

STAR TREK

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RENAISSANCE

"Veiled Intentions"

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

A sea of endless stars unfolds before us. Suddenly the BAJORAN WORMHOLE explodes into view. Amidst the blue and white swirls we find the U.S.S. ENTERPRISE.

The mighty ship passes by us. We swing around to see its destination: DEEP SPACE NINE.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

We find ourselves in Captain Cross's Ready Room. He sits behind his desk, gazing ponderously out the window. One of Deep Space Nine's pylons hangs ominously outside of his window.

Cross thoughts are soon interrupted as the door chime rings out.

CROSS

Come in.

The doors swish open and we find DOCTOR ELRIS LEA. She steps through quickly, letting the doors shut behind her.

ELRIS

You wanted to see me?

CROSS

(glumly)

At least someone made it back in one piece.

ELRIS

(softly)

I heard about Dojar.

CROSS

Yeah.

ELRIS

I'm sure you did everything you could.

CROSS

I've been telling myself the same thing. It's not helping much.

(beat)

Have a seat.

Elris sits down. Cross gathers his thoughts.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Something's happened to Y'lan. I'm not sure what, but he's been acting strangely ever since he returned to the ship.

ELRIS

Returned...?

CROSS

We think he was in the wormhole.

(beat)

I know we're limited in what we can do for him. But I'd hate to lose another -

ELRIS

I'll do everything I can.

Cross smiles glumly and nods.

CROSS

I'm glad you made it back.

ELRIS

I only wish the Ambassador's friend could have come with us.

CROSS

How's he taking her death?

ELRIS

I don't know. He's been quiet.

CROSS

He's always been quiet.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

Gazing through a window on the promenade's second level, we see the ENTERPRISE. We pull back to find AMBASSADOR ODO gazing out. His posture is familiar - arms crossed over his chest, with a hand just under his chin. He is still, but his eyes reveal a sea of pain flowing within him.

ELRIS (V.O.)

But it's different now. There's a loneliness about him. You can see it in his eyes. It's almost like they're sad...

Odo sighs and is about to leave when -

TALORA (O.S.)

Ambassador.

Odo glances up to find TALORA standing before him. He is startled slightly, but does well not to let it show.

ODO  
Hello, Commander.

TALORA  
I was sorry to hear about what happened on Bajor.

ODO  
(uncomfortable)  
Thank you.

TALORA  
It could not have been easy for you.

ODO  
Not, it wasn't. If you'll excuse me -

TALORA  
I hope you'll be able to continue negotiations.

Odo stops, turns.

TALORA (CONT'D)  
I realize the Federation can be difficult to deal with.

ODO  
Difficult would be an understatement.

Talora motions to Morn's.

TALORA  
I was about to have lunch. Would you care to join me?  
(awkward beat)  
We can review the details for the next round of talks.

Odo hesitates, considers, and finally relents. He turns back to Talora.

ODO  
All right. It has been awhile since I've had a root beer.

Talora nods in acknowledgment and the two enter the bar.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- MORN'S BAR

The bar is busy as ever. Slinky dabo girls tempt customers to try their luck, Starfleet officers laugh as they play darts, and several Jem'Hadar occupy a few tables in the corner. They say little and drink less.

At one of their tables, we find the vorta REES conferring with several of his bodyguards. He glances away for a moment, and his eyes light up. He rises and quickly rushes to Odo and Talora, who are searching for a table.

REES

Founder. Your presence brings me untold joy.

He bows before Odo, who sighs.

ODO

I wish you'd stop doing that.

REES

Forgive me. It has been many days since your departure and I find I quite miss your guidance and wisdom. Please, I invite you both to share our table.

Odo turns to Talora, who simply nods - no objection there.

ODO

Oh, all right.

Rees again lights up.

REES

Splendid. You -

ODO

(half grumbling)  
- honor you with my presence. Yes, I know.

Rees smiles graciously and leads them toward the table. Moments before they arrive, the wall just behind their table EXPLODES. Smoke fills the room immediately as debris rains down on the hapless patrons.

The crowd in the bar rushes out onto the promenade in a panicked frenzy. As the smoke begins to clear we find Talora struggling to her feet. Her uniform is ripped and her shoulder is bleeding, but she is otherwise unharmed.

TALORA

Ambassador! Ambassador!

ODO

Here.

Odo appears next to her, with nothing visibly wrong. The two rush to the table and find Rees on his knees, coughing.

ODO (CONT'D)

Rees.

The vorta struggles to his feet, but he has a large wound on his side and he stumbles. Odo grabs his arm.

ODO (CONT'D)

Easy.

Talora takes one look at him and taps her comm badge.

TALORA

Talora to the Infirmary. Medical emergency in Morn's.

ODO

Oh no...

Talora follows Rees' gaze to a fallen Jem'Hadar soldier. She rushes to him, kneels down. Several sharp pieces of debris are lodged in his chest and his throat. Blood trickles down onto the carpet from a gash in his throat.

Odo and Rees kneel beside her as she checks for a pulse. There is none. She shakes her head sadly. He's dead. OFF their reactions...

FADE OUT.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- INFIRMARY

Rees lies on one of the bio beds. His wound has been dressed already. Our focus moves to Talora, who has shed her uniform jacket. The right sleeve of her shirt is also missing. TORAN treats the gash with a dermal regenerator.

TORAN

The pain should be gone in a few minutes.

(to Odo)

Are you certain you're not hurt?

ODO

It takes more than an exploding bulkhead to injure me, Doctor.

The Infirmary doors slide open and a medic team enters with a gurney. The fallen Jem'Hadar lies under a covered sheet.

TORAN

(to the medics)

Put him in chamber L-four.

They nod and quickly rush off. Toran returns his attention to Talora.

TORAN (CONT'D)

Can you move your arm now?

Talora demonstrates full range of motion as once more the doors open. CAPTAIN KELSEN VORAL and ADMIRAL DELFUNE enter.

DELFUNE

What happened?

TALORA

We were in Morn's when the bulkhead behind our table suddenly exploded. It looked like an EPS conduit was to blame.

VORAL

My God. Was anyone hurt?

REES

(sadly)

One of my bodyguards was killed.

DELFUNE

That's all?

REES

Isn't it enough?

VORAL

I'll have an engineering team examine the conduit immediately.

Odo frowns.

ODO

You're not going to have security examine the scene?

VORAL

There's nothing to suggest it was intentional.

ODO

There's nothing to suggest it wasn't.

VORAL

With all due -

DELFUNE

(cutting in)

Captain Voral will have a security detail examine the scene immediately.

Odo nods.

DELFUNE (CONT'D)

It may be necessary to delay this evening's session as well.

Voral is about to object.

DELFUNE (CONT'D)

As a precautionary measure. We'll reschedule the talks for Oh-seven hundred. Is that acceptable?

ODO

I would have brought it up myself if you hadn't, Admiral.

DELFUNE

I'll inform Admiral Thel.

She turns and rushes off.

VORAL

My security chief may want to speak with you.

ODO

We'll make ourselves available to him.

Voral nods and exits.

TORAN

(to Rees)

I'd like to keep you here for a few hours.

REES

Is that really necessary?

TORAN

Your wound was deep. I want to make sure it's healing properly.

REES

But surely -

Odo steps forward.

ODO

I think it would be best if you remained here until the doctor releases you.

REES

As you wish. I serve the Founders in all things.

TORAN

You two are free to go.

(to Talora)

Let me know if you feel any irritation in your shoulder.

TALORA

Thank you, doctor.

Talora slides off the bed and she and Odo depart.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

We find Talora, alone in the briefing room, going over numerous PADDs. She is lost in thought and doesn't hear the doors slide open or Captain Cross enter the room. After a moment, she looks up and sees the captain.

CROSS

Remember me? Ship's captain?

Talora rises but Cross halts her with a wave of his hand.

CROSS (CONT'D)

No need. I hear there was some excitement on the station earlier.

TALORA

An explosion in Morn's.

CROSS

Caused by?

TALORA

Unknown.

CROSS

Injuries?

TALORA

One Jem'Hadar soldier was killed.  
Rees was injured but is recovering.  
Ambassador Odo wasn't hurt.

CROSS

I suspect there's very little that  
can hurt Ambassador Odo.

TALORA

I suspect you're right.

An awkward silence develops between them as Cross strolls to the window and stares out.

CROSS

I was a little disappointed when you  
didn't check in after we got back.

TALORA

I've been very busy with the  
negotiations.

CROSS

I know. As I recall, when The1  
ordered us to leave, you were ready  
to stay behind.

A beat.

TALORA

Captain, I -

CROSS

We've lost a lot of people on this  
assignment, Talora. Ozran and Dojar  
are gone. Toran's staying on DS9.  
Narv and Y'lan are both comatose.

(beat)

I don't want to lose my First Officer  
too. Not now.

(beat)

Not now.

The silence returns for a few moments.

CROSS (CONT'D)

We're holding a little get-together  
in Ten Forward later, for Dojar. I  
hope you'll make an effort to attend.

Talora says nothing. Cross walks to the door. He pauses  
and turns as if to say something more, but thinks the better  
of it and exits.

EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The mighty stations adrift in the sea of stars. A BAJORAN  
SHUTTLE passes over us, heading for the docking ring.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- DOCKING RING

Admiral Delfune waits impatiently outside the docking hatch.  
Two Starfleet security guards flank the doorway.

Finally the great circular door rolls to the side. THE KAI  
emerges, with two cloaked VEDEKS following her. Delfune  
turns and regards the new arrival.

DELFUNE

I'm relieved to see you've arrived  
safely.

KAI

This journey was more agreeable than  
my previous one.

DELFUNE

I'm sure it was.

Delfune motions for them to start walking.

DELFUNE (CONT'D)

I assume you found who you were  
looking for?

KAI

The Prophets.

DELFUNE

If you'd like.

KAI

Yes, I encountered the Prophets.

DELFUNE

And did your meeting prove insightful?

KAI

It was - enlightening, if confusing.  
The Prophets often speak in mysteries  
so that we may gain wisdom in trying  
to understand.

DELFUNE

And did they tell you to call of the strike and let your people return to work?

KAI

Not in so many words. I still have much to understand about my experience in the Celestial Temple. I hope you'll understand that I wish to mediate on it awhile longer.

DELFUNE

We don't have much of a choice, do we?

KAI

You did have a choice. You could have notified us of the negotiations and involved us from the beginning. Instead, you chose to ignore us. Do not blame me for the consequences of the Federation's actions.

Delfune stops, activates the next hatchway. The door rolls aside.

DELFUNE

After you.

The Kai steps through, and Delfune follows. We hold on the vedeks as they pass through the door as well. We catch a fleeting glimpse under the hood of one of them - it is TIMIN POL.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- SECURITY OFFICE

We find ourselves in an office that is both very familiar and very new - the security office of Deep Space Nine. It is little changed since we last saw it, save for some more advanced, Federation computers put in place.

We also see a large viewscreen on the wall, populated with smaller 'boxes' that are taken to be security monitoring posts throughout the station. They show several key structures, including the station's core, the docking ports and other points of entry, and many shops on the promenade.

The man behind the desk, JEREMY BRADFIELD, is surprisingly young. He is clean-cut and straight-laced, the kind of guy one expects to see on military ads.

His eyes dart about the large viewscreen as he takes in various happenings around the station with uncanny speed.

Just outside his own office, he notices Talora approaching. He frowns and activates a button on his desk.

The doors slide open before Talora can even ring the chime.

The Romulan enters and takes in her surroundings. Bradfield's eyes scarcely leave the various viewscreens, except to look at his own computer terminal.

BRADFIELD

Can I help you?

TALORA

I'm Commander Talora, of the Enterprise.

BRADFIELD

Right, here for the talks. I'm Lieutenant Bradfield, or Chief Bradfield. Please, sit down.

Talora takes a seat across from him, raising a curious eyebrow at the myriad monitors.

TALORA

Your displays are very elaborate.

BRADFIELD

They have to be. I coordinate more than two dozen officers from this office.

TALORA

That must make manual security sweeps rather difficult.

BRADFIELD

I don't do manual sweeps. I don't believe in them. Or more accurately, I don't believe they are my job. I am the security chief - my role is to coordinate all efforts, activity, and team deployments. I can best achieve that right here. The people on this station know where I am.

(nods at the video wall)

And they know I'm watching.

TALORA

(unimpressed)

I see.

Bradfield sorts through some PADDs on his desk and then finally makes eye contact with Talora.

BRADFIELD

I'm going to go out on a limb and assume you're not just dropping by to chit chat.

TALORA

I was hoping you could tell me if your officers found anything during their security sweep of Morn's bar.

Bradfield again sifts through PADDs for a moment.

BRADFIELD

(checking)

The cause of the explosion was a faulty EPS conduit. There was a power surge. It overloaded and blew out.

(sits the PADD down)

If you'd like, I could make that report available to you.

TALORA

(nods)

You can have a copy sent to me aboard the Enterprise.

BRADFIELD

Happy to oblige. Will that be all?

TALORA

I believe so. Thank you for your time.

Bradfield nods as Talora rises and leaves.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- INFIRMARY

We find Rees, still lying in his bio bed but obviously getting restless. Toran goes about several tasks in the Infirmary.

REES

How much longer do you plan on keeping me here, doctor?

TORAN

Not long. Your tissue is healing well. Another few hours, maybe.

REES

I don't suppose I'm allowed food or drink.

TORAN

Water should be all right.

REES

A pity. I've been craving a tall glass of Rokassa Juice.

Toran stops, glances at Rees.

TORAN

I thought the Vorta didn't have taste buds.

REES

We didn't before Odo returned to his people. He graciously convinced the Founders that we were in need of some...genetic enhancements.

TORAN

You have a great deal of respect for Odo.

REES

Respect is a gross understatement. Adoration would be more appropriate.

TORAN

Just because he's a Changeling?

REES

(a bit put out)

A Changeling? He is a god. The first Founder I had the privilege of serving under as advisor.

TORAN

You don't find it difficult to worship a god who you can reach out and touch?

REES

Of course not. What an absurd notion.

TORAN

For many cultures, it's the intangibility of their gods that makes their faith worthwhile. Believing without seeing strengthens faith.

REES

It surprises me to hear that coming from a Bajoran. Your gods are quite literally outside the window. You have but to take a shuttle into the wormhole to see them face to face. Does that cheapen your faith?

TORAN

I guess not.

REES

Nor does walking with the Founders cheapen ours.

TORAN

Even though you know you're genetically engineered to obey and worship them?

REES

Every god creates out of a desire to be worshipped. Just as you feel drawn to your Prophets, so we feel drawn to the Founders. There is less of a difference than you realize, I think.

Toran lets it go as he once again begins moving about the Infirmary.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- GUEST QUARTERS

We find ourselves in a guest suite on Deep Space Nine. The room has a hastily built altar with some incense burning. We find THE KAI watching the monitor in her room. It's a news report, featuring Carter standing on the promenade near the bar.

CARTER

...outside of Morn's Bar on Deep Space Nine, where earlier today an explosion claimed the life of a Jem'Hadar soldier. Although the cause is being unofficially dubbed an accident, it has caused a number of ripples which lead this reporter to question that judgment. Foremost among those, the peace talks with the Dominion have been put on hold temporarily while a thorough investigation is conducted. If indeed this was an accident, an investigation would not be needed. It seems to be just another example of Feder...

She turns it off and sighs. Timin is revealed behind her, standing next to a window.

TIMIN

Our friend Mr. Carter wastes no time.

KAI

Such senseless loss of life. And to what purpose?

TIMIN

There is no purpose, Eminence. Only incompetence. Federation incompetence.

KAI

I don't expect the Council of Ministers to look upon this delay favorably. Bajor grows more restless every second the Dominion remains here.

TIMIN

We are caught in the middle. A rock and a hard place, as the humans say.

KAI

I feel as though I should speak out - say something to our people, give them some guidance.

TIMIN

Bajor would heed the words of her Kai.

KAI

I find it difficult to guide others when I myself am so conflicted.

TIMIN

Eminence, you have known for many years that the Federation has become unreliable. That they care nothing for Bajor.

The Kai seems hesitant.

KAI

I know that they are having difficulties, as we all do.

TIMIN

In times of trial, one comes to rely upon one's friends and are thusly relied upon in turn. The Federation has done nothing to aid us and everything to mock us. It is time we took a stand and showed them we will no longer be cast aside.

The Kai sighs.

KAI

It is a most difficult situation.

