

STAR TREK

RENAISSANCE

"What Shadows We Pursue"

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Controlled panic permeates the sickbay as a team of medical technicians surrounds a bio-bed. Our movements are uncertain, confused, tense - perfectly mirroring the unspoken emotions the trained staff is suppressing. As each new tech arrives on the scene, as each new voice enters the fray, we JERK to see the speaker. We are constantly in motion, panning around the bed amidst the chaos.

MEDIC 1

Heart rate down 25%.

MEDIC 2

Breathing is erratic. There might be damage to her airways.

MEDIC 3

Her blood pressure is falling dangerously low.

TORAN (O.S.)

20 cc's of tricordrazine. We have to stabilize her heart.

Our last jump shows TORAN, steady and sure amidst the chaos around him. A medic hands him a hypospray. We follow his hand as he moves it toward his patient and find DR. LEA ELRIS lying on the bio bed. She is unconscious, her face badly bruised and bloody. He quickly injects the hypo, to no effect.

MEDIC 1

Heart rate still falling!

Toran hands the spray off to a nearby tech. His face is impassive - the consummate professional.

TORAN

Double it.

Seconds later another hypo appears in his hand. He injects it.

MEDIC 1

Heart rate stabilizing.

TORAN

Let's look at her airways.

The bio bed's readings drop sharply and several alarms sound all at once. The already on-edge med team reacts, but the stress is taking its toll.

MEDIC 2

(off the scanner)

I'm detecting a blood clot in her hippocampus. It's growing fast.

Toran's courageous facade begins to crack. He scans her head with a tricorder.

TORAN

I've located the clot. Give me 20 cc's of anecitine.

Toran injects Elris with the hypo that Tech thrusts into his hand.

MEDIC 1

No effect. The clot is still growing. Synaptic functions are starting to be affected.

TORAN

We'll have to dissolve it directly.

Someone hands Toran a small device which he places on Elris' paling forehead. He activates it, presses a combination of buttons. A steady beep emanates from the device.

Toran stares hard at her, as if willing her to pull through, willing her back to life.

MEDIC 1

Pressure in the hippocampus is decreasing. Brain wave activity is stabilizing.

TORAN

Come on, Lea. Come on...!

Suddenly...the beeping stops. A second passes, or maybe it's an eternity, before the medic speaks again.

MEDIC 1

The clot has dissolved. No permanent damage.

(beat)

She's all right.

Toran permits himself a brief sigh of relief.

TORAN

I want her vitals monitored around the clock. I need everyone ready to assemble immediately if she takes another turn.

The medics go about their job, keeping track of her vitals, studying medical readings.

A visibly relieved Toran takes but a momentary breath. No sooner is he ready to go back to work than CAPTAIN NEIL CROSS enters sickbay.

CROSS
What happened?

TORAN
She was attacked. A security team found her in Morn's.

CROSS
Attacked by who?

TORAN
We don't know.

CROSS
No one saw it?

TORAN
No one's come forward.

CROSS
Will she be all right?

TORAN
There was a blood clot in her hippocampus but we've removed it. She's stable at the moment.

CROSS
(softly)
What was she doing there...?

TORAN
I don't know. We may learn more when she recovers.

CROSS
Then she will recover?

TORAN
I'll see to it personally, Captain.

Cross nods drifts over to the bio bed. The medics are busily monitoring Elris, obstructing his view from time to time.

He shakes his head sadly.

CROSS
(still looking at
Elris)
Toran, you'll...

TORAN
Keep you posted. Yes sir, I will.

Cross smiles glumly and withdraws from Sickbay. Toran takes a moment, gathers himself, and returns to his staff.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CORRIDOR

We find Cross en route to the bridge, obviously a bit distracted. As he rounds a corner, ERIK GREY appears out of nowhere and runs into him. The startled captain disengages himself from his Chief Engineer and regards him with concern.

CROSS

I trust you have a good reason for mauling the captain.

Grey nods, taking a moment to catch his breath.

GREY

Yes, sir. Dojar...I think he may be alive.

Cross's face is a blend of surprise and skepticism.

CROSS

What...?

GREY

Dojar's alive, Captain. In the Gamma Quadrant.

Off Cross's concerned expression...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- CONFERENCE ROOM

Cross sits at the head of the table. QUINLAN sits next to him. Their focus is on the viewscreen, which displays footage of Liaman's ship seconds before its destruction.

GREY

This is the other ship about three seconds before we engaged the tractor beam. Their warp drive was just engaging.

(louder)

Computer, play log.

On the viewer, the Enterprise tractor beam rips Liaman's ship to shreds as it jumps to warp.

GREY (CONT'D)

Computer, reset to time index 042.

CROSS

I assume there's a point here somewhere.

Grey presses a few buttons on the panel. The display quickly splits, with one half showing the footage and the other half showing a sensor readout.

GREY

The grid on the right is our subspace log. It constantly monitors all know subspace frequencies for communications. Watch what happens. Computer, play log.

Again the footage plays. Seconds before the explosion, there is a spike on the readout.

CROSS

(curious)

What was that?

GREY

A subspace transporter.

QUINLAN

I thought those were banned in the Federation.

GREY

They are. The matrix is too unstable.

CROSS

Then where did it come from?

GREY

That's what I couldn't figure out. There were no other ships in the vicinity. But sensors picked up traces of macrochondria a few light years away.

CROSS

Macro-what's?

GREY

Macrochondria. It's part of Q'tami physiology, but it seems prevalent in their machinery as well. I rigged the sensors to detect it a few months back and left the modifications in place, just in case.

Cross shifts uneasily in his chair.

CROSS

Is it a bucket?

GREY

No, sir. A monitoring station, obscured from normal sensors by a Class 3 pulsar in the Norus cluster. I believe Y'lan somehow contacted the monitoring station and used its subspace transporters to beam Dojar to safety. Most likely here -
(Grey indicates on the screen)
- to this planet.

A pang of guilt furrows Cross's brow momentarily.

CROSS

(softly)

I shouldn't have left so quickly. We should have stayed, searched the wreckage longer...

QUINLAN

There's no point in worrying about it now. At least we know where he is, right? We can get him back.

CROSS

That's the problem. We CAN'T get him back. No Federation vessel is permitted to go through the wormhole. I can't ignore a mandate like that.

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

Not now. The talks have reached a critical stage.

QUINLAN

What about ignoring Dojar? We can't just leave him there. If the Dominion have done something to him...

(she trails off)

We owe it to him, Captain.

Cross sighs.

CROSS

I won't violate the agreement not to enter the Gamma Quadrant.

(beat)

However...if two of my officers were to work out some kind of covert rescue mission of their own volition, and handle all the details themselves...

Grey and Quinlan share a quick smile.

GREY

Understood, Captain.

QUINLAN

Thank you, sir.

Cross nods solemnly as Grey and Quinlan head for the door.

CROSS

Just be sure all three of you make it back here. And if you're caught...

QUINLAN

Right. It's our funeral. Just remember to send some flowers. I'm partial to roses myself.

The two quickly exit, leaving Cross to ponder his decision.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- WARDROOM

We find ourselves in the midst of fairly intense negotiations. COMMANDER TALORA and ROMULAN PROCONSUL LOVIK sit across the table from AMBASSADOR ODO and the Vorta REES.

REES

We've reviewed your proposals for technological exchanges, and have found them most satisfactory. With on exception.

(MORE)

REES (CONT'D)

You've requested detailed information on our cranial implants, but have offered in return your cloaking technology - something we are already familiar with.

TALORA

The technology we are offering is a vast improvement over the technology you're familiar with. Cloaking technology was nearly perfected several decades ago, just before a coup d'etat on the Romulan homeworld. Our new cloaks are undetectable.

REES

I see. And you would be willing to arrange for a demonstration of this?

TALORA

If you wish.

Rees defers to Odo, who considers it.

ODO

I think we'll take your word for it.

Odo picks up a PADD, presses a few buttons, and hands it to Talora.

ODO (CONT'D)

The Dominion agrees to your exchanges.

Talora also marks the PADD.

TALORA

Then we are in agreement. Thank you, Ambassador.

The two rise, and the others nearby follow. The negotiations have ended. Talora politely waits for the Dominion delegation to withdraw before she attempts to leave herself. Lovik, however, has other ideas.

LOVIK

I must admit Commander, I am impressed. This is the fourth round of talks in the past week, and you have won them over each time.

TALORA

Thank you, Proconsul.

LOVIK

I wanted you to know, I intend to make mention of your successes to Praetor Neral when I next speak with him. I'm quite certain he will share my sentiments.

Talora is speechless.

TALORA

I - I don't know what to say.

LOVIK

You've said enough already. I look forward to seeing how you handle the next round of talks. Good day, Commander.

