Drang. They
worship falsely... they must be
destroyed...

The clear words go silent for a moment, as if thinking or
checking. The formless whispering voices swirling around
them, the orangey light giving it all a fiery glow...

VOICES
...we are in agreement... you must
remember your vow, your promise to
her... interrogate them, follow
the signs... they are sinners,
abhorrent... you are a soldier of
the True, a Knight of the
Ascendants...
(beat)
...destroy the Drang.

On Rena and Shar's shocked, horrified reactions...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

17 INT. EVEN ODDS - MESS HALL

The large room where the *Even Odds* crew meet to eat, plan and hang out. Beginning on Dez, looking sceptical...

DEZ

The Ascendants.

WIDEN to reveal that all five Alphies are at the table, plus Dez, Facity and Prees. Shar is holding a padd...

NOG

Yes. They're --

JAKE

He's heard of them, Nog.

FACITY

They're just a legend, aren't they?

JAKE

Tell that to the crew of *Gryphon*.

SHAR

The voices clearly said they were going to destroy a people called the Drang. Do you know of them?

DEZ

(small, tight)

They're our next job.

NOG

You can't go, Captain. You have to get as far away as possible.

DEZ

It's too late for that. We entered orbit ten minutes ago.

TENMEI

And is anything happening?

DEZ
(tightly)
No. Everything's fine.

FACITY
Dez...

DEZ
Shut up.

JAKE
Fac? Please... what is it?

FACITY
We haven't been able to get in
touch with our contacts. All the
comm lines are scrambled.

NOG
They're here.

DEZ
There could be any number of
reasons. We don't give up on a job
just because of a bad comm line.

JAKE
(sarcastic)
Of course. Money comes first.

TENMEI
Captain, please. We're trying to
help. We've seen first-hand what
the Ascendants are capable of.

DEZ
There are no Ascendants. Nobody
here but us and a few Drang ships.

SHAR
Their vessels are very small. They
could be hiding.

DEZ
Why should I believe you? Because
the voices in the Wa told you?

SHAR

(simply)

Yes. I believe the voices are a comm system that we inadvertently intercepted. During our first encounter with the Ascendants, all the Starfleet crews took extensive sensor readings.

(re padd)

Given my suspicions, I went back over Prees's readings, compared them to ours with a fresh eye.

FACITY

And what did you find?

SHAR

I concluded that the *Even Odds* - or more specifically the Wa - is in fact Ascendant technology.

A moment for everyone to absorb. That's a pretty big claim.

DEZ

That's ridiculous.

JAKE

No, it's not. It makes perfect sense. You've told me from the beginning you've no idea how old this ship is, or where it came from. And that the Wa always helped the ship to repair itself after any damage or upgrades.

FACITY

Yes, it did. But so what?

JAKE

Opaka told me about meeting that Ascendant woman, Raiq, when she crashed her ship. It landed after a fight in orbit, but by the time she'd healed, so had the ship. Like it was alive.

PREES

Sounds like the Wa to me.

SHAR

Those coloured patches are the interface to activate various functions - communications, entertainment. Ascendants generally live and work alone - they would need amusement.

JAKE

The Wa reacted to the Iconians' gateways too, didn't it? And to the Eav'oq's space-folding trick. Maybe it's sensitive to that stuff as a connection to the wormhole.

NOG

It might be what powers that space-jump thing they do too.

DEZ

This is all fascinating, but I still don't see why I should care.

Rena has been quiet till now, but she finally speaks up...

RENA

Because this was meant to happen.

They all look at her, curious - even the other Alphies...

JAKE

Rena...? What do you mean?

RENA

It all adds up. Do you think it's a coincidence that all of this is happening now? That the Emissary's son was rescued by a ship based on Ascendant technology? That you'd discover the lost kai of Bajor, who had also been saved by an Ascendant... and that together you'd reawaken the Eav'oq?

DEZ
(deliberately
contrary)
Yes. All a coincidence.

RENA
Okay. How about you making friends
with Deep Space Nine's resident
Jem'Hadar? Or that the first time
Jake is back in the Gamma Quadrant
again, you just happen to try to
steal our ship? At the same time
somebody finally figures out how
the Wa works? Or that you'd have a
date with the Drang at the exact
moment the Ascendants are here?
Still a coincidence?

DEZ
Yes!

FACITY
Dez, come on...

DEZ
Facity, no! You can't possibly
think this is all some great plan
of the Bajoran gods.

RENA
How can you not? Look, I'm no
religious fundamentalist. But I
believe in the Prophets. I believe
they have a plan for everyone. And
this is too many coincidences to
deny. We're meant to be here, to
save the Drang from the Ascendants.

DEZ
There are no Ascendants!

The comm suddenly interrupts - SRRAL's artificial voice...

SRRAL (comm)
Dez, this is bridge.

DEZ
Go ahead, Srral.

SRRAL (comm)
Sensors detect large explosion on
surface of Drang homeworld.

Quiet, worried looks around the room...

JAKE
It's starting.

18 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

The main screen shows the DRANG PLANET, a burning patch big enough to have destroyed an entire city on its surface. All crew of both the *Even Odds* and *Rio Grande* stand appalled...

FACITY
What happened?

BRAD
It's the government centre. As much as the Drang can be said to have a government. No idea how or why.

SHAR
You should scan again for ships,
using these parameters.

Shar lifts his padd, pulls a chip out of it, holds it out to Facity. She takes the chip, plugs it into a console...

FACITY
Srral... do it.

SRRAL (comm)
Scanning, Facity.

A pause of a few moments...

SRRAL (comm)
Confirmed. Small ship matching
parameters holds position over
planet's northern magnetic pole.

DEZ

Alright, I believe you. Srral, get us out of here.

JAKE

No! We have to do something.

NOG

Jake...

DEZ

I'm not putting us in the middle of this. Srral --

SRRAL (comm)

(interrupting)

The vessel is scanning us.

Uh-oh. They've been detected. Jake is almost smug...

JAKE

You're already in the middle of it, Dez.

Nog suddenly takes firm command. Dez basically lets him...

NOG

Jake - get out of here, now.

JAKE

What?

NOG

Prynn - take them. All four of you. Get back to the runabout and power it down. Then hide inside.

TENMEI

Why?

SHAR

(realising)

He's right. The Ascendants have as many sensor records of us as we do of them. If they detect Starfleet technology on board...

TENMEI

Oh, hell. Alright, let's go.

JAKE

What about Rena? They know about Bajorans now. If they detect her... they'll kill us all.

NOG

Okay, Shar... find some way to mask your life signs. All of you, not just Rena - Raiq saw you and Prynn on the *Defiant* bridge. For all we know she told the rest of them to look out for you.

SHAR

I'm not sure how to do that without the runabout's power...

MEERA

(speaks up)

I can do it. I can cover the ship and block their life signs.

JAKE

Nog... what about you?

NOG

I wasn't on the bridge. Maybe they won't recognise me. So I'm going to talk to them... and try and get us all out of this alive. Stop talking and go! We've got seconds until they're on top of us.

MEERA

Come on - follow me.

Meera leads Jake, Rena, Tenmei and Shar into the lift. Jake spares a worried look for his friend - then they're gone.

Nog stands on the *Even Odds* bridge - a tiny little Ferengi amid these huge events. He strips off his uniform jacket, removes his rank pips, hides them under a console. But he keeps his combadge in his hand. Terrified but determined.

NOG
Oh... this was a bad idea.

19 INT. EVEN ODDS - CORRIDOR

Jake, Rena, Tenmei, Shar and Meera run down the corridor at top speed. No time for screams or jokes - this is for real.

20 INT. EVEN ODDS - HANGAR

They run into the hangar deck, where the *Rio Grande* sits. The runabout's hatch opens at their approach...

21 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

The four Alphies run into the cockpit - Tenmei immediately heads to the consoles, begins hitting buttons...

TENMEI
Computer, initiate full systems
shutdown. Power, drive systems,
sensors - kill it all. Now.

COMPUTER
Acknowledged.

TENMEI
Shar - help me!