TIMIN

Times of importance always are.

KAI

I must rest. We begin discussions about the wormhole tomorrow.

TIMIN

Of course, Eminence. I will make sure you are not disturbed.

The Kai rises and departs silently.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- MORN'S BAR

The bar is completely empty. The gaping hole remains in the wall, and it is there we find Talora. She kneels next to the hole, scanning it with her tricorder. She examines the readings and frowns.

Talora rises and is about to leave when she notices a spot on the carpet. Curious, she kneels down. The area she's looking at is unremarkable. There is nothing of interest there, yet she gazes at it as though it should reveal the secrets of the universe.

Quickly she pulls out her tricorder and scans the area. The readings are returned, and she is deeply confused.

TALORA

Impossible.

She continues her scans.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

We find Quinlan and Elris walking together on the Promenade, in the middle of a conversation.

QUINLAN

Is anyone going to be speaking?

ELRIS

I don't know.

QUINLAN

It just doesn't seem right. Everything we've been through and now it seems like we're all just - falling apart.

ELRIS

Things change.

QUINLAN

Not like this. Not this much, not this fast.

The two pause at a small bench which sits opposite the Infirmary. Talora appears nearby, looking distracted. She examines the readings on her tricorder with surprise and confusion.

Quinlan tries to get her attention, but the Romulan walks with her head down, straight into the Infirmary.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Is it just me, or did she seem a little distracted?

ELRIS

(shrugs)

I thought she always looked like that.

Without warning, there is an enormous EXPLOSION from within the Infirmary. Smoke pours out onto the promenade as panic once again rules the day. People run in all directions.

Quinlan and Elris exchange concerned glances before they both rush headlong into the burning Infirmary.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- INFIRMARY

Fire blazes and smoke fills the air as Elris and Quinlan make their way through the Infirmary. They are first met by Talora who, aside from a few bruises, appears to be all right.

TALORA

Rees and Toran are in here.

QUINLAN

We'll get them. Get out of here.

Quinlan finds Rees on the floor, underneath his overturned biobed. She kneels down and helps him up. He appears relatively uninjured, and is able to limp out with her.

Nearby, Elris almost trips over the fallen Toran. She kneels down quickly.

ELRIS

Toran!

TORAN

(gritting his teeth;  
dazed)

I'm fine.

Elris raises Toran to his feet.

ELRIS

Is there anyone else in her?

TORAN

Just Rees.

ELRIS

Jen got him. Come on!

They rush out of the smoke.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE -- CONTINUOUS

As Elris gets Toran out of the Infirmary, a disaster control team arrives on the scene. They dive into the flames and try to put them out.

Seconds later, Captain Voral and Chief Bradfield arrive as Elris and several DS9 nurses examine the three caught in the blast. ODO is there a second later.

VORAL

What happened?

TORAN

I was about to get Talora a blood sample from the Jem'Hadar. As soon as I stepped into the morgue there was a blast. It looked like it came from inside one of the morgue chambers.

VORAL

Was anyone hurt?

TORAN

Not critically.

ODO

I think there's enough evidence to warrant an investigation into both explosions.

VORAL

I agree. Bradfield, get a security detail down here to check things out.

BRADFIELD

Aye, sir.

Bradfield vanishes, barking orders into his comm badge as he goes. As Voral speaks to the survivors, Odo pulls Talora aside.

ODO

I'm beginning to see a common thread here.

TALORA

Common thread?

ODO

Both you and Rees were involved with both explosions. I somehow doubt that's a coincidence.

TALORA

An assassination attempt?

ODO

I think it's too soon to say for certain. But it would be foolish to rule out the possibility.

TALORA

I'm certain Lieutenant Bradfield will do everything he can to uncover the truth.

ODO

I'm afraid I don't share your confidence in his abilities. He's got his team doing all of the work for him. And I've never trusted a security chief who doesn't get involved with security matters personally.

(beat)

I'd feel a bit more at ease if you were to assist him.

Talora looks surprised.

TALORA

Me?

ODO

You do have a background in investigative work. And given your own personal stake in the matter, I would think you'd be well equipped and well motivated to figure out what's happening.

TALORA

Ambassador, I'm far too busy with the negotiations to -

ODO

I wouldn't worry about the negotiations. I suspect they'll be put on hold.

(beat)

If this IS intentional, you can be whoever's behind it will strike again.

Talora considers Odo's words for a moment.

TALORA

I'm willing to assist in the investigation. But I don't think Lieutenant Bradfield will approve.

ODO

Leave that to me.

Something approaching a grin crosses Odo's face for a moment, then vanishes.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- SECURITY OFFICE

We find Bradfield once again busy at his desk, going over various reports and PADDs. He barely glances up when Talora enters his office.

BRADFIELD

Have a seat, Commander.

She sits and patiently waits while Bradfield works. After a few moments he stops and looks up, gathering his thoughts.

BRADFIELD (CONT'D)

Look Commander, let me be blunt. I realize that you offered to help us because Ambassador Odo specifically asked for you. I also realize you're a command officer, not a security officer, so I'll endeavor to make this easy on you.

Talora frowns, clearly offended.

TALORA

There is no need for you to make it 'easy' on me. I am perfectly capable of assisting you in this investigation.

BRADFIELD

Of course you are. But I have a team of my most reliable officers already working on it. It would damage their morale to bring in someone from the outside.

TALORA

Lieutenant, my presence here is for the benefit of the peace talks. It is my intention to fulfill my promise to Ambassador Odo and do everything I can to assist you.

Bradfield sighs.

BRADFIELD

Look, Commander, I appreciate that. Really, I do. I simply don't need you right now. My team is on it. I trust them. They'll get the job done.

TALORA

Whether you need me or not is irrelevant. The fact is I am here, and I am not going to leave until I am given a role in this investigation.

Bradfield looks like he's about to press the issue, but holds back and sighs. He grabs a PADD, glances at it, then offers it to Talora.

BRADFIELD

All right, fine. It's standard procedure to investigate the living quarters of the victim, to see if there's anything pointing to a possible motive -

TALORA

I understand the necessity of this procedure.

BRADFIELD

(annoyed)

Good. Then it's all yours.

Talora glances over the PADD and frowns.

TALORA

This is not what I was expecting.

BRADFIELD

At the moment, it's all I've got. File a report on the ship and as soon as I get it, I'll contact you and we'll figure out what to do next.

TALORA

Very well.

Talora rises and leaves Bradfield, who immediately returns to monitoring his video wall.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TEN FORWARD

We find a number of Enterprise officers - Cross, Quinlan, Elris, Toran, and ERIK GREY - gathered in a dimly light, unusually quiet Ten Forward. Each carries a tall glass and a somber visage.

Cross looks at the door several times, as if expecting it to open. It doesn't.

ELRIS

(softly)

You told Talora, right?

CROSS

Of course I did. I suspect she's too wrapped up in her investigation to bother.

ELRIS

Should we wait?

CROSS

No. She's not coming.

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

(steps forward)

We're here to pay tribute to a fallen  
colleague. A shipmate. A friend.  
We're here to honor Gril Dojar.

Cross raises his glass. The others follow suit.

INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP -- CORRIDORS

Talora is escorted through the bland corridors of the  
Jem'Hadar vessel. Her escort looks particular unhappy about  
her presence.

JEM'HADAR THIRD

I do not see the need for this.

TALORA

It is a necessary part of the  
investigation.

JEM'HADAR THIRD

It is futile. The attack on the  
Second happened on your Federation  
starbase. Not on his own ship.

TALORA

I don't recall mentioning that it  
was an attack.

JEM'HADAR THIRD

(scoffs)

Starfleet can call it whatever they  
want. It does not change the truth.

TALORA

Some would say truth is subjective.

JEM'HADAR THIRD

Do not twist my words. What happened  
on your station is as much an accident  
as the events on the Majestic.

TALORA

Those events have been dealt with.  
I suggest you accept that.

JEM'HADAR THIRD

I do not take orders from Romulans.

TALORA

No, but you do take orders from the  
Vorta. And in case you have  
forgotten, I am here at their request.  
Unless you intend to openly question  
their judgment, I would advise you  
to keep such thoughts to yourself.

The Jem'Hadar stops and glares at Talora. We get the impression he'd like nothing more than to remove her head from her neck. Instead, he reaches behind him and punches a button on the wall. The door slides open.

