

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x12 - "Demons of Air
and Darkness."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Gateways Book 4
Demons of Air and Darkness*

by Keith RA DeCandido

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - EUROPA NOVA SYSTEM

The outskirts of the Europa Nova star system. A Cardassian GALOR-CLASS ship settles into orbit about one of the outer planets. Starfleet runabout *Euphrates* approaches the ship head on, holding position, making its intentions clear.

2 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Steeling herself for what might happen, Colonel KIRA NERYS hits the comm, while TARAN'ATAR sits beside her.

KIRA

Trager, this is Colonel Kira Nerys in command of a joint Federation-Bajoran task force. What business do you have in this system?

A Cardassian face appears on the screen, and from all appearances, it's the face of the man Kira hates more than anyone in the galaxy. It's GUL DUKAT.

DUKAT (screen)

Greetings, Colonel.

KIRA

(with a snarl)

Dukat.

(to Taran'atar)

Arm phasers, prepare to fire.

Kira is ready to blow Dukat out of the sky right now. But on screen, Dukat holds his hands up, hoping to pacify her. In fact, this is not Dukat at all. The bone structure and skin tone are both slightly different, and he has some tiny wisps of facial hair on his chin.

It's actually GUL AKELLEN MACET (TNG 4x12 "The Wounded"), the first Cardassian ever seen (same actor). As well as the physical differences, his speech is much less superior and condescending, but naturally warm and friendly.

MACET (screen)

I believe you've mistaken me for someone else, Colonel. I am Gul Macet. Dukat was my cousin, and I assure you, the family resemblance has done me no favours.

KIRA

Surprised to hear a Cardassian say that.

MACET (screen)

I know you've history with Dukat, Colonel. I only ask that you hold it against me no more than you would against his daughter.

KIRA

I wouldn't go there if I were you, Macet. What do you want?

MACET (screen)

Simply to help. The *Trager* is at your disposal to aid in the evacuation of Europa Nova.

KIRA

Out of the goodness of your heart?

MACET (screen)

You've been willing to make use of my services in the past. Although perhaps you wouldn't know it. The *Trager* is the ship that destroyed the Vorta cloning facilities on Rondak Three.

KIRA

(realising)

You were in Damar's resistance.

TARAN'ATAR

(unimpressed)

You were one of those who betrayed the Dominion.

MACET (screen)

That would be your view. The so-called observer I've heard about. I admire your courage, Colonel, if not your common sense.

KIRA

Alright, Macet. I can't say I understand why you're doing this, but I'm in no position to refuse, and I don't have time to argue.

TARAN'ATAR

(off panels)

Sensors show that the *Trager* is equipped with Dominion technology.

MACET (screen)

That's true, Colonel. We have sensors and transporters on a par with a Jem'Hadar vessel - at least that's what the Dominion told us.

TARAN'ATAR

Then those transporters will still be viable for another six hours.

MACET (screen)

In that case, we'll begin scans and beam-outs immediately.

KIRA

Thank you, Gul. We'll investigate the gateway, see if we can stop this radiation at the source. Captain Emick of the *Intrepid* is in charge while I'm gone.

MACET (screen)

Understood. And Colonel, it's a pleasure to be working with you.

KIRA

I hope I can say the same when this is all over. Kira out.

His face disappears from the screen, and Kira starts the runabout moving back to Europa Nova.

TARAN'ATAR

You should not trust him.

KIRA

Why, because he worked for Damar's rebellion? I worked for that resistance movement, Taran'atar, but you follow my orders.

TARAN'ATAR

I follow your orders because a Founder instructed me to. I have received no instructions to trust Cardassian Guls who are known betrayers. You don't trust him either, yet you are willing to give him this responsibility.

KIRA

I am. Because I have no choice.

(back to panels)

I'm setting a course for the gateway. Let's see what's on the other side.

3 EXT. ORBIT OF EUROPA NOVA

The planet's orbit is growing thicker with the toxic green waste. The *Euphrates* approaches and dives straight into the densest concentration, until it disappears into the gases.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

Busy busy busy - every docking port is filled with another convoy vessel, some just attaching, some pulling away having already delivered their cargo of refugees. The *Defiant* is gone, on its way back to Europa Nova.

5 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Lt EZRI DAX stands at the doorway of some guest quarters, where a large WOMAN is busily complaining at her.

WOMAN

The replicators don't work. I've been trying to make an espresso for the last hour.

DAX

Oh, I'm sorry. Let me look.

She enters the quarters, and goes to the replicator.

DAX

Computer - espresso, unsweetened.

A small cup MATERIALISES, and Dax picks it up, sips gently.

DAX

It seems fine.

WOMAN

It's horrendous!

DAX

I know that things are difficult, Ms DellaMonica, but -

WOMAN

Everything that means anything to us, Lieutenant, we left behind. We may never see it again. That's the way the universe works, I accept

that. But all things considered, I don't think it's too much to ask to at least get a decent espresso. And this is not a decent espresso.

Dax smiles, checks her padd, and taps her combadge.

DAX

Dax to McAllister.

MCALLISTER (comm)

Go ahead, Lieutenant.

DAX

Could you report to the Habitat Ring, level four, section forty-eight and have a look at the replicator, please? The people here will explain the problem.

MCALLISTER (comm)

On my way.

WOMAN

Thank you. Without my caffeine, I get cranky.

DAX

That's alright. Don't hesitate to call me with any other problems. And Ms DellaMonica, we're doing everything we can to reunite you with your espresso maker.

WOMAN

I appreciate that, Lieutenant.

Dax leaves, quite pleased with herself at a job well done.

DIFFERENT QUARTERS, with an old man in the doorway:

MAN

It's too hot in here.

DAX

I'll have the temperature reduced.
The last occupants were Ovirians -
you know how they like it hot.

MAN
What's an Ovirian?

DAX
They're from the planet -

MAN
(horrified)
Aliens? You put aliens in my room?
I don't want to share my space
with aliens!

ANOTHER DOOR - a younger man:

MAN
I've got a terrible rash!

DAX
Have you been to the infirmary?

MAN
There's an infirmary here?

ANOTHER DOOR - a middle-aged woman:

WOMAN
Where's the kitchen?

DAX
These quarters have replicators.

WOMAN
Oh. So how do I cook food, then?

ANOTHER DOOR:

MAN
The lights are too bright.

ANOTHER DOOR:

WOMAN

These beds are terrible!

ANOTHER DOOR:

WOMAN

I can't get the shower to work.

ANOTHER DOOR:

MAN

The lights are too dark.

ANOTHER DOOR - a small, timid woman:

WOMAN

Someone stole my necklace.

Dax, who has been growing gradually less patient with each of the previous complaints, SNAPS like a crazy person.

DAX

How could you let someone steal your necklace? Why were you wearing a necklace anyway? You knew you'd be crowded in with a bunch of people! Any idiot knows to keep an eye on your belongings when you come to a place like this! I can't believe you'd be so completely idiotic!

ENSIGN GORDIMER (male human, South African, security) has come around the corridor corner just in time to witness this. The poor woman cringes back, terrified. Coming to her senses, Dax is utterly horrified with herself.

GORDIMER

Are you alright, Lieutenant?

DAX

I'm fine. Ensign, this woman has had some jewellery stolen. Could you taken her statement, please?

GORDIMER

Of course, Lieutenant.

DAX

I'm very, very sorry, Ms Bello. My behaviour was completely uncalled for.

The woman just flinches back, not daring to speak. Dax decides to go while she can, leaving Gordimer to it.

6 EXT. SPACE - ORBIT OF EUROPA NOVA

The *Defiant* is back in orbit, among still-increasing waste.

7 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

VAUGHN in the captain's chair, BASHIR standing nearby, the latter full of righteous indignation.

BASHIR

Commander, we can't do this! We had a chance when we started, but with the tortoise-like pace we've been going, that chance has gone. People are going to die.

VAUGHN

We had this conversation in Ops, Doctor. The chances were poor to begin with. We don't give up because the math is bad.

BASHIR

I understand that. But we have a bigger problem. Look at this.

Bashir hands Vaughn a padd, which he looks at calmly.

VAUGHN

Yes, I know. Captain Mello told me about this already.

BASHIR

If that mass comes through the gateway -

VAUGHN

I'm aware of the danger. Tell me, Doctor, do you have any actual business on the bridge besides telling me things I already know?

BASHIR

I'd like to know why I wasn't informed of this! And I'd like to know what's being done!

VAUGHN

Since you've been busy with relief efforts, keeping you briefed was not a priority. Neither is panicking or flailing about in outrage. We'll deal with the problem.

8 EXT. SPACE - DELTA QUADRANT

The *Euphrates* emerges on the other side of the gateway, pushing through the thick green fog that surrounds it.

Around it are more large chunks of waste matter, including one that is bigger by far than even the one that hit the planet in 8x11 "Gateways". Bits of debris from the destroyed HIROGEN vessel float about too.

9 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira checks the screen display and looks out the window; both show the enormous meteorite on course for the gateway.

KIRA

That single mass is putting out more radiation than everything that's in orbit of Europa Nova combined. If we let that go through, the planet is dead.

TARAN'ATAR

Colonel, I'm picking up a vessel. It is the source of the waste.

10 EXT. SPACE - DELTA QUADRANT

The waste material parts to reveal the gigantic MALON TANKER looming over the tiny runabout. It is heavily damaged by weapons fire, its tanks buckled and opened to space, and the waste pouring out towards the gateway.

11 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

KIRA

Do you recognise it?

TARAN'ATAR

It does not match anything in your records, nor any ship I am aware of. Fully ninety percent of the ship is dedicated to cargo space. Indeterminate weapons capacity. I believe the ship is a barge for the hazardous material.

KIRA

(sneer)

And they thought they found the perfect dumping ground. They must have been thrilled with themselves.

TARAN'ATAR

At present, most of their systems are offline. I am not reading any life signs.

KIRA

None at all? That ship's gotta have a crew of several hundred. Could the radiation be interfering?

TARAN'ATAR

It could, but not so much as to mask that many life signs. There is also a Class-M planet in this system, less than a million kilometres from our position.

KIRA

Alright, I'm going to assume that
someone is alive over there.

(hits keys)

Unidentified vessel, this is the
Federation runabout *Euphrates*.
Respond please.

In response, an unfamiliar TRANSPORTER effect takes them
both, and they disappear from the runabout.

12 **INT. MALON VESSEL - BRIDGE**

The disgusting, grimy, smoky control room of the Malon
tanker, as seen in 8x11. Kira lies unconscious on the
floor, her wrists bound behind her back with organic rope.
She JERKS awake with a start. With some struggle, she gets
herself into a sitting position, and looks around.

She sees the bodies of the three Malon bridge crew -
MARSSI, KRON and GRIL. They are slashed and slaughtered in
pools of their own greenish-blue blood. There is no sign of
Taran'atar anywhere.

Out of the smoke in the room, a silhouetted figure stomps
heavily towards her. From Kira's perspective by the floor,
it looks gigantic, at least eight feet tall.

The figure finally steps into the dim green light of the
bridge. It's the HIROGEN hunter, looking down at Kira with
a snarling grin.

HIROGEN

Prey.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

13 EXT. SPACE - ORION SHIP

Re-establishing the Vulcan-designed, Orion Syndicate-owned ship in space alongside the hourglass-shaped Iconian ship.

14 INT. ORION SHIP - MEETING ROOM

MALIC the Orion crime lord's guards have a weapon pressed to each side of an increasingly panicked QUARK's head. TAMRA the dabo girl squeaks with fear. GAILA is fairly beaming with happiness, smiling his best "I won" smile.

QUARK

Alright, alright. I'm working for Starfleet security. They sent me here to drag these negotiations out as long as possible.

Malic shakes his head with disappointment and goes back to tapping at his fancy padd. Then he looks up at his guards.

MALIC

(dismissively)

Kill him anyway.

ORION GUARD

Just so you know, Quark, after you're dead, I'm taking the dabo girl for myself.

Tamra smiles right back at him, because now we finally see that the dabo girl has actually been DS-Nine's security chief, RO LAREN in a blonde wig, all along.

Ro reaches down, grabs a heavy tassel off her skimpy outfit and quickly THROWS it hard down onto the negotiation table. Knowing what's coming, Quark covers his eyes before the enormous FLASH goes off, blinding everyone in the room.

As they're all busy blinking, Ro KNOCKS down Malic onto the floor, grabs Quark's arm and makes a run for it. One of the guards tries to SHOOT them, but goes way over their heads.

As Ro and Quark run...

QUARK (v.o.)
I've got a bit of a problem.

15 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Ro is in uniform behind her desk, Quark standing in front.

RO
Let me guess - Malic. He came to
you two days ago to extort your
cooperation in a business venture.

Quark sighs and slumps into the seat opposite Ro, defeated.
This is already going badly.

QUARK
I have this friend on Cardassia,
Deru. We arrange to get supplies
to needy people on Cardassia in
return for their land.

RO
You kick people out of their
homes?

QUARK
Of course not! Only people with
excess land. Most of it was
damaged during the war anyway.

RO
So these people, who used to be
rich but now can't even feed
themselves, get promised black-
market food and supplies. And all
they have to do is give up some
excess land they couldn't do
anything with anyway.

QUARK
(pouting)
You make it sound like a crime.

RO

If you didn't know it was a crime,
you wouldn't be here. So Malic
threatened to tell Starfleet?

QUARK

It's not Starfleet I'm worried
about. It's Garak.

Ro gazes back at him, as if waiting for the punchline.

QUARK

You ever met Garak?

RO

(shrug)

I know him by reputation, and I
honestly don't think we'd ever
find your body.

(beat)

So what does Malic want you to do?

QUARK

Just some negotiations for the
Syndicate. I don't know what for.
But once he gets what he wants,
he'll probably tell on me anyway.

Ro sits back and ponders the problem for a moment.

RO

Alright Quark, I'll help you. But
you have to help me in return.

QUARK

How?

RO

By going through with the deal,
and helping me to infiltrate the
Orion Syndicate.

QUARK

What?! I'm not infiltrating the
Orion Syndicate, Laren!

RO

Oh yes you are. Because if you don't, I'm going to tell Starfleet and Garak what you've been up to.

QUARK

I don't believe this! You help me get out of being blackmailed by Malic by blackmailing me with the same thing?

RO

Great, isn't it? So you go and do whatever Malic wants you to do, only you'll have a dabo girl along for company.

QUARK

What use is a dabo girl?

Ro hangs her head in disappointment - he's such a moron. Quark finally gets the message, and then gets a pleasant mental image - maybe this won't be so bad after all.

16 INT. ORION SHIP - CORRIDOR

Having grabbed a weapon off one of the guards, dabo girl Ro drags Quark running down the corridor as ALARMS blare out.

QUARK

I still think this is insane.

Two more Orion guards come round a corner - she SHOOTs them both down, bends down and grabs their weapons. She tucks one into her waistband and hands the other to Quark.

QUARK

What am I meant to do with this?

RO

Take a guess.

17 EXT. SPACE - DELTA QUADRANT

Re-establishing the massive, damaged Malon tanker among the masses of toxic green waste matter and gas.

The Hirogen sneers over at the three slaughtered Malon bodies, then back at Kira, who is still tied up on the floor. He speaks with an animalistic, rumbling growl.

HIROGEN

Diverting prey... barely. Their ship was the true enemy. My vessel was destroyed. My trophies, my weapons, my life - all of it wiped away by these insignificant creatures. After I killed them, I awaited fresh prey. Then you came.

KIRA

You tie up all your prey before hunting them? Some predator.

HIROGEN

No, you are bait. For the other one. I transported two over, but only one is here. The other is somewhere on the ship. It will show itself eventually.

Kira knows he is referring to Taran'atar, and takes hope.

KIRA

He's probably long gone.

HIROGEN

He is near. I can feel it in -

Suddenly the Hirogen is TACKLED from behind by the unshrouding Taran'atar, knocking both of them to the deck. They WRESTLE on the ground, but the Hirogen is hugely well-built, bigger and stronger even than the Jem'Hadar.

Kira rolls out of the way of them, struggling to her feet. She KICKS as hard as she can at the Hirogen's helmeted head. It's like kicking a stone. He is not hurt in the least, but he is surprised enough for Taran'atar to THROW him off. Landing gracefully and easily, the Hirogen smiles.

HIROGEN
At last. Worthy prey.

KIRA
Move!

She BOLTS for the open doorway into the body of the ship,
and Taran'atar follows right behind.

19 INT. ORION SHIP - CORRIDOR

Ro and Quark turn a corner and see a turbolift opening.
Inside, a tall and beautiful Orion female, dressed in well-
tailored "dirty rags", is draped lithely all over a small,
old and gnarly Orion male. Ro raises her weapon - the man
SHRIEKS a wailing scream, but the woman takes it in stride.

RO
Back inside.

He carries on screaming - she puts the gun to his head.

RO
Stop. Screaming.

He does, although still blubbering, and they all get back
into the turbolift together. The doors close.

20 INT. ORION SHIP - TURBOLIFT (CONTINUOUS)

Ro puts the gun to the Orion male's head again.

RO
Take us to the lowest deck.

ORION
(to computer)
D-d-d-d-d-deck seventy-one.

The lift starts moving. They wait, and wait. The doors
finally open onto a half-dozen Orions all pointing weapons.

21 INT. MALON VESSEL - CORRIDOR

Kira and Taran'atar are also on the run through the dark,
grimy, slimy and smoky corridors of the Malon tanker.

KIRA
You know these guys?

TARAN'ATAR
A Jem'Hadar unit encountered a Hirogen ship several hundred years ago. They are nomadic hunters with an impressive level of technology. I examined this ship's systems - very few are still operative. We are also unarmed - our energy weapons are either still on the *Euphrates* or destroyed.

KIRA
Kira to *Euphrates*. Two to beam up.

COMPUTER (comm)
Unable to comply due to theta radiation interference.

KIRA
Can you locate this vessel's transporters?

COMPUTER (comm)
Deck twelve, fore section.

KIRA
Do you still have your *kar'takin*?
(he nods)
Good. After you.

Pulling the knife out from behind his back, Taran'atar leads Kira running down the corridors again.

22 **INT. ORION SHIP - CORRIDOR**

Seeing the crowd of Orion guards pointing their weapons at her, Quark thinks it's all over. But Ro smoothly takes her weapon off the male Orion in the turbolift with her and points it at the female's head instead.

RO
Let us go or the slave gets it.

To Quark's surprise, the Orions do as she says. Ro moves forward cautiously, keeping her gun at the female's head and dragging the male behind her. As she reaches the guards, she SHOVES the male at them; they tumble together.

She makes a run for it, dragging Quark and the Orion female, who is called TREIR. They turn another corner.

Ro grabs a new tassel off her dress and THROWS it back around the corner. There is a sound like multiple phasers firing, then the THUD of multiple bodies hitting the floor.

RO
Concussive grenade. Should keep them out for a while.

QUARK
You couldn't do that before?

RO
You really can be a whiner, can't you?

She grabs one last tassel off her dress and presses it. Ro, Quark and Treir dissolve in a transporter beam.

23 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

The trio materialise into a small Bajoran ship, all somewhat out of breath. A Bajoran woman in a red Militia uniform, ETANA KOL, is in the pilot's seat.

RO
Sergeant Etana Kol, meet Quark.
Quark, Etana.

ETANA
Who's your friend, Lieutenant?

RO
She was a hostage.
(to Treir)
You're free to come with us. You can start over in the Federation

or on Bajor. You don't have to be a slave anymore.

TREIR

Did it even occur to you that I liked being a slave?

RO

Honestly? No, it didn't.

TREIR

Good, 'cause I didn't. But Malic might have something to say.

RO

He has to find us first. Etana, set course back to the gateway Quark and I came here through.

QUARK

What's the point? I'm doomed anyway. You heard Malic - all it takes is one command into his padd, and Garak will know all about my deal with Deru.

Nonchalantly, Ro reaches about her person and pulls out Malic's padd, the fancy one he never lets out of his sight.

RO

You mean this padd?

24 INT. MALON VESSEL - CORRIDOR

Kira and Taran'atar hurry through the corridors, and come across another slaughtered Malon worker. Looking at him:

KIRA

When we arrived, I wanted to kill these people. Now they're dead, I actually feel sorry for them.

TARAN'ATAR

Their battle is done, and they did not reclaim their lives. Our battle is not yet over.

KIRA
Damn right it isn't.

They reach a door and pry it open...

25 INT. MALON VESSEL - TRANSPORTER ROOM

There is a TRANSPORTER PLATFORM, but while Taran'atar begins to work the controls, Kira notes some other complex equipment, including one large central device about the size of a TV set. She rushes to examine it.

KIRA
This is like the shield enhancers we had in the resistance.

TARAN'ATAR
With respect, Colonel, we must use the transporter. The Hirogen may be here at any time...

KIRA
Taran'atar, this may be what we need to save Europa Nova!

TARAN'ATAR
As you command.

Together they begin to disconnect the device.

KIRA
It'll be an hour until the Torona gateway is full. The *Defiant* can't disrupt the gateways until then. But that huge mass of waste will go through sooner. If we can use this to enhance Nog's shields, we might be able to use the runabout to block this gateway completely.

They set the shield enhancer onto the transporter platform. Kira stands with it, Taran'atar goes to the control panel.

TARAN'ATAR
I have locked onto the *Euphrates*.

KIRA

Good. Get up here.

TARAN'ATAR

If we both leave, the Hirogen will simply beam us back. One must stay here to distract the hunter while the other installs the shield.

Kira pauses - obviously Taran'atar is the better choice to stay, but she hates the idea of leaving anyone behind.

KIRA

That thing could kill you.

TARAN'ATAR

I am already dead. I go into battle to reclaim my life. This I do gladly, because I am Jem'Hadar.

(beat)

One more thing, Colonel. I said earlier that I believed my gods had cast me out. Perhaps I was wrong.

Kira understands - he is about to fight for his Vorta and his Founder. That is all he has ever wanted to do.

KIRA

Energise.

Taran'atar works the controls, and Kira DEMATERIALISES. He steels himself and turns back to the corridors of the ship.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

26 INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT

Kira is working quickly to attach the shield enhancer.

COMPUTER

Warning. Power requirements of
module exceed present capacity.

KIRA

Dammit. Computer, can you divert
enough power from other sources to
allow it to function?

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

KIRA

Can it still be done if impulse
power is left active?

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

KIRA

Okay then, do it.

COMPUTER

Unable to comply.

KIRA

(stay calm,
deep breath)

Why not?

COMPUTER

Life support must be terminated.

Damn it. There's no choice, she knows she has to do it.

KIRA

Computer, begin recording.

27 **INT. MALON TANKER - CORRIDOR**

A from-behind POV shot of the Hirogen hunter prowling the corridor. He is still hunting Taran'atar, but we are seeing him from the Jem'Hadar's point-of-view - he is shrouded and following the Hirogen himself from a safe distance.

As the Hirogen turns a corner, he finds a still-living Malon worker. The Malon's skin is bubbling and cracking from the theta radiation. He is scared out of his wits, cowering back from the Hirogen in abject terror.

MALON

Oh gods, please don't kill me!

The Hirogen absent-mindedly ATOMISES the screaming worker with his rifle - this creature is beneath his notice now. He continues the hunt for Taran'atar, who has seen it all.

28 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Kira sits silently in the pilot seat as the ship flies through space, the nearby planet growing nearer. She is sadly resigned about what she has to do.

29 **EXT. DELTA QUADRANT PLANET - SURFACE**

It's a desert. Hard-packed sand, very little vegetation. The runabout soars down out of the sky and touches down, blowing up clouds of sand as it does.

The hatch OPENS and Kira steps out. She wears Starfleet desert gear (7x02 "Shadows and Symbols") and carrying an emergency kit and a phaser. She doesn't like what she sees, but she is out of options. She taps her combadge.

KIRA

Computer, activate program Kira
One.

The runabout's hatch closes. As she moves out of the way, the ship LIFTS OFF and heads back into orbit without her. She solemnly watches it go, then pulls out a tricorder...

The screen shows the words THETA RADIATION LEVELS and a graph with a rising line.

Knowing what that means, she pulls a hypospray out of the emergency kit, injects herself, and begins to walk.

30 **EXT. SPACE - DELTA QUADRANT**

The *Euphrates* flies back into the depths of the waste field and approaches the Delta side of the gateway.

31 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

In the empty cockpit, lights and beeps indicate the shield enhancer activating, and then most of the other systems cutting out and dropping to emergency power only.

32 **EXT. SPACE - DELTA QUADRANT**

As the ship holds position right in front of the gateway, its shield bubble is visible against the swirls of green gas, growing and thickening until it blocks the gateway.

33 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Vaughn is in command, NOG is at engineering, TENMEI is at the helm, and Bashir is still quietly fuming.

NOG

Message from the *Gryphon*, sir.

VAUGHN

On screen, Lieutenant.

(Mello's face appears)

What can I do for you, Captain?

MELLO (screen)

You can enjoy the good news.
Colonel Kira did it - the toxic stream coming through the gateway has reduced by ninety percent.

VAUGHN

That is good news.

BASHIR

That'll improve the chances that we'll be able to evacuate in time.

NOG
Commander, there's an incoming
message from the *Euphrates*.

VAUGHN
On audio, Lieutenant.

Kira's voice comes through badly broken up by interference.

KIRA (comm)
This is Colonel Kira Nerys on the
Euph... fleet vessels at Europa
Nova. The radia... antimatter
waste from its hold into the
gateway... using the *Euphrates* to
block that and any further
waste... eed to... chances on the
fifth planet. As soon as it is
feasible to disrupt the gateways,
do it, regardless... Taran'atar or
I have returned. That's an order.

VAUGHN
Can you clean that up, Nog?

NOG
I'm afraid that is the cleaned up
version, sir.

VAUGHN
Keep an ear out for more
repetitions, see if we can pick up
more pieces of the puzzle.
(to Mello)
Captain, you heard?

MELLO (screen)
Yes, Commander. And to answer your
next question, we still have at
least half an hour before we've
hit our quota for the Jarada.

VAUGHN
Will the tachyon burst be ready by
then, Lieutenant?

NOG

It should be, sir. But I'd feel better if Ensign ch'Thane were here to look over the specs one last time. It was his design. May I ask why he didn't accompany us?

VAUGHN

(without looking
at him)

You may not ask, Lieutenant.

34 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Dax walks the corridor, disgusted with herself from the earlier lapse. Just as she approaches an intersection, she hears VOICES. She stops short so as not to interfere, but still listens in, even though she knows she shouldn't.

SHAR (o.s.)

I understand, *zhavey*.

CHARIVRETHA (o.s.)

No, I don't think you truly do, or you wouldn't insist on acting like this.

Around the corner, SHAR and CHARIVRETHA are in the midst of another iteration of their regular argument. She is stern, attempting to intimidate him. He is furious and indignant, tired of being bullied and emotionally blackmailed.

CHARIVRETHA

In Uzaveh's name, Thirishar, you cannot afford to take such risks when you know what is at stake!

SHAR

Exploring the Gamma Quadrant is hardly a risk, *zhavey*.

CHARIVRETHA

Please don't tell me you're that naïve. If you want, I can quote

you starship casualty figures
going back two-hundred years.

SHAR

That won't be necessary.

CHARIVRETHA

Then what will it take? To what
part of you do I appeal? Clearly
you feel no sense of duty to your
own kind. Are you even thinking
about anyone besides yourself?

That does it - Shar lashes out and PUNCHES a dent into the
wall, startling his mother. His voice seethes with emotion.

SHAR

I have thought of everyone but
myself my entire life, *zhavey*!
That's how you raised me, isn't
it? How all Andorian children are
raised? We don't live for
ourselves, always for the whole.

CHARIVRETHA

Then why are you doing this?

SHAR

Because it isn't working! I've
kept track, *zhavey*, I've seen the
numbers. And I see what we're
doing to ourselves because of
them, because of our desperation
to delay the inevitable.

CHARIVRETHA

And your answer is to turn your
back on us? On everyone?

SHAR

(quietly)

You don't understand. You never
did.

He turns and begins to stalk irately down the corridor, in
the direction of where Ezri is loitering.

CHARIVRETHA

Don't you walk away from me,
Thirishar.

Around the corner, Dax has been listening despite herself. Now that she realises Shar is coming, and tries to cover by looking like she only just got there. Shar appears at the corner, still seething, but stops short when he sees her.

SHAR

Lieutenant Dax! I didn't see you
there.

Charivretha also appears, following Shar, and also stops short at Dax's presence. Dax tries to rescue the situation.

DAX

You must be Councillor zh'Thane.
I'm Lieutenant Ezri Dax.

CHARIVRETHA

You used to be Curzon Dax, yes?

DAX

Two hosts ago, yes.

CHARIVRETHA

Well, I'll try not to hold that
against you. If you'll excuse me.

Clearly not willing to continue in public, Charivretha gathers herself, turns and walks back down the corridor. Dax turns to Shar, who looks as miserable as he ever has.

DAX

Do you want to talk about it?

SHAR

I'm afraid I can't, Lieutenant,
but thank you for asking.

DAX

I take it there are three people
on Andor waiting for you to come
home for the *shelthreth*?

SHAR
You know about that?

DAX
I'm three-hundred years old, Shar.
I've known a few Andorians in my
time. I also know how important
the *shelthreth* is.

SHAR
Not you too, Ezri. I already made
up my mind. Being in Starfleet is
all I ever wanted, since I was a
child. I'm not going to give it up
now, and I'm certainly not going
to let *Zhavey* hold me personally
responsible for the fact that the
Andorian species is dying.

Off Dax's sympathetic but troubled reaction...

35 **EXT. DELTA QUADRANT PLANET - SURFACE**

Kira trudges through the endless desert, shading her eyes
from the blinding sun. Exhausted, sweaty and depressed.

She pulls up her sleeve and sees that her skin is already
starting to break from the radiation. She pulls out the
tricorder again - the radiation levels are still rising.

KIRA
One hour to fatal levels.

After a moment to consider that, she starts walking again.
She taps her combadge and begins to talk as she walks.

KIRA
Colonel Kira, personal log. I wish
Odo was here. I promised not to
let myself think about him. I know
he did what he had to do. But I
could always talk to him. And if
not him, there was always someone.
Jadzia, Kasidy, Lupaza, Furel,
Bareil... Benjamin. Every single

one of them is dead or gone. Who have I got now? How screwed up is my life that my best friend is a Jem'Hadar? And now I'm stuck on this miserable world to fulfil my oath to another world. To think, some people say the Prophets don't have a sense of humour.

(beat)

Is this how I'm to have my faith rewarded? Dying on an unnamed wasteland millions of miles from home, theta radiation chewing my cells up and spitting them out? I don't want to die like this. Not here... and not Attainted.

Suddenly, her tricorder BEEPS. She takes it out and studies the screen. She recognises a peculiar energy reading, and her face drops in shock and amazement.

ELSEWHERE IN THE DESERT

A person-sized GATEWAY stands clearly on the sand, in the middle of nowhere, glittering in the air.

BACK TO KIRA

She is stunned - and saved. Even though she is exhausted, she gathers every bit of energy she has left and heads off.

KIRA

It's a sign, Nerys. The Prophets have given you a sign. They have not abandoned you. They've given you a way off this hellhole, you just have to get there. So move!

36 INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE

NOG

We just received a message from the *Gryphon*, Commander. The last of the five-hundred-thousand allowed by the Jarada have been evacuated through the gateway.

VAUGHN
Were you able to get a clearer
message from Colonel Kira?

NOG
No sir.

VAUGHN
Very well. Prepare the tachyon
burst, Lieutenant.

BASHIR
Sir, Colonel Kira -

VAUGHN
(not unkindly)
Colonel Kira specifically said to
try the tachyon burst as soon as
it was feasible, regardless of
whether or not she or Taran'atar
had returned. Are you questioning
her orders, Doctor?

BASHIR
(reluctantly)
No, sir.

VAUGHN
Good. Helm, take up position forty
thousand kilometres from the mouth
of the gateway.

Tenmei obeys without acknowledging.

NOG
Ready on your order, sir.

VAUGHN
Then consider the order given,
Lieutenant.

37 **EXT. ORBIT OF EUROPA NOVA**

Facing the gateway, the *Defiant* releases a bright stream of
ENERGY from its navigational deflector array, aimed right

at the gateway. In response, the gateway BURSTS into a rainbow kaleidoscope of colours, then goes dark.

38 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Nog checks his panels.

NOG

Power output of the gateway is zero, and we're no longer reading the Delta Quadrant.

(checks panels)

Power output on the Costa Rocosa gateway is also nil, sir. We did it. The gateways have been shut down.

39 **INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT**

Ro and Etana are in the front seats, Quark and Treir sat quietly behind, minding their own business. Ro has removed her wig. Looking through the front window, they see their gateway hanging in space.

ETANA

So far, no sign of pursuit. But that could change at any moment.

(quietly, re Treir)

What are you going to do with her?

RO

I'm not sure. She didn't even flinch when I put the gun to her head. I mean, she couldn't have known I was bluffing.

ETANA

She's been a slave all her life. Maybe she doesn't know how to be anything else.

RO

Maybe. For now, let's just go through that gateway and -

The gateway BURSTS into colours, and then goes dark, to general consternation in the shuttle.

RO

I'm not reading any power signature from the gateway.

ETANA

I'm not picking up the Clarus system anymore either.

RO

Dammit.

ETANA

It gets better. The Orions have found us. Two of their fighter ships are on an intercept course.

40 **EXT. DELTA QUADRANT PLANET - SURFACE**

Kira is still exhausted but pushing herself to the limits to reach the gateway. She is looking more and more cracked and blistered from the increasing radiation, but she is determined to get off this planet rather than die here.

Finally, just at the edge of her vision, she sees it glittering on the horizon. She has her tricorder out, confirming readings, dragging herself closer and closer.

Then the gateway BURSTS into a rainbow of colours, and disappears. The signal on Kira's tricorder goes dead.

Stunned and heartbroken, Kira drops to her knees on the once-again-empty sand. She's going to die.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

41 EXT. SPACE - ORION SHIP

Ro's Bajoran shuttle is under attack by two small fighters
- it is evading well, but still taking a few hits.

42 INT. ORION SHIP - MALIC'S ROOM

Malic is pacing, furious. One of the Orion guards is at a
console built into the wall.

MALIC

What do you mean, the gateway has
gone offline?

ORION GUARD

Just what I said. There's no power
reading from the gateway, and
we're not reading the Clarus
system on the other side. And I've
monitored half a dozen other
communiqués that indicate all the
other gateways have gone dead too.

MALIC

Quark and his accursed nephew.
It's time I had a conversation
with these Iconians. I'll be in
the conference room.

He starts to head out the door - the guard calls him back.

ORION GUARD

Malic, I've got life-form readings
on the Bajoran ship. Two Bajorans,
one Ferengi... and one Orion.

MALIC

They've still got Treir. Make sure
the fighters disable the ship, not
destroy it. If any harm comes to
Treir, whoever is responsible will
compensate me for her full value.

Heading out again, he casually puts his hand in his pocket to pull out his padd, and realises it is not there. He is so stunned he almost forgets to be furious.

MALIC

Check the tracer on my padd. Now!

ORION GUARD

Uh, you're not going to like this.

43 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

Etana is frustratedly trying to get the fancy padd to work, while Ro pilots the ship and avoids the fighters.

RO

How are you coming with that padd,
Sergeant?

ETANA

I don't think I can get it done,
Lieutenant.

QUARK

You need a code broken?

RO

Quark, sit down and shut up.

QUARK

I need something to do, Laren. And
I'm an expert codebreaker.

ETANA

Expert? I spent most of my time in
the resistance cracking Cardassian
codes.

QUARK

Oh please, any idiot can crack
Cardassian codes.

RO

Let him have a shot. We've got
nothing to lose.

44 INT. MALON TANKER - BRIDGE

Growing increasingly frustrated, the Hirogen prowls back into the Malon bridge, THUMPing the doorframe on the way in. He goes to the main console in the middle of the room, slinging his gigantic rifle over his shoulder on a strap.

Behind him, unnoticed, the shrouded shape of Taran'atar creeps into the room too, and slowly moves to stand opposite the Hirogen, the console between them.

Unshrouding as he goes, Taran'atar RUNS hard, vaulting up onto the console and SLASHing with his *kar'takin*, cutting the Hirogen's face and the rifle strap at the same time.

As the rifle falls, Taran'atar lands on top of the Hirogen and they CRASH to the deck. Taran'atar tries to STAB down at the face again, the only part of the Hirogen that is unarmoured, but the Hirogen brings up his hands and CLAPS them over the knife, and they struggle for control.

The Hirogen SWINGS to the side, rolling Taran'atar off him. The knife SKITTERS away, and both combatants come up onto their feet. Taran'atar takes note of where his *kar'takin* and the Hirogen's rifle have fallen - the knife is closer. He takes the chance to GRAB it and holds it up.

The Hirogen presses a button on his armour, and a knife of his own POPS out of his sleeve - serrated, vicious, movable but still connected to the armour. They size each other up across the bridge. As strong and powerful as the Jem'Hadar is, the Hirogen is even bigger, plus armoured.

HIROGEN

Curious prey. You yourself set the terms for combat with blades, yet you do not attack. Instead you wait, try to gauge my attack even as I wait to gauge yours.

Taran'atar does not reply - it would be a waste of energy.

HIROGEN

Do you not speak, prey? Very well. If you will not strike, I will.

And they go to it, a furious furball of strikes and parries. Taran'atar is able to block all the Hirogen's attacks, but the hunter is moving too fast for Taran'atar to make any attacks of his own. As the weapons CLANG...

45 INT. ORION SHIP - MEETING ROOM

GAILA and the ICONIANS stand at one side, wondering what's going on. Malic and his guards enter, not at all pleased.

MALIC

Would you care to explain why all the gateways have gone offline?

GAILA

What?!

One of the Iconians finally speaks - a small, squeaky voice that really does not suggest awesome and ancient power.

ICONIAN

It is nothing to be concerned over. We wish to conclude these negotiations.

MALIC

And I'm telling you now that no deal will be consummated until I have a satisfactory answer as to why a relative of your negotiator has sabotaged your own product.

GAILA

You mean Nog? Why would you assume our family relation is meaningful?

MALIC

For the same reason you assumed his relationship to Quark was meaningful. You proposed that as sufficient reason to discredit him - does the same not apply to you?

ORION GUARD

Malic! A message from the bridge.

MALIC

Excuse me, Gaila. While I take this, see if you can come up with a compelling reason for me not to have the three of you shot.

Malic goes over to the guard, who speaks quietly to him.

ORION GUARD

The gateways came back online. As far as Loga can tell, they seemed to just reboot after ten minutes.

MALIC

Very well.

ORION GUARD

There's more. We've monitored the Iconian ship, and they've been in constant contact with the two in the conference room.

MALIC

That's to be expected.

ORION GUARD

Yes, but we were finally able to break their code.

Malic smiles - that's very good news.

46 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

Still swerving to avoid the attacking fighters.

QUARK

I broke the code!

ETANA

What?! That's not possible!

QUARK

Let me rephrase. I broke one of the codes. That's why it was giving you trouble, Sergeant -

there were two codes, the
Iconians' and the Orions'.

RO

You broke the Orions'?

QUARK

No, the Iconians'. I've got a
translation of the last five
minutes of comm chatter, and I
must say, it's very interesting.

47 INT. ORION SHIP - MEETING ROOM

Malic's guards now have their weapons trained on Gaila and
the Iconians. Gaila is starting to panic.

MALIC

You're lying. You're not Iconians
at all, are you? This is all an
elaborate plot by the Ferengi, the
Bajoran Militia and Starfleet to
undermine the Orion Syndicate.

(beat)

We have weapons trained on your
ship. Don't be fooled by the fact
that this vessel was built by
pacifists. It's very well armed.

GAILA

There's no need for hostilities!
We can discuss this like rational
beings!

MALIC

The time for discussion is over.
It's obvious now that you withheld
intelligence on the gateways, not
as a bargaining tactic but because
you didn't have that intelligence.
You had no idea why there are no
gateways near the Bajoran system,
and you have no idea why they all
just crashed and rebooted. You've
lied to us. The Syndicate doesn't
appreciate being made fools.

GAILA

It was Quark! He made fools of us all! He's a crafty one, my cousin!

MALIC

Be silent, Ferengi. I've learned the hard way not to trust anyone from your wretched species.

(to Iconians)

And you? Have you nothing to say for yourselves?

The lights go out, and the room ROCKS from weapons fire.

ORION GUARD

We're under attack!

48 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

While the two larger ships battle it out nearby...

QUARK

We've got to save Gaila.

RO

I beg your pardon?

QUARK

He's still on that ship. The Orions and the Iconians, or whoever they are -

ETANA

They're called the Petraw, based on these comms we've intercepted.

QUARK

Well, they can both kill each other for all I care, but we have to save Gaila.

RO

Why the sudden compassion? He was the one who betrayed you in there.

QUARK

That was just business. He's still family.

RO

Isn't there a Rule about how family should be exploited?

QUARK

(grinning)

And how am I supposed to do that if he's dead?

Looking out the window at the ongoing FIREFIGHT between the Vulcan-Orion ship and the Iconian-Petraw ship, she knows he is right. Damn him. She brings the ship around.

RO

Here goes nothing.

49 EXT. SPACE - ORION SHIP

The Bajoran shuttle turns around and heads back into the firefight, swerving like crazy to avoid the crossfire.

50 INT. MALON TANKER - BRIDGE

Taran'atar and the Hirogen are still fighting, their knives CLANGing off each other as the Hirogen keeps the Jem'Hadar on the defence.

Taran'atar sees that the Hirogen is trying to gradually manoeuvre himself closer to his rifle. He can't allow that, so he starts manoeuvring the Hirogen back away again.

The Hirogen makes rhythmic SLASHing motions with his knife. Right, left, centre. Right, left, centre. Taran'atar gets into a rhythm of deflecting those attacks. They are getting closer together all the time.

Then suddenly the Hirogen changes his pattern, slashing left instead of right, and Taran'atar doesn't block in time. The knife SINKS deep into the Jem'Hadar's right arm, and he ROARS in pain.

51 EXT. DELTA QUADRANT PLANET - SURFACE

Kira lies flat on the sand, half-dead. Her skin is broken and bubbled all over from the radiation, she is sweating but shivering, and just about managing to hitch one breath at a time. She barely notices the insistent BEEPing from her discarded tricorder.

When she finally notices it on the sand beside her, she grabs it and looks. Then she looks up at the horizon, and her eyes widen. The gateway is back. She gathers what tiny strength she has left, and sets off yet again.

52 INT. ORION SHIP - CORRIDOR

Gaila runs panicking down the corridor as the ship ROCKS from the attack and lights go out all over. He turns a corner and finds another Orion guard, who immediately draws his weapon and points it right at Gaila. Gaila is sure he is about to die, but then the TRANSPORTER beam takes him.

53 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

Gaila materialises in the shuttle to face a grinning Quark.

GAILA

Quark.

QUARK

Pleasure to see you, cousin.

Quark just saved his life, and precisely because of that, Gaila couldn't possibly loathe Quark any more right now.

54 INT. MALON TANKER - BRIDGE

Taran'atar GRUNTS at the pain of the Hirogen's knife in his arm, but he manages to STAB his own *kar'takin* forward and cut the Hirogen's face slightly again. In response, the Hirogen slowly DRAGS the knife out of Taran'atar's arm, causing even more pain and damage on its way.

Then the Hirogen STABS forward again, but Taran'atar LEAPS up into the air. The knife goes into the console behind Taran'atar, and the Jem'Hadar LANDS right on the Hirogen's head before flipping off it and landing on the other side of the room, nearer the massive rifle.

He knows there are only seconds remaining to get to the rifle before the Hirogen frees his stuck knife, but he is injured now and sluggish.

There is a loud SNAPPING sound - the Hirogen has snapped the tip of the knife to get free. He comes at the Jem'Hadar with a ROAR, knocks him down to the floor, and proceeds to BEAT the bloody hell out of him with his fists.

After a furious round of punches, the Hirogen gets up and heads over to grab the rifle. Taran'atar painfully drags himself up to stand - the Hirogen is impressed.

HIROGEN

Resourceful prey. But this hunt is over.

TARAN'ATAR

Not... while... I... live...

And he LAUNCHES back at him again, punching and trying to grab the rifle's torn strap. Growling, the Hirogen TWISTS and THROWS Taran'atar back onto the ground, stands hard on his good arm with his heavy boot, and looks down at him.

HIROGEN

I repeat... this hunt is over.

And he STABS the jagged edge of his broken knife right down into Taran'atar's chest.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

55 EXT. SPACE - DELTA QUADRANT

The enormous and battered Malon tanker, still sitting there dark. It is surrounded now by a thick field of green fog and toxic matter - with the gateway blocked by Kira's runabout, there is nowhere for it to go, so it builds up.

56 INT. MALON TANKER - BRIDGE

The Hirogen TWISTS his knife in Taran'atar's chest. The Jem'Hadar splutters blood, and then goes limp. With a grunt of satisfaction, the Hirogen stands and goes to the central console. An ALARM is going off, and he wants to know why.

The console shows a lot of alien writing, but a fairly clear DIAGRAM of the tanker, and the indication that the engines are in trouble. A GRAPHIC shows a series of bars, slowly going dark one by one. When the last one goes, the ship will explode. The Hirogen thumps the console in anger.

HIROGEN

To lose my own vessel was bad
enough. Now I lose this as well!

He works the console, and the graphic changes to show him a series of escape pods covering the skin of the ship.

There is a CLATTERING sound, and the Hirogen spins to see Taran'atar standing up, wrecked and bloody but defiant and hanging on to life. He is holding the Hirogen's enormous rifle and pointing it at him. The hunter is almost pleased. Such worthy prey!

TARAN'ATAR

Victory... is... life...

He FIRES, and the Hirogen dies with a smile on his face.

Taran'atar staggers to the console, sees the display the Hirogen was looking at, memorises it, moves to the door. It's time to get out of here before the ship blows up.

57 **EXT. ORBIT OF EUROPA NOVA**

The full fleet is in orbit - *Defiant*, *Intrepid*, *Gryphon*, *Trager*, the *Rio Grande*, various freighters and cargo ships, and the ten Bajoran convoy ships. Not the *Euphrates*.

58 **INT. DEFIANT - MAIN BRIDGE**

Vaughn in command, Tenmei at helm, Nog at Ops station.

NOG

Commander Vaughn, the last of the refugees have been evacuated from Europa Nova.

Vaughn smiles with relief - the rest of the crew break out in CHEERS and WHOOPS. Tenmei gets up and goes to hug Nog. That done, Tenmei turns and looks at Vaughn. She smiles, and gives him a nod of acknowledgement, a job well done. He smiles back. Then she returns to helm.

NOG

According to Captain Emick, President Silverio was the last person to board the *Intrepid*.

VAUGHN

Good for her. Open a channel to the entire convoy please.

NOG

Yes sir, channel open.

VAUGHN

Excellent work, all. We still have a long way to go, but the most important thing - getting the Europani out of danger - has been accomplished. At this time, we will bring the last remaining refugees to Bajor and Deep Space Nine. Lieutenant Bowers, you and the *Rio Grande* will stay behind and wait for any new signals from Colonel Kira or Taran'atar.

TENMEI

The convoy is getting into formation for the return trip, Commander. Except for the *Trager*.

VAUGHN

Open a channel to the *Trager*.

Gul Macet's face appears on the main viewscreen.

MACET (screen)

What can I do for you, Commander?

VAUGHN

I just wanted to confirm that you will be returning to DS-Nine with us, Gul Macet.

MACET (screen)

Of course, I simply wasn't sure where to align myself.

VAUGHN

Have your helm confer with Ensign Tenmei. If you don't mind my asking, sir... why are you here?

MACET (screen)

We have worked against the galaxy, Commander. At a time when the entire Alpha Quadrant was united against a common threat, we alone stood with the threat. Well, we and the Breen. Now many of us, including myself, believe that we are better off trying to become part of the quadrant once more. You may consider this the first step on that road.

VAUGHN

Thank you for your candour, Gul. And perhaps when we arrive back on Deep Space Nine, we can discuss further steps on that road.

MACET (screen)
I would like that very much,
Commander. *Trager* out.

Macet's face disappears, and Vaughn sits back thoughtfully.

VAUGHN
Let's go home, Ensign Tenmei.

59 EST. DEEP SPACE NINE

Busy but triumphant - many ships docked and offloading.

60 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE

Ro is in uniform, sat at her desk, working hard and trying her best to ignore Treir, who loiters nearby.

TREIR
Excuse me, but how long am I
supposed to stand here?

RO
Treir, I'm really busy right now.
Can't you go somewhere else?

TREIR
Where? I'm not exactly dressed for
walking around in public. And I
don't have a change of clothes. In
fact, I don't have much of
anything now, thanks to you.

RO
You were a slave!

TREIR
Oh please, you didn't take me
hostage for my own sake. Did you
for one second think about what
your actions would mean for me?

Ro is about to blow up, when Quark enters the office.

RO
Quark, I really don't have time -

QUARK
Actually, I have a solution to
your problem.

RO
Which one?

QUARK
This one.

He puts his arm around Treir, and she drapes herself over
him like she had the old man. She is an instant chameleon.

QUARK
As it happens, I haven't been able
to find a decent dabo girl to
replace the one who married my
brother and moved to Ferenginar.
How would you like the job?

TREIR
(sigh)
Fine. It's not like I've got a lot
of alternatives.

RO
Good luck.

QUARK
Come along, my dear. We'll find
you a proper dabo girl outfit and
get you started.

TREIR
No, you'll find some real clothes
and we'll discuss my salary.
(back to Ro)
Oh, and Lieutenant? You might want
to try the Hynerian coding system.

She leaves with Quark, and Ro smiles after them. She has to
admit to liking Treir after all.

Quark leads Treir across the Promenade and into his bar. He beckons over a Ferengi server, and explains to him MOS what to do with Treir. They go off together, and Quark heads behind his bar. There is a message waiting for him - he taps the screen absently. GARAK's face appears.

GARAK (screen)

Good day, Quark. I hope you're well. I wanted you to know I recently spoke with DS-Nine's new security officer, Lieutenant Ro. Such a delightful young woman. She suggested I look in on an acquaintance of yours, a gentleman named Deru. It seems he's been saying the most slanderous things about you, Quark. Rest assured, I put him straight. Lieutenant Ro vouched for you, after all, and I knew you to be such an upstanding individual from our time together.

(beat)

Well, I must be going. Perhaps we could catch up on old times... or new ones. Goodbye for now.

Garak has been nothing but charming and erudite the whole time. And yet Quark has never been more terrified.

62 EXT. DELTA QUADRANT PLANET - SURFACE

Basically dead on her feet, covered in blisters, boils and cracked skin, Colonel Kira has finally reached the gateway. She gazes at it with amazement. It changes between two destinations, holding on each for five seconds or so.

In one, she can see OPS on Deep Space Nine, with Ezri Dax stood at the central table. Dax does not seem to notice the gateway in their midst. In the other, there is the warm, foggy white light that exists in the Celestial Temple.

Should she go back to DS-Nine, where she has no friends, a job that is grinding her down, and where she is not even allowed to worship? Or should she go to what she knows is effectively heaven? What does it matter? She's dead anyway.

63 **EXT. ORBIT OF EUROPA NOVA**

One solitary runabout holds position near the gateway, still surrounded by the remaining toxic waste.

64 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

SAM BOWERS and GERDA RONESS (human female, security gold) sit in the front seats.

 RONESS

 Lieutenant, something's coming through the gateway.

 BOWERS

 Looks like an escape pod. It's just managing to squeak past the blockage created by the *Euphrates*. Don't recognise the configuration.

 RONESS

 Me either. I'm getting a life sign, though. It's Jem'Hadar!

 BOWERS

 Trying to get a transporter lock... Damn, too much radiation. Can we get a tractor beam?

 RONESS

 Yes sir.

65 **EXT. ORBIT OF EUROPA NOVA**

The runabout sends out a TRACTOR BEAM and grabs the small, green-grey escape pod. It begins to DRAG the pod out of the system, away from the radiation.

66 **INT. RUNABOUT - COCKPIT**

Bowers hits the buttons, and Taran'atar materialises on the pad. He is broken, bloodied, battered. His right arm hangs limply, there is an enormous gash in his chest, his face is swollen, and more. He was standing, but he collapses to his knees. Bowers and Roness rush up with a tricorder.

RONESS

What happened to him?

BOWERS

What happened to Colonel Kira?

TARAN' ATAR

Colonel Kira... did not...
survive.

Bowers and Roness react with horror.

TARAN' ATAR

The radiation... no life signs...
I must return.

BOWERS

No, you need a doctor right now.
Ensign, set course for DS-Nine,
maximum warp.

She rushes back to the helm to comply.

RONESS

What about Colonel Kira, sir?

BOWERS

For now? Hope to hell he's wrong.

67 **EXT. DELTA QUADRANT PLANET - SURFACE**

Right on death's doorstep, Kira makes her choice.

With finality, expecting death and looking forward to meeting the Prophets, she STEPS THROUGH the gateway and into the bright white light, and she disappears.

FADE OUT:

THE END