Lovik respectfully departs, leaving a still surprised Talora to herself.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- ENGINEERING

Our focus falls to a computer terminal in an unusually quiet engine room. A schematic of the Enterprise, DS9, and the wormhole occupies our field of view momentarily. A feminine hand reaches in front of us, presses some buttons. We pull back to find the hand's owner - Quinlan - speaking with Grey. They both look tired; they've been at this for hours.

QUINLAN

We could send out a false signal from the shuttle. Make it look like we're just debris, nothing of interest.

GREY

(shakes his head)

No good. The wormhole can't be triggered by debris. Even if we could trick the Jem'Hadar sensors, the wormhole opening for a piece of debris would draw too much attention.

Quinlan sighs; this is obviously not her first bad idea of the day.

QUINLAN

There has to be some way we can sneak through...

(beat)

What about...what about retrofitting the Pathfinder with low-observability systems?

GREY

Do YOU want to strip off the hull
and replace it with bio-mimetic
coverings?

Quinlan sighs again, getting more frustrated. She gazes
blankly at the console for a few moments.

QUINLAN

Damn it.

(beat)

What about disabling their sensors?
Couldn't we fire a torpedo rigged to
jam sensors?

GREY

The Pathfinder's a type 26 shuttle,
it can't be fitted with a Mark 6
torpedo launcher. That's what we'd
need to fire a sensor jamming torpedo.
Besides the effect doesn't last that
long. They'd run us down in minutes.

Quinlan throws her arms up and stomps away.

QUINLAN

Well what the hell? Let's just beam
over to a Jem'Hadar ship and convince
them to take us. Or better yet,
let's steal the damn thing!

GREY

I don't think that would work either.

(beat)

You used to be a pirate. No ideas
from back then?

Quinlan wheels on Grey.

QUINLAN

Those WERE my best tricks. And I
don't see you coming up with anything
better!

(beat; a calming breath)

Sorry. Didn't mean to go off the
boil. It's just so damn frustrating,
you know? First we think he's dead,
then we find him but we can't get to
him...

GREY

It's all right. It's been a stressful
few weeks for all of us.

QUINLAN

That's no excuse. I'm Chief of
Security now, I should act like it.

Quinlan sighs, leans against the console.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

I'm starting to wish I wouldn't have skipped Undercover Tactics.

GREY

You never took it?

QUINLAN

Oh it was on my schedule. I just had - other priorities.

GREY

You don't say.

QUINLAN

(proudly)

You're looking at the only Academy graduate to score in the negative on the Covert Surveillance exam.

GREY

I remember that exam.

QUINLAN

I'm sure you scored highest in your class.

GREY

Actually, highest in the Academy.

QUINLAN

Wow, look at me not being surprised.

GREY

Picking up on the cloaked vessel was easy enough. The trick was to reconfigure the aft sensor array to detect...

QUINLAN

(cutting him off)

Wait...what did you say?

GREY

The sensors. The aft array had to be...

QUINLAN

No, no. That's it. A cloak! What if we jury-rigged a phase inverter? Used it like a cloak?

GREY

(off his console)

It might work...but the modifications could take days. Even then it wouldn't completely hide us.

Quinlan rises, paces, refusing to let this one go. Her mind is working a mile a minute.

QUINLAN

What about a real cloak? Could you fit the Pathfinder with a real cloak?

GREY

Possibly. Not that it does us any good. We don't have a cloak.

QUINLAN

No, we don't.

(big smile)

Not yet, anyway.

Grey recognizes the gleam in Quinlan's eyes. He's suddenly a bit apprehensive.

GREY

Oh no.

QUINLAN

Are you fond of larish pie?

Off Grey's concerned look...

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

The promenade is typically busy, cluttered with various Starfleet officials, Vorta, Jem'Hadar, civilians, and members of various delegations present for the peace talks.

Our focus falls to Talora and RICHARD MAREK, who are leaving one of the many kiosks along the promenade. Marek carries a jumja stick.

TALORA

Have you heard anything regarding Doctor Elris?

MAREK

I spoke to Toran an hour ago. She's still unconscious but showing signs of improvement. Quite a beating she took. Any word on who did it?

TALORA

Unfortunately, no.

(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

And with the negotiations, I've had no time to pursue it beyond my initial report. Still, I'm glad to hear she's all right.

(sadly)

We've already lost too many good people.

MAREK

Dojar.

TALORA

(nods)

Dojar. He was one of the first shipmates I felt I could relate to in some capacity.

MAREK

Two outcasts on the ship of the damned.

(off Talora's frown)

Sorry.

(offers his stick)

Jumja?

Talora is about to respond, but something catches her eye. We follow her gaze to just outside of Morn's, where a young Pakled boy is surrounded by three Jem'Hadar soldiers. Trouble is obviously brewing, and Talora moves swiftly to stop it.

JEM'HADAR SECOND

What are you babbling about? Speak plainly!

YOUNG PAKLED

You are ugly. You frighten me, I wish to go.

JEM'HADAR THIRD

Then go.

The Pakled tries to step around them, but the Second steps in his way, causing a collision.

JEM'HADAR SECOND

Watch where you're going.

YOUNG PAKLED

I wish to go. I wish to go!

The Jem'Hadar grabs the Pakled by the collar and snarls. Just as it seems he's going to rip the hapless young man in two -

TALORA (O.S.)
Your behavior is entirely
inappropriate.

The Second turns to find Talora glaring at him. He does not release his grip on the Pakled.

JEM'HADAR SECOND
Mind your tongue, Romulan. Or you
will be next.

TALORA
I am not simply a Romulan. I am the
lead negotiator in the Dominion peace
talks with Romulus. And I somehow
doubt your Vorta masters or Ambassador
Odo would look kindly on this event
if we they were to find out about it
when next I see them.
(the Second hesitates)
What is to be gained from defeating
an enemy so inferior to yourselves?
Have the mighty Jem'Hadar become
nothing more than schoolyard bullies?

The Second considers this for a moment, then lets the young Pakled go. He scurries off quickly, lest the Jem'Hadar change his mind.

TALORA (CONT'D)
A wise decision. Though in the
interest of the peace talks, I suggest
you avoid any further altercations.

The Jem'Hadar grumble and walk away.

MAREK
Interesting choice, that.

TALORA
Hm?

MAREK
Schoolyard bullies.

TALORA
It seemed appropriate.

MAREK
I've never seen someone handle the
Jem'Hadar so skillfully. You're
quite the diplomat.

TALORA
You're the second person today to
make such an observation.

MAREK

Maybe it's a sign.

TALORA

(not convincing)

I do not believe in signs.

MAREK

But -

TALORA

(thoughtful)

But - recently, I have been weighing the potential of a diplomatic career against continuing with Starfleet.

MAREK

You've obviously got the knack for it.

TALORA

I've found it to be very fulfilling. And it would be nice to be among my own people again.

MAREK

It sounds like your mind is made up.

TALORA

I didn't say that.

MAREK

Not in so many words.

TALORA

I haven't even been offered a position.

MAREK

Yet.

TALORA

There's no reason to believe I will be.

MAREK

The Enterprise would miss you.

TALORA

The Enterprise would be just fine without me. I'm sure Captain Cross would be relieved to have a first officer who would not push him off a cliff.

Marek slows his pace. Talora does likewise.

MAREK

(beat)

Your shipmates would miss you.

TALORA

I would miss them. I -

Talora trails off as she notices Y'lan some distance ahead of them. Ce is walking slowly, almost at an amble. He looks around the Promenade at nothing in particular. If we didn't know cim better, we'd think ce was out for a leisurely stroll and some window shopping.

Talora regards the Q'tami with mild confusion as ce approaches them.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Y'lan. I wasn't aware you were up
and about.

Y'lan looks at Talora for a long moment through seemingly empty eyes.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Y'lan? Are you all right?

The Q'tami continues to stare at her blankly. Ce glances at Marek, then back to Talora, then leaves, continuing down the corridor at the same casual pace. Talora and Marek watch Y'lan as ce pauses to examine several other people, storefronts, and kiosks. Ce vanishes around the curve of the promenade, leaving Talora and Marek to exchange confused, if concerned glances.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. BAJORAN RESTAURANT

Our focus falls on a dirty plate splattered with various, unappetizing selections. A hand reaches down, grabs the plate, and rushes off.

A quick angle change gives us a much better look at this rather seedy-looking joint. It is largely populated by Bajoran staff and patrons.

The door opens, flooding the entrance with sunlight. Several people grumble about it as Quinlan and Grey, both dressed as civilians, enter the restaurant. The door closes behind them, and the place resumes its former luminance.

GREY

Nice place.

Quinlan leads him to a table in the corner, away from most of the crowd and even darker than the rest of the place. A scantily clad, haggard looking waitress appears.

WAITRESS

You want food?

GREY

(softly)

If that's what you call it...

Quinlan kicks Grey under the table and flashes a pleasant smile at the waitress.

QUINLAN

Two pieces of larish pie.

The waitress rushes off.

GREY

What was that for?

QUINLAN

Don't complain. You'll look suspicious.

Grey looks around the room at the various unsavory types.

GREY

Really? I'm the one who looks suspicious?

QUINLAN

You're out of your element here,
Erik. You're going to have to trust
me.

GREY

What are we doing here, exactly?

QUINLAN

Having larish pie.

The waitress returns with two small plates, which she practically throws on the table before departing again.

GREY

Charming woman.

QUINLAN

Compared to the one that used to
work here, she WAS charming.

Grey scrutinizes the lump on his plate and pokes at it with a dirty fork. He groans and glances up to see Quinlan already eating hers. She smiles innocently.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

What? I haven't eaten in two days.
Besides, larish pie is supposed to
look like that.

Grey isn't convinced. He's about to take a tentative bite, but a shadow falls over the table. Both officers look up to find a darkly-clad Bajoran. He sports a scar under his left eye and carries a large bundle under his arm. This is ROTAN.

ROTAN

Jenny?

Quinlan frowns.

QUINLAN

You know I hate it when you call me
that.

Rotan smiles.

ROTAN

I know.

Rotan sits next to Quinlan and places the bundle on the floor at his feet.

ROTAN (CONT'D)

Is it true what I've heard? You
went back to Starfleet?

QUINLAN

That was news two years ago, Rotan.
Where have you been?

ROTAN

You know as well as I, in this line
of work we don't always have time to
check up on the latest crew manifests
from Starfleet. Especially with the
level of interest Starfleet has shown
in Bajor for the past decade or so.
Still, it's a shame to lose someone
of your caliber.

QUINLAN

There are plenty more like me out
there, and you know it.

ROTAN

Maybe so, maybe so.

As he speaks, Rotan subtly slides his bundle under the table,
right in front of Quinlan.

ROTAN (CONT'D)

Still, that raid on the Falcon...No
one's been able to pull off anything
like that since. I'm still living
off of what I made from the goods
you brought in.

QUINLAN

(smiles)

That was eight years ago. Since
when did you learn how to be thrifty?

ROTAN

There's nothing wrong with
diversifying a little bit. I may
enjoy the work, but I won't be doing
it forever you know. Things are
getting tougher, and too much ambition
can get you killed.

QUINLAN

Thrift and caution? You've changed,
Rotan.

ROTAN

So have you.
(rises)
Good seeing you again. Jenny.

He smiles at her frown and departs as quickly as he came.

GREY

What was that about?

Quinlan reaches under the table and produces the bundle.

QUINLAN

What we came here for.

Grey lifts the edge of the cloth. Inside is the dull silver of machinery.

GREY

(dubiously)

This is a cloaking device?

QUINLAN

No. But it's our ticket to getting one. Let's go.

The two rise and leave quickly, with Grey carrying the bundle. We are left staring at the emptied table. Quinlan reappears and scoops up Grey's untouched pie, then exits again.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- GUEST QUARTERS

We find ourselves gazing at a small computer terminal in the guest quarters that house KAI SHALA. The Kai is gazing at a Federation profile of Timin Pol. She seems very disturbed at what she's reading.

The doors slide open and in steps TIMIN POL himself. The Kai quickly switches off the viewer and turns to him.

TIMIN

I have received word from the Council of Ministers. They stand ready to support you when you choose to withdraw from the peace talks.

SHALA

If I choose.

TIMIN

If? Forgive me, Eminence, but after the recent terrorist attack, I thought we were in agreement -

SHALA

We were. But the Federation has dealt with the criminal responsible, and the peace talks have resumed. I see no further reason to threaten withdrawal from the talks.

TIMIN

Kai Shala, now is the time to show them that we will not back down. If you give in to them -

SHALA

I am not giving it to them by honoring my word.

TIMIN

We cannot afford to show weakness! If you resume the talks now, the Federation will never take you seriously.

SHALA

I believe they will. The worker strike will continue until our right to the wormhole is acknowledged.

TIMIN

Eminence, please -

SHALA

Enough. I must ready myself for the talks.

(he doesn't move)

Now.

Surprised, Timin slowly retreats from the room.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Sickbay is fairly quiet at the moment, with no patients or staff other than Elris in her biobed and Toran in the office. He's reading through various medical reports, but he's not focused. His gaze keeps drifting up to Elris' bed. We can see the fatigue in his eyes, some combination of physical exhaustion and emotional turmoil.

The doors slide open, and in steps Quinlan. She moves swiftly, quietly to Elris' bedside and gazes sadly at her friend. She senses Toran's presence as he appears behind her, but doesn't move.

QUINLAN

How's she doing?

TORAN

She's improving. She should make a complete recovery, but it will take some time.

(beat)

Is there something I can help you with?

QUINLAN

Just wanted to say goodbye to her before I leave.

TORAN

You're going somewhere?

She finally turns and regards Toran, a bit more like the Quinlan we know.

QUINLAN

(nods)

Top secret, level ten, hush-hush,
tell you but I'd have to kill you
kind of mission.

(beat)

You look like shit.

Toran shrugs.

TORAN

I'll be all right.

QUINLAN

You've been here the entire time,
haven't you?

TORAN

Maybe.

QUINLAN

When's the last time you slept? Or
ate?

TORAN

...I'm not sure.

QUINLAN

You know what she'd tell you if she
knew.

TORAN

The same thing I'd tell her if our
positions were reversed. Get some
rest. Eat something. Try to relax.
Worrying won't do you any good.

QUINLAN

And you'd both be right.

(sighs)

And neither of you would listen. So
what gives? You're staying at her
side like a lost little puppy.

TORAN

She's my patient. I'm concerned
about her.

QUINLAN

And I'm sure you'd forsake food and
sleep if it were me, or Erik, or
Talora lying there, wouldn't you?

(MORE)

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

(Toran is silent)

Thought so.

(beat)

Why do you keep doing this to her,
Toran?

TORAN

Doing what?

QUINLAN

You're always at her side, always
wanting to help her, leading her on.
But anytime she tries to draw close
you pull away.

TORAN

I wasn't aware...

QUINLAN

(cutting him off)

...that you're a real pain in her
ass? Well, now you know.

(beat)

I don't know if you realize this -
somehow I doubt you do - but Lea
genuinely cares about you.

Toran sadly gazes at the bed, but says nothing.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

I've known her a long time. It's
not easy for her to open herself up
like that. But for whatever reason,
she has feelings for you. Can you
say the same...?

Toran swallows hard. Should he admit it?

TORAN

I...I don't know.

QUINLAN

I think it's time you figured out.
Before you lose your chance.

(Toran looks to her)

Starfleet isn't exactly the safest
place to be. And God knows, on this
ship...

(she sighs)

There are no guarantees.

She smiles at Elris once, then heads for the door. Before
she leaves, she turns back to Toran.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Well, there is ONE.

(Toran turns to her)

If you don't have this sorted out by the time I get back, you'll have to answer to me.

She smiles knowingly, and Toran forces himself to return it. Seconds later, the doors steal Quinlan from sight, and Toran is left with the unconscious Elris.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

We find ourselves just across the hall from the security office. We see BRADFIELD as he stops briefly to talk to someone, then enters the office.

Turning slightly to the left, we find Ambassador ODO in a very familiar posture - right arm across his chest, left hand just under his chin. He gazes at the office with a hint of sadness in his eyes.

DELFUNE (O.S.)

Reliving old times?

Odo doesn't move.

ODO

You can't return to your childhood home and not expect to see a few ghosts.

DELFUNE

Childhood? Is that what you'd call your time here, Ambassador?

ODO

In many ways, a child is all that I was. But that doesn't make what I experienced here any less meaningful.

DELFUNE

That's a surprisingly human sentiment.

ODO

I worked alongside humans for many years, Admiral. It may have been long ago but here -
(taps his head)
- it might as well have been yesterday.

Delfune extends her arm, inviting Odo to join her on her walk. He nods and the two set off.

DELFUNE

I understand the Kai is ready to talk.

ODO

(nods)

The Dominion delegation will be meeting with her in two hours. We've also requested that the Federation be present.

DELFUNE

I'm sure Admiral Thel will appreciate it.

(beat)

So long as he doesn't ask me to be the delegate.

ODO

I thought you were intent on regaining rights of passage through the wormhole.

DELFUNE

Of course I am. I just can't abide all the talk of prophets and celestial temples and following paths laid out for us and all the other nonsense they try to pass off legitimate.. I've never been a very religious person.

ODO

I never would have guessed.

DELFUNE

(lets it go)

I understand you've been in touch with your people recently.

ODO

(annoyed but not surprised)

Word travels fast. Yes, I was in contact with them a few hours ago. A routine update, nothing more.

DELFUNE

Of course. What's their opinion about all of this?

ODO

They were somewhat discouraged at the way things have gone so far.

DELFUNE

Take a number.

(beat)

You have a great deal at stake here,
don't you Ambassador?

ODO

What makes you say that?

DELFUNE

I didn't get to where I am by not
knowing how to read people. There's
a lot of responsibility resting on
your shoulders.

ODO

One could say the same for every
leader involved with these talks.

DELFUNE

One could. But one could also say
it's more personal for you. If the
Founders have truly changed, as you
say they have, then those changes
must have been brought about by what
you taught them about us. I suspect
their willingness to initiate these
talks is spawned directly from the
faith they place in you. If things
don't go well, if these talks fail,
then your people may have second
thoughts about placing their in faith
in you again.

ODO

You're not very good at beating around
the bush.

DELFUNE

Actually, I mastered it years ago.
I've just found the blunt approach
to be more effective.

ODO

No argument there.

(beat)

Well Admiral, I hope for your sake
that I won't be seeing you at the
wormhole negotiations.

DELFUNE

Likewise, Ambassador.

Delfune moves on ahead of him, ending their conversation.
Odo pauses where he's at and looks around, taking in his
surroundings. A lifetime ago, he shared a very special moment
at this exact spot with a very special Bajoran.

He closes his eyes as if to relive the moment in his mind, then sadly walks away.

INT. ROMULAN WARBIIRD -- CORRIDOR

We find ourselves in the dull green and grey interior of a Romulan Warbird. The corridor is cramped and militaristic.

A Romulan sentry rounds a corner and marches by. He pauses as we hear the familiar whir of a transporter beam. He stops, as if to make sure he heard it. The sound of deck plates being walked on echoes through the corridor for a moment, and its enough to make him turn around to check things out.

He glances around the corner from whence he came. There is nothing there. After a brief scan of the hallway, he proceeds onward and vanishes into a turbolift nearby.

Our focus returns to the corridor he came from. Suddenly a piece of metal appears in midair. The area around it seems to blur slightly. The blur 'walks' toward the intersection.

QUINLAN (V.O.)

Is he gone?

More shuffling as more of the device appears. We recognize it as the device Quinlan obtained from Rotan on Bajor.

GREY (V.O.)

He's gone.

QUINLAN (V.O.)

Good. I thought we were busted for a minute there.

GREY (V.O.)

We're just lucky between the two of us we were able to cover this up.

QUINLAN (V.O.)

Yeah, about that. Sorry, I didn't mean to jam my knee into your armpit like that.

Silence.

GREY (V.O.)

That wasn't my armpit.

More silence.

QUINLAN (V.O.)

Oh.

(chuckles)

No wonder you screamed like a girl. I figured you just had a low threshold for pain.

GREY (V.O.)

Just do me a favor and turn on your visor so you can see me next time.

We hear a click.

QUINLAN'S P.O.V.

We see a reddish silhouette standing in front of us, arms crossed. We can't make out any details but it's obviously Grey.

BACK TO SCENE

QUINLAN (V.O.)

It's on. Let's get going.

The device is lifted off the ground and floats down the corridor, flanked by two vague, barely noticeable blurs.

INT. ROMULAN WARBIRO -- ENGINEERING SECTION

The device hovers into a narrow corridor off of the engineering section. It rounds another bend then stops and glides down to the floor.

Grey's head appears a few feet above it. A few seconds later, his entire body fizzles into existence. He is clad in a sleek, black sneaking suit with goggles, which now rest atop his head.

QUINLAN (V.O.)

What are you doing?

GREY

The suits are thermal regulated, so they won't pick up any heat signatures. And if that fails, they can still trick the internal sensors into thinking we're just bacteria.

QUINLAN (V.O.)

You trying to say we're nothing but germs?

GREY

Something like that.

Quinlan dissolves into view a few seconds later. She removes her goggles, as Grey removes a hatch on the wall and begins examining various Romulan systems.

GREY (CONT'D)

I hope this thing works.

QUINLAN

It will. Trust me, I've lifted more than a few Romulan cloaks in my day. Once you install this cloak emulator, their computer won't know the difference.

GREY

Unless they try to engage it.

QUINLAN

Which they can't do in this sector because of treaty stipulations.

(wry grin)

Stop worrying so much, Erik. You'll turn gray.

Grey grunts, pulls out a PADD and works on it for a few moments.

GREY

I was afraid of this. It's encoded, I can't get into their computer from this. Unless you happen to have a Romulan access code on you.

Quinlan smiles, insufferably proud of herself.

QUINLAN

Who do you think you're talking to? Give me that.

She takes the PADD, keys in a few things, and hands it back.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Viola. You've got access to everything from the ship manifest to the mess hall menu.

GREY

(working)

Let's just hope main power falls in between those two somewhere.

(a beat, then)

All right, I'm in. I can only cut main power for forty seconds. That's all the time we've got to switch these.

(puts his goggles on)

Make sure the night-vision works.

Quinlan pulls down her goggles and tests them, as Grey tests his own.

QUINLAN

Working.

Grey is hesitant.

GREY

You're sure this thing will be untraceable?

QUINLAN

Erik, I don't even know who makes these things, and I know practically everyone involved with this stuff. Even if they did discover the emulator, they won't be able to trace who built it. Or who installed it.

GREY

I hope you're right.

QUINLAN

I'm always right. Sometimes.

GREY

Here we go...

Grey takes a deep breath and presses a button on the PADD.

All around them the lights flicker, systems flicker, and the ship shuts down. In the darkness we see the soft glow of their night vision goggles.

Grey disconnects the large power coupling for the cloaking device. He and Quinlan remove the device, which is far heavier than the emulator. With some effort, it comes free of its housing. The two nearly drop it as they try to set it down gently.

GREY (CONT'D)

Nineteen seconds.

QUINLAN

No pressure.

Grey and Quinlan quickly set the emulator in the cloak's housing. Grey reaches back and connects the power coupling, finishing just as the lights come back on.

Grey and Quinlan sit quietly for a moment in complete silence.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Well, that wasn't so difficult.

Another beat, as if she expects something to go wrong now that she's said that. Silence ensues.

GREY

All right, let's get this thing out of here.

Grey reaches into his belt and produces a small device - a power pack - which he connects to the cloak. He hits a few buttons on the cloak, and it vanishes.

The two officers reactivate their suits, and in seconds we see the vague distortion of their movement - albeit much slower this time.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

We find Kai Shala standing by herself in a distant corner of the promenade's second level. She seems lost in thought - her mind is in great turmoil.

Nearby we see Cross making his way through the promenade. He catches sight of the Kai and decides to join her.

CROSS

Can you hear them?

Shala turns, a bit startled.

CROSS (CONT'D)

The Prophets. Can you hear them?

SHALA

Not so long ago, I heard them very clearly.

CROSS

But not today.

SHALA

Not as clearly today, no. Their words are still there, but there is so much noise, so much interference. I'm beginning to wonder if it ever really happened.

CROSS

I realize it's none of my concern, but I don't see how you could have room for doubt. Your shuttle was destroyed, yet here you stand. Something saved you. It might as well have been the Prophets.

SHALA

You don't strike me as a man of faith, Captain.

CROSS

I'm not.

SHALA

But you sound more willing to believe than others I've spoken to in the Federation.

CROSS

The Federation and I differ about a lot of things, Eminence.

SHALA

Then why do you remain in Starfleet?

Cross sighs thoughtfully.

CROSS

Because whatever differences I may have with our leaders, I still believe in what the Federation stands for. Or at least, what it once stood for. I may disagree with the people, but not the ideals.

SHALA

It sounds to me like you do have faith in something, Captain.

CROSS

Your Prophets are living beings. They exist whether the Bajorans believe in them or not. But if people stopped believing in the Federation, in the ideals it represents...

SHALA

Then it would cease to exist.

CROSS

Or it would fall into corruption.

Shala is thoughtful for a moment.

SHALA

You make a convincing argument, Captain. If only I could be sure of your sincerity.

CROSS

I'm not trying to make an argument. Just conversation. My actions will prove or disprove my sincerity.

(beat)

Good day, Kai Shala.

Shala nods respectfully at Cross as the captain departs.

From across the promenade, we see a cloaked figure watching this conversation intently.

He withdraws into the shadows, but for a brief moment we see the angry face of Timin Pol.

INT. ROMULAN WARBIRO -- CORRIDORS

Back where Quinlan and Grey first beamed aboard. We hear them shuffling around and a heavy THUD as they sit the cloak on the deck. Seconds later, both reappear.

GREY

If I never have to carry one of those again, I won't be the least bit disappointed.

QUINLAN

Yeah, but think of how good it is for your biceps.

(removing her goggles)

You know, it's funny, back when I said how easy this was, I half expected the ship to go on red alert right aft...

The red alert sounds. The lights dim and begin to flash red as a voice announces an intruder alert.

GREY

You couldn't let it rest, could you?

Grey quickly reactivates the suit. Quinlan does likewise.

QUINLAN (V.O.)

Uh...shouldn't we hide?

GREY (V.O.)

We're invisible! If they can detect us like this a few bulkheads between us won't matter. Just stay put. Maybe it's not us.

QUINLAN (V.O.)

What are the odds of another intruder breaking in here at the same time we steal their cloaking device?

A door at the other end of the corridor opens, and four Romulan guards, all heavily armed, rush straight for Grey and Quinlan. They draw closer and arm their weapons...

...and walk right past them. They rush out of the corridor and down another.

QUINLAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I stand corrected.

(beat)

Stay here. I'll go check it out.

GREY'S P.O.V.

We can see a red form - Quinlan - moving quickly away from our position, paying no heed to Grey's insistence she stay behind.

GREY (V.O.)

Jen, don't. It's too dangerous, you might be detected. Jen, get back here! Jen!

(beat)

Ah, damn it.

BACK TO SCENE

Two more sentries rush past Grey's position. Just behind them, we see the telltale blur as Grey follows them around the corner. We find ourselves on the Romulan side of the docking hatch with Deep Space Nine. The door is dented and broken.

Peering over the shoulder's of the gathered sentries, we find a Romulan guard severely beaten and bloodied. Held nearby at gunpoint is the attacker: The Jem'Hadar Second that Talora had dealt with earlier.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- WARDROOM

Almost everyone involved with the negotiations is present: Odo, Rees, Talora, Lovik, Cross, and several others. Odo and Rees sit across from Talora and Lovik.

REES

You cannot imagine how much we regret this vicious attack against one of your citizens. I assure you, we in no way condoned this Jem'Hadar's actions.

TALORA

This incident was not the first time that particular Jem'Hadar has caused trouble. Earlier this morning I had to stop him from beating a young Pakled.

ODO

On behalf of the Dominion, I offer my sincerest apologies for these unfortunate events.

TALORA

Your apology is accepted. But in the interest of continuing these talks, we would like certain assurances that such an event will not happen again.

ODO

Of course. What do you have in mind?

TALORA

(deadpan)

A complete removal of the Jem'Hadar from Deep Space Nine.

Rees glances worriedly at Odo.

ODO

I believe that might be premature.

REES

It would be an affront to their honor, to punish the whole for the crimes of the one. It would make it seem as though we do not trust them. I fear it might cause more problems that it would solve.

Talora reacts swiftly; she was expecting this.

TALORA

Very well. Then we request you remove the Jem'Hadar responsible for the attack and have him sent back to the Gamma Quadrant.

ODO

Agreed.

TALORA

Also, as a preventative measure, we request an increased Vorta presence on the station.

REES

So that we can more quickly curb any further outbreaks. A wise precaution.

ODO

I'll have Rees see to those arrangements at once.

TALORA

Very well. Finally, I believe it would assuage the victim of this attack to receive a personal apology from you, Ambassador.

ODO

(nodding)

I had already planned to pay him a visit.

TALORA

(rising)

Thank you, Ambassador. Your cooperation is very much appreciated. May this crisis serve only to unite our peoples and further motivate the cause of peace.

REES

Well said.

Odo and Talora shake hands briefly, ending the meeting. Several minutes of pleasantries ensue between the various delegates, and slowly the room begins to empty. In moments, we are down to Odo and Talora. Talora remains, caught by the concern in Odo's expression.

TALORA

Is there something wrong, Ambassador?

ODO

Since the first moment we encountered your ship, I've been proclaiming how much the Dominion has changed. How we are only interested in peace, not violence. And then...this.

TALORA

One incident doesn't mean anything.

ODO

Maybe not. But these negotiations have been hanging by a thread from the very beginning. One more incident like that and everything we've worked for could be lost.

TALORA

I'm not going to let that happen.

ODO

It's ironic. There was a time when I would have responded in kind and fought back against the Jem'Hadar. And now here I am, making excuses for them. Apologizing for them.

TALORA

It seems the Dominion isn't the only thing that's changed over the years.

ODO

I guess not.
(beat; he rises)
We'll be conducting a full investigation of the incident. Whatever provoked this attack, I assure you Commander, we will find it.

TALORA

I have no doubt.

Odo nods and exits. Talora is about to do the same, but the doors slide open once more. Lovik enters, a grin on his face.

LOVIK

I'm glad I caught you. We need to talk.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- CORRIDORS

Outside the wardroom. Talora emerges only to find herself face to face with Cross.

TALORA

Captain. Something wrong?

CROSS

I was just heading back to the Enterprise. Thought I'd see if wanted to join me.

TALORA

Very considerate of you.

The two begin walking.

CROSS

I heard about what happened in there. Asking them to withdraw the Jem'Hadar completely - pretty gutsy.

TALORA

I didn't expect them to concede on that point. One of the first rules of negotiation: always ask for more than you want. Your real demands will sound much more reasonable.

CROSS

Still, it was a pretty big risk demanding that right off the bat.

TALORA

The riskier the road, the greater the profit.

CROSS

Another rule of negotiation?

TALORA

No. Ferengi Rule of Acquisition number 62.

CROSS

(amused)

I see.

TALORA

One of the few useful contributions the Ferengi have made to the Alpha Quadrant.

CROSS

I hate to say this, but you really would make one hell of a diplomat.

TALORA

(awkward beat)

Interesting you should mention that, Captain.

CROSS

Why is it that?

Talora takes a breath, then takes the plunge.

TALORA

Proconsul Lovik has just offered me
a permanent diplomatic position on
Romulus.

Cross stops and stares blankly at her for a moment, as if
gauging whether or not she's serious. Finally he smiles.

CROSS

I hope you let him down gently.

TALORA

I did not.

CROSS

Ah. Well, I guess letting him down
point blank would be much more Talora.

TALORA

I didn't let him down at all.

CROSS

You're accepting it?

TALORA

I don't know yet. It's a very
tempting offer. I would be working
directly for the Praetorate, dealing
with high level diplomatic -

CROSS

(cutting her off)

You can't be serious.

Talora seems upset at the captain's interruption.
Nevertheless, she maintains her composure.

TALORA

I am very serious, Captain. This is
an incredible opportunity to serve
the Empire.

CROSS

Forget the Empire. What about the
Enterprise?

TALORA

There are any number of capable
officers who are more than qualified
for my position.

CROSS

Damn it, Talora, we don't NEED some other capable, qualified officer. We need YOU.

TALORA

(eyes narrow)

Has it occurred to you Captain, that there are other needs and wants at stake here besides those of your ship?

Before he can object, Talora turns and storms off. Cross is left staring at the door.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLE BAY

The shuttle craft 'Pathfinder' sits in the center of the bay. Quinlan stands on top of the shuttle, working on installing one of the large launcher-pods. The rear hatch is open, and we hear Grey on the inside, fidgeting and messing around.

QUINLAN

You all right in there?

GREY (V.O.)

Damn Romulan interface. I'd love to get my hands on the idiot who built this piece of...there!

A second later, the shuttle cloaks. Grey emerges from the back, seemingly out of thin air. His sleeves are rolled up and his hair is a mess, but his face is beaming.

GREY (CONT'D)

I had to reconfigure half the power grid, but I got it installed. Just don't ask me how I'm going to get it back out.

(beat)

How's the pod coming?

QUINLAN

Between this and say, a week on Risa...I'd choose Risa.

She closes a small hatch and scoops up the tools she was working with.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

If we had time, I'd like to test this thing out. But I guess we're ready.

The doors slide open and Cross enters. He's obviously distracted, but snaps out of it when he sees Quinlan apparently standing in midair.

CROSS

No levitating crew members on my ship. Captain's standing order.

GREY

Sorry, sir.

Grey vanishes into the shuttle for a moment and disengages the cloak. The Pathfinder reappears, and seconds later so does Grey.

CROSS

(re: the weapons pod)
Packing some extra heat, I see.

QUINLAN

Would you want to be caught in the Gamma Quadrant with a stolen cloaking device and anything LESS than the maximum armament possible?

CROSS

Point taken. Everything's going all right, then?

GREY

The modifications and weapon enhancements are complete. The problem now is getting through the wormhole.

CROSS

I think I can help you with that. Ambassador Odo is sending the rogue Jem'Hadar back to the Gamma Quadrant. Since I doubt they'll want to spend eighty years getting there, it's a safe bet they plan to use wormhole.

Quinlan smiles.

QUINLAN

Perfect. When?

CROSS

They're scheduled to depart in five minutes.

GREY

We can be ready by then.

QUINLAN

Captain, I take back every bad thing
I've ever said about you.

(off Cross's scowl)

Not that I've said a lot of bad things
or anything. I mean it's not like I
sit up in my quarters at night at
think of bad things to say about
you. Not anymore, at least.

(quick breath)

Erik, help me out here?

Cross chuckles.

CROSS

Forget it. I'm sure I deserved it
somewhere along the line. Just be
careful out there. Once you leave
this ship, you're on your own.

(beat)

Good luck to you both. Bring him
home.

GREY

Thank you, sir. We will.

QUINLAN

You have our word.

His farewells made, Cross exits as swiftly as he came.
Quinlan doesn't waste a second; she turns to Grey and smiles.

QUINLAN (CONT'D)

Ready?

He nods and they head for the shuttle.

GREY

You don't have to be so happy about
this, you know.

QUINLAN

What? It'll be fun.

INT. PATHFINDER -- CONTINUOUS

The two arrive in the cockpit and sit down.

GREY

Getting ourselves killed in the Gamma
Quadrant is your idea of fun?

QUINLAN

You're worried NOW? AFTER we snuck
aboard a Romulan ship and stole a
cloaking device out from under their
noses?

GREY

I was worried then, too. But for some reason I had a great deal of pain to help take my mind of my worries.

QUINLAN

(apologetic)

I said I was sorry.

He flashes a sidelong smile.

GREY

I'm kidding.

QUINLAN

And here I always thought your idea of humor started with, "Two phase inducers and a plasma coil walk into a bar."

Grey chuckles and works on the console in front of him.

GREY

Per-Launch sequence initiated. I'm bringing the cloak on-line.

(gestures ahead of them)

Care to take the helm?

QUINLAN

You better believe it. I've seen the way you fly. You always end up stranded in some nebula somewhere.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SHUTTLEBAY

The Pathfinder raises off the ground and cloaks. Seconds later, we see the bay's force field shimmer as the shuttle passes through.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- DOCKING RING

A squadron of Jem'Hadar soldiers and two Vorta lead the disgraced Second away in shackles. The look in the Second's eyes is distant, but there is just a hint of murderous intent still present.

EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- DOCKING RING

The Jem'Hadar vessel slowly backs away from the station and angles sharply toward the wormhole. Moments later, the brilliant wormhole explodes into a swirling pattern of blue and white. It swallows the vessel whole and vanishes, leaving only the black void of space in its wake.

EXT. SPACE

Again, the wormhole appears. The Jem'Hadar vessel emerges and proceeds slowly away from the collapsing mouth of the giant anomaly.

INT. PATHFINDER

Grey and Quinlan sit at their respective stations as the Pathfinder slows down. The Jem'Hadar ship continues onward, as evidenced through the front window.

GREY

Once the ship is clear, set a course for Levandra.

Quinlan glances at her console, sees the heading.

QUINLAN

We're going to have company. That's where the Dominion ship is heading.

GREY

What?

QUINLAN

See for yourself.

GREY

(off her console)

We'll follow them for now. Stay back, we don't want to let them see us.

QUINLAN

Really? I hadn't thought of that.

Grey lets it go and continues to monitor his station.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Cross sits in his chair, examining a PADD. Talora enters and moves to her seat. Cross doesn't acknowledge her. The tension between them is thick. Talora finally breaks the ice.

TALORA

May I speak with you, Captain?

Cross works on the PADD for another moment, then sighs, rises, and leaves his chair.

CROSS

(as he passes her)

Briefing Room.

Talora follows a few paces behind.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIEFING ROOM

Cross and Talora enter.

CROSS
What is it, Commander?

TALORA
I wish to apologize for my behavior
earlier.

Cross considers this for a long beat.

CROSS
It's all right. I'm just glad you've
come to your senses.

TALORA
My senses?

CROSS
About leaving the Enterprise.

TALORA
I haven't reached a decision yet.

CROSS
(irked)
I see.

TALORA
Captain, I admit I lost my temper
with you earlier. That's what this
is about. I don't intend to apologize
for wanting to better myself, wanting
something more.

CROSS
Even if it means turning your back
on your ship and crew?

TALORA
How would accepting this position be
turning my back on the Enterprise?
You've approved the transfer of
hundreds of crew members over the
past few years.

CROSS
Those were different.

TALORA
How?

CROSS
(quickly)
Because they weren't...
(trails off)
Forget it.

Talora realizes where he's going with this.

TALORA
Because they weren't me.

CROSS
The Enterprise needs you, Talora.
This crew needs you.

TALORA
With all due respect, Captain, I
believe you're the one who needs me.

Cross looks at Talora in confused disbelief.

CROSS
I see some of that old Romulan
arrogance is resurfacing.

TALORA
It's not arrogance. It's the truth.
You've come to rely on me so heavily
that you're not entirely certain you
can function without me. This crew
does not need me, Captain. You do.
To keep you grounded. To keep you
sane.

Cross looks out the window in silence, his eyes intense.

TALORA (CONT'D)
You are a good man, Captain Cross.
But I cannot sacrifice my career to
be your nursemaid.

Cross's jaw bulges as he turns to face Talora. Before he
can form a response, the comm activates.

CALE'S COMM VOICE
Bridge to Captain Cross.

CROSS
Go ahead.

CALE'S COMM VOICE
Sir, Y'lan has just arrived on the
bridge.

CROSS
What does he want?

CALE'S COMM VOICE

He's not saying, Sir. He's
just...staring.

CROSS

We'll be right out.

Without waiting for a reply from Talora, Cross storms out of the room. Talora is a step behind him.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE -- CONTINUOUS

Cross and Talora emerge from the room to find Y'lan standing in silence near one of the science stations. Ce is completely silent.

CROSS

Something we can help you with, Y'lan?

The Q'tami remains silent for a few moments, then slowly and carefully walks over to one of the science stations. Without warning and with amazing speed, Y'lan begins to smash the science stations!

The crew runs for cover as the mighty Q'tami rampages across the back of the bridge. Talora reacts quickly, rushing straight for Y'lan. Before she can get close, Y'lan wraps a tentacle around her leg, rips her off her feet, and flings her across the bridge. She lands hard against the helm and falls to the ground.

Cross kneels at Talora's side and watches helplessly as Y'lan unleashes his fury on the bridge amidst an eruption of sparks and smoking consoles.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIG

The ripple of a force field fills our view as a tentacle presses into it. As we pan back, we find Y'lan testing the field in several other places. He appears to be calm now, but there still is a strange, detached look in his eyes.

Cross stands on the outside of the cell, staring with concern at the Q'tami within. Toran stands outside of the cell, a medical tricorder in hand, scanning Y'lan.

CROSS

What could have caused this behavior?

TORAN

Unfortunately your guess is as good as mine. Maybe it's some kind of phase. The Q'tami equivalent of puberty.

Cross is thoughtful.

CROSS

Or maybe it's got something to do with Dojar.

TORAN

That's very possible. We know so little about the connection they share...maybe being apart like this has done something to him.

The doors slide open and Talora enters, limping slightly and holding her side.

TALORA

Is Y'lan contained?

CROSS

Unless he suddenly develops the ability to walk through a Level 10 force field.

(re: her side)

What's wrong?

TALORA

A bruise.

Cross motions Toran over to her. He scans her with a medical tricorder.

TORAN

It's no bruise. You've got a cracked rib. Hold still, I can treat you here.

Toran opens his medkit and takes out a device, then goes to work on Talora's side. Talora presses onward.

TALORA

We've received a report from Deep Space Nine. It seems an increasing number of Jem'Hadar are behaving erratically.

CROSS

Any more attacks?

TALORA

None so far. Still, I think it would be a wise precaution for me to request their complete removal from Deep Space Nine.

CROSS

And what outrageous demand are you going to make to soften the blow? Ask them all to shoot themselves?

TALORA

(irritated)

I will deal with that when the time comes.

CROSS

(indignant)

I'm sure you will.

Toran finishes his work and replaces his gadget.

TORAN

You should feel as good as new, Commander.

Talora doesn't hear him. She and Cross are still glaring at each other.

TALORA

Permission to return to Deep Space Nine, Captain.

CROSS

I wouldn't want to keep your diplomat friends waiting.

Again the two stare at each other. Toran awkwardly glances at both.

TORAN

I should probably head back to
sickbay.

Talora wordlessly turns and leaves. Cross stares hard at the door for a few moments, but is snapped back to reality when Y'lan tests the force field again.

The comm system activates.

MEDIC'S COMM VOICE

Sickbay to Doctor Toran.

TORAN

Toran here.

MEDIC'S COMM VOICE

You asked to be notified when Dr.
Elris woke up. She's just come
around.

TORAN

I'm on my way.

Toran curtly nods to Cross and rushes out of the brig. The captain steps closer to the force field and gazes intently at Y'lan. Y'lan stops all movement and seems to return the gaze.

CROSS

Do you know where he is? Do you
know if he's all right?
(beat, then upset)
Why can't you answer me?

Y'lan is silent for a moment. He raises a tentacle up and presses it against the force field again. Cross sighs and withdraws.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- SICKBAY

Toran rushes into Sickbay. He finds Elris still on her biobed. She is clearly very weak and very dazed. A number of medics run tests on her, check her various vitals out.

TORAN

Report.

MEDIC

She's awake and doing well. A little
dazed right now.

TORAN

Very good. I'll handle it from here.

The medic nods and withdraws. Toran moves to Elris and begins scanning her. She seems upset that he's there.

TORAN (CONT'D)

These readings are looking good.
You should be back on your feet in a
few days.

(beat; he looks down
at her)

You scared me, you know. I didn't
think you were going to make it.
When they brought you in here, you
were in pretty bad shape.

Elris struggles to say something.

TORAN (CONT'D)

You won't be able to speak for a
little while. Your vocal cords were
damaged. Actually, you were
fortunate. You might have suffered
permanent damage to your airways.

Toran goes about several miscellaneous tasks, running various
scans on Elris.

TORAN (CONT'D)

I've been thinking a lot about things.
About how you're always accusing me
of being obsessed with Bajor. And I
always tell you the same thing.
It's my home, no one else cares about
it.

(beat)

I do love Bajor. More than almost
anything else. Almost.

As Toran talks, Elris reaches for the PADD that he left on
her bedside. She awkwardly, clumsily types in a message
with one hand.

TORAN (CONT'D)

But I shouldn't have thrown it in
your face like I did. I know you
have your problems with Bajor, and
it was wrong of me to just rub your
face in it. I may not agree with
your approach but I shouldn't have
been so arrogant about my own. I -

Toran is distracted when the PADD clatters to the floor. He
turns, picks it up, reads it. He seems pained by what he
reads. He glances to Elris, who stares silently at the
ceiling.

TORAN (CONT'D)

Well - all right. If that's what
you want.

(beat)

I'm sorry.

Toran sits the PADD on the bedside and walks over to the nurse. Our focus remains on the PADD, and we slide closer to it - close enough to see the message Elris wrote.

"Don't want to hear this. Get nurse. Go home."

EXT. SPACE

A large Jem'Hadar vessel - the same one which departed Deep Space Nine - assumes a somewhat slower pace as it approaches a large planet.

INT. PATHFINDER

We find Grey and Quinlan at their respective posts.

QUINLAN

This place looks familiar.

GREY

Think so?

QUINLAN

They've entered into orbit. Looks like they're planning on being here awhile.

(beat)

What could they want here? Levandra IV is supposed to be uninhabited.

GREY

It's not anymore. I'm picking up structures on the surface. Looks like a small base.

(beat)

And would you look at that. A Cardassian bio sign.

QUINLAN

At least we know he's still alive. Shall we beam down?

GREY

No, I don't want to risk them finding the shuttle. We'll land.

Quinlan checks her console.

QUINLAN

I can get us to within twenty kilometers. Any closer and there won't be a suitable landing site.

GREY

Any closer and they'd probably detect us. Twenty will do fine.

QUINLAN

(smiles)

We aim to please.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- READY ROOM

Cross sits at his desk, going over some reports on his viewer. His door chime rings out.

CROSS

Come in.

Talora enters. She stands in front of Cross, her arms behind her back, in a rigidly formal posture.

CROSS (CONT'D)

What's on your mind, Commander?

TALORA

Ambassador Odo has agreed to remove the Jem'Hadar from Deep Space Nine.

CROSS

Well done. I'll have to get you to tell me how you did it someday.

TALORA

I don't think that will be possible, Captain.

Talora produces a PADD from behind her, which she places on the captain's desk. Cross glances at it, then meets Talora's gaze.

CROSS

What's this?

TALORA

It's my resignation from Starfleet. I have decided to accept Proconsul Lovik's offer. I will begin my new assignment immediately after the Dominion peace talks have been completed.

Cross picks up the PADD, glances over it, his face moving from shock to anger.

CROSS

So you've decided to just walk away. Turn your back on your ship and crew. Turn your back on your captain.

TALORA

It would appear so.

CROSS

I see. The fact that this ship needs you...that I still need you...means nothing.

Talora sighs.

TALORA

I did not come to this decision lightly. I will continue to perform my duty as your First Officer until these talks are over. But you must understand that my decision is made, and it is final. Sending me on a - a guilt trip will not change anything.

Cross meets her gaze, his faced washed into disappointment and barely controlled anger.

CROSS

Will that be all?

TALORA

Yes, Captain.

CROSS

Then get out.

Talora nods curtly and leaves. Cross rises, walks across his desk, the PADD still in hand. He reads over it once more, but his anger finally consumes him. He hurls the PADD at the door. It hits the frame and clatters to the ground.

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Talora has paused on the other side of the door. She hears the PADD hit the door and fall and she frowns. A glimmer of sadness crosses her features, as if she wonders if she made the right choice.

Her concern is slowly replaced with contentment. Perhaps even a glimmer of happiness. She's made the right choice, and she reassures herself of it.

EXT. LEVANDRA IV -- WILDERNESS

Judging from our surroundings, Levandra IV is a very warm, tropical like setting. Our focus is a piece of particularly mountainous terrain, which we find Grey and Quinlan traversing carefully.

QUINLAN

(re: her tricorder)

I don't know what the hell's in these rocks, but they're making it hard to get a fix on anything.

GREY

(tugging his collar)

This heat's going to be the end of me.

QUINLAN

I hadn't noticed.

GREY

It's forty-five degrees Celsius!
How can you not notice?

QUINLAN

I spent six months on Behr Prime in the middle of their warm season. Makes this look like the arctic.

(lights up)

There. I think I've got it. One Cardassian, two Jem'Hadar.

(beat)

Strange. They're a kilometer south of the base.

*

GREY

Cardassians love the heat. Maybe they're letting him get some air.

QUINLAN

Right. Cause Jem'Hadar are known for their compassion.

GREY

Well whatever they're doing, we'd better get over there. The Pathfinder will only stay cloaked for another seven hours. And that's running on minimal power.

QUINLAN

Then let's get moving already. Don't you know it's hot here?

Grey chuckles and shakes his head as the two get underway.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

Admiral Delfune walks purposefully down the promenade. She passes Cross, who is standing by himself near one of the windows. She hesitates, moves to him.

DELFUNE

Captain. I wasn't aware you were scheduled for any briefings today.

CROSS

(not moving)

I'm not. I just needed to - get out
for awhile.

A beat.

DELFUNE

I heard about your First Officer.

CROSS

Really. Imagine my surprise.

DELFUNE

You can't blame her for accepting
the job, can you? It's -

CROSS

(cutting her off)

An incredible opportunity. So I've
heard.

(glances over his
shoulder at her)

What does any of this matter to you?
You've never liked her.

DELFUNE

Not really. But I've never liked
you either, and yet, here we are.

Cross turns to face her.

CROSS

Now is not the best time to -

He drifts off as his gaze moves to just behind Delfune.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Oh no...

Delfune turns and follows his gaze. Just outside of Morn's,
we find two Vortas trying to get a number of Jem'Hadar to
come with them. The Jem'Hadar do not want go, and are
growling in rage.

One of them snarls at the Vorta, causing the smaller man to
stumble backwards. The Jem'Hadar shouts a cry of defiance
and smashes one of Morn's tables. When his comrades see
this, they too begin breaking things.

Cross and Delfune exchange concerned glances. Cross taps
his comm badge.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Cross to Enterprise.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Enterprise here, Captain.

CROSS

I think the Dominion just lost control of the Jem'Hadar. They're starting some trouble in Morn's.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

I'll coordinate with as many ships as necessary to maintain a lock on all Starfleet personnel.

CROSS

Make sure you let the Romulans and the Bajorans know as well. Tell them to be ready to pull their people out if things get ugly.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Of course, Captain.

Cross and Delfune head over to the bar.

EXT. LEVANDRA IV -- WILDERNESS

Grey and Quinlan move swiftly through the wilderness. Both are overheated and dirty. They've both shed their outer tunics, leaving only the black sleeveless undershirts of their suits. Grey glances over to Quinlan.

Quickly through the underbrush they move, Quinlan in the lead with a tricorder running.

QUINLAN

Just over this next ridge.

They proceed with renewed vigor.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- MORN'S BAR

Things have gone from bad to worse, as a dozen Jem'Hadar break barstools, chairs, and tables. They shatter glasses, mirrors, and anything else they can get their hands on.

A number of Starfleet security officers show up, phasers drawn. They begin firing at the rabid Jem'Hadar, but their settings are too low. They only succeed in further angering them.

One of the Jem'Hadar leaps up onto the bar and utters a horrific battle cry. He grabs a nearby security officer by the throat, hoists him up onto the bar, and runs a knife clear through him.

EXT. LEVANDRA IV -- WILDERNESS

They arrive at the side of an old rocky trail and drop down. A small hill hides them from sight from the road. On the road they see two armed Jem'Hadar flanking a third person - Dojar!

QUINLAN

You take the ugly one.

Grey makes to respond but catches himself.

GREY

Which ugly one?

QUINLAN

Um - the one on the left?

Grey nods.

A heartbeat later, he gives the signal and the two level their phasers.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- MORN'S BAR

The other Jem'Hadar have seen what their comrade has done and echo the cry, drawing their own weapons or using their bare hands. They begin killing anything and everything that moves - Starfleet, Romulans, civilians, even their Vorta masters.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

Cross and Delfune watch helplessly as the house of cards collapses and the Jem'Hadar begin their rampage.

CROSS

This isn't going to do much for the peace talks.

(taps his badge)

Cross to Enterprise!

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Talora here, Captain.

CROSS

Everything's gone to hell over here! The Jem'Hadar are killing everyone in sight. Beam as many people off the station as you can and tell the other ships to do the same!

INT. ENTERPRISE -- BRIDGE

Talora is on the edge of the Captain's chair, a look of complete horror washing over her.

TALORA

Understood.

(taps her comm badge)

Bridge to transporter room. Begin emergency beam-out.

Silence, then...

COMM VOICE

I've lost the lock! There's some kind of dampening field interfering with the transporters!

TALORA

Keep trying! ... Did you hear that, Captain?

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

Cross and Delfune, as before.

CROSS

I heard it. Keep on it. Cross out.

(to Delfune)

Know anything about a dampening field?

DELFUNE

If I did, I wouldn't be on this side of it.

EXT. LEVANDRA IV -- WILDERNESS

Grey and Quinlan fire simultaneously. The Jem'Hadar stumble, caught off guard, but they don't go down.

QUINLAN

Stubborn, aren't they?

GREY

Narrow the band.

QUINLAN

Right.

The Jem'Hadar bring their weapons to bear and fire at Grey and Quinlan. The shots are hasty, easily avoided. Grey returns fire and hits his target first, flattening the Jem'Hadar.

The other Jem'Hadar takes aim and Grey's position, giving Quinlan a clean shot. She fires her phaser and her opponent falls.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

The Jem'Hadar rampage spills out onto the promenade as hundreds of terrified people flee for their lives.

Cross meets the flood head-on, ready to dive into the thick of the fight. He turns back to Delfune.

CROSS

Get off the promenade or you'll be trampled! I'll try to control this crowd!

DELFUNNE

You're not going to fight them!

CROSS

Just go!

Delfune backs away from the oncoming stampede as Cross turns to meet it head-on. He rushes to a nearby kiosk and shouts above the din. His phaser is at the ready.

CROSS (CONT'D)

This way! Come on, people! Try to stay calm! This way!

The Jem'Hadar already on the promenade follow the violent precedent set by their comrades and begin killing anything that moves. Cross takes aim at several with his phaser and fires to no avail. Hesitantly, he increases the setting and fires again.

EXT. LEVANDRA IV -- WILDERNESS

Grey and Quinlan rush the road towards Dojar, who simply stands there, gazing at the bodies of the fallen Jem'Hadar.

GREY

Dojar, are you all right?

QUINLAN

Are we glad to see you. You wouldn't believe what we've been through to get there.

Dojar looks at Quinlan. There's something not right about the gaze, something in his eyes.

DOJAR

You should not have come.

QUINLAN

Oh, who really believes in that 'needs of the many, needs of the few crap' anymore? We're here, we found you, now let's get out of here.

DOJAR

Drop your weapons.

Grey and Quinlan stop short.

GREY

What?

DOJAR

Drop your weapons.

Quinlan is nervous, but forces an unconvincing laugh.

QUINLAN

If it's all the same to you, I think
I'd rather not. Now come on!

She reaches for his hand as if to pull him along. Before she reaches it, Dojar lashes out with his fist and strikes Quinlan across the face. She is knocked to the ground.

GREY

Dojar! What the hell...?

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

We pick up on Kai Shala as she emerges from the Bajoran shrine. A number of terrified Bajorans follow her. She remains between them and the crowd, protecting them.

SHALA

Come, my children. This way!

Nearby, a crazed Jem'Hadar begins slashing his way through the crowd. He is moving straight for the Kai. His attacks send a crowd of people running past the Kai, forcing her and the crowd following her against the wall. The Jem'Hadar takes notice of them and advances, madness in his eyes.

Shala stands defiant, arms spread wide in protection of her people.

SHALA (CONT'D)

(softly)

May the Prophets protect us.

The Jem'Hadar advances on Shala and raises his blade.

EXT. LEVANDRA IV -- WILDERNESS

Quinlan is on her feet, more angry than anything it seems. Grey steps between her and Dojar.

GREY

What's gotten into you?

By way of reply, Dojar lashes out at Grey and knocks him to the ground.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

Seconds before the Jem'Hadar's blade drops, he is tackled and brought to the ground. Shala looks in amazement at her unexpected rescuer. Cross affords her only a brief glance.

CROSS

Get them out of here!

Shala nods and herds the Bajorans away.

The Jem'Hadar kicks Cross away. He hits the ground and his phaser clatters away from him.

The Jem'Hadar is upon him, bringing the blade down. Cross rolls away just in time, but the Jem'Hadar is quick. The captain tries to struggle to his feet, but he is met with a kick to the ribs which flattens him.

Cross struggles upward as his enemy closes in. The Jem'Hadar sneers at him.

With a surge of strength, Cross explodes to his feet and charges the Jem'Hadar. Both men are sent tumbling over a nearby kiosk. They wrestle atop the kiosk, above the chaos ensuing all around them.

The Jem'Hadar gains the advantage. He pins down Cross by the neck with one hand. The other hand raises his blade. Cross struggles, defiant to the last.

EXT. LEVANDRA IV -- WILDERNESS

As Grey struggles to his feet, Quinlan regains her phaser and levels it point blank at Dojar.

QUINLAN

What the hell is going on? Don't you recognize us?

Dojar smacks the weapon from Quinlan's hand, yanks her toward him, and strikes her with a powerful blow to the temple. Quinlan collapses, unconscious.

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- PROMENADE

Cross glares at the Jem'Hadar as his blade is raised. As the weapon begins to fall, there is a flicker of silver above Cross's head. Suddenly the Jem'Hadar's blade comes loose and flies up to the upper level of the promenade. The startled soldier follows it up. We find Odo, his arm returning to its humanoid form, the blade in hand.

Cross capitalizes on the momentary distraction. He knees the Jem'Hadar in the ribs and breaks free of the death grip. Without a weapon, the Jem'Hadar wraps both hands around Cross's neck.

Cross does the same, though he's the weaker of the two.

As he struggles for air, he notices one of the many view screens set up throughout the promenade. With a surge of strength, Cross brings his knee into the Jem'Hadar's stomach. His enemy stumbles. Cross launches them both off of the kiosk.

The Jem'Hadar hits the wall first, and the impact weakens his grip. Cross takes the advantage and slams the Jem'Hadar's head into the viewscreen. There is a shower of sparks as the Dominion soldier struggles and convulses, before falling to the ground.

Cross stumbles back, letting the body fall. He glances up at Odo. A silent moment of gratitude passes between them before both men return to the crowds, trying to get people to safety.

EXT. LEVANDRA IV -- WILDERNESS

As before. Dojar reaches down and grabs Grey by the throat, pulling him to his feet. The Cardassian rips the phaser from Grey's hand and tosses it into the forest.

GREY
(struggling)
Dojar...I can't breath...

Dojar lets Grey drop to the ground next to Quinlan. A split second later, he levels a Jem'Hadar disruptor at them. Grey gapes in wide-eyed horror...

INT. DEEP SPACE NINE -- CORRIDORS

With the hellish chaos still in the background, Admiral Delfune slides into one of the corridors adjoining the promenade. She takes a moment to gather herself, then taps her comm badge.

DELFUNNE
Delfune to Cross.

Nothing. She tries again.

DELFUNNE (CONT'D)
Delfune to Thel, please respond.

Nothing. Again.

DELFUNNE (CONT'D)
Delfune to anyone; please respond!
The...

She trails off as a shadow falls over her. She turns quickly. Though the light from the promenade obscures his face, we can see a Starfleet comm badge.

Delfune looks relieved, but only for a moment.

For in the next moment, the unknown officer has a phaser drawn, aimed straight at her. It takes a second to register.

She tries to back way.

DELFUNE (CONT'D)

No...

A grin crosses the officer's shadowed face.

CLOSE SHOT of the phaser as his thumb slowly presses the trigger.

Delfune's scream echoes in our ears.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

TO BE CONTINUED...