

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

11x08 - "Puppy Love."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

and from the post-finale novels  
by Pocket Books

**TEASER**

FADE IN:

**1     EXT. PUBLIC FIELD**

Gently rolling hills, freshly cut grass, distant tall trees waving in the breeze, and a bright sunny sky. The perfect day for a family picnic.

Two Aarruri puppies run across the grass, yipping excitedly as they both chase the same flying frisbee. One LEAPS into the air gracefully and catches it in its mouth. The other instantly launches upon its rival, play-fighting with squeaky little growls as they wrestle for the frisbee.

The second finally wrenches it away from the first, and with a swing of his tiny neck, flings the frisbee back in the direction it came from. They both give chase, tiny paws thumping on the ground as they go.

**PAN AROUND** until we find PIF and his wife SETT sitting together on the ground, watching their children play. They laugh as the puppies play tug-o-war with the frisbee.

SETT

Don't be greedy, Bif! Let Kett  
play too!

One of the puppies looks over to his parents, pauses, and then sulkily spits the frisbee out. The second one runs away happily, frisbee in her mouth. Sett turns back to Pif.

SETT

This was a lovely idea.

PIF

It was nice of Quark to find this  
program for us. Living on this  
station is great, but the kids  
need to run around from time to  
time, burn off some energy.

They turn back to watch the two puppies play-fighting. Then suddenly, a third puppy races in from off-screen, catching

the first two off guard, snatches the frisbee away and runs off gleefully.

SETT  
(laughing)  
Fett! Be nice!  
(shakes head)  
Honestly, that girl. She's going to be a fighter, that one.

PIF  
As long as she's not fighting her brothers.

They go quiet for a while, watching the trees, the tweeting birds, the distant sounds of yipping puppies.

PIF  
So what are you doing tomorrow?  
Any plans?

SETT  
Not really, no. You?

PIF  
Nothing.

SETT  
Yeah. We did nothing yesterday too.

PIF  
(chuckle)  
You call running around after six puppies 'nothing'?

SETT  
You know what I mean. Don't get me wrong, I'm glad we moved here from the *Even Odds*. It's a much better place to raise a family. But...  
(shrug)  
We live here, but we don't really do anything. You know?

PIF

(sad)

Yeah, I know. Every day was an adventure on the *Even*. And it was fun while I was young and single and had nobody to worry about. I earned my keep - I was the best runner in the sector!

SETT

(flirty)

I remember.

PIF

I brought us here for safety and stability, and I love spending so much time with you and the kids. And these people are so nice, they let us live here free of charge. But I don't feel right just taking all their food and their energy. When Jake came to live on the *Even Odds*, he didn't just take up food and energy. He worked, he was one of the team. Now we're living here, I feel like we should do the same. I just don't know how.

SETT

Maybe we could go and talk to the captain. A station this size, there must be plenty of jobs for somebody who's willing to work.

PIF

But I can't run anymore. My leg.

SETT

You have other skills, Pif. Trust me, they'll find something for you.

PIF

What about you?

Sett doesn't answer for a moment. She appears to be thinking, just looking around the field at the view.

PIF

Sett...? What is it?

SETT

No, it's nothing. Don't worry.

PIF

Come on, Sett. I know I'm the motor-mouth in the family, but you can still talk sometimes.

She smiles at his little joke. Her green spines stiffen.

SETT

I just wonder... do we even want to stay here at all?

PIF

You want to go back to the *Even*?

SETT

No. You were right, the children need to be safe. This station may be bigger, safer, but it's still artificial. Look around you. It's nice, but it's not real. Wouldn't it be nicer if it was real?

PIF

So what are you thinking?

SETT

I'm wondering about Bajor. About whether we should live down there instead of up here. They've got real trees and grass and air... the children would have a whole planet to run around.

PIF

How do we decide? We shouldn't make any rash decisions, jump into anything too quick. I've already got one broken leg.

Sett is about to reply when something catches her attention off screen.

SETT

Speaking of... Fett! Get down from that tree! You'll hurt yourself.

PIF

(grin)

Ah, let them play. I'm sure we both climbed trees when we were their age. And we didn't have holodeck safety protocols.

SETT

Yeah, and look at you now. Fett, be careful! You're going to -

Sett GASPS, followed by a loud SPLASH from off screen. The sounds of high-pitched snickering from the other puppies.

Finally, puppy Fett emerges onto screen, slouching along all soaking wet, fur drenched, spines and tail drooping. But she is soon over it, shaking herself dry and chasing after the other puppies again.

Sett sighs with amused exasperation. Pif face-paws. The puppies yip about playfully in the background...

FADE OUT:

**END OF TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

FADE IN:

**2 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING**

The usual establishing shot, tight on Ops.