JEM'HADAR THIRD

These were the Second's chambers.  
Complete your examination.

Talora slides past the Jem'Hadar and into the room.

INT. JEM'HADAR SHIP -- SECOND'S CHAMBERS

To say the chambers are small would be a gross understatement. Barely bigger than a closet, the chambers provide only room for a small bed and dresser.

TALORA

You're kidding.

JEM'HADAR THIRD

The Jem'Hadar do not 'kid'. We have no need of material trinkets. The Founders are our sustenance, and the Dominion is our life. We know no other pleasure than that of service in battle for our creators.

Talora pulls out some of the drawers, but they are all filled with military uniforms. She checks around for a moment, but finds nothing of interest.

TALORA

I believe I've seen enough.

She leaves, the Jem'Hadar but a step behind her.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

The desktop monitor fills our view. Carter is once again standing outside of Morn's.

CARTER

With a second explosion on Deep Space Nine delaying the Dominion peace talks yet again, and no word from the Kai on when the Bajoran worker strike is going to end, people are left to speculate about what's going on. Some are claiming it's the work of terrorists, while others claim it is merely the Federation's incompetence that has allowed these events to get so far out of hand. One thing is for sure - the Bajoran people are becoming very restless.

(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)

It seems once again the Federation  
is ignoring their...

Voral switches off the monitor, looking somewhat annoyed.

VORAL

This is not the kind of news I need.  
You can bet your life I'll be getting  
a hundred nastygrams from the Bajoran  
Council of Ministers any time now.

(beat)

You'd think Bajorans would be a bit  
more patient, what with their  
spiritual heritage. But they're  
just as jaded, impatient and irritable  
as the rest of us. I've spoken to  
more than a few council members who  
don't even try to disguise their  
anxiousness to get these talks over  
with. They genuinely don't understand  
the intricacies of diplomacy.

CROSS

They want to dance but they don't  
want to know the steps.

VORAL

Exactly. The Occupation, for all  
its atrocities, was a fairly  
straightforward situation. Get rid  
of the Cardassians. Make it happen  
however you can. They don't  
understand why we can't do the same  
with these talks.

A beat.

CROSS

In all fairness, I think there's a  
bit of paranoia among the Bajorans.  
After the Q'tami incident, I think  
they're a bit more fearful about  
more violence developing. The fact  
that it's the Dominion we're  
negotiating with doesn't help matters.

Beat.

VORAL

Do you think things will turn violent  
again, Captain?

CROSS

(sighs)

If you would have asked me two days  
ago, I would have said no. But now...

Cross lets the thought hang there. Voral nods in agreement.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- MORN'S BAR

We find Elris and Talora hunkered down where the Jem'Hadar's body had been. They both stare blankly at a tricorder.

ELRIS

Are sure there was no blood here before?

TALORA

(annoyed)

Of course. I still have the tricorder readings on file.

ELRIS

What about the original readings? Didn't the responding physician take any tricorder readings?

TALORA

I spoke to Doctor Toran already. He scanned the Jem'Hadar upon his arrival, but maintained no records regarding his blood type. He made no scan of the blood on the carpet.

ELRIS

Well, it's here now. The dispersal pattern is consistent with the wounds he suffered. It looks legitimate to me.

TALORA

This is impossible. There was nothing here.

ELRIS

If that's true, you're suggesting...

TALORA

...that someone removed the blood from the carpet and then replaced it.

ELRIS

That doesn't make sense. And there's nothing that I know of that can remove a blood stain so completely. Even if it wasn't visible anymore, there would still be very small amounts of blood left. The tricorder would pick up on it.

Talora pauses, thinks for a moment.

TALORA

Is there any way to confirm that blood belongs to the Jem'Hadar that died?

ELRIS

Only with a blood sample that we know is his.

TALORA

The body was destroyed when the Infirmary exploded. I will speak to Ambassador Odo - they may have a sample on their vessel.

ELRIS

If they even keep things like that on file.

(pulls out a hypo)

I'd better get a sample of this before it disappears too.

The doors slide open and Quinlan enters.

QUINLAN

I thought I saw people in here. I was hoping they'd opened up again.

ELRIS

Afraid not.

QUINLAN

What's going on?

TALORA

I am aiding Lieutenant Bradfield in his investigation.

(beat)

And I may require your expertise.

QUINLAN

As Quinlan the Security Chief, or Quinlan the ex-pirate who knows way too much about things she shouldn't?

TALORA

The latter.

Quinlan smiles.

QUINLAN

Good. Always more fun that way.

She joins Elris and Talora on the floor.

TALORA

This is the spot where the Jem'Hadar died after the explosion. His wounds were deep, several were open.

QUINLAN

With you so far.

TALORA

I returned to the accident scene a day later, and the blood was gone. Completely.

QUINLAN

Did a maintenance crew remove it?

TALORA

No one ordered that the scene be cleaned. Such an order would have been signed by the lead investigator. Lieutenant Bradfield insists he did not sign one. Nor can I find any record of one.

ELRIS

Besides, there would still be trace amounts of blood even after it was cleaned. Too small to see, but they'd be detectable on the tricorder.

QUINLAN

But there's blood there now.

TALORA

We cannot explain it.

QUINLAN

So you think someone lifted the original blood and then put this here?

TALORA

It seems unlikely, but plausible.

QUINLAN

(thoughtful)

I remember hearing about a Rigellian device that was capable of completely removing any substance from any surface - no residuals, nothing to trace. It was popular with terrorists on the black market during the Eola War in the Beta Quadrant.

ELRIS

(sighs)

That means there's no way to know if something like that was used here.

QUINLAN

That's the idea.

Elris closes her tricorder, frustrated.

ELRIS

This doesn't make any sense.

TALORA

(beat)

Here is what we know thus far. A Jem'Hadar soldier is killed in an apparent accident. His body is taken to the Infirmary where it is subsequently incinerated in a second explosion. Meanwhile, all traces of his blood seem to vanish from the scene of the accident, only to be found again a day later.

QUINLAN

Then you're right. It's a plant. Someone removed the blood and replaced it.

ELRIS

But why?

TALORA

The question of the hour.

Off their concerned expressions.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

Quinlan steps out of Morn's and is about the head down the corridor when she is hit by a passer-by not paying attention. The man wears dark clothing and walks quickly with his head down.

QUINLAN

Hey, jeez. I'm pretty sure your head can tilt upwards, y'know.

The man looks up - it is TIMIN. He recognizes Quinlan immediately, and tries to get away before she realizes who he is.

TIMIN

My apologies.

He quickly rushes off. Quinlan watches him go for a moment, but it sinks in quickly.

QUINLAN

Hey! Come back here!

Quinlan takes off in pursuit. Timin glances back and sees this. He immediately steers himself toward the largest crowd of people he can find. He pushes through them, knocking down several.

Quinlan follows but is slowed by the chaos Timin leaves in his wake.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Stop!

Timin only slows to round a corner and disappear into one of the hatchways that connects the promenade to the habitat ring. Quinlan moves to follow, but gets stuck behind the rolling hatch door. She quickly reopens it and rushes through.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- CORRIDORS

Quinlan charges through the hatch leading into the habitat ring. She looks left, then right. There is no sign of Timin. Slowly she moves, close to the wall, her phaser drawn. She hears movement around the next intersection. She takes a silent breath, readies her phaser, and turns -

- to find Carter about to walk into her. She stops short at the sight of a phaser pointed in his face.

CARTER

Whoa! Hey, easy.

QUINLAN

(disgusted)

Carter? What the hell are you doing here?

CARTER

Conducting an interview for my next broadcast.

(grins)

Care to be next?

Quinlan glances around, her phaser still drawn.

QUINLAN

Did you see anyone come this way?

CARTER

Anyone like who?

QUINLAN

Dark hair, scar on the face, looks  
like a vedek...

CARTER

(shrugs)  
You're the only one I've seen. Sorry.

QUINLAN

(frustrated)  
Damn it.

Quinlan frowns and rushes off, still keeping her eyes peeled.  
Timin appears from around the corner.

TIMIN

She saw my face.

CARTER

Maybe she doesn't recognize you.

TIMIN

Let us hope not. My presence here  
must remain a secret.

CARTER

I've never been good at keeping  
secrets.

TIMIN

I hope for your sake you can keep  
this one, Mr. Carter.

Timin pats Carter on the back and proceeds down the hall.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDORS

Talora waits as the turbolift doors in front of her slide open. She enters.

TALORA  
Transporter room 3.

CROSS (O.S.)  
Hold the lift.

Talora quickly finds the hold button, giving Cross time to enter.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TURBOLIFT -- CONTINUOUS

An awkward silence ensues between the captain and his first officer. After a few moments, Cross sighs.

CROSS  
Hold lift.

The lift slows to a stop.

TALORA  
Is there a problem, Captain?

CROSS  
Yes, there is. You didn't come to the service last night.

TALORA  
(realizes)  
I'm sorry. I have been very involved with the investigation.  
(louder)  
Resume lift.

A few awkward moments pass.

CROSS  
Hold lift.  
(to Talora)  
Have you even given him a second thought since we came back?

TALORA  
Of course I have. And I have grieved for Dojar when I have been able. But I can't allow my personal feelings to interfere with the talks. Or with this investigation.  
(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

(louder)

Resume lift.

Cross is seething next to his first officer. He looks like he might erupt any second.

CROSS

Hold lift.

TALORA

Captain, this is -

CROSS

Are you trying to tell me my feelings are interfering with my job?

TALORA

I think you're proving that right now.

(louder)

Resume lift.

CROSS

Halt lift. My feelings are not getting in the way. But when one of my officers starts acting like she is no longer a member of my crew, then I have a problem.

TALORA

I did not ask to be made head of the Romulan negotiations. And I did not ask to be involved with this investigation. But this is where I am, and I will perform those duties to the best of my ability. Just as I have done for you.

CROSS

Until recently.

(beat)

Resume lift.

An awkward silence ensues as Talora glares hard at Cross. He returns her gaze. Finally, the lift comes to a halt. The doors part to reveal a very annoyed Quinlan, arms folded over her chest.

QUINLAN

Who's been holding up the damn turbolift?

Talora glares hard at Cross before storming off.

EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

The massive station against a sea of stars.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- SECURITY OFFICE

Bradfield walks into his office and stops short at the sight of Talora in his chair. He scowls.

BRADFIELD

What are you doing here?

TALORA

Attempting to further the investigation.

BRADFIELD

I told you I had my best people working on it.

TALORA

You also told me you would contact me after I filed my report on the Jem'Hadar ship. Since you didn't do that, I assumed that perhaps your word was - unreliable.

Bradfield is obviously offended.

BRADFIELD

Who the hell are you to come in here and -

TALORA

Spare me your outrage. It will not accomplish anything.

BRADFIELD

You've got a lot of -

Talora rises, offers Bradfield his chair.

TALORA

If you'd like, I would be happy to show what I've discovered.

Bradfield sits down, barely controlling his anger. Talora leans over his chair, working on his console. The technical schematic for a small device appears.

BRADFIELD

What is this?

TALORA

A nitrilin explosive device. The cause of the explosion in the Infirmary.

BRADFIELD

(surprised)

Nitrilin is supposed to be untraceable.

TALORA

Under normal circumstances. But the frigid temperatures of the morgue chamber somehow changed its consistency. There were trace amounts throughout the Infirmary. I would be more interested in knowing how your team could have missed it.

BRADFIELD

Nitrilin is rare, it's not something we scan for routinely.

TALORA

Two explosions in less than a day? I wouldn't call that routine.

BRADFIELD

(annoyed)

I'll have a word with them later.

(beat)

Any other insights? Like a motive?

TALORA

I believe the intent was to destroy the body of Jem'Hadar.

BRADFIELD

What would that accomplish?

TALORA

It would prevent us from obtaining a sample of his blood.

BRADFIELD

What's so important about his blood?

TALORA

(annoyed)

For a security chief who sees everything that goes on on this station, you seem to be missing a great deal.

BRADFIELD

Humor me. Pretend I don't know anything.

TALORA

(sighs)

After the explosion, I saw a blood stain on the carpet. When I went back later to examine it, it was gone. The next day, it had somehow reappeared. It is my opinion that the victim's blood was removed and replaced with another sample.

BRADFIELD

Do you realize how absurd that sounds? Why would someone go through all that trouble just to get rid of a blood sample?

TALORA

Why indeed?

Bradfield sighs.

BRADFIELD

This is turning out to be more trouble than it's worth. Everyone's nervous about how long we've been delaying the peace talks. Something has to give soon.

The door chime rings out. Bradfield glances out the window where we find Carter, apparently alone. Bradfield opens the doors.

Carter steps in part way.

CARTER

Do you have a moment, Lieutenant?

BRADFIELD

What do you want?

Carter enters, sits uninvited.

CARTER

I'm concerned.

BRADFIELD

Good for you.

CARTER

I'm serious, Lieutenant. These constant delays are making the Bajorans very nervous. They're beginning to doubt the talks will go forward. They're beginning to doubt the Federation's ability to help them.

TALORA

And why would they be feeling that way, Mr. Carter? Surely not because they've been watching your reports.

CARTER

I know where you're going, Talora. But the reports I made are based on Bajoran opinion, not influencing it. I conducted a great many interviews before I made my reports.

TALORA

Now why do I have a hard time believing that?

CARTER

It makes no difference to me if you believe it or not.

(to Bradfield)

Do you have any leads at all? Any clue as to motive, any suspects?

BRADFIELD

I don't have time for this. Get out of here.

CARTER

(indignant)

Lieutenant Bradfield, this investigation is a very important turning point in these talks. Up until now the Bajorans have been nervous, their faith has been shaken. I'm offering you the opportunity to put all of that to rest. Give me something to take back to them, something to tell them you're doing what you can, something to restore what little faith they had in you.

Bradfield seems to ponder this for a moment, but he meets Carter's gaze with daggers in his eyes.

BRADFIELD

Get out of my office.

Carter shakes his head sadly.

CARTER

It's a shame you feel that way. I really wanted to help you. But you leave me no choice.

Carter stands, quickly withdraws. Talora looks after him, concern mounting in her eyes.

TALORA

I don't think that was wise.

BRADFIELD

I don't care what you think,  
Commander.

Talora quickly departs.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

Talora quickly rushes to catch up with Carter.

TALORA

Mr. Carter.

The reporter stops when he sees Talora approaching.

CARTER

Yes, Commander?

TALORA

What was that about, exactly?

CARTER

I don't understand.

TALORA

If there is a headline to be found here, I somehow doubt it is to be found among the Bajoran populace. What interest could you possibly have in how the Bajorans feel?

CARTER

(beat; thoughtful)

A week ago I might have asked myself that same question. I guess things change.

TALORA

Yes, things change. And people change. But you, Mr. Carter, do not. What's really going on here? What story are you really after?

CARTER

As I told the rather stubborn Lieutenant, I'm interested in what the Bajorans think of this.

TALORA

Why?

CARTER

Because no one else is.

TALORA

Reporting on the Bajorans won't get you back into the FNN.

CARTER

(beat)

I know. But it's something I have to do. Excuse me, Commander.

Carter walks away, leaving Talora to ponder his words.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

Cross sits at his desk, listening intently to Quinlan, who is seated across from him. We arrive mid-conversation.

CROSS

You're certain it was him?

QUINLAN

I nearly mauled the guy. I got a good look at him. It WAS Timin.

Cross considers this.

CROSS

This is one of those very unpleasant situations where no matter what we do, we look like the bad guys.

QUINLAN

Well we have to do something. He nearly killed Dojar. And he damn near blew up the Enterprise.

CROSS

I know that.

(beat)

Inform Talora. She might be able to explore it as a possible lead in her investigation.

QUINLAN

Yes, sir.

Quinlan rises and departs.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TEN FORWARD

We find Talora sitting in the otherwise empty Ten Forward. The lights are dim; it is the night shift.

The doors slide open. Talora barely affords a glance up as Quinlan enters the room. Likewise, Quinlan doesn't notice Talora at first. She heads to the bar and reaches over, grabbing a bottle and a glass.

TALORA

I somehow doubt Hal will approve of that.

Quinlan jumps, startled, nearly dropping the bottle.

QUINLAN

Don't worry, it's my bottle. I just keep it here for special occasions.

Quinlan pours herself a drink.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Care for a glass?

TALORA

No thank you.

Quinlan downs her drink then joins Talora at her table.

QUINLAN

Burning the midnight oil?

TALORA

I suppose.

QUINLAN

Any progress?

TALORA

Minimal.

QUINLAN

I may have a lead for you.

Talora puts down her PADD for the first time.

TALORA

Regarding the blood?

QUINLAN

Regarding someone with a motive.

(beat)

Timin Pol is here.

Talora fights through the familiar name until she matches it with someone.

TALORA

From Ionis.

QUINLAN

That's right.

TALORA

(considers)

As I recall, Timin was willing to do just about anything to make the Federation look bad. Do you know where he is?

QUINLAN

No. I ran into him on the promenade and chased him into the habitat ring. I lost him back there. All I found was Carter.

TALORA

(something clicks)

Carter. Have you seen his most recent reports?

QUINLAN

I didn't know he was broadcasting again.

TALORA

Not for the FNN. For the Bajorans. In fact, he has been extremely concerned for the Bajoran people, and his recent reports reflect that.

Quinlan realizes.

QUINLAN

To the point of making the Federation look bad?

TALORA

Precisely.

(rising quickly)

He has arranged for temporary quarters on Deep Space Nine. Would you care to - assist me in an interrogation?

Quinlan lights up.

QUINLAN

Only if you let me bring the guest of honor.

The two are on their way out the doors, which slide open. Talora taps her badge.

TALORA

Talora to Ambassador Odo.

The doors slide shut.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- HABITAT RING

We're just outside Carter's door. Quinlan approaches, dressed in civilian clothing - and not much of it. She rings the chime once. Twice. Again.

Finally the doors slide open and Carter, half awake, is standing on the other side. When he sees Quinlan's garb, he suddenly finds himself very much awake.

CARTER

What are you doing here?

QUINLAN

(coyly)

Where's Sarah?

CARTER

She's asleep.

QUINLAN

Good. Come here.

She grabs him by his collar and leads him down the hall. She walks backwards, smiling suggestively the entire time. Carter is confused but obviously very excited.

CARTER

I've been waiting a long time for this.

They stop, and Quinlan opens a door leading into quarters.

QUINLAN

Believe me Lewis, I've been wanting to do this for a long time too.

She smiles and pulls him in.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- CONTINUOUS

Carter is THROWN into a very uncomfortable chair. The impact is jarring and his head is snapped back. Before he can get up, straps flip out of the chair's arms and legs and restrain him.

Taking in the room now, we see Talora sitting behind a desk, which is the only other piece of furniture in the room. Her hands are completely obstructed from his view. She hands Quinlan a robe.

TALORA

Mr. Carter, we need to talk.

CARTER

I take it Romulans aren't into menage a tois.

TALORA

(disgusted)

No. I am, however, interested in learning some more about your sudden interest in the Bajorans.

CARTER

(sighs)

This again?

TALORA

According to my records, you left Deep Space Nine just prior to the strike proclamation. Why?

CARTER

I wanted to do some sight seeing.

TALORA

On Bajor?

CARTER

No, on Risa. But Bajor was closer.  
Ah!

Carter glances down at his wrist straps, which seem to have tightened.

CARTER (CONT'D)

What the hell was that?

TALORA

What was what, Mr. Carter?

They tighten again.

CARTER

Ah! That!

TALORA

Is there something you want to tell us, Mr. Carter?

Carter sighs.

CARTER

Fine, fine, I went to Bajor. It seemed to me like for all the fuss everyone was making about the wormhole, no one bothered asking the Bajorans what they thought.

TALORA

(glances down, then up)

Excellent. And who did you speak you while you were on Bajor?

CARTER

I don't remember. A lot of people.  
(tightening)  
Ah! What are you trying to do?

TALORA

I'm only trying to ask you a few questions. You say you met with a lot of people. Would you mind giving me an example?

CARTER

This is bullshit. You have no right to keep me here. I -

The restraints tighten again, this time much worse. The strap around his stomach tightens as well.

CARTER (CONT'D)

The Kai! I met with the Kai!

The straps loosen, and Carter gulps in the air.

TALORA

What was the nature of your meeting?

CARTER

I just wanted to ask her opinion about the wormhole issue.

TALORA

I see. And here I find that less than two hours after your alleged visit, the Kai requested that Bajorans everywhere lay down their occupations and stop working.

CARTER

So? She wasn't happy about being ignored. I don't blame her.

Talora glances down again, then makes eye contact with Carter.

TALORA

Did you make contact with anyone named Timin Pol?

CARTER

(awkward)  
Timin who?

The straps tighten.

CARTER (CONT'D)

I swear, I don't know who he is!  
I've never even heard of him!

The straps tighten more.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Ah! All right, all right! Yes, I spoke with him!

TALORA

And is he on this station right now?

CARTER

I don't -

Again, the straps are pulled tighter.

CARTER (CONT'D)

He's here! He's here!

The straps loosen.

TALORA

Does he have anything to do with the recent explosions on this station?

CARTER

No.

TALORA

Mr. Carter, I am getting tired of this.

CARTER

No! He doesn't, I swear he doesn't!

Quinlan scans him with a tricorder.

QUINLAN

His bios are normal. I think he's telling the truth this time.

The straps relent.

TALORA

Why is Timin Pol here?

CARTER

Maybe he enjoys the -

(as the straps tighten)

Ah! All right, all right! I honestly don't know. He's here with the Kai, acting like some sort of advisor. That's all I know. He's asked me to cover this - struggle he perceives the Bajorans going through.

(off Talora's scowl)

What, was I supposed to say no?

It's a good story.

(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)

And it's a good point. The Federation  
HAS been ignoring Bajor.

TALORA

I am not interested in discussing  
politics at the moment.

CARTER

Fine. Then I won't bother telling  
you that if the talks aren't back on  
by tomorrow evening, the Kai is going  
to announce Bajor's withdrawal from  
the peace accords. The strike will  
continue indefinitely. And I suspect  
Bajor will be less willing to  
compromise.

(beat)

Now will you shut this damn thing  
off, please?

Talora raises an eyebrow.

TALORA

Shut what off, Mr. Carter?

She reveals her hands have nothing in them. Carter stares  
in confusion.

CARTER

But the chair...

ODO (O.S.)

Excuse me.

Carter's eyes widen. He slowly turns his head and finds  
himself confronted with Odo's head, which seems to have grown  
from the back of the chair.

ODO (CONT'D)

Would you mind getting off of me?

Carter faints dead away and falls to the floor in a heap.  
Odo finishes morphing back into a humanoid. He smiles,  
insufferably pleased with himself.

TALORA

Well done, Ambassador.

ODO

Likewise, Commander.

QUINLAN

You think it's true, what he said  
about the Kai?

TALORA

We must assume it is.

(beat)

Unfortunately if Timin is not behind  
the attack - we are back to square  
one.

Off the three of them, standing over Carter...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

We enter mid-conversation as Cross and Quinlan are already in mid-conversation.

CROSS  
You kidnapped and interrogated Lewis Carter?

QUINLAN  
Yes, sir. I realize it may have been a bad idea -

CROSS  
(chuckles)  
Bad idea? You should both be put in for promotion.  
(leans back in his chair)  
I hope he had something interesting to say.

QUINLAN  
Timin has nothing to do with the explosions. But he's planning on using them to his advantage. He's got the Kai talked into some kind of speech about Federation incompetence.

CROSS  
Wonderful.

QUINLAN  
We could move against him, prevent him from doing it.

CROSS  
Not a good idea. If he's got the Kai's ear, any attempt to move against him would only deepen the rift between Bajor and the Federation. Things were bad before this accident business, but they're getting worse. Right now, gaining the Kai's support is more important than bringing him to justice.

QUINLAN  
Despite what he did?

CROSS  
Tried to do. He didn't succeed.

QUINLAN

What's the difference? It's just semantics.

CROSS

In a situation like this, semantics are everything. Especially when it comes to dealing with the Kai.

QUINLAN

So he goes free because he's got friends in high places?

CROSS

For now, it seems so.

QUINLAN

That's bullshit.

(beat)

Sir.

CROSS

To put it mildly, yes.

(thoughtful sigh)

Maybe I'll try and talk to the Kai. If I can warn her about him without outright arresting him -

QUINLAN

Captain Neil Cross taking the subtle approach? You sure about that?

CROSS

(shrugs)

We all have to play against type sometimes. Like an ex-pirate turned Security Chief for example.

QUINLAN

Fair enough. I just hope you can get her away from Timin.

CROSS

Let me worry about that. Dismissed.

Quinlan rises, heads for the door.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Oh, Quinlan...

(she turns)

Nice work.

Quinlan smiles and leaves Cross to his thoughts.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

We find Elris at one of the various stations in Sickbay, running tests on the blood sample she took from Morn's. Toran enters as she works. Elris barely spares him a glance.

TORAN

Y'lan seems fine, as far as I can tell.

(silence)

The bio readings are normal, but ce's still not talking.

(silence)

Apparently ce's not the only one.

ELRIS

I'm in the middle of a blood analysis at the moment.

TORAN

Oh.

Toran walks over to a nearby biobed where NARV remains comatose. He checks on several things.

TORAN (CONT'D)

Narv is looking better.

Elris still says nothing.

TORAN (CONT'D)

I get the feeling you're upset with me.

More silence. Toran sighs.

TORAN (CONT'D)

Fine. I'm needed in the Infirmary anyway. They're supposed to have it completed by now.

ELRIS

Wouldn't want to keep you from your precious Bajoran station.

Toran hesitates, looks at Elris - whose attention is still on the tests she's running - and leaves.

The tests finish up, and Elris reads over the results. She taps her comm badge.

ELRIS (CONT'D)

Elris to Talora.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Yes, doctor?

ELRIS

I've finished the scans of the blood.  
It's definitely Jem'Hadar.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

But we have no way of knowing which  
Jem'Hadar.

ELRIS

Not unless the Dominion keeps such  
records, no.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

I've spoken to Ambassador Odo. They  
do not.

(beat)

Thank you for your efforts, Doctor.

The comm goes dead. Elris sets about other tasks.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- SECURITY OFFICE

We find Talora and Bradfield in the Security Office. One of  
his displays has a video feed from the station outside of  
Morn's. The other has a display from outside the Infirmary.

They watch them carefully, but nothing of interest happens  
prior to the explosions.

BRADFIELD

Just like I told you, Commander.  
The monitors picked up nothing  
unusual.

TALORA

I'd like to take these logs to the  
Enterprise to examine them further.

BRADFIELD

I don't see what good that will do.

TALORA

I can get permission from Captain  
Voral if necessary.

Bradfield sighs, hits a few buttons.

BRADFIELD

I've given you access to the logs.  
You can download them to the  
Enterprise computer.

TALORA

Thank you, Lieutenant.

BRADFIELD

You'll let me know if you find something, I hope.

TALORA

Of course.

Talora leaves the office.

INT. DS9 -- BAJORAN TEMPLE

We find the Kai alone, meditating in the Bajoran temple. Behind her, we see Cross enter. He clears his throat politely to get the Kai's attention. She rises and turns.

KAI

May I help you?

CROSS

I apologize for disturbing you, Madame Kai. I'm Captain Neil Cross, of the Enterprise.

The Kai smiles graciously.

KAI

Captain Cross, of course.

CROSS

I hope I'm not intruding.

KAI

I can spare a few moments for the man who tried to save my life. Come, sit with me.

Cross walks to the front of the temple and sits on the edge of the raised platform, next to the Kai.

CROSS

I hope you've recovered from your experience.

KAI

I have, thank you.

CROSS

It's fortunate that you were close enough to the wormhole that the - uh - Prophets were able to save you.

KAI

I believe it was their will for me to meet with them. But tell me, how is your officer? The Q'tami?

CROSS

Well, he's -  
(debates, drops it)  
He's doing well.

KAI

I'm pleased to hear it.  
(beat)  
If I may be so bold, Captain Cross,  
I don't believe you came here just  
to exchange pleasantries with me.

CROSS

You're very perceptive.

KAI

Perception is one of many virtues  
the Kai must master.

Cross thinks for a moment, trying to decide the best approach.

CROSS

I'm concerned for your safety.

The Kai seems surprised to hear this.

KAI

My safety? Why?

CROSS

My officers have reported the presence  
of a Bajoran man on the station,  
someone whom we've had dealings with  
before. His name is Timin Pol.

KAI

And why is it that I should be  
concerned about this Timin?

CROSS

A few years ago, he abducted a member  
of my crew with the intent to kill  
him.

The Kai seems taken aback.

KAI

How terrible.

CROSS

He also intended to destroy the  
Enterprise. Fortunately, my crew  
was able to stop him before he  
succeeded.

KAI

I'm relieved to hear that.

CROSS

I hope you understand, I am concerned only for your safety.

KAI

(rising)

I understand perfectly, Captain Cross.

Cross rises.

KAI (CONT'D)

I appreciate your word of caution. Rest assured, I will take it to heart.

CROSS

Thank you. I would hate to see any more tragedy follow these talks.

KAI

As would I. Good day to you, Captain.

CROSS

And to you.

Cross inclines his head respectfully and withdraws. As he exits the room, we see a shadow move to the left of the doorway. Timin steps out of the darkness which had hidden him so completely.

TIMIN

What did I tell you?

KAI

You were correct, it seems. Almost word for word, exactly as you predicted.

TIMIN

They will stop at nothing to keep Bajor from becoming independent. The nerve! Disrupting the Kai's time of prayer and meditation to spread propaganda!

KAI

The captain seemed to be genuinely concerned.

TIMIN

Cross is a trained lackey. He excels at wearing whatever mask the Federation wants us to see.

The Kai is thoughtful for a moment.

KAI

The things he said - were they true?

Timin seems distressed, but only for a moment. He strides to the Kai.

TIMIN

Eminence -

(he kneels, kisses  
her hand)

I promise you, any actions I have taken in my life have been for the good of my home. For the good of Bajor. Perhaps some have been more...drastic than others. But even such drastic actions, when taken for the good of Bajor, the ultimate and everlasting good, cannot be seen as wrong.

The Kai mulls this over and accepts it.

KAI

Perhaps you're right.

TIMIN

(rising)

I would not lead you astray, Eminence. Come, we have much to discuss.

Timin leads the Kai from the temple.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- MORN'S

Talora sits by herself, going over several PADDs. The door slides open and she glances up to find Odo. She puts down the PADD and rises.

TALORA

Ambassador.

ODO

No need for that. I've never felt comfortable with all of these political niceties.

Talora sits back down and Odo joins her.

ODO (CONT'D)

Have you made any progress?

TALORA

I've had our Chief Engineer examine the security logs in detail. There is nothing to indicate anyone entered Morn's Bar or the Infirmary with hostile intentions.

ODO

What about transporter logs?

TALORA

I've examined every log for the past three weeks. Nothing.

ODO

May I see that?

Odo glances at the PADD with the log file playing.

ODO (CONT'D)

Odd.

TALORA

What is it?

ODO

These are from the station's sensor logs?

TALORA

Yes. Lieutenant Bradfield utilizes a number of sensor stations throughout Deep Space Nine.

ODO

(grumbling)

I remember them. When the Cardassians controlled Deep Space Nine, they required me to use them. I deactivated them once Starfleet took over. But this log can't have been from one of those stations.

TALORA

Why not?

Odo puts the PADD on the table and points to the image.

ODO

The sensor logs on the promenade are designed to capture images at a fixed ratio of 1248 x 936. It's hardwired, it can't be changed. These logs have been captured at 1192 x 880.

TALORA

But the log signatures match those of the sensor stations.

Odo looks at the logs again.

ODO

Then somebody must have cropped the image.

A beat.

TALORA

We have to find out who.

ODO

I doubt Bradfield will give us free access to his computer.

TALORA

Are you certain?

ODO

I wouldn't.

TALORA

There may be another way.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

Talora stands off by herself, a PADD in hand, looking carefully across the Promenade. We see Lieutenant Bradfield exit the security office and walk swiftly down the hall. As soon as he is out of sight, Talora heads for his office.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- SECURITY OFFICE

Talora enters the office. A young officer, Ensign WHIPPLE, sits behind the desk, casually examining the display wall. He glances up.

WHIPPLE

Commander?

TALORA

Lieutenant Bradfield requested I drop this report off.

Whipple takes the PADD, glances it over, and places it on the table.

WHIPPLE

I'll make sure he gets it.

TALORA

Thank you.

She turns to leave, but catches something out of the corner of her. She moves to the video wall.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Did you see that, Ensign?

WHIPPLE

See what, ma'am?

Whipple rises from his desk and walks over to the video wall.

TALORA

This display. It malfunctioned.

As they talk, our focus returns to the desk. The PADD Talora brought in grows a small arm, which travels slowly, carefully down to the computer interface. Several finger-like protrusions emerge and work on the console. The display reads 'Dampening Field Established.'

The arm moves to another part of the interface and continues its work. After a few moments, half of the display screens go blank.

WHIPPLE

Oh, great.

(taps his badge)

Whipple to Chief Soltes.

(nothing; again)

Whipple to Chief Soltes.

Whipple sighs in frustration.

WHIPPLE (CONT'D)

This would happen on my first Security shift. I'm sorry commander, I have to go check this out.

Whipple rushes out of the room. Talora rushes to the desk and begins working, as the PADD she brought in slowly morphs into Odo.

TALORA

You must have been very effective as Chief of Security here.

ODO

Yes. I was. Have you found the original log files?

TALORA

I believe so.

We see the logs appear on the display screen. Both are larger than when we last saw them. More of the Promenade is visible. We first run through Morn's, which is basically the same file.

ODO

Nothing different about that. Try the other one.

Talora brings up the second log file and plays it. It looks much the same.

ODO (CONT'D)

They both look the same.

TALORA  
(suspicious)  
Yes, they do.

She backs up the Infirmary explosion log and plays it again. Suddenly she freeze-frames it.

TALORA (CONT'D)  
There. Do you see that?

She works on the console. The bottom right corner of the screen is magnified. We find ourselves gazing at the top part of a human face.

ODO  
Who is it?

Talora enhances the image further. We see the features of Lieutenant Bradfield come into focus.

TALORA  
It is Lieutenant Bradfield.

ODO  
Bradfield? I thought he never left his office?

TALORA  
He doesn't.  
(beat)  
Where could he be going? What is on the Promenade in that direction?

ODO  
Morn's, the Replimat, a few shops.

TALORA  
The Replimat?

ODO  
(nods)  
A series of public access replicators.

TALORA  
Replicators...  
(rises quickly)  
Come on.

Talora rushes out, with Odo a step behind her.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- REPLIMAT

We find Talora and Odo working on two different replicators.

TALORA

This terminal was accessed  
approximately five minutes before  
the explosion in the Infirmary.

(beat)

By Lieutenant Bradfield. It appears  
he modified the matter conversion  
matrix to run through the station's  
pattern buffers.

ODO

(mildly impressed)

That wouldn't leave a traceable  
signature.

TALORA

Which is why I found nothing when I  
analyzed the transporter logs.

ODO

So he beamed the explosive directly  
into the morgue chamber.

TALORA

It would appear so.

ODO

But why? What was his motive?

TALORA

I suspect we'll find that out when  
we arrest him. Would you care to  
join me, Ambassador?

ODO

I wouldn't miss it.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- HABITAT RING

A hand fills our view. We pull back to find Talora reaching  
for the door chime. Odo is at her side, as well as several  
armed security officers.

The doors slide open and Bradfield emerges in his robe.

BRADFIELD

Commander. I -

He notices the security contingent.

BRADFIELD (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

TALORA

Arresting the man who planted an  
explosive device in the Infirmary.  
If you'll come with us, please.

Bradfield glances at the security officers, then at Odo, then at Talora.

Suddenly he bellows and leaps at Odo.

BRADFIELD  
Dominion bastard!

Odo allows himself to morph temporarily into his gelatinous state. Bradfield plunges through him and runs into the wall. He turns to find several phasers leveled at him.

TALORA  
If you'll come with us, please.

Bradfield sneers but makes no move.

BRADFIELD  
This is your fault, Changeling.

ODO  
My fault?

BRADFIELD  
Your people murdered my parents in the war! They took everything I had! Everything!

Odo frowns. He's used to hearing this by now, but it does little to ease the impact.

ODO  
I'm - sorry.

BRADFIELD  
Sorry? Will that bring them back?  
Will it give me back my family?  
WILL IT?

ODO  
No, it won't.  
(beat)  
But neither will stopping the negotiations.

TALORA  
Get him out of here.

The security team takes Bradfield away as he continues to hurl insults at Odo.

TALORA (CONT'D)  
Are you all right, Ambassador?

ODO

(nods)

You'd be surprised how often I hear that. Even in the Gamma Quadrant. I don't hold myself responsible for the crimes of people during the war. I just wish there was something I could do to help close the rift.

TALORA

I'm sure the negotiations will be back on now. I think that's a good place to begin.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- DELFUNE'S OFFICE

We find Delfune and Talora together in the dimly lit office.

DELFUNE

You did a commendable job, Commander.

TALORA

I'm sure it pains you to say that.

DELFUNE

Not as much as you might think. Bradfield's arrest has calmed the Bajoran storm, so to speak.

TALORA

I assume I will be needed to bear witness at the trial?

DELFUNE

No. The trial is being held off the station. Bradfield has already left.

TALORA

I don't understand.

DELFUNE

You did well, Commander. You played your part. Now it's time to let it go.

TALORA

(upset)

My part? Admiral, I must object to this being taken out of my hands so quickly. I had expected to -

DELFUNE

There are forces at work here that are far beyond you, Commander. Beyond even me. You don't want to push this any further.

TALORA  
Admiral, I -

DELFUNE  
Trust me on this Commander. Let it  
go. Now.

Talora glares hard at Delfune for a few moments before rising and departing.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- TALORA'S QUARTERS

Talora sits in her bed with a single light on above her. She reviews information on a PADD. A quick look from her shoulder shows us she's reading up on Bradfield.

She slowly sits up, reading on in disbelief.

TALORA  
Impossible.

She reaches over and activates her comm panel.

TALORA (CONT'D)  
Talora to Captain Cross.

CROSS' COMM VOICE  
(groggy)  
What is, Commander?

TALORA  
I need to see you at once, Sir.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

Talora paces, PADD in hand.

TALORA  
I thought it was strange that the matter was so quickly taken out of my hands. I checked into Bradfield's background.

CROSS  
And?

TALORA  
He claimed he planted the explosive to try and derail the peace talks. He didn't want peace with the Dominion because they killed his parents.

CROSS  
The Dominion killed a lot of people, Commander. There are bound to be a few survivors who would like to return the favor.

TALORA  
(holds up the PADD)  
His parents are alive.

CROSS  
What?

TALORA  
They're alive. On Rigel VII.

Talora hands Cross the PADD. He looks it over as surprise washes over him.

CROSS  
Talora...this says his parents were  
killed. By the Dominion.

Talora rips the PADD out of his hand.

TALORA  
That's impossible.  
(she hits a few buttons)  
It was here five minutes ago.

Cross sighs.

CROSS  
I think maybe you need to get some  
rest. You've been working yourself  
too hard.

TALORA  
Captain, it was -

CROSS  
That's an order, Commander.

Talora gives Cross a frustrated stare before turning and rushing off.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDORS

Talora storms down the Enterprise corridors, clearly preoccupied. She pauses for a moment, then taps her comm badge.

TALORA  
Talora to Doctor Elris.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- MORN'S BAR

The bar is still closed, but most of the damage from the blast has been repaired. We find Dr. Elris alone, examining the blast site with her tricorder. She is just as displeased with her findings this time as she was last time.

ELRIS  
(to herself)  
Honestly Talora, I don't know what  
you expected me to find.

She makes one more pass then closes the tricorder, ready to leave. But something catches her eye.

The corner of one of the nearby tables is slightly discolored. Elris moves to it, kneels down, looks it over. She quickly pulls out her tricorder and scans it. Her eyes widen.

ELRIS (CONT'D)  
Oh my God...

She stares in silence for a few moments, then taps her comm badge.

ELRIS (CONT'D)  
Elris to Talora.  
(nothing)  
Elris to Commander Talora, come in  
please.

A shadow falls over her. She freezes for a moment, then slowly turns to face the shadow. Before she (and we) can see who it belongs to, a fist LASHES OUT and hits Elris square in the temple. Her head bounces off the table and the tricorder falls to the ground.

We fall with it. The tricorder remains in the foreground as we hear the sounds of a vicious beating. Glass breaks, tables fall, and moments later, Elris falls to the ground before us in a heap.

We hear the whine of a phaser. Seconds later, a gloved hand takes the tricorder and walks away.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END