Shar runs to the rear consoles and starts working them too. Jake and Rena stay out of the way, nervous and hugging each other. One by one, all the systems go dark and silent...

22 INT. EVEN ODDS - HANGAR

Meera LEAPS gracefully into the air, MORPHing as she goes. She becomes a wide, flat SHEET of changeling protoplasm, covering every square inch of the ship. It CREEPS from the fore to the stern, until it swallows the runabout whole...

23 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Silent now - all the machines are dead, and the lights are dark. The only light comes from the front window, filtered through Meera's golden body.

Jake and Rena hug each other. Tenmei turns to Shar, stands, approaches him slowly, and reaches out to hug him too. He clings on to her with mixed relief and fear...

24 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

They're waiting... waiting...

DEZ

(quiet)

I hope to hell you know what
you're doing.

NOG

So do I.

Back to waiting. It makes the tension worse. Eventually...

SRRAL (comm)

Incoming --

Before the synthetic voice can finish, a ball of FLAME bursts into life at the front of the bridge. Everyone flinches back from the force of it. After a second, the fire burns out and reveals an Ascendant male.

His name is BLAS. He stands calmly on the deck, peering imperiously at the crew, the image of the burning Drang homeworld behind him. He spots Nog, and seems to intuit that he is the one in charge, at least for the moment.

And Nog looks back at him, trying not to shudder or shake with fear. As the two of them stare each other down...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

25 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Nog and Blas measure each other up, while the *Even Odds* crew wait on tenterhooks. Nog is very nervous, but he put himself in this position, and now he will see it through...

BLAS

I am Blas, Archquester of the
Ascendancy.

NOG

Hi. My name's Nog.

BLAS

You are not Drang.

NOG

No...

BLAS

Fortunate for you. If you are not
Drang, why are you here?

NOG

We're... couriers. Salesmen. We
were here to meet a client.

BLAS

Your client is dead. If not now,
then soon.

NOG

Why? I mean, it's not like I can
do anything about it, but I was
just wondering... why are you
killing the Drang?

BLAS

They worship... falsely. They tell
tales of gods who will reward them
for prosperity.

NOG
Is that so bad?

BLAS
There are no gods but the True
Gods. And only the Ascendants may
worship the True. Tell me, Nog...
do you worship?

26 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Jake and Rena cling to each other. Shar and Tenmei sit in
the front seats, holding hands. All they can do is wait...

MEERA (o.s.)
Starfleet. There is a signal
coming from the bridge. Shall I
open a hole for it?

TENMEI
Will you still be able to block
our life signs?

MEERA (o.s.)
I believe so.

TENMEI
Then do it. Thank you.

A moment, then the COMM comes to life with processed voices
- Nog and Blas. They listen, scared for their friend...

NOG (comm)
My people believe in profit. In
making money. We believe the more
money you have, the better person
you are.

27 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Beginning on Nog's hand, gripping tight to his combadge...

BLAS
Material wealth. Pitiful. And not
so very different from the Drang.
But you have no gods?

NOG
That's right.

Blas holds his silver-skin hand out flat. A ball of FLAME bursts into life in his palm - he doesn't flinch. The fire blows away and reveals an IMAGE standing in Blas's palm...

...it is a DRANG - a reptiloid creature on its hind legs, hands up to protect itself from some unseen threat. Blas gazes down serenely at the moving image in his palm...

BLAS
The Drang Imperator. I questioned him - as deluded as he was, he may have held clues to the location of the Fortress of the True.

NOG
And did he tell you anything interesting?

BLAS
In fact, he did. He mentioned something of great interest to me, about a people called... Bajoran.

28 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Rena JERKS at Blas's words. Jake holds her tight...

BLAS (comm)
He said they used to have a colony not far from here, although it was destroyed some years ago.

29 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Continuing the conversation...

BLAS
You wouldn't know anything about that, would you? Perhaps you did business with them?

Nog lies with all the skill he can muster...

NOG

Never heard of them. We're not from around here. So... what happened to the Emperor?

BLAS

He told me what we needed to know. And then...

Blas pointedly closes his fist, crushing the image of the Drang, flames licking up between the fingers. Nog and everyone else get the message loud and clear...

BLAS

He was first. His city followed.

Blas opens the hand again, and he is now holding a BALL of throbbing, pulsating energy. He looks back at Nog...

BLAS

A device precisely this size was all I needed to destroy their main city. A much smaller device would do the same to this ship.

NOG

Now, hold on - there's no need for that. If you got what you needed out of the boss, why kill anybody else?

BLAS

(isn't it obvious?)

They shame the True. The Drang, the Eav'oq, the Bajorans... It is my sacred duty as a Knight of the Ascendants to cleanse the stars of heresy. So says the Fire.

NOG

The "fire"? Is that a person?

BLAS

The Fire was sent to us by the True. She is their emissary to the Ascendants.

30 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Everyone reacts to the familiar word. Jake and Rena are especially curious...

BLAS (comm)

With our path illuminated by the
Fire, we will find the Bajorans,
and all heretics... and they will
burn.

Rena tenses again...

31 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

Blas lowers his hand. This conversation is over.

BLAS

I suggest you leave now, if you do
not wish to share their fate.

The Ascendant seems to burst into FLAMES... and then he is gone. Nog still daren't breathe - it might all fall apart.

FACITY

(quiet)

Srral, keep sensors on that ship.

Nog lifts his combadge and speaks into it...

NOG

Jake? Did you all hear that?

32 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Jake speaks into the air...

JAKE

We heard it.

NOG (comm)

Get up here. Fast.

Curious now, the four get ready to leave. The golden film of changeling retracts itself away from the windows...

33 **EXT. SPACE - DRANG HOMEWORLD**

The planet as seen from space. The *Even Odds* sits in orbit, with the city-sized fire blazing on the planet's surface...

34 **INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE**

The turbolift door opens and everyone re-enters the bridge. Nog sags with relief to have his friends back...

TENMEI

Alright - what do we do?

DEZ

We get out of here.

JAKE

Dez, don't you dare. We have to help the Drang!

DEZ

Why, exactly? In what way is any of this my problem?

JAKE

You know, I just can't believe you, Dez. I can't believe I ever admired you or wanted to stay with you.

Dez throws his arms up in exasperation and annoyance...

DEZ

Oh, here it is! You want to know why I ran away from you, Jake? Because of this. This smug, self-righteous attitude I knew you'd throw at me. You think you're so morally superior to all of us.

JAKE

If you mean I won't stand by and let an entire race be massacred, then hell yeah, call me superior all you want. You? You only care about finding your next job.

DEZ

That's what we do! I don't live in your fabled money-less economy, Jake. I don't have the luxury of doing good deeds just so I can feel good about myself. I have a crew to feed and clothe, and a ship to keep running. And you know what? I do feel good about it. I bet your friend Nog there agrees.

Jake turns to Nog, clearly assuming his friend's support...

NOG

Oh no. You're not putting me in the middle of this.

JAKE

(astonished)

Nog...!

RENA

Both of you shut up, right now. Every word you yell at each other is another Drang being killed. And we have been sent here to save them. So forget your petty little squabbles for a minute and think about what we're going to do.

DEZ

Fine! Let's have some practical suggestions, then. If you're so determined to save the Drang, tell me how. Go on.

Rena takes a breath, and tries to rise to the challenge...

RENA

Alright. It's only one guy in one ship, right? It'll take him a long time to kill a whole planet's worth of people all on his own. That gives us time to just attack his ship and destroy it.

SHAR

Rena... I appreciate your desire to help, but even one Ascendant ship is a major threat.

JAKE

We have the runabout and the *Even Odds*. And you have your readings. We can find a way. We have to.

DEZ

This is a freighter ship. We barely have enough weapons to fend off the average asteroid, never mind apocalyptic aliens.

RENA

(pointed)

You have Ascendant technology.

They stop, considering that. They had forgotten...

NOG

Maybe she's right. Maybe there's some way we can turn their own technology against them. Shar, go over those readings, look for --

SRRAL (comm)

Ship breaks orbit, powers weapons.

Oh crap. Is it coming for us?

35 EXT. SPACE - DRANG HOMEWORLD

The northern pole of the planet. A tiny, silver ASCENDANT SHIP rises up from the surface, out of the orbital plane...

On the Ascendant ship, as a new device extrudes from its external hull - a kind of smooth, sleek missile launcher...

...and FIRES.

The missile goes nowhere near the planet or the *Even Odds* - instead it shoots straight off towards the Drang sun.

36 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

Everyone watches the screen, confused by this turn...

SRRAL (comm)
Missile aims for system's sun.

BRAD
What? Why?

NOG
(realising)
Oh no...

BRAD
What?

SRRAL (comm)
Sensors detect fluctuations in
star's gravitational and magnetic
fields.

SHAR
Let me see...

Shar goes to the panels at the rear of the bridge, begins working them... After a few moments, he turns back to his friends, a stricken look on his face...

SHAR
Readings are consistent with an
isolytic subspace burst.

Nog closes his eyes, hangs his head. Tenmei covers her mouth in horror, tears threatening...

TENMEI
Oh, God...

RENA
What does that mean?

Nobody really wants to say. Rena wants answers...

RENA
Guys! Come on, tell me!

Shar manages to explain in halting, horror-stricken tones.

SHAR

An isolytic weapon creates a sub-space tear - a hole in the fabric of local space-time. If the weapon were detonated inside a star, it would destabilise the nuclear reactions, forcing the star to nova. This means the star will eject a massive and catastrophic burst of radiation... which will scour the life from every world in the system. Every Drang, every life form, down to the smallest bacteria. All burning.

(beat)

And there is nothing we can do to stop it.

Rena is dumbfounded. She looks at Jake, Tenmei, Shar... nothing any of them can do. She looks to the screen...

37 EXT. SPACE - DRANG HOMEWORLD

Its work done, the Ascendant ship JUMPS away in a flash.

The next second, the star EXPLODES. It bursts in blindingly bright light, a massive wave of radiation expanding out in a spherical shell, growing slowly but steadily...

38 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

On everyone's sad, beaten, defeated expressions, as they watch these events on the main viewscreen...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

39 EXT. SPACE - DRANG SYSTEM

The NOVA grows, a shell of cast-off matter preceded by the wave of energy and power. It is moving at light speed, but at interstellar distances it still looks agonisingly slow.

40 INT. EVEN ODDS - BRIDGE

This sight is also relayed via the *Even Odds'* screen...

DEZ

(quiet but pointed)

Do I have your permission to leave
now, Jake?

RENA

No! We can't just give up! Shar,
Nog, there has to be something...

But they just sadly shake their heads. Jake reaches out to her, tries to comfort her. She won't have it.

SRRAL (comm)

Communications cleared. Ascendant
must have blocked signals before.

TENMEI

Put it on speakers.

FACITY

Why?

TENMEI

Because these are the last words
they'll ever say. They deserve to
have somebody hear them.

Facity nods to Shar. He works the panels, and the speakers come to life with the SOUNDS of chaos. Voices talking over each other, shouting and screaming, clearly in a panic.

The *Even Odds* and *Rio Grande* crews stand, listen solemnly.

SRRAL (comm)
Escape vessels launch from surface.

TENMEI
They can't all escape in four minutes. But at least some is better than none.

DEZ
(new idea)
Srral - move us to behind the planet, away from the sun. Then drop shields and begin transporting Drang on board. As many as you can get.

SRRAL (comm)
Who shall I choose?

DEZ
Random. Totally random. Facity, get on that helm and be ready.

FACITY
Hell yeah.

Newly energised, the crew get to work. Gently cradling the distraught Rena, Jake mouths silently to Dez...

JAKE
Thank you.

TENMEI
Two transporters are better than one. Shar, come on!

And she strides quickly to the turbolift, Shar behind her.

41 EXT. SPACE - DRANG SYSTEM

A pitiful few ESCAPE SHUTTLES launch from the surface, as in the background, the wave of nova energy approaches.

Even Odds manoeuvres into the shadow. At the same time, its rear cargo hatch opens and the *Rio Grande* emerges...

42 INT. EVEN ODDS - TRANSPORTER ROOM

Prees works the transporter, as Feg and Triv guide confused and terrified handfuls of DRANG off the platform, in time for the coils to power up and save the next half-dozen.

Among the panicked chattering and grunting of the Drang, Feg and Triv try their best to explain what is going on...

43 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

More DRANG appear in twos on the tiny runabout transporter stage. Shar receives them while Tenmei works the helm...

SHAR

Please move to the rear cabin.
I'll explain everything soon, but
first priority is to beam as many
aboard as possible.

(next pair)

Please move to the rear cabin...

TENMEI

Shar...!

Shar turns at Tenmei's worried tone, and sees the view...

...the wave of energy is almost at the planet, silhouetting against the growing light, making the whole area eclipse...

TENMEI

We need to go, now! I can't risk
taking any more. Get them secure.

44 EXT. SPACE - DRANG SYSTEM

...and the wave HITS.

The radiation scours the planet, just like Shar said. The concussive force of it kicks up the very surface. Ground is pulverised, buildings are vaporised, oceans are boiled.

At the last split second, the *Even Odds* and the *Rio Grande* jump to warp, escaping into space. The energy wave chases them, continuing on its way, until it HITS CAMERA, and we

WHITE OUT

Then **FADE IN** to:

45 EXT. SPACE

Some time later, the two small ships sit in the orbit of another planet, green and habitable. The few Drang shuttles that managed to escape are also in orbit.

46 INT. EVEN ODDS - HANGAR

Both crews stand in the hangar, looking out at the surface of the world and fleet through the open cargo bay hatch...

FACITY

That's the last of them. All the refugee ships, everyone we were able to save...

TENMEI

The last of them. Literally.

PIF

I can't stop thinking about everyone we left behind. All those people who lost their families, their children... if I ever lost my family...

Tenmei looks at him, thinking about something...

NOG

You think they'll be safe? The Ascendants won't come for them?

JAKE

We'll just have to hope, Nog.

NOG

But they've got nothing. No homes, no technology...

MEERA

The Dominion will take care of them.

TENMEI

(amazed)

I beg your pardon?

MEERA

The other changelings abandoned the Dominion. I will return to the Link, even if it only consists of Odo... and I will command the Jem'Hadar to help the Drang.

DEZ

Meera... are you sure?

MEERA

I am. Thank you for everything, Dez. I have cherished my time here. But now it is time to go.

Meera begins to stride towards the open hatch...

NOG

Meera, wait.

(she turns back)

Tell Odo... tell him that Kira wants the Dominion's help with the Ascendants. That she asked for an alliance. But Taran'atar said no. Will you do that?

MEERA

Happily, Nog. Goodbye.

Meera leaps into the air, MORPHS into a MISSILE of changing matter, passes through the forcefield... and is gone.

The rest turn as if to go. But Jake calls after them...

JAKE

Dez, hold on. There's something else I want to talk about.

DEZ

Oh for crying out loud, Jake. If you're going to complain about me stealing your ship again --

JAKE

That's not it. I accept that you did everything you could to save as many Drang as possible. But there's something else you could do to help.

(anticipates
his protest)

It won't cost you anything. And if you can help, do you honestly not feel any obligation to do it?

DEZ

(grudging)

What's your idea?

JAKE

That you listen. That's all. Maybe this is even the real reason for all of Rena's coincidences. There is a way to use the Ascendant tech in this ship to our advantage, and we can do it by listening.

NOG

(gets it now)

To the Wa.

JAKE

Exactly. Shar, you could give them your translation program. Nog, you could give them a code to access the wormhole relay. And Dez... you could listen to whatever the Ascendants say, and pass it on to us. And we can use it to stop them. So what do you say?

Nog, Shar, Rena and Tenmei look on hopefully. Dez stands silently considering it, aware that everyone is waiting...

47 EXT. SPACE

Focusing on the *Rio Grande*, sitting in orbit of the Drang's nameless new colony world...

48 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Tenmei and Shar are getting ready to go, once again putting the ship back together. Shar is relaxed, relieved... Tenmei still has something on her mind...

SHAR

I am glad we could convince Dez to help. The extinction of a species is an issue that's rather close to my heart, you understand.

Tenmei nods absently. Shar comes up close to her, reaches out for her hand. She lets him take it, reluctantly...

SHAR

I am also looking forward to returning to the station. And "picking up where we left off."

He leans in for a kiss... she pulls away from him...

TENMEI

Shar... don't.

SHAR

What's wrong? Did I upset you?

TENMEI

No. Well, yes, sort of. But no.
(sags)
Oh God... I can't do this.

SHAR

I don't understand. You said --

TENMEI

I know I did. And I meant it. But then I came here. I saw Brad... it's plain as day she has a thing for Jake. But when she heard he got married... she backed off in a second. Didn't say another word about it. Another woman's husband is off limits, end of discussion.

SHAR

But Prynn, you know Andorians --

TENMEI

And Pif, and his wife and babies.
If anything ever came between
them, stopped him from watching
his children grow up... he as near
as said it would kill him. How can
I do that to another family?

SHAR

Prynn, what are you saying?

TENMEI

That I can't do this. Us. I want to.
I want to so much. You're beautiful
and sensitive, and I know I'm
hurting you. And it probably doesn't
help to tell you I'm hurting myself
too. But better that than get
involved with a married man and
break up a family. I let myself
think I could do it for a minute, I
wanted to think I could do it... but
I can't. I'm sorry, Shar... I can't.

She turns and walks away, crying, leaving Shar confused...

49 THE WA

Shar stands inside the white nothingness of the Wa, guiding
Prees through his translation program using a padd. Prees
reaches out and touches the orange splotch in front of her.
The Wa dims, and the formless, whispering VOICES return.

The turbolift opens, again carrying Rena. She wanders out
slowly, looking around. It no longer looks as enchanting to
her as it did. She tentatively approaches the others...

SHAR

Hello, Rena. Can I help you?

RENA

Prynn told me what happened. I
wanted to see if you were okay.

PREES

I'll leave you two alone.

Prees pulls away and heads to the turbolift. She enters, and the door closes behind her, leaving empty space...

RENA

How are you feeling?

SHAR

Confused. Continually pulled back and forth. I had thought Andorian relationships were among the most complex in the Federation. But I am learning human relationships can be just as perplexing.

RENA

Yep. That they are. But if you need somebody to talk to, somebody who has no romantic investment in you whatsoever... I'm willing.

SHAR

I appreciate that. Thank you.

RENA

(change subject)

So Prees is going to listen in to the Ascendants for us?

SHAR

She is. She will submit weekly reports through the relay... Rena?

He trails off, because Rena is looking very worried all of a sudden. She heard something, something in the voices...

RENA

Shar, have you been recording this? Can you run it back?

SHAR

Uhh... yes, if you wish.

He works the padd. The sound of the voices REWINDS by a few seconds, and plays over again. We can't make any of it out any clearer, but Rena apparently can, and it worries her...

RENA

Jake said there's a Cardassian on board, right?

SHAR

The ship's medic, I believe.

RENA

Get him. Get him down here right now. And everyone else.

CUT TO:

50 THE WA

The five Alphies, plus Dez and Glessin, are now gathered around Shar's padd in the orange-hued Wa...

RENA

Shar - play it back again.

Shar taps buttons, and the voices replay. Glessin listens intently... and recognises the words with fascination...

DEZ

What does it say?

GLESSIN

It says... "I am the Fire."

TENMEI

"The Fire"... that's what the Ascendant guy said was their version of the Emissary, right? Sent to them from their gods?

JAKE

Right. So why is that a surprise? They would talk about that, wouldn't they?

RENA
That's not the problem.

DEZ
Then what is?

RENA
She didn't just say, "I am the
Fire." She said it...
(beat)
...in Cardassian.

Dez looks to Glessin, who nods in agreement. Nog's face
slowly falls, dumbstruck, as the answer comes to him...

NOG
Blessed Exchequer...

TENMEI
What? What is it?

NOG
"I am the Fire." A Cardassian
female, the Emissary to the
Ascendants.
(w/ gravity)
This road trip is over. We need to
get home. Now.

On Nog's determination...

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW