

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - THE STATION

Deep Space Nine floats serenely in space. A large, grandiose ship is docked at one of the upper pylons. The ship is painted with regal colors, its markings indicating that it belongs to an important delegate.

SISKO (v.o.)

Captain's log, Stardate 51507.2. We are hosting the royal family of Luxia VII. The Federation recently made first contact with the Luxians and have discovered that they are superb weapons engineers. It is hoped that we will be able to purchase advanced weapons from the Luxians in our fight against the Dominion.

2 INT. PROMENADE, LOWER LEVEL

Four individuals that are wearing stylized masks that completely cover their heads are slowly working their way down the Promenade, waving golden wands about them. It almost looks like they are dancing ritualistically. The crowds on the Promenade are stopping and parting to allow the four people to continue on their way. A few feet behind them follows Sisko, Kira, Dax, and Worf, all of them in dress uniforms. Worf and Kira look extremely bored.

KIRA

How much longer is this going to take?

SISKO

The Luxians insisted on this purification ritual before the Monarch can even set foot in the station. They have to do it every place that the Monarch might possibly go.

Kira groans to herself.

KIRA

He's supposed to tour the entire station!
Why didn't the Federation attache warn us of this ritual?

SISKO

According to the attache, the Luxians are a very private race. They won't volunteer information about their culture willingly. This took the attache by surprise as well.

Worf looks around impatiently.

WORF

Where is the Federation attache anyway?

Sisko almost laughs, but manages to just smile at Worf enigmatically.

SISKO

She said she had some personal business to attend to. I wouldn't worry, Worf.

Worf grumbles something to himself under his breath. This causes Sisko to almost laugh again. Kira shoots him a questioning look, but Sisko shakes his head, trying to control his smile. Dax elbows Worf in the stomach.

DAX

Shush! This ritual is important to the Luxians. What would you say if the Luxians complained if you forced them to watch a Rite of Ascension?

WORF

I would not invite a Luxian to view a Rite of Ascension.

DAX

Why not? Maybe they would appreciate it.

Worf doesn't say anything. Dax smiles and looks at Worf coyly.

DAX

Why don't you wear your dress uniform more often?

WORF

I don't like the way it looks on me.

DAX

I do.

(she smiles and whispers to him)

Maybe after my shift I can show you how much.

Worf stops short and stares at her. Dax keeps on walking, her smile slightly wider. A tiny smile tugs at the corner of Worf's mouth, and he quickly catches up with the group.

3 INT. PROMENADE, UPPER LEVEL

Jake and Nog are leaning on the railing, watching the four Luxians work their way down the Promenade.

NOG

These Luxians have some very strange customs.

JAKE

This coming from the guy who wants to install a Ferengi donation box in our quarters so visitors will pay us latinum.

NOG

(with mock indignation)

Are you mocking my culture?

JAKE

No, not your culture. Just you.

Nog chuckles. The Luxians pass out of view, so the two young men turn and look out the massive windows.

NOG

So are you seeing Ensign Devoria again tonight?

A pained look flashes across Jake's face for a split second, but it quickly passes.

JAKE

She and I ... well, we kind of split up.

Nog looks at Jake, shocked.

NOG

Why? What happened?

JAKE

She was kind of ... independent. She never wanted to do anything special for me. You know, like pamper me every now and then. She never seemed all that interested in me.

NOG

Pamper you? You mock my culture, and yet you want a female to pamper you? It looks like I'm beginning to rub off on you!

JAKE

I hope not. I'd look bad with big ears!

Nog laughs and playfully punches Jake on the arm.

4 INT. WORF'S QUARTERS

Worf steps through the door. He lets out a relieved sigh.

WORF

Lights!

The lights come up. Suddenly, feminine hands come from behind Worf and cover his eyes. Worf smiles and lets out an excited growl of pleasure. He reaches up, takes the hands, and turns, pulling the owner of the hands into a passionate kiss. He finally breaks away, smiling. His smile, however, turns to a shocked look when he realizes who is in his quarters. Deanna Troi smiles up at him.

TROI

Surprise, Worf! I'm glad to see that you're happy to see me!

Worf can only stare at Troi in shock.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 INT. OPS

O'Brien is looking over his control panel when the turbolift sounds in the background. He looks up, curious. His face brightens when he sees that Troi is riding the lift. She smiles back.

O'BRIEN

Counsellor! It's good to see you again! What are you doing here?

TROI

I'm acting as Federation attache to the Luxians. The *Enterprise* made first contact with them a few months ago, and they insisted a senior officer from the *Enterprise* act as attache. I was chosen. So how are Keiko and Molly?

O'BRIEN

They're fine. I know Keiko will want to have you over for dinner. Then you can meet our newest family member, Kira Yoshi.

TROI

I heard about that. I'm guessing that you've made the transition here smoothly?

O'BRIEN

The fact that we've been here for five years helps.

TROI

I suppose so.

Troi glances nervously at Sisko's office, where she can see Worf pacing back and forth. Finally, she looks at O'Brien, almost embarrassed.

TROI

How has ... how has Worf been doing? I know that he didn't deal with the destruction of the *Enterprise D* that well. How has he been adjusting?

O'BRIEN

Okay, I guess. He had a rough time for a while. But it seems like he's made the transition for the most part. Lives out on the *Defiant*, but that's just Worf. Of course, Commander Dax helps as well.

TROI

Commander Dax?

O'BRIEN

You haven't met Dax yet? She spars with Worf on the holosuite all the time. They're very close, if you know what I mean.

Troi's disposition cools somewhat.

TROI

I see.

6 INT. SISKO'S OFFICE

Worf is staring out of the doors at Troi. His lip curls angrily. He turns back to Sisko, who sits behind his desk. Sisko smiles sheepishly.

SISKO

I'm sorry, Worf. Commander Troi told me she was an old friend of yours and that she wanted to surprise you. I had no idea you would take it this badly.

WORF

(somewhat harshly. He is trying to control his anger)

I suppose you had no way of knowing.

SISKO

What's the matter? Why so hostile to a former crewmate?

WORF

It is personal.

SISKO

I see.

Sisko stands up and crosses around the desk. He comes over and stands next to Worf and glances out the window, watching Troi as she talks with O'Brien amiably. Sisko nods thoughtfully.

SISKO

There is a problem, though. That woman out there is the Federation attache to the Luxians. I know that Starfleet wants this treaty to go through without a hitch. That means that the attache and my crew have to be working at their peak. If there is something that might keep that from happening, I need to know about it, personal or not.

Worf sighs, frustrated. He finally turns from the window.

WORF

Deanna and I were ... close.

Sisko looks at Worf, not comprehending.

SISKO

I'm not sure I understand. I'm close with a lot of the officers I've served with. You seem to be close with ... well, Dax...

Sisko's eyes go wide with understanding. Worf nods.

WORF

We did not part on the best of terms. So you can understand why I am not entirely ... pleased to see her.

SISKO

I do understand, Mr. Worf. Be that as it may, you also have a duty to perform. Just try to avoid Commander Troi while she is on the station. We need this treaty to go through.

WORF

Aye, sir.

Worf exits the office.

7 INT. OPS

Worf has stepped through the office door. He pauses for a moment, looking at Troi from behind. He steels himself and quickly moves towards the turbolift. Troi turns and sees him. She smiles at him expectantly, but Worf isn't even looking. Her face falls as Worf quickly jumps into the turbolift.

WORF

Docking ring.

The turbolift immediately whisks Worf away from Ops and away from Troi's disappointed gaze.

8 INT. WORF'S QUARTERS

Worf enters his quarters.

WORF

Lights!

The lights obediently comply. Dax steps up behind Worf and playfully covers his eyes. Worf groans to himself.

WORF

Not again!

Dax drops her hands from his eyes, surprised. She comes around him, looking at him disappointed.

DAX

That's hardly the reaction I was hoping for.

WORF

(sighing)

I'm sorry, Jadzia. I have been ... distracted.

Dax's eyes go wide with surprise as she pulls a hair from Worf's uniform.

DAX

I guess so. Any idea who this belongs to?

WORF

Deanna Troi, the Federation attache.

DAX

The same Deanna Troi that you knew on the
Enterprise?

Worf nods, knowing exactly where this is going. He starts to speak, trying to placate Dax.

WORF

It's not what you think...

DAX

Oh, really? The one woman you loved on the *Enterprise* is here on the station, I find one of her hairs on your collar, and I have nothing to worry about?

WORF

That hair must have gotten there when she surprised me in my quarters.

DAX

(sarcastically)

It's comforting to know that both your women think alike.

Worf looks away, an upset look on his face. Dax realizes she's not helping, and gently places a hand on his arm

DAX

Why don't you tell me what's going on? You never really told me what happened between you two.

Worf shrugs.

WORF

It's true that Deanna and I were ... intimate. Shortly before the *Enterprise D* was destroyed, Deanna and I had an argument.

DAX

We've had arguments before.

WORF

This was no ordinary argument. I wanted us to become more committed to one another. For some reason, she did not. We fought for many hours and she finally left my quarters. When I tried to talk to her, she refused. She said it was over between us. Shortly thereafter, the *Enterprise* was destroyed and I was transferred here.

Dax looks at Worf, surprised. He is showing genuine remorse over what happened.

WORF

I do not understand why she is behaving the way she is. The last time I saw her was during the Second Borg Incident. She didn't seem to be interested in rekindling our relationship then.

DAX

I don't think that a potential Borg invasion is exactly the most romantic setting, Worf.

Worf shrugs. Dax reaches out and rubs his arm tenderly.

DAX

Just remember who you're engaged to, okay?

Worf cracks the smallest of grins.

9 INT. PROMENADE, LOWER LEVEL

The Luxian Monarch, a creature that strongly resembles a striking man in his late fifties, stands before Sisko, surrounded by a small entourage. Kira and Odo flank the Captain, smiling cordially.

SISKO

Welcome to Deep Space Nine, Monarch.

The Monarch turns away, seemingly uninterested. Sisko shoots a confused glance at Kira, who shrugs. Suddenly, the Monarch turns and crushes Sisko with a powerful bear hug. Sisko wheezes slightly from surprise.

MONARCH

I am honored to be here, Captain Sisko. Your hospitality is warm and embracing!

The Monarch releases Sisko and moves on to Kira, who grits her teeth. Sure enough, the Monarch embraces her as well. He releases her and moves on to Odo. Odo quickly raises a hand to stop the Monarch.

ODO

The honor is mine, Monarch. It is I who should embrace you for privileging me with your presence.

The Monarch nods, satisfied. Odo gives the Monarch a quick and very light hug. The Monarch turns back to Sisko, who tenses, almost expecting another bear hug.

MONARCH

And now, Captain, we must tour this marvel of yours.
I must see where our weapons will help you fight the
Dominion!

Sisko motions for the Monarch to precede him. The Monarch and his entourage do so. Sisko hangs back for a second.

SISKO

(whispering to Kira)

I hope there aren't any more surprise customs like
that.

10 INT. PROMENADE, UPPER LEVEL

Jake is leaning on the railing, watching the Monarch move his way through the Promenade. He looks up at Nog, who is scanning the crowd warily.

JAKE

Will you relax, Nog?

NOG

I can't. Odo handpicked me to help watch the crowd.
He's trusting me to keep an eye on things.

Nog notices something suspicious in the crowd and dashes away from Jake.

NOG

You there! With the holorecorder! Let me see that!

Jake laughs at his friend as Nog disappears into the crowd. He looks down on the Monarch, then up at the crowd that has gathered on the upper level. He frowns as his eyes fall on a rather tall humanoid, dressed in billowing black robes. The creature is staring down at the Monarch coldly. He finally turns and pushes his way through the crowd, roughly following the path of the Monarch below. Jake bites his bottom lip, not sure of what to do. He finally leaves his perch and begins to follow the humanoid.

11 INT. PROMENADE, UPPER LEVEL, DIFFERENT SECTION

Several minutes have passed. The humanoid in the robes has stopped and is staring down at the Monarch, who is inspecting Leeta's stand. Jake is several feet behind him, still scrutinizing the humanoid uneasily. Finally, the humanoid reaches into his cloaks and pulls out a small oblong tube, a series of switches along its length. The humanoid presses one of the switches, causing the rod to glow. Jake's eyes go wide with fear and he dashes forward.

JAKE

(shouting)

Get down!

The humanoid presses another button on the tube. As he does, Jake slams into him from behind. A brilliant beam of energy explodes from the tube, but because of Jake's interference, the shot goes wide, missing the Monarch. Odo immediately covers the Monarch and is shouting orders:

ODO

Escort the Monarch to his quarters immediately! Send reinforcements to the upper levels! I want to find out who fired that shot!

Jake doesn't seem to hear Odo. He is struggling with the would-be assassin, trying to wrestle the weapon from his hands. The assassin puts up a valiant fight, but it is too late. Within seconds, security personnel have surrounded Jake and the assassin, phasers drawn and ready. The assassin finally raises his hands in defeat. The security personnel swarm over him, dragging him away. Jake sits on the Promenade deck, stunned. Sisko dashes up to him and helps him up.

SISKO

Jake, are you okay?

Jake nods weakly. Sisko puts his arm around him.

SISKO

Come on. We'll get you to the Infirmary.

12 INT. INFIRMARY

Bashir is running a medical tricorder over Jake, who appears to have recovered from his initial shock. Sisko stands nearby, watching over the whole scene apprehensively.

BASHIR

Well, it appears you have a few minor bruises and scrapes, just what you would expect from someone who single-handedly wrestled a royal assassin into submission.

SISKO

What made you think that he was an assassin?

JAKE

I recognized him as a Kylosian. He was wearing the ceremonial garb of a Rebus Warrior. They do nothing but assassinate people.

SISKO

And how would you know about Rebus Warriors?

JAKE

I was going to include one in a story I'm writing. I was a little worried about doing that since I had never seen one before. I guess I don't have to worry about that anymore.

Odo steps into the Infirmary.

SISKO

Have you had a chance to speak with the assassin yet?

ODO

I have. His name is Borell. Apparently the Luxians sold Borell and a rebellious faction he led some weapons a few years ago. The Kylosian government put down the rebellion and Borell blamed the Luxians.

SISKO

So he tried to take it out on the Luxians by killing their Monarch?

ODO

So it would seem. He is now resting comfortably in a holding cell until the Kylosians can send someone to pick him up.

SISKO

And how about the Monarch? Is he okay?

ODO

He was a little shaken up, but he has recovered nicely. I just spoke with him before coming over here. Apparently he wants to speak with you, Jake.

Jake looks over at Bashir, who shrugs.

BASHIR

You're free to go as far as I'm concerned. If you have any problems, though, let me know.

Jake nods and turns to Sisko, who shrugs.

SISKO

I guess it's time for you to meet some royalty, Jake. Just be ready to be hugged.

Jake frowns, not comprehending.

13 INT. THE MONARCH'S GUEST QUARTERS

Jake now understands what his father's warning was about. The Monarch has him in a crushing bear hug. Sisko and Troi watch from a corner, the Monarch's entourage standing in a different corner. Jake struggles to breath for a few seconds before the Monarch releases him.

MONARCH

That is just a mere token of my appreciation for saving my life. Kylosians! Bah! Poor losers, if you ask me!

JAKE

I guess so, Your Majesty.

MONARCH

Come, brave Jake Sisko! You must be honored for saving my life!

Jake turns and looks at Sisko, who once again shrugs. Sisko finally waves Jake to follow the Monarch, who has walked over to the entourage. One of the females in the group, an absolutely stunning young woman about Jake's age, hands the Monarch a golden piece of silk. The Monarch takes it and strides over to Jake. Jake looks at the silk apprehensively, not sure what is happening. The Monarch smiles at Jake reassuringly, but when Jake smiles back, the Monarch's smile vanishes.

MONARCH

(seriously)

You, Jacob Sisko, have saved my life. You risked your own to make sure I would have mine. I owe you everything. I can only offer you a mere pittance for your heroic deed.

The entourage suddenly begins to screech and howl in approval. Jake jumps, startled by the sudden

noise. The Monarch allows the cacophony to go on for a few seconds before motioning for silence. He bows before Jake, offering up the silk. Jake stares at it, dumbfounded.

MONARCH

Take this gift from me. It is yours.

Jake gingerly reaches out and carefully takes the silk from the Monarch's hands, almost as if he is expecting the elderly Luxian to attack him. The minute the silk slips from the Monarch's hands, he leaps to his feet, once again startling Jake. The entourage once more begins to howl, this time doing a ritualistic dance around Jake. The Monarch joins in the dance as well. Jake stares at them all, bewildered. Sisko can barely keep from laughing as he leans over to Troi.

SISKO

(whispering)

Do you know what is going on?

TROI

(she shrugs)

No. Nobody from the *Enterprise* saved the Monarch's life. Our loss, I guess. I mean, who would want to miss something like this?

The Monarch waves for the dancing to stop. He finally smiles and puts both of his hands on Jake's shoulders.

MONARCH

The ritual is over! Now it is time to feast!

The Monarch ushers Jake, Sisko, and Troi into an adjoining room. As he does, he gives a significant look to the female Luxian who handed him the silk. She nods at the look.

14 INT. THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE MONARCH'S QUARTERS

The doors part, and Jake backs out of the open doorway as quickly as he can. He waves to the people inside.

JAKE

Thank you! Thank you very much ...
(he holds up the silk)
... for the wonderful gift.

From inside, Jake hears another chorus of howling and screeching, which mercifully dies when the doors hiss shut. Jake seems to deflate, letting out a relieved sigh. He takes a deep breath and starts down the corridor.

15 INT. THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE JAKE'S QUARTERS

Jake turns the corner and heads for his quarters. As he does, Nog backs out of the quarters in what appears to be shock. Since he isn't paying attention to where he is going, he bumps into Jake.

JAKE

Hey, Nog.

Nog doesn't turn, but continues to stare at the closed doors.

NOG

I hear the Monarch gave you a present for saving his life.

Jake holds up the silk and looks at it.

JAKE

I guess.

NOG

I tell you, I wish I had been that attentive! I would love to get a gift from him.

JAKE

You really want it that badly?

Nog can barely contain his excitement.

NOG

Oh, yes.

JAKE

Then here.

Jake hands Nog the silk and pushes his way past him.

JAKE (cont.)

I'll see you later.

Jake enters the quarters, leaving a very confused Nog staring at the silk in his hands.

16 INT. JAKE'S QUARTERS

Jake has his head down as he steps through the door. He finally looks up and stops short. Sitting on the edge of the couch is the female Luxian who handed the Monarch the silk. Her face brightens when she sees Jake.

LUXIAN FEMALE

I have been waiting for you.

Jake isn't really sure of what to say. The beautiful female rises from the couch and seems to glide towards him. Jake begins to back away, slightly scared about what's going on.

JAKE

You have been?

LUXIAN FEMALE

Oh, yes. My name is Shara. I am yours.

Jake stares at her blankly.

JAKE

What?

SHARA

I am yours. My father, the Monarch, has given me to you for saving his life. We have underwent the bonding ritual, so I am now your wife.

Before Jake can say another word, Shara grabs him by the front of his tunic and kisses him passionately. Jake isn't quite sure how to react. When Shara finally releases him, he can say only one thing:

JAKE

(softly)

Help!

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

17 EXT. THE STATION

Deep Space Nine continues to hang peacefully in space.

SISKO (v.o.)

Personal log, supplemental. Things have calmed down some after the attack on the Monarch. Unfortunately, things in Jake's life seem to have gotten that much more interesting.

18 INT. SISKO'S QUARTERS

Jake is pacing back and forth in front of Sisko, who is seated on a couch, watching his son in amusement.

JAKE

I mean, what am I supposed to do? She tried to seduce me the minute I walked into my quarters!

SISKO

And this is a problem?

Jake crosses his arms, but he doesn't stop moving. The look he shoots at Sisko shows that he isn't taking this lightly.

SISKO

All right. I'm sorry. Where is she ... what did you say her name was?

JAKE

Shara.

SISKO

Well, at least you two are on a first name basis!

Jake pauses in his pacing long enough to glare at Sisko. Sisko throws up his hands in apology.

SISKO

Okay. I'm sorry. Where is she right now?

JAKE

She's still in my quarters. I tried to get her to leave, but she refused! She said that she belongs to me now, that she exists to fulfill all my wants and desires.

SISKO

Sounds like every young man's dream come true, if you ask me.

JAKE

It's down right spooky!

SISKO

Well, okay. Here is what I would do. Go and talk to the Monarch. Explain to him that you didn't understand what you were getting into. Maybe there is a way out of this.

Jake nods to himself and turns to leave.

SISKO

And Jake?

Jake turns back to Sisko.

SISKO

Until you can get out of it, try to enjoy it.

Jake gives Sisko a withering look before exiting. Sisko watches him go and chuckles to himself.

19 INT. THE MONARCH'S GUEST QUARTERS

The Monarch is seated on his couch, meditating. The door chimes. He doesn't even open his eyes.

SISKO

Enter!

The doors part to reveal a very nervous Jake. The Monarch finally opens his eyes and looks to Jake. A smile crosses his lips.

MONARCH

Jacob Sisko! It is good to see you again. And so soon! I trust that you are enjoying my present?

Jake grits his teeth. He isn't sure of how to approach this.

JAKE

Well, actually, Your Majesty, that's why I've come to speak with you.

MONARCH

It pains me greatly to part with Shara. She was my favorite daughter.

JAKE

You just naturally give people your favorite daughter?

MONARCH

Of course! You saved my life, so it is only fitting that you take my own flesh and blood as reward.
(he suddenly becomes grim)
She is pleasing you, is she not?

Jake can only shrug. The Monarch is once again smiling.

MONARCH

Excellent! Now what do you wish to speak about?

JAKE

Actually, it's about Shara. It's a very generous offer, Monarch, but I can't accept her.

The Monarch finally rises from his couch. His face becomes grim. He clasps his hands behind his back and begins to pace in front of Jake. Jake stares at him, not sure of what is happening.

MONARCH

This is a very serious matter, young man. I have seen fit to take you into my family, to present you with a gift of the utmost value, and you refuse it?

Jake, not sure of what to do, merely nods his head. The Monarch sees this and nods as well, as if thinking.

MONARCH

You dislike my daughter? She does not please you, and so you return her to me?

Jake tries to say something, but the Monarch cuts him off.

MONARCH

(almost shouting)
That is a most serious and grave insult! Wars have broken out over lesser matters!

JAKE

(weakly)
Wars?

MONARCH

Not only that, but you threaten the relationship between our two peoples by refusing my generous gift! Is that what you want?

Jake holds up his hands in surrender.

JAKE

All right! It's okay! She's very lovely!

The Monarch looks momentarily perplexed, but he finally shrugs.

MONARCH

Then it is settled. Shara will live here with you as your wife. It was good to talk to you again, Jacob Sisko!

The Monarch returns to his couch and resumes his meditation. Jake stares at him, defeated. He finally turns and leaves the quarters.

20 INT. JAKE'S QUARTERS

Jake enters his quarters and gasps. They are nothing like when he left them. Colorful silk draperies coat every wall, some of them hanging from the ceiling. His furniture has been replaced with elaborate and garish couches and chairs. Jake steps into the midst of his quarters, gaping at everything in shock when Shara breezes in from the bedroom, carrying a multi-colored floral arrangement.

SHARA

Hello, Jake.

Jake turns and stares her as she places the flowers on a coffee table. She seems completely oblivious to his astonishment.

JAKE

What happened here?

Shara looks around the room and smiles pleasantly.

SHARA

I redecorated. We are, after all, of the Luxian Royal Family. We must live like it!

JAKE

Where did we get all of this ... this ...
(he's searching for a non-offensive word)
...stuff?

SHARA

I had it transferred from my father's ship.

Jake is about to say something when Nog comes out of his bedroom, carrying a suitcase. Nog shoots Jake an annoyed look, but Jake can only look at him in surprise.

JAKE

Where are you going?

NOG

Back to live with my father, apparently. Your *wife* insisted.

Shara comes up from behind Jake and wraps her arms around his waist. Jake doesn't respond for a second, but she realizes what she's doing and quickly escapes from her grasp. He turns on her.

JAKE

What is this all about?

SHARA

It is inappropriate for a married couple to have a friend living with them. On Luxia, that would be considered rude.

NOG

(sarcastically)
And I don't want to be rude.

Without saying another word, Nog turns and walks out of the quarters. Jake starts after him, but isn't sure of what to say, so he stops in his tracks. Shara immediately is behind him again, running her hands across his body sensuously.

SHARA

Now that he's gone, we can continue where we left off...

Before Jake can protest, Shara has pushed him onto the couch and straddles him, kissing him passionately. Jake is stunned for a few moments before he manages to push her off of him. He stands up and walks across the room. Shara stares after him, confused.

SHARA

This is most unusual.

JAKE

You can say that again.

Jake turns around and grits his teeth. He clearly isn't comfortable with this, but he wants to make the best of it.

JAKE

Look, in your culture, this whole "give your daughter away" business may be normal, but marriage isn't like that in mine.

SHARA

It isn't?

JAKE

No! People try to get to know one another better before they even start dating let alone ... consummate a relationship. Right now, all I know is your name!

Shara shrugs.

SHARA

What do you want to know about me?

Jake stares at her, not sure of what to say. He gropes for the right words:

JAKE

Uh ... well, what are your hobbies?

SHARA

I embroider. I also learned to play chess. I sometimes write poetry.

JAKE

(brightening)

You write?

Shara nods enthusiastically.

SHARA

All the time! I was one of the best poets in the Royal Academy. Of course, there were only five students, and none of them really like writing poems.

JAKE

You see? Now we have something to talk about. I'm a writer as well.

SHARA

Oh, I knew that already.

Jake gives her a wary look. He doesn't like where this is going.

JAKE

You did?

Shara nods, smiling pleasantly the whole time.

SHARA

I noticed that you had a bunch of short stories in your personal database.

JAKE

What do you mean, "had?"

SHARA

I had to delete some of them to make room for my personal files!

Jake stares at Shara for a few seconds, dumbfounded. Then the full realization of what happened dawns on him. He jumps up from the couch and snatches up a PADD from a coffee table. He starts to look over the contents, a look of desperation on his face.

JAKE

You deleted over half my collection! It took me months to write all of those...

Jake's voice trails off. He looks up at Shara in anger.

JAKE

You deleted my short stories to make room for *this*?

Jake shows the PADD to her. Some sort of multi-colored geometric patterns float around on the screen, occasionally morphing into another shape. Shara shrugs.

SHARA

I need that to fall asleep at night. I can't go anywhere without it.

With a disgusted sigh, Jake turns off the PADD and turns away from Shara, trying to control his anger. Shara rises behind him.

SHARA

Jake?

JAKE

(without turning around)

What?

SHARA

Do we know each other better now?

JAKE

Sure. Why not?

SHARA

Oh, good.

Without warning, Shara latches on to Jake from behind and pulls him back onto the couch.

21 INT. REPLIMAT

Troi, O'Brien, and Bashir are seated around a table, eating a meal. Bashir is laughing, apparently at O'Brien's expense, since the Chief wears a dour expression.

BASHIR

You're kidding! Ten decks?

Troi nods, but O'Brien cuts in to defend what little remains of his good reputation.

O'BRIEN

It was more like seven.

Troi shrugs.

TROI

At any rate, not only did the Chief's "improved" diagnostic program cut power to ...
(she smiles sweetly at O'Brien)
ten decks, it also locked the Bolian Ambassador in her quarters and caused the computer to play Klingon arias at full volume. Her ears were ringing for days afterwards.

Bashir laughs again, causing O'Brien to sink even lower in his chair. Bashir finally stops laughing when he sees Jake approaching them.

BASHIR

Hello, Jake. How's married life been treating you?

Jake gives Bashir a pained expression.

JAKE

You know about that too?

BASHIR

I think your father mentioned that at the morning briefing. So how has the Princess Shara been treating you?

JAKE

It is horrible. Last night, she complained that the station beds were too lumpy, so she had me go up to the Luxian ship and bring down a new one. Then this morning, she took a two hour shower and then redecorated the quarters *again!* Now I feel like I'm living in a tropical rain forest!

O'BRIEN

If she's driving you so crazy, why don't you just divorce her?

JAKE

I can't! According to the Monarch, it would be a grave offense, one that might jeopardize the entire treaty!

BASHIR

Surely he's exaggerating.

JAKE

I don't know. That's why I came to see Counsellor Troi.

(to Troi)

Is there any way out of this?

TROI

None that I know of. The Luxians take marriage very seriously. They marry for life. Divorce is extremely rare. Granted, your case is unusual. Princesses usually marry dukes or barons, but then, there is still a lot that we don't know about them.

Jake's shoulders slump in defeat.

JAKE

Oh, great.

SHARA (o.s.)

Oh, Ja-aaaaake!

Jake winces as Shara comes up from behind him, putting her arm around his waist.

SHARA

Hello, Counsellor Troi.

(to Jake)

Come on, Jake. We have to go over to Garrick's. I want to buy you a new suit, one that shows your status.

Jake shoots a pleading look to the three officers. Bashir looks at O'Brien and shrugs.

BASHIR

I don't know, Jake. I've always thought you could use a new suit.

Jake shoots Bashir a dirty look as Shara drags him off. Bashir chuckles.

TROI

Was that entirely fair?

BASHIR

Maybe not, but it sure was fun. If you'll excuse me.

With that, Bashir pushes away from the table and leaves. O'Brien rises as well.

O'BRIEN

I should really get back to work as well. You'll have to come over tonight, Counsellor.

Troi nods and O'Brien leaves. Troi gets up from the table as well and leaves the Replimat.

22 INT. PROMENADE, LOWER LEVEL

As Troi leaves the Replimat, she spots Worf walking along. She starts after him.

TROI

Worf!

Worf stops in his tracks and grumbles to himself. He turns.

WORF

Yes?

TROI

I've been looking all over the station for you! I've been meaning to talk to you...

WORF

I am very busy. Long range sensors have shown some Jem'Hadar activity in the Gamma Quadrant that...

TROI

Oh, please. Remember who you're talking to. I know you're lying.

Worf sighs, defeated.

WORF

All right. What is it?

TROI

I was hoping we could get a chance to talk. I have a feeling you weren't exactly happy to see me earlier. I thought maybe we could get together and maybe ... exercise?

Worf looks at Troi in surprise.

WORF

You have kept up on your training?

Troi nods.

TROI

I try to practice every day. Dr. Crusher and I try to spar once a week. Beverly is getting very good as well, but I can still take her down.

Worf considers this and finally nods.

WORF

Very well. Meet me in the holosuites in two hours. I will expect you then.

Troi smiles brilliantly.

TROI

I look forward to it.

Worf nods and turns, leaving Troi standing in the middle of the Promenade, extremely happy.

23 INT. JAKE'S QUARTERS

The quarters have been redecorated yet again. Now subtly-colored paintings adorn the walls. Jake is seated on a new couch, trying hard to concentrate on his writing while Shara moves around the quarters, humming a melody-less tune to herself as she works.

SHARA

What do you think of the quarters now?

Jake doesn't look up from his work.

JAKE

Fine. Whatever.

Shara turns and stares at Jake, somewhat annoyed.

SHARA

You didn't even look!

Jake sighs and gives the quarters a quick look. He immediately turns back to his writing.

JAKE

Like I said. It looks fine.

Shara smiles and returns to her work. The door chimes. She looks at the door.

SHARA

I'll get it!

Shara turns and the doors hisses open in the background. Shara gasps, surprised.

SHARA (o.s.)

Timok!

Jake looks up and sees a Luxian male, approximately the same age as Shara, stride into the room. He is dressed in a tight-fitting black jumpsuit that accentuates his well-muscled physique. What looks like a massive dagger is strapped to his right leg. And even larger blade is strapped to his left. He looks down at Jake with mute rage.

TIMOK

Are you Jacob Sisko?

Jake nods, not taking his eyes off of Timok's weapons. Timok's face contorts with anger and he draws the blades.

TIMOK

I am Baron Timok of Luxia! I am the one who truly loves the Princess Shara! Prepare to die!

Jake's eyes go wide with fear.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

24 INT. JAKE'S QUARTERS

With a mighty cry, Timok charges, slashing at Jake. Jake immediately jumps behind the couch, the sword blade embedding itself in the furniture. Timok struggles to pull his weapon free. As he does, Jake quickly gets up and quickly runs over to Shara.

JAKE

Is this another custom you forgot to tell me about?

Shara nods, looking between Jake and Timok dreamily.

SHARA

It's the Ritual of Retribution. Timok and you must fight for me. It's so romantic.

Jake barely dodges another attack from Timok.

JAKE

You call this romantic?

Jake is on the run again, this time towards his replicator. Timok tries to cut him off (literally), but Jake manages to slap the comm system. Jake yells frantically to the computer as Timok charges him, a blood-curdling scream erupting from his mouth.

JAKE

Security to Jake Sisko's quarters immediately!

Jake throws his arms above his head to protect himself as Timok continues to charge. Suddenly, however, Timok stops in midstride and stares at Jake in bewilderment.

TIMOK

Why are you having someone interfere with this? This is a serious matter! You and I must fight to the death for the Princess Shara!

Jake rises and stares at Timok angrily.

JAKE

Why do you think? You're trying to kill me!

TIMOK

Of course! You stole the love of my life from me. It is my right as a Luxian Baron to avenge myself.

JAKE

Look, this wasn't my idea. I'm getting sick and tired of you Luxians and your "serious matters!" These rituals are driving me crazy! She won't let me enter the room until she performs a five minute ceremony to "commemorate our love..."

TIMOK

That is a sacred rite! I won't allow you to mock it...

Before Timok can attack again, Jake manages to snatch the weapons from his hand and slams them down on the table.

JAKE

Will you just shut up! All I did was save the Monarch's life. I never even dreamed that this would be the result! I can understand that you're upset. I would be too if I lost the love of my life. But there are better ways to deal with this!

Timok looks genuinely surprised. It never dawned on him that there was an alternative to the Ritual of Retribution.

TIMOK

There are? Like what?

Jake heaves out a sigh of relief. He walks over to Timok and places an arm around his shoulder gingerly.

JAKE

Plenty of ways. But first, we'd better let Security know you're not going to kill me anymore.

25 INT. WOLF'S EXERCISE CAVERN ON THE HOLOSUITE

Dax is in the cavern, dressed in a black exercise outfit, stretching out. She smiles when she hears the doors open behind her.

DAX

It's about time you got here...

She turns around and the smile dies on her lips. Troi stares back at her coldly.

DAX

Oh, it's you.

TROI

You must be Commander Jadzia Dax.

DAX

Oh please. All my friends call me Jadzia. But you can call me Commander Dax.

Troi regards Dax carefully. They begin to circle around each other, almost like warriors preparing for battle.

TROI

I sense a great deal of hostility from you.

DAX

I didn't know you had to be an empath to state the obvious.

TROI

And I would think that living seven lifetimes would give you a little more tact.

Dax stops short, almost as if struck across the face. Her eyes begin to burn with a fierce anger she saves only for her mortal enemies.

DAX

I don't think you know who you're dealing with, little one.

Now Troi bristles at the unintentional reminder of her mother's childhood nickname for her. She too is becoming more hostile.

TROI

Oh really? Why don't you tell me?

DAX

I've been trained in personal combat by Koloth, Kor, and Kang. I'm not someone you want to take lightly.

TROI

I'm no slouch when it comes to fighting either. I had a pretty good teacher as well.

DAX

Oh yeah? Let's see how good.

Dax charges forward, throwing a series of punches that Troi deftly blocks. Dax tries to hide the fact that she's impressed as she launches into another attack, which Troi again manages to evade and

counter. Dax is caught off guard once again by Troi's aggression. Troi takes this to her advantage by sweeping Dax off her feet with a vicious hook kick. Dax falls to the ground and stares up at Troi defiantly. Troi, on the other hand, smiles down at Dax victoriously.

TROI

Apparently your three teachers are nothing compared to Worf. He taught me well.

DAX

Maybe. Let's see how well you do with a *bet'leH*.
Computer! Two *bet'leHs*, battle parameters.

Two *bet'leHs* appear in the air by the two women. Dax deftly plucks hers out of the air and gives it a sharp twirl. Troi glances at the blade uneasily. Finally, she sucks in a deep breath and takes the *bet'leH* and assumes an easy defensive posture.

DAX

I'll try not to hurt you too badly.

TROI

I can't say I'll do the same.

Dax charges forward, swinging her *bet'leH* in a vicious arc. Troi manages to block it, but it is clear that she isn't quite prepared for this fight. Dax notices this and laughs viciously.

DAX

Maybe you're not as good as you thought!

TROI

Well, I certainly made up for it in other areas. I don't think I've ever seen Worf so satisfied!

Troi punctuates this remark with a sharp jab which Dax barely parries. She quickly regroups.

DAX

Oh really? Then why would he be so happy with me?
Or did I fail to mention that we're engaged?

This takes Troi off guard. Dax manages to swing in a blow that staggers Troi. Troi quickly regroups.

TROI

Then why did Worf kiss me so passionately in the *Defiant*? Maybe he's been longing for his...

Troi isn't given the chance to finish. With a cry of rage, Dax tackles her to the ground. Soon the two women are rolling over each other, each one trying to pin the other to the ground. Finally, after several seconds of a brutal wrestling match, they fall apart from each other. They simply sit on the ground, staring at each other venomously while they both try to catch their breaths. The doors to the holosuite open and Worf strides in, dressed in his black exercise uniform.

WORF

I apologize for my lateness...

Worf's voice trails off as he looks at the two women.

WORF

Apparently you decided to start without me.

Dax and Troi both rise, never taking their eyes off of each other.

DAX

That's okay, Worf. I think I'm done for the day. I'll just leave you two alone.

With that, Dax leaves the holosuite. Worf watches her go, then turns to Troi for an explanation. Troi just sighs, disgusted, and leaves as well. Worf watches her go as well and then grumbles to himself for a second before calling:

WORF

Computer, end program!

26 INT. QUARK'S

Jake and Timok are seated at the bar. Jake is nursing a drink. Timok, on the other hand, is looking around the bar, overwhelmed by it all.

JAKE

Okay. My understanding of Luxian rituals is still a bit shaky. Is there some way that I can give Shara to you?

Timok looks at Jake in surprise.

TIMOK

You want to give the Princess to me? Why would you give up such a precious gem?

JAKE

That's just it...

(he's thinking desperately)

...she's just too precious for me. I don't deserve her. But you obviously love her and can give her the life she deserves. Now, is there some way I can give her to you?

Timok shrugs.

TIMOK

Well, I could kill you.

JAKE

I'd prefer to avoid something that would wind up with me dead.

TIMOK

Or I could save your life.

Jake thinks about this information for a second and then turns and waves at Quark, who is speaking with Morn in hushed tones. Quark excuses himself from the conversation and walks down to the two young men.

QUARK

What can I do for you?

JAKE

Quark, I need to hire an assassin.

Quark stares at Jake in shock, not sure if he heard him correctly.

QUARK

Excuse me? I thought I just heard you say that you wanted to hire an assassin.

JAKE

That's right. How much would that cost me?

QUARK

Well, let's see. A top of the line assassin will cost you upwards from three hundred bars of...

JAKE
(cutting him off)
Oh, I don't want a top of the line assassin.

Quark blinks in surprise.

QUARK
You ... you don't?

JAKE
No. A third or fourth rate assassin would be preferable. One who is extremely clumsy and could easily be stopped.

Quark stares at Jake for a second, not sure of what to say. Finally, he glowers at him.

QUARK
Odo put you up to this, didn't he?

JAKE
No, that's not the case...

QUARK
Well, you can tell him that I don't deal with assassins, first or fourth rate!

With that, Quark turns and storms away from Jake. Jake sighs in frustration and turns back to Timok, who stares at him, confused.

TIMOK
I'm not sure how that helped.

JAKE
It was just an idea. Maybe we can try to stage an accident. Then you could save my life and I could give you Shara.

TIMOK
I'm not sure I understand. We fake an accident, and then I pretend to save your life? Why?

JAKE
Because then everyone will think you really did and I can give you the Princess Shara. You would get what you want, Shara would ... still be Shara, and I'd be happy as well.

Timok nods as he begins to understand.

TIMOK

All right, let us prepare this "accident."

27 INT. PROMENADE, LOWER LEVEL

The doors leading to the docking ring open and two more Kylosians enter the station. One (named Tresk) bears a striking resemblance to Borell. They look around the crowd anxiously. The other Kylosian (named Groman) turns to Tresk.

GROMAN

Is Borell here?

TRESK

Hold on a moment.

Tresk places two fingers to his temple and closes his eyes. A dull roar surrounds him as he concentrates.

28 INT. BRIG

Borell is seated in a cell, meditating. Suddenly, he opens his eyes in surprise. A cruel smile forms on his lips. He closes his eyes again. A dull roar surrounds him as well, but the guard outside the cell doesn't notice.

29 INT. ANOTHER SECTION OF PROMENADE, LOWER LEVEL

Troi is walking along, smiling, but she suddenly pauses in midstride. She frowns and looks around the Promenade, not sure of what she's sensing.

30 INT. FIRST SECTION OF PROMENADE

Tresk opens his eyes and smiles at Groman.

TRESK

He is here, but he is being held in the security office.

GROMAN

We'll need to liberate him.

With that, Tresk and Groman quickly disappear into the crowd.

31 INT. THE OTHER PART OF THE PROMENADE

Troi continues to scan the crowd, confused. As she does this, Worf approaches her from behind.

WORF

Deanna!

Troi jumps, startled. She turns around and breathes a sigh of relief when she sees that it's Worf. She smiles up at him.

TROI

I'm glad to see you, Worf.

WORF

We need to talk.

The smile on Troi's face dies when she hears the tone of Worf's voice. She steels herself.

TROI

All right. What do you want to talk about?

Worf glances around the Promenade, uncomfortable.

WORF

Not here. Somewhere private.

Troi motions for Worf to follow her. They leave the Promenade.

32 INT. WORF'S QUARTERS

Ten minutes have passed. The doors open to admit Troi and Worf. Troi turns around and motions for Worf to speak.

TROI

So what is it you wanted to talk about?

Worf hesitates, unsure of how to approach this.

WORF

We need to talk about ... us.

Troi looks at him, surprised.

TROI

"Us?" I was unaware that there was an "us" anymore. At least, that's not the way you make it seem.

Now Worf looks at Troi in surprise.

WORF

Me? You're blaming me? If anyone is to blame for all of this, it is you! You were the one who broke off our relationship back on the *Enterprise*, not me!

TROI

Like you gave me much choice! You were the one who was insisting that we undergo the Mating Ritual immediately, if I remember correctly!

WORF

(shouting)

That was because...

(he regains control of himself)

That was because I loved you. I wanted to be with you for the rest of my life!

TROI

Worf, you wanted to undergo the ritual that very day! If you would have had your way, we would have been mated for life within the hour you made that suggestion!

WORF

So?

TROI

So... you were moving too fast for me! I was scared! You were so insistent, I saw only one way out...

Troi's voice trails off in regret. Worf stares at her, unsure of what to say or do.

WORF

(quietly)

Do you even know what you did to me? Because of you and the destruction of the *Enterprise*, I was ready to leave Starfleet. I have finally been able to get my life back together again, and now...

Worf waves at Troi, indicating that she is the problem. Troi steps forward and places a hand on Worf's arm tenderly. She stares up into his eyes.

TROI

Do you know what I've been through without you? You were a solid foundation in my life, Worf. I knew I could always turn to you, and suddenly, you were gone. I tried to be strong, and I tried to move on with my life after you were transferred here. I even started seeing Will. But then...

Troi's voice trails off. She turns away from Worf.

TROI

...but then you came back to the *Enterprise* when the Borg attacked Earth. All of the old feelings came rushing back. I tried to fight it, but I realized how much I missed you in my life. I would have told you then, but...

This time Troi makes a vague gesture with her hand. Worf nods, understanding.

WORF

We were hardly given the time.

TROI

Exactly. And then, after we returned to the present, you were gone back to this station. And try as I might, I couldn't get you out of my mind. Every time I closed my eyes, I could hear your voice and see you smiling at me. When I heard about this mission, I jumped at the chance to see you again. I know that it's my fault that our relationship ended, and I'm sorry, but isn't there some way we can work this out?

WORF

I don't see how. I'm sorry.

Worf turns to leave. Troi latches on to his arm and turns him around. She pulls him close, straining up to him.

TROI
(Whispering)
Please. Don't go. Don't leave me.

Before Worf can protest, she has pulled him into a passionate kiss. Worf isn't sure what to do, so he merely stands there in shock. As she kisses him, the doors to the quarters hiss open. Worf and Troi pull apart and look at Dax in shock. Dax stares back at them, also surprised.

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

33 INT. WORF'S QUARTERS

Worf stares at Dax in shock, still holding Troi in his arms.

WORF
(surprised)
Jadzia!

Worf finally realizes that he's still holding Troi. He lets go of her and backs away a few steps.

WORF (cont.)
What are you doing here?

DAX
I would ask you the same thing, but I think I already know the answer.

With that, Dax spins on her heel and exits the quarters. Worf stares after her, not sure of what to do. He turns back to Troi, desperate.

TROI
Now that she's out of the way...

Troi takes Worf back into her arms. Worf allows her to do so, staring helplessly at the closed doors. He finally realizes that Troi is trying to kiss him again, and quickly untangles himself from her and dashes out the door.

Dax is storming down the Promenade, the crowd easily parting to let her pass. As she goes, Worf enters the Promenade behind her. He scans the crowd, trying to find her.

WORF
(calling)
Jadzia!

Dax ignores him, barreling along. As she goes, Bashir steps out of the Infirmary. He looks up and smiles at Dax.

BASHIR
Hello, Jadzia!

WORF (o.s.)
Jadzia!

Bashir spots Worf in the crowd and stops Dax. She tries to get away, but Bashir prevents it.

BASHIR
I believe Worf wants to speak with you.

DAX
Well, I don't want to speak with him....

It is too late. Worf has caught up with her.

WORF
Jadzia, please let me explain!

Dax whirls on Worf, staring at him dangerously.

DAX
I don't think there's anything to explain! Everything seemed pretty clear to me!

WORF
That isn't the case at all.

DAX
Oh, I suppose that it was another "accident," wasn't it? You didn't want her to kiss you, but she did anyway? Come on, Worf! I've lived seven lifetimes. I know what was happening there.

Bashir is looking extremely uncomfortable, almost as if he wants to quickly escape.

WORF

That is what happened! I wanted to speak with her about what was going on, but she wouldn't listen...

DAX

Just be quiet! I thought we had something special, Worf! You and me, together! But I see you kissing an old flame... you invite her to exercise with us without telling me...

Dax is almost on the verge of tears. Worf tries to take a step closer to her to comfort her, but she backs away from him.

DAX

How would you like it if you saw me kissing an old flame, huh?

BASHIR

I think I had better....

Before Bashir can say anything else or get away, Dax grabs him and pulls him into a passionate kiss. Bashir is so shocked, he can only stand there and allow himself to be kissed as Worf looks on in mute shock. Dax finally releases him and glares at Worf triumphantly.

DAX

There!

With that, she turns and storms down the Promenade. Bashir stares after her, dazed. Finally, he looks to Worf, who is still glaring at him angrily.

BASHIR

(quickly)
I... uh... oh.

Bashir quickly ducks back into the Infirmary.

35 INT. A JEFFRIES TUBE

Groman and Tresk are hunched over an open access panel. Groman is working feverishly with the circuits inside while Tresk scans the corridors warily.

TRESK

Are you done yet? Borell is getting impatient!

GROMAN

Maybe he'd like to try this. Whoever is in charge of security here is good. I can't isolate just one forcefield, so I'm trying to bring them all down...

Groman smiles to himself with pleasure as there is a little flash inside the open panel.

GROMAN

That should do it.

Groman shuts the panel and he and Tresk disappear into the shadows.

36 INT. THE BRIG

Borell is seated in his cell, staring at the guard icily. Suddenly, the force field to his cell disappears. Before the guard can react, Borell rockets forward and smashes a fist over the guard's head. The guard promptly passes out on the deck. Borell runs over to a locker, forces it open, and removes his weapons. He glances around the brig once and is gone out the door.

37 INT. OPS

The turbolift deposits Worf on the deck. He looks around at the other crew warily. All of them give him brief glances and then look away. All that is, except for O'Brien. He immediately runs over to Worf.

O'BRIEN

Worf, what's going on? Dax just came up here crying and...

Before O'Brien can finish, the doors to Sisko's office open and Dax leaves them. She is still crying. She takes one look at Worf and dashes into the turbolift.

DAX

Habitat ring.

The turbolift whisks her away. Worf stares after her, unaware that Sisko has left his office and is standing behind him.

SISKO

(sternly)
Mr. Worf, in my office, now!

Worf still stares after Dax, but follows Sisko into his office.

Sisko strides around his desk but doesn't sit. Instead, he fixes a fiery gaze on Worf, causing the Klingon to squirm slightly.

SISKO

I just had a very interesting talk with my chief science officer, Mr. Worf. Do you know what she said to me?

Worf doesn't say anything, knowing full well that if he does, Sisko will only come down on him harder.

SISKO

She asked me for a transfer! It seems she doesn't want to be on the same station as you.

WORF

Did you approve the transfer?

SISKO

No, but I did grant her two weeks personal leave to sort out her feelings. I believe, Mr. Worf, that you said you could handle this situation with Commander Troi. I take it you failed miserably.

Worf grumbles to himself.

WORF

You could say that.

SISKO

I could also remind you that I told you to avoid Commander Troi so we wouldn't have to worry about a situation like this. Or was I mistaken?

Worf shakes his head.

SISKO

Well, now you have some new orders, Mr. Worf. Until the Luxian Monarch and Commander Troi leave, you are to avoid both Troi and Dax. Understood?

Worf nods. Before Sisko can dismiss him, Odo appears outside the door, looking somewhat anxious. Sisko presses a button on the desk, allowing Odo to enter.

SISKO

What is it, Constable?

ODO

I'm afraid we have a problem, sir. I just received a communique from the Kylosian authorities. It seems that Borell is more than he appeared. Not only is he a Rebus Warrior, he is also a Twinned Warrior.

SISKO

A what?

ODO

Apparently some Rebus Warriors have twins. These twins have some sort of telepathic link and are supposed to be inseparable. The Kylosians wanted to know if we had captured Tresk, Borell's twin.

SISKO

And?

ODO

And... five minutes ago, someone cut power to the brig's forcefields. Borell escaped. I'm assuming that Tresk is responsible.

SISKO

Put the station on alert and triple the guard around the Monarch. We don't want Borell to try again.

ODO

Already done, sir. I was hoping that I could borrow Mr. Worf to coordinate my teams from Ops.

Sisko stares at Worf coolly. Worf has finally regained some composure and stands at rigid attention.

SISKO

That would be fine, Constable. We're through here.

Odo nods and Worf exits the office. He immediately strides over to his station.

39 INT. A CARGO BAY

Tresk and Groman are hiding in the shadows. Suddenly, Borell jumps into it with them. Groman jumps, startled, but Tresk is nonplused.

BORELL

It is good to see you, Brother.

Tresk nods, smiling.

GROMAN

So now what?

BORELL

Did you bring the Class VII inverter?

Groman produces a small device and nods.

BORELL

Excellent. The way to the main reactor should be clear.

With that, the three Kylosians disappear down a corridor.

40 INT. THE MAIN REACTOR

Two security guards stand by the reactor at rigid attention as several technicians monitor the readings on the reactor. Suddenly, Borell and Tresk dash out of the shadows, easily knocking the two guards unconscious. Groman follows, using a small hand weapon to stun all of the technicians. Groman then opens a panel near the reactor. He places the device into the reactor and presses a button. A series of red lights begin to flash on the device.

GROMAN

In three minutes, this will cause a major power surge in the relay net. The ODN net will catastrophically collapse two minutes later.

BORELL

Excellent. That will be the perfect cover.

TRESK

So what now? We go after the Monarch?

BORELL

No. He can wait. First, we take out the person who dishonored me.

Once again, the three Kylosians disappear into the shadows.

41 INT. OPS

O'Brien looks at his panel as it begins to buzz menacingly. He frowns, not sure of what he's reading. Sisko looks up as well.

SISKO

What's the problem, Chief?

O'BRIEN

I'm not sure, sir. I'm reading some sort of power fluctuation in the main reactor...

Before O'Brien can finish what he's saying, the lights in Ops begin to flicker. Several computer panels go blank, only to surge on again a second later.

O'BRIEN

What the....?

Suddenly, several computer panels explode, fires breaking out all around them. One of the explosions catch O'Brien in the face, sending him back into the bulkhead. Worf is frantically looking over his status board.

WORF

Sir, I'm reading a massive feedback surge building in the main reactor. If it isn't checked, it could cause the ODN relay net to fail.

SISKO

Sisko to main reactor.

There is, of course, no response. Worf shakes his head.

WORF

It's too late, sir. The net will overload in thirty seconds.

Sisko turns around and stares at Worf helplessly.

42 INT. HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Dax has a bag packed and is walking down the deserted corridor. She has finally stopped crying, but it is clear her mind is made up: she is leaving the station. Suddenly, Troi comes around the corner.

DAX
(to herself)
Oh, great.

Dax tries to keep on walking, but Troi blocks her way.

TROI
We need to talk.

DAX
I'm in no mood to talk.

TROI
Please.

Before either woman can say another word, the lights in the habitat ring start to flicker. Dax and Troi look at them, puzzled. Suddenly, there are several large explosions down the corridor, throwing both women off their feet. When they finally recover, Dax looks at either end of the hallway. Large amounts of debris block either exit.

DAX
It looks like we're trapped here.

TROI
That's the least of our worries. Look.

Dax follows Troi's pointed finger and gasps. A large section of bulkhead is cracked. Dax and Troi stare at it as the crack grows larger with the sound of tearing metal. They shoot worried glances at each other.

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

43 INT. OPS

The situation has declined severely. Just about every computer terminal is out. Fires rage in several

corners, casting a hellish pall over Ops. Sisko staggers to his feet, only to brace himself as another explosion rocks the station. Worf has somehow managed to remain standing.

SISKO

Mr. Worf, report!

WORF

I'm readying a catastrophic ODN net failure on all decks. There are multiple hull breaches... heavy casualties coming in from all over the station!

SISKO

Chief...

Before Sisko can finish, O'Brien is already racing over to his panel.

O'BRIEN

Already on it, sir.

O'BRIEN is looking over his panel frantically when the comm system chimes.

DAX (o.s.)

Dax to OPS.

SISKO

Go ahead.

44 INT. HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Dax and Troi are still staring at the crack, which has since grown larger. A small hissing sound is rapidly becoming louder as more and more atmosphere escapes through the crack. Several dazed and groggy people are leaving their quarters and staring at the rubble that blocks their exit dumbly.

DAX

We have a potential hull breach in the habitat ring. Level three, section ten.

45 INT. OPS

Sisko glances at Worf, who nods, confirming that he is showing the same thing. Sisko turns to O'Brien, who has recovered and is holding a hand over a bloody gash in his forehead.

SISKO

Will the emergency forcefields be able to respond if it does breach?

O'Brien shrugs, not looking up from his panel.

O'BRIEN

I don't know, sir. Power is still fluctuating all over the station. They might...

SISKO

Did you hear that, old man?

46 INT. HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Dax watches as Troi begins to round up the dazed people, trying to silence some crying children.

DAX

I did. Benjamin, Commander Troi and I are trapped in section ten with about fifteen other people. It looks like part of the decks above us collapsed and we...

Suddenly, the crack explodes outward, exposing the deck to space. Hurricane like winds shoot through the corridor, causing Dax to be swept off her feet. The survivors latch on to anything that is bolted down, as does Troi.

47 INT. OPS

Worf's panel buzzes ominously at him. Worf looks it over and his eyes grow wide in fear and surprise. He looks up at Sisko frantically.

WORF

Explosive decompression on level three, section ten!

Sisko holds up a hand to Worf and turns away.

SISKO

(shouting)

Dax!

Angry static is his only answer. Sisko looks to O'Brien.

O'BRIEN
Emergency force fields are not responding!

48 INT. HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Dax has managed to latch on to a section of torn carpeting, but that is slowly tearing away. She struggles to hang on against the powerful winds, but it is clear she is losing. At one point, her hand slips, but Troi lashes out and quickly grabs her by the wrist.

TROI
(shouting)
Hang on!

DAX
(shouting back)
Like I have a choice!

Suddenly, the winds die down, dropping the two women to the deck. Troi and Dax look at the opening and see a force field in place over the hole. It is fluctuating wildly, however.

TROI
That doesn't look like it's going to hold.

DAX
(slapping her combadge)
Dax to Ops.

There is no answer.

49 INT. OPS

Sisko stands in the middle of organized chaos as technicians dart back and forth, working feverishly to repair the damage. He looks to O'Brien.

SISKO
O'Brien, what do we have on that explosive decompression?

O'BRIEN

Just that it happened, sir. Internal sensors and communications are out in that part of the station. As far as I can tell, the emergency containment field is in place, but with these fluctuations, I can't tell how long they'll last.

SISKO

What about life signs? Anything?

O'Brien shakes his head. Worf grips his panel and grits his teeth slightly.

WORF

Permission to join the rescue crews in section ten, sir. I can't help Constable Odo with the systems fluctuating.

Sisko nods and Worf dashes into the turbolift.

50 INT. JAKE'S QUARTERS

Timok and Shara are seated on one of the couches in the darkened room, staring lovingly into each other's eyes.

TIMOK

Soon, my beloved Princess, we shall be together!

SHARA

Are you sure, Timok? I know that Jake has promised to help us be together, but do you trust him? Humans are so odd.

TIMOK

I know. They have very strange customs, but what do you expect, beloved? They're aliens!

Shara nods sagely. There is a loud clank and the doors to the quarters are forced open. Jake manages to squirm his way through them. Timok and Shara immediately rise.

JAKE

It's like I thought. Just about everything is out around the station.

TIMOK

That is unfortunate.

JAKE

Actually, this works out to our favor.

TIMOK

It does?

JAKE

With the sensors out, no one will be able to tell we faked the accident. Nog is waiting on the Promenade. There are enough witnesses there, the Monarch will have to honor my giving Shara to you.

SHARA

Are you sure you want to do this Jake? We could still be very happy together.

Jake steps forward and bumps his head on a low-hanging pot, another of Shara's decorations.

JAKE

I'm sure. Come on, Timok. Let's go.

Jake and Timok leave the quarters through the half-open door.

51 INT. HABITAT RING CORRIDOR OUTSIDE JAKE'S QUARTERS

Jake and Timok head down the corridor, quietly talking to each other. As soon as they have left, Borell, Tresk, and Groman melt out of the shadows. Borell stares after Jake acidly.

TRESK

That is the worm who dishonored you? That boy?

Borell nods grimly. Tresk and Groman exchange surprised looks.

TRESK

This shouldn't be too difficult.

GROMAN

Let's get it over with. I doubt that the power fluctuations will keep station personnel busy that much longer.

The three Kylosians quietly follow them.

Dax is seated on the floor, staring at the gaping hole in the wall. The forcefield is still fluctuating, only more violently. She turns and glances at the survivors, who have huddled together near one of the blockades. Her nose wrinkles slightly and turns around to see Troi hunched over part of a bulkhead, a phaser in hand. Troi frowns and looks at the phaser, makes a quick adjustment to the setting, and fires again. Dax's eyes go wide with shock and crawls over to her.

DAX

What are you doing? Do you want to use up all of our air?

Troi gives her a condescending look.

TROI

Think about it. If we had a limited supply of air, most of it would have been sucked out when the hull breached. We're fine.

DAX

Then what are you doing?

TROI

Trying to cut a piece of bulkhead that can be used to plug the hole. I figure that if the forcefield collapses, the air pressure would hold this plug up against the wall.

Troi continues to cut as Dax considers it. Finally, Dax reaches over to an open case and pulls out a phaser as well. She makes the proper adjustment and begins to cut as well. Troi barely glances up from her work but she smiles.

TROI

Any idea how long we might be in here?

DAX

Provided the forcefield doesn't shut off before we get this plug ready? Standard procedure says that a regular rescue crew will be here by now and trying to...

Troi suddenly looks up in surprise. Her smile grows broader.

TROI

Worf is here as well.

Dax looks up in surprise.

DAX

Are you sure?

TROI

Oh, yes. His presence is very...unique.

Dax studies the happy smile on Troi's face for a second, but decides it's best not to comment.

53 INT. PROMENADE

The lights are beginning to flicker on again and people are cautiously venturing out of the shops and restaurants. Timok and Jake exit one of the turbolifts. Timok glances around.

TIMOK

Now what will happen in this accident?

Jake points up to Nog, who is standing on the upper level next to a heavy looking banner.

JAKE

I'm going to go stand under that banner. Nog will watch you. When you're ready, wave to Nog, and he'll untie the banner. When it starts to fall, push me out of the way. It's as simple as that.

TIMOK

And people will notice this?

JAKE

(nodding)

Nog will shout when the banner lets go. It'll work!

With that, Jake crosses over and stands under the banner. Timok shrugs and glances around the Promenade. His eyes suddenly narrow when he sees Borell and Tresk. They are creeping through the shadows, drawing ceremonial looking weapons. Timok immediately rips his knife and sword from their sheath. Jake sees this and his eyes go wide.

JAKE

What are you doing?

TIMOK

(shouting)

Look out!

Timok charges forward, shoving his way past the startled Jake and tackles both Borell and Tresk. The two assassins are surprised by the sudden fight, but manage to put up a defense. Timok fights valiantly, barely keeping the two Kylosians at bay, even steering them to a position under the banner. Finally, he looks up to Nog and waves. Nog frowns, not comprehending, but finally understands. He quickly unties the banner, causing the large banner to fall and club the assassins over the head. Timok smiles to himself and looks over the crowd that gathered to watch the fight. The Luxian turns to Jake.

TIMOK

Will that suffice?

Jake stares at Timok in shock and nods.

54 INT. HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Dax and Troi have almost finished cutting out a massive piece of the bulkhead, and none too soon. The forcefield is steadily becoming worse. There are sporadic bursts of wind as it cuts out.

TROI

We need to hurry!

DAX

Tell me something I don't know!

As Dax says this, the bulkhead falls inward. Troi and Dax struggle to get behind it, pushing it towards the hole. As they do, the forcefield cuts out entirely. Dax and Troi huddle up behind the bulkhead and push harder and harder until finally, they manage to shove the bulkhead up against the hole. The sound of the wind cuts out for a few moments, replaced by a subdued hiss that eventually dies. Troi falls back against the opposite wall and lets out a sigh of relief.

TROI

Now all we have to do is wait for Worf and the rescue team to find us!

Suddenly, part of the blockade is pulled away and several rescue team personnel push their way inside. Bashir is with them. He immediately kneels down next to the survivors. Worf follows soon after. Troi's face brightens and she starts for Worf.

TROI

Worf...

The words die in her throat as Worf immediately goes to Dax and takes her into his arms, holding her tight. Dax returns the embrace, closing her eyes and crying tears of relief. Troi shuffles backwards, nodding. She finally understands.

55 INT. THE MONARCH'S QUARTERS

Jake is bowing in front of Timok, offering him the golden silk. Timok takes it and wraps it around his wrist reverently, his movements orchestrated by the entourage's screeches and howls. Sisko and the Monarch stand in one corner, watching the entire scene.

MONARCH

And these Kylosians assassins? They have been turned over to the proper authorities?

SISKO

(nodding)

The Kylosian government took them into custody two hours ago and have extended their most heartfelt apologies both to you and to Jake.

MONARCH

Your son is very brave.

SISKO

So I've noticed. Now, Monarch, about the trade agreement...

MONARCH

Do not worry about it, Captain. My inspection of your station shows where our weapons can be integrated into your systems with great ease. My diplomats will be in contact with your Federation Council within two months to discuss payment plans and such.

Sisko smiles to himself as Jake steps out of the entourage. The other Luxians begin to dance around Timok and Shara, who stand in the middle of the ecstatic chaos, kissing tenderly. Without thinking, Jake lets out a massive sigh of relief. The Monarch steps forward, a confused look on his face.

MONARCH

Jacob Sisko, Baron Timok informed me of your plans to stage an accident so you could give my daughter to him.

Jake grits his teeth, expecting to be dressed down by the Monarch.

MONARCH

If you did not want to be married to my daughter, why didn't you say something? I would have dissolved your marriage immediately!

Jake stares at the Monarch in shock.

JAKE

But... but when I came to talk to you about that... You said that it was a grave insult! You said that my refusing your gift would jeopardize Luxia and the Federation's relations!

Now the Monarch stares at Jake in surprise.

MONARCH

I thought Shara explained this to you! When a Monarch gives his daughter to a person such as yourself, the recipient of the daughter is allowed to refuse the gift! But I must insist you keep it three times! I thought that you were performing the Refusing Ritual! You would refuse Shara, and I would protest three times.

JAKE

You mean...

Shara and Timok approach the Monarch and Jake, smiling proudly. Shara's smile dies when she sees the look on the Monarch's face.

MONARCH

Shara! Jacob tells me that you never informed him of the Refusing Ritual! Why did you do this?

SHARA

I would have, but...

(she gets a dreamy look in her eyes when she looks at Jake)

...then I saw how handsome Jacob was, and I didn't want to leave him...

JAKE

(to Timok)

Why didn't you tell me I could just refuse?

TIMOK

You didn't ask.

Timok and Shara return to the entourage. The Monarch shrugs and follows them. Jake stares after the Luxians, completely dumbfounded.

JAKE

I didn't *ask*?

Sisko steps forward and puts his arm around Jake, gently leading him towards the door.

SISKO

Now you know why I hate diplomacy.

56 INT. DOCKING RING

Troi and Worf are standing by one of the large doors.

WORF

Are you sure you'll be okay?

TROI

I'll be fine, Worf. Remember when the *Enterprise* collided with the cosmic string fragment? I was fine after that happened. What happened here was a walk in the park.

WORF

I was not talking about that.

Troi smiles wryly at Worf.

TROI

I thought I was supposed to be the Counsellor.

(she sighs)

Yes, I'll be fine. I should have realized that it was probably too late. Like I said, Will has been showing some interest in me again. Maybe I can start into that with my whole heart.

WORF

Perhaps.

Troi turns to leave, but pauses slightly when she hears:

DAX (o.s.)

Wait!

Troi turns as Dax runs up to her. Dax smiles warmly at Troi and takes her hand, squeezing it warmly.

DAX

I just wanted to thank you for your help when we were trapped. And I wanted to apologize for... well...

Dax shrugs, but it is clear she's apologizing for her behavior. Troi smiles understandingly.

TROI

I'm sorry about that as well. Just don't let Worf go.
You have no idea what kind of a man you have.

With that, Troi turns and leaves. Dax places a hand around Worf's waist and holds him close.

DAX

Yes, I do.