**3 INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE**

VAUGHN sits behind the captain's desk, with RO standing at his side. Pif is perched in the guest chair, straight and formal, spines stiff with respect.

VAUGHN

So... you want a job?

PIF

Yes please, Captain. I appreciate everything you and your crew have done for me. I just want to give something back.

VAUGHN

I think it's a delightful idea. But... we only have authority to assign Starfleet personnel. Even Bajoran Militia assignments are ultimately at the discretion of General Lenaris, not us.

PIF

(cheerful)

Then I'll join up!

RO

It's not that simple, Pif. Both organisations require years of training, studying, working your way up from the bottom. You can't just put on a uniform and go.

VAUGHN

But there are numerous civilian operations on the station. I'm

sure one of them has something suitable. What are your skills?

PIF

(tail thumping)

I'm a great runner. That was my job on the *Even Odds*, you know. To run. It's the best thing an Aarruri can be! My parents were so proud when I got a running job. I would carry messages, act as a tour guide, create distractions when we were on a mission -

RO

Sounds like fun.

PIF

Anything that involves running, I'm your man!

VAUGHN

Sorry to interrupt, Mister Gaber -

PIF

Please, call me Pif!

VAUGHN

Very well - Pif. But I recall a report from Doctor Bashir that you suffered a leg injury that prevented you from running.

Pif sags - his white lie has been caught out.

PIF

Yes, that's true. It was in the first Jem'Hadar attack. Glessin did the best he could, but it never really healed right.

(faux hopeful)

But I can still run! Just... not quite as fast I used to.

VAUGHN

To be frank, Pif, we don't need a messenger. The station's computer takes care of that, faster than you ever could, I'm afraid.

PIF

Tour guide?

RO

We've never really needed one in the past. Again, the computer always took care of it.

PIF

(mutter)

Yeah... stupid computers.

VAUGHN

I'm sorry. I'd like to help. I'm just not sure what we can offer.

Pif's spines droop with disappointment. Ro gets an idea.

RO

Actually, now that I think about it, there have been exceptions. I remember reading in Odo's reports that he once hired a Klingon to work on the station's Bajoran security force.

VAUGHN

Ah yes... I believe it was the ambassador's brother, wasn't it? Whatever happened to him?

RO

He didn't last long. And after that he fell off the records. But Odo must have been able to arrange that with the generals somehow.

Pif's tail begins thumping again with renewed enthusiasm. Vaughn smiles indulgently.

VAUGHN

Let me talk to some people. I'm  
not making any promises, mind you.  
But I'll see what I can do.

Thump thump thump thump...

**4    INT. DS9 - PIF'S FAMILY QUARTERS**

Standard quarters, but made up completely differently.  
There are no tables, chairs or beds. Instead there are many  
things to climb on and jump off of - steps that go nowhere,  
fur-covered dog-houses the size of a suitcase, huge pillows  
and cushions strewn about.

Five little puppies bound about this space at random, still  
playing and play-fighting. One sits alone on a cushion,  
watching the others. The puppies all look alike of course,  
but with small features to distinguish them - fur patterns,  
different shades, longer spines.

Their mother Sett approaches the quiet puppy, called TIFF.  
She nuzzles him gently, sits beside him.

SETT

Are you okay, Tiff? Why don't you  
play with your brothers and  
sisters?

TIFF

(sulky)

Fett took the toy I wanted.

SETT

Oh, I'm sorry, Tiffles. I'll talk  
to her again. It's nearly time.  
Will you be okay?

TIFF

I guess.

Pif struts into the room from the bedroom area, and takes a  
place proudly in the middle. He sits up straight, and calls  
out loud.

PIF

Puppies! In a line, please!

Tiff sulkily pulls himself up from his cushion and slumps to the middle of the room. Most of the other puppies jump down from their perches or otherwise stop what they were doing and join Tiff in the centre, forming a line.

Except for Fett, who is up at the top of a tower fighting with a plushy toy, ignoring the others.

SETT

Fettra Eoba! You heard your father  
- get down here right now and join  
your brothers and sisters.

Making sure to jump on and off as many other things as she can on her way, Fett finally gets down off the tower and joins the line.

SETT

Thank you, Fett. Now, you all know  
that your mother is leaving for a  
few days. So you've just got your  
father to look after you. Are you  
going to behave yourselves?

The puppies yip and bark their approval.

SETT

I hope so. I don't want to find  
the station a wreck and your  
father in the hospital when I get  
back.

She walks along the line, affectionately nuzzles each puppy's nose in turn.

SETT

You know I love you all. So be  
good, and I'll see you soon.

PIF

Stay where you are for a moment,  
puppies. I'm just going to say  
goodbye to your mother.

(Fett shifts)

Fett - stay.

With a put-upon sigh, Fett does as she's told. Pif and Sett step aside to the door, where a packed holdall is waiting.

PIF

Call when you get there.

SETT

I promise. Jake and Rena promised to show me around, give me an idea of if we might want to live there or not. I might even start looking for schools.

PIF

(grin)

Make them somebody else's problem, you mean.

SETT

You know you love them.

PIF

Of course I do.

They nuzzle romantically, then Sett coils her prehensile tail through the handle of the holdall, and hoists it up.

SETT

Oof - heavier than I thought.

Then with a last smile at the puppies, the door opens and she's gone. Pif turns back to the puppies.

PIF

Alright. Now, just because your mother's gone doesn't mean you can run riot. I have a brand new job helping out on the station's engineering crew. And since I can't leave you alone all day, you'll have to come with me. Which means you'll have to be on your absolute best behaviour.

**CUT TO:**

**5    INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR**

One puppy is on his back on the deck, his front paws gripping tight to an engineering tool while his back paws kick and scratch at it and he gnaws at it with his teeth.

Two more puppies roll past him in a furious ball of fur, play-fighting and barking at each other all the way.

NOG is further down the corridor, working at a piece of machinery. He reaches to the side to pick up a tool...

...and comes back with a puppy in his hand. Realising, he SHRIEKS with shock and drops it. The puppy runs off quite happily. Nog steadies his nerves.

NOG

Pif!

Pif trots to him eagerly, wearing a Bajoran Militia uniform in green-grey, shaped for a dog's body. He's holding a tool in his mouth and another with his tail. He spits the tool out to the deck and grins for Nog.

NOG

(tense smile)

Could you keep your puppies out of the tools, please?

PIF

(cheerful)

Sorry, Nog. You know how kids are. They're into everything!

NOG

Well, can they not be?

(pulls a hair  
from his teeth)

Aside from getting fur on everything, some of these machines are dangerous. Like this.

He picks up a passing puppy, plucks the device from its mouth. He switches it on - it's a laser scalpel thingy.

NOG  
Could have taken his head off.

PIF  
Her. But you're right. I'll keep  
them out of the way.  
(calls out)  
Puppies! In a line, please!

Pif trots off, and the puppies follow him to make a line.

Nog wretches with disgust at the slobber on the laser  
scalpel. He drops it, wipes his hand on his uniform... and  
the hand comes back with green fur stuck all over it.

NOG  
(angry mutter)  
Blessed Exchequer...

LEISHMAN (o.s.)  
Relax, Lieutenant.

He looks to the side, where his deputy LEISHMAN is ignoring  
her work to gleefully scratch the belly of another puppy.

LEISHMAN  
I really don't understand how you  
can't think they're the most  
adorable things ever.

NOG  
What if you had to work with...  
what are they called, all small  
and spindly with eight legs...

LEISHMAN  
(shudder)  
God, don't even joke about that.

NOG  
Well, that's how all Ferengi feel  
about these things. I can't help  
it. Just like you apparently can't  
help forgetting that plasma pump.

With a disappointed pout, Leishman lets the puppy go and join its family while she turns back to her work.

LEISHMAN

With all due respect, sir, you're a heartless monster from hell.

NOG

I'll remember that when it's time for your next crew evaluation.

Puppy Fett pounds past them both down the corridor, another tool in her teeth... Pif chases after her...

PIF

Fett! You bring that back this instant!

As Leishman smirks and Nog mutters...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

**6**    INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

The breakfast crowd - officers and civilians with coffees, pancakes, bowls of oatmeal. People looking tired, dragging themselves to wakefulness.

Pass over to a table where PRYNN and CANDLEWOOD are sat, or rather slumped. Candlewood is in fact face down, head on the table, groaning in semi-consciousness.

PRYNN

You really haven't got this  
'dignity of a senior officer'  
thing down yet, have you?

CANDLEWOOD

If I haven't managed waking up in  
the morning after twenty-six  
years, dignity has little chance.

QUARK arrives, looking down at Candlewood unimpressed.

QUARK

Shall I clear these plates, or do  
you need to drool onto them some  
more?

CANDLEWOOD

It's a dignified drooling.

Prynn starts batting Candlewood gently about the head.

PRYNN

Will you wake up!

CANDLEWOOD

Abuse! Violence in the workplace!

QUARK

You know, if you have this much  
trouble in the mornings, I have

several holosuite programs that  
know just how to perk a man up.

PRYNN

Always the philanthropist, Quark.  
But somehow I don't think your  
particular brand of entertainment  
will be quite to John's taste.

QUARK

Why not? I have programs for every  
taste. Everyone is welcome at  
Quark's!

A LAUGH comes through the crowd, a warm and rich male  
voice, and John's head immediately snaps up. It's HETIK,  
just arriving for his morning shift, laughing with TREIR as  
they enter together. Prynn notices the change, and smirks.

PRYNN

Well, I think we've found one  
thing that perks John up.

John blushes furiously, and slumps back onto the table, his  
head bonking on the surface.

CANDLEWOOD

Ow.

Quark picks up the empty plates and heads away. He steps  
behind the bar, places the empties into the reclamator.  
When he turns around, puppy TIFF is sitting on the bar.

TIFF

Hi!

QUARK

Aah!

Quark jumps and drops the tray; it clatters noisily to the  
floor. He pauses to catch a breath, then flags down Hetik.

QUARK

Hetik! Take this... delightful  
creature... off the counter.

HETIK

Come on, you. You know you're not supposed to be up there.

Hetik picks up the puppy and carries him away.

At another table Nog sits, tense and uncomfortable. Pif perches opposite still in uniform, with the puppies up and down and all around.

NOG

I'm sorry, Pif. But I just don't think engineering is going to work out for you. For your own sake as well as mine.

PIF

I understand. These paws aren't really good for manipulating delicate tools, are they?

NOG

But I've spoken to Major Cenn. He's willing to give you a go on security.

PIF

Thanks, Nog. I know yesterday wasn't easy for you. Thanks for being nice about it.

Hetik arrives, Tiff cradled in his arms.

HETIK

Pif - I have something of yours.

NOG

You know what? I just had an idea. Could you do something for us, Hetik?

HETIK

Name it.

NOG

Could you look after the puppies for the day? Pif's wife is down on Bajor and he can't really take them on security patrol...

HETIK

I'd love to. And I'm sure Quark won't mind at all - he loves the little fellas!

Nog chuckles at the joke. Hetik moves away, still cradling the puppy. Nog shudders at the furry things all around him.

NOG

I'm curious, Pif. Didn't you live and work with two Ferengi on the *Even Odds* for years?

PIF

(nods)

Feg and Triv. Didn't see much of them, really. They kept to themselves. Whenever I managed to corner one of them, they always had to rush off to do something. I guess they were too busy counting their money.

NOG

Yeah, I'm sure that's what it was. I'll see you later, Pif.

Nog gets up from the chair and walks stiffly over towards Pryn and Candlewood's table. Once he gets there, he lets loose with a shuddering groan of revulsion that he's been holding in for ages.

NOG

Nnnnnngggggaaaaaaaahhhhh!

CANDLEWOOD

(smile)

Something wrong?

NOG

Shut up. Let's just go before I  
tear all my skin off and go for a  
trilithium shower.

They all get up and get ready to leave. But before they go,  
Candlewood looks back across the room towards Hetik.

The hunky Bajoran dabo boy is still cradling the puppy in  
his big muscular arms. Candlewood's eyes scan the tableau  
over. Arms. Face. Puppy. Face. Arms. Puppy. Arms.

CANDLEWOOD

Kill me now.

He throws up his hands in surrender and turns away.

7 **INT. DS9 - CARGO BAY**

A freighter is docked, with its holds open into the cargo  
bay. Major CENN is in charge, with crewman SEVAK (Vulcan  
male) present and a couple of other security officers.

Boslic captain RIONOJ, she of the flowing purple hair and  
aquiline features, stands imperiously with hands on hips.

RIONOJ

Major, I'm offended. I've been  
doing business on this station for  
more than a decade, since before  
the Cardassians left.

CENN

All the more reason to make sure  
we're not becoming complacent,  
then. Isn't that logical, Sevak?

SEVAK

It is indeed, Major.

From among the crates and boxes strewn around the bay, Pif  
emerges, in his fitted Bajoran uniform, sniffing every box.  
He stretches high on his back legs to sniff something.  
Previously distracted, Rionoj finally sees him and recoils.

RIONOJ

What the hell is that?

CENN

That, Captain, is my new deputy.

RIONOJ

You must really be in trouble.

CENN

Why do you say that?

RIONOJ

Hiring sniffer dogs? If I knew your security measures were that weak, I'd have tried getting around them long before now.

CENN

So you admit you're trying to get around our security now?

RIONOJ

I never said that.

SEVAK

In fact, as a caninoid species, Aarruri olfactory senses are much more sensitive than those of humanoids. And the instincts of a living creature can always consider possibilities purely technological sensors cannot.

PIF

That's right!

RIONOJ

Aah! It talks?!

PIF

(cheerful)

Of course I talk! Aarruri are great at talking.

Rionoj breaks out in huge peals of laughter.

SEVAK

I fail to see amusement in our current circumstances.

RIONOJ

Then you're not paying attention. Look at this thing! You really expect me to take it seriously?

CENN

I assure you, Captain, you should be taking this very seriously.

RIONOJ

This thing as a security officer? What's he going to do, lick me to death? All I need is a cookie in my pocket and I can smuggle in whatever I want!

Pif growls, his hackles raising. The normally good-natured alien is getting annoyed now.

RIONOJ

(mocking)

Does puppy want a cookie? Want a tickle behind the ears?

Pif has had enough. Baring his teeth and puffing himself up, he launches and runs straight at Rionoj, opens his jaws wide, and GRABS her hard round the leg.

She SCREAMS as he bites deep into the flesh, thrashing the leg side to side as she tries to fight him off.

CENN

Pif! Stop!

Pif has dragged Rionoj down to the floor now. He's still growling, she's still screaming. Cenn tries to pull the furious dog away, but his jaws are clamped tight.

Finally, Sevak calmly reaches over and gives Pif a Vulcan nerve pinch. The dog slumps unconscious to the deck, letting go of Rionoj's leg.

She pants, hissing her breath through her teeth. She backs away to a bulkhead, holding her torn and bleeding leg.

RIONOJ

Oh, Major. You just wait till my lawyer gets here.

Cenn looks on worried...

**8 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

Quark stands by a table, collecting empty glasses. Treir stands opposite, patient and long-suffering.

QUARK

I tell you, they're a menace.

TREIR

You're over-reacting.

QUARK

Am I? Broik's already dropped two glasses today. That's profit out of my pocket.

TREIR

And you're blaming that on the puppies?

QUARK

They're a distraction. People tripping over them, employees tickling their bellies instead of earning me money. Shedding all over the place like... like animals!

TREIR

The customers love them.

QUARK

I don't care. Do you know one of them follows me around all the time? I can't escape!

TREIR

Aww, which one?

QUARK

How should I know? They're all as disgusting as each other.

TREIR

Oh, Quark. What am I going to do with you?

Sneering, Quark turns away and leaves. With a sigh, Treir turns and walks away the other direction.

But we slowly PAN down to underneath the table they were talking over...

...and the puppy TIFF is sitting on the deck under the table. He heard everything Quark just said. His spines are drooping, his ears flat with sadness, tears in his eyes.

Sniffing, he runs out from under the table, dashes across the bar and out onto the Promenade.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

**9     INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR**

Commander Ro strolls along the corridor, nodding polite hellos to passers-by. She turns a corner into an empty section of corridor... and stops dead.

Because curled up in a doorway, pressed tight into the alcove and shivering in fear, is the puppy Tiff. The poor thing is scared and alone and sniffing in tears.

Ro's face drops, and she crouches gently down towards the puppy. Not too close, don't want to scare him even more.

RO

Tiff? What are you doing here?

The puppy looks up tearfully, recognising Ro with relief.

RO

Are you okay? What happened?

TIFF

I ran away. And then I got lost.

RO

Where's your father?

TIFF

Don't know. Don't know anybody...

RO

Why did you run away?

TIFF

Uncle Quark said mean things.

Ro has to cover her reaction for the puppy's sake. But she knows exactly what must have happened, and she is pissed.

RO

Well... I'm sure he didn't mean  
it. Come with me, and we'll find  
your father together.

Sniffing, Tiff crawls forward and allows Ro to pick him  
up. He clings to her chest, tucking his face into the crook  
of her neck. She cuddles him close, comforting him.

She stands and carries on, her face like thunder.

RO  
We'll find your father...  
(grits teeth)  
...and Quark.

**10 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

The door opens, and Ro walks in with Tiff still clutched to  
her breast. When the tiny puppy sees his father sat in the  
guest chair, he yips with happiness.

RO  
Pif, I found something of yours.

PIF  
Tiffo? What's going on?

Tiff jumps down from Ro and cuddles up to his father.  
Meanwhile, Major Cenn is sat in the security chief chair.

RO  
He got lost. And scared. But he'll  
be fine.

PIF  
(gently)  
What's going on with you today?  
Why do people keep having to find  
you and bring you back? That's not  
like you, Tiffo.

TIFF  
I'm sorry, daddy.

RO

It wasn't his fault. He overheard somebody say something, and he got upset.

PIF

Who?

RO

Don't worry about that. I'll take care of it.

(to Cenn)

So what's going on here?

TIFF

Are you in trouble, daddy?

CENN

No, little guy, your daddy's not in trouble. We just came to the "mutual agreement" that security isn't the best fit for him.

RO

Why, what happened?

CENN

I'll tell you later.

RO

I look forward to it. Come on, you two. Let's go.

Pif jumps down off the seat, Tiff follows him. They and Ro all turn and exit the security office out to the Promenade.

**11 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR**

They enter the bar, quieter now. Pif is still downcast after his mistake in the cargo bay, but he fakes a big smile and calls out loud.

PIF

Puppies, in a line please!

Tiff is already there, but the others appear from all over the bar and rush over to their father.

Standing and watching this, Ro forces a happy smile on her face. She tenses when Quark wanders over, watching Pif and the line of puppies leave the bar in single file.

QUARK

I don't know what you said to them, but thanks for getting them out of here.

Ro holds her tongue until the Aarruri are all gone. Then she grabs Quark's ear, TWISTS it in a fury, and drags him by it over to a dark corner, him SQUEALing all the way.

RO

What the hell is wrong with you?

QUARK

What did I do?

RO

You actually called the puppies disgusting?!

QUARK

Well, they are.

RO

Tiff heard you! He was hiding under the table. And then he ran away. He could have gotten hurt because you couldn't keep your damned mouth shut.

QUARK

(sulky)

I didn't know he was there.

RO

Does that matter?! You couldn't stop yourself, could you? You just couldn't help being... you.

QUARK

I am me. That's a surprise to you?

RO

I guess it shouldn't be. But stupid me, somehow I always fool myself into thinking this time, you won't disappoint me.

QUARK

Hey, don't blame me if you don't know exactly who I am by now.

RO

I can live with you having a problem with furry things. I don't like *pulakoos*, I get it. I can handle you swindling every person who walks through that door, or checking out Treir's behind when you think I'm not looking. But calling somebody else's babies "disgusting"... Babies, Quark! Is that something I'm supposed to be okay with?

That finally seems to get through. Quark pauses.

QUARK

Fine. I'm sorry. Are you happy?

RO

Let me show you how happy I am, Quark.

She reaches threateningly for his ear again. He squeals.

QUARK

Alright, alright! What do you want me to do?

RO

Well, let me think about that for a moment. I know! Vaughn assigned Pif to work the night shift in the Infirmary tomorrow.

QUARK

So?

RO

So, I already said I'd babysit the puppies for him. I think you should join me. And you will apologise to them.

Her tone makes it clear this is not an option. Quark is simply horrified, voice shaking at the mere thought.

QUARK

What if I don't want to?

RO

Then I will never forgive you.

With that, Ro turns on her heel and stalks away, leaving Quark to think about what she's said.

**12 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

The usual establishing shot, just enough to indicate some time passing.

**13 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

The lights are dimmer than usual, indicating night shift.

PIF

And I know I should have held my temper; frankly I didn't even know I had a temper. I just hate when people dismiss me like that.

BASHIR is moving around the Infirmary, carrying equipment here and there, checking this screen or that screen. Pif follows him everywhere he goes, motor-mouthing all the way.

PIF

Did you know I used to not even like to wag my tail in public? People always called me cute when I did, and I hated that. I'm an adult, I'm not cute. So I'd sit on it, make sure it couldn't wag. But then I thought, why should I let

other people change who I am? If they don't take me seriously, that's their problem, not mine.

BASHIR  
I agree entirely.

Bashir continues to move around - Pif continues to follow.

PIF  
I think having a family had a lot to do with it. How could I expect the puppies to grow up into strong, proud Aarruri if I couldn't teach by example?

BASHIR  
That's very true.

PIF  
And they are growing up. Fett's a real troublemaker, though. Fighting, disobeying the rules, stealing toys from her siblings. Don't know where she gets it.

BASHIR  
Lots of kids go through a phase like that, I wouldn't worry.

PIF  
I guess. I do worry about Tiff though. He's so quiet and shy. Doesn't really engage with his siblings. The one thing he seemed to be interested in was the bar, following Quark wherever he went.

BASHIR  
I'm sure that went down well.

PIF  
It's quite sweet, actually. I was glad to see he had an interest. Maybe he wants to go into sales or hospitality. I'd like him to be a

runner, of course. I'd like them all to be runners. It's the best thing an Aarruri can be! But as long as he's happy...

Leaving on Bashir's please-get-me-out-of-here expression...

**14**    **INT. DS9 - PIF'S FAMILY QUARTERS**

Quark stands in the doorway, looking about as reluctant as a person can. He pokes his head across the threshold, grimacing at the fur-covered doghouses and the fur-covered dogs clambering all over them.

Ro is out of uniform, standing and holding a puppy.

RO

Quark! I'm glad you came. Come on in.

QUARK

Into the *pulakoo's* nest.

Quark steps into the room like he's stepping into hell, skin crawling, face frozen in horror. Ro smiles soothingly.

RO

It's okay. They're not going to hurt you.

QUARK

We don't know that.

RO

Come on. It's the best way to get you used to them.

QUARK

Why should I get used to them?

RO

Because you have no other choice. They're not going anywhere, Quark. And familiarity breeds acceptance.

(beat)

Now, before we settle in, is there anything you want to say?

Quark grimaces, knowing what Ro is referring to. It's the last thing he wants to do. He takes a deep breath.

QUARK

Okay. Puppies... I apologise for anything I may have said -

RO

May have?

QUARK

Fine. I apologise for what I said the other day. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

That was completely insincere, and everyone knows it. But Ro knows this is only the start of the evening.

RO

I guess that'll do. For now.  
(holds out puppy)  
Do you want to hold one?

QUARK

(flinch)  
Let's build up to that, shall we?

Ro turns and carries the puppy she's holding back towards his brothers and sisters. Ending on Quark's expression...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT THREE**

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

**15    INT. DS9 - PIF'S FAMILY QUARTERS**

Ro sits cross-legged on the floor, rough-housing with the puppies. They yip and play-growl happily, playing tug-of-war with a toy, swiping at her hair, climbing all over her.

Quark sits across the room, balled uncomfortably into a giant bean-bag chair. He's watching Ro with revulsion.

QUARK

This is ridiculous. They don't even have any real chairs.

RO

Of course they don't. Why would they?

QUARK

For guests.

RO

They've only been here a couple of months. They probably haven't had any guests yet.

QUARK

(shifting)

Well, it's very inconsiderate.

RO

Oh, will you stop complaining! Why can't you be more like these little guys? Look at the fun they're having.

QUARK

Not that one.

He gestures across the room, where Tiff sits alone, staring sad and droopy at Quark from his solitary cushion.

QUARK

Why is it staring at me?

RO  
He's waiting for you to apologise.

QUARK  
I already apologised.

RO  
Oh, so sincerely. That's Tiff.  
(off Quark's  
blank look)  
The one who always follows you  
around the bar. The one who  
overheard you being mean. You hurt  
his feelings, Quark. You didn't  
even recognise him?

QUARK  
I didn't even know it was always  
the same one. They look the same.

Ro sighs, shakes her head. She grabs one puppy...

RO  
Then let me introduce you to the  
family. There are three boys and  
three girls. This is Bifto...  
(re another)  
...this is Nifro...  
(points)  
...and that's Tiffo. Those are the  
boys. Now this feisty little lady  
is Fettra...  
(another)  
...this is Kettsa...  
(last one)  
...and this is Wettla.

She points around them all in turn...

RO  
Bif, Nif, Tiff... Fett, Kett,  
Wett. The Eoba family.

QUARK

"Eoba" ? I thought their father's name was Gaber.

RO

It is. But Aarruri names work differently from ours. Ga is a region on their homeworld, and "ber" means "one of seven." So "Gaber" means that Pif is one of a litter of seven, from Ga.

QUARK

That's stupid. There must be more than one litter of seven from Ga, or whatever.

RO

So there's a lot of Gabers out there. So what? I'm sure I'm not the only Ro on Bajor. Are you the only Quark on Ferenginar?

QUARK

The only one that matters. So what does Eoba mean, then?

RO

Well, they kinda made that up. Pif and Sett are both from Ga, but their puppies were born on the *Even Odds*. So they took the initials of the closest thing they had to a home, and added "ba" for one of six. "Eoba."

QUARK

How do you know this stuff?

RO

Through the miracle of talking. Maybe if you did the same, you wouldn't be so scared of them.

Ro finally stands, gently picks up Tiff from his cushion, cradles him close and walks over to Quark. She snuggles into the bean-bag next to Quark, still carrying the puppy.

RO  
Quark, say hello to Tiff.

QUARK  
Do I have to?

RO  
(warning)  
Quark...

QUARK  
Okay, okay. Hello, Tiff.

RO  
Hold your hand out.

Hesitantly, Quark does. Tiff pokes his head forward, sniffs the hand tentatively, then gently licks it.

QUARK  
Why did it do that?

RO  
He likes you. It's affectionate.  
They're just children, Quark. Have  
you never thought of having  
children yourself, someday?

QUARK  
You think I'm father material?

RO  
Maybe not right now. But if you  
found the right woman...

QUARK  
I tried raising a child already. I  
taught Nog everything I know. And  
look how that turned out.

RO  
I think Nog turned out wonderful.  
You taught him resourcefulness.  
Determination. Independence. You

have more to give than you think  
you do.

QUARK  
Why... do you want children?

RO  
(chuckle)  
I've never found the right man.

QUARK  
And if you did?

Ro smiles at him. They both read the subtext clear as day.

RO  
Let's build up to that, shall we?

**16 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Bashir is working alone, when Pif reappears out of a side doorway. He seems happy enough.

PIF  
Hey, Doc. Ensign Parabas says  
she's feeling a lot better and  
doesn't need my help anymore.

BASHIR  
(smirk)  
That's great. I was wondering,  
Pif... do you actually have any  
medical training? At all?

PIF  
No, not really. Dez used to call  
me in to cheer people up all the  
time though.  
(proudly)  
People always got out of the *Even  
Odds'* sickbay super-fast when I  
was around!

BASHIR

I'm sure they did. I was just wondering why Captain Vaughn assigned you to the Infirmary.

PIF

I guess he's just trying out the options. Engineering and security didn't really work out.

BASHIR

Why not?

PIF

Well, I already told you about the freighter captain. And the puppies were distracting Nog.

BASHIR

You wouldn't always have the puppies with you.

PIF

No. But I don't know any more about engineering than I do about doctoring. And Nog... he's trying his best, and I'm grateful, but...

BASHIR

I understand. But if you'll allow me to offer you some advice, Pif, it sounds to me like you're still trying to force yourself to be something you're not. All these jobs you're trying out, they're not you. You can't just take a job to keep yourself busy. You should find something that plays to your strengths.

(smile)

What would Pif do?

As Pif ponders that question...

It's somewhat later in the evening now. The puppies have tired themselves out and taken themselves off to bed, all cuddled into adorable piles of fur in their doghouses.

Ro and Quark remain on the bean-bag, close together, Tiff fast asleep on Ro's chest, her gently stroking his fur.

QUARK

You're so gentle with them.

RO

Why shouldn't I be? They're just babies, Quark. They don't deserve scorn for being what they are.

QUARK

I know. And I am trying, honest. I'm here, aren't I?

RO

You are. And I'm grateful. We all have cultural issues. But that's part of the fun of living in a place like this. Meeting people and things you don't expect.

QUARK

I can't help my instincts.

RO

You can override them with logic.

QUARK

Since when are you a Vulcan?

RO

Well, it's true. It's not Vulcan logical to hate somebody on such superficial reasons. It's not human compassionate, it's not Klingon honourable... and it's not Ferengi profitable either.

QUARK

But...

(shudder)

The shedding. The slobber.

RO

Oh, please. You know and I know that you've had customers doing way more disgusting things than that in your bar.

QUARK

Yeah, like drooling on the table.

RO

Who would...? No, don't tell me. Look, my point is, you're fine with those. And you'll be fine with these too if you just let yourself get used to them.

(beat)

Stroke him with me.

QUARK

Oh, I don't know...

RO

Go on, he won't bite.

Quark still hesitates, so Ro gently reaches out, grasps his hand, and carefully brings it to Tiff's sleeping head. Unsure of himself, Quark begins the stroke the puppy.

QUARK

It's soft.

RO

What did you expect?

QUARK

I expected... soft.

The puppy shifts under Quark's hand, and Quark pauses, worried he's done something wrong. But Tiff just resettles and sniffs at Quark's hand. Then he gently licks it a couple of times, and settles back to sleep.

RO

See? He likes you. In fact, for some inexplicable reason, he's fascinated with you.

QUARK

My innate charm, obviously. It crosses species boundaries.

RO

(smile)

It certainly does.

Tiff wriggles again against Ro's chest. Slowly, so as not to wake him too much, she manoeuvres herself out of the bean-bag and stands up, carrying Tiff over to his siblings.

She places him into one of the doghouses, where he snuggles up with the other puppies and falls right back to sleep. She grabs a furry blanket and carefully lays it over them.

That done, she goes back over to Quark. She grabs his hands and pulls him upright. They stand close, face to face. He gazes up at her, nervous. This is getting intimate.

QUARK

Thank you.

RO

For what?

QUARK

For not hating me... for being what I am.

She reaches out and strokes his earlobe. He reaches out and strokes her hair away, letting her earring show. She leans in, and coyly licks his lips. She likes him.

RO

You know, there's a much bigger bean-bag in the other room.

Quark smiles, hardly able to believe it. But he isn't about to say no. Ro grasps his hand, and they exit together...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

**18 INT. DS9 - PIF'S FAMILY QUARTERS - BEDROOM**

We pan slowly up another large furry blanket, the shape of bodies underneath. Tiff is curled into a dip in the shapes, fast asleep. Continuing up the blanket...

...Until we reach Quark's face. He's naked under the covers and mostly asleep too. He snorts his way to consciousness, and notices Tiff with a grimace.

QUARK

How did that get there?

Ro is next to him, also naked, half-asleep. She mutters...

RO

He snuck in about half an hour ago. Must have figured out how to work the doors.

QUARK

What time is it?

RO

Computer, time.

COMPUTER

The time is zero-three-forty-eight hours.

RO

Ooh, that's not good.

Ro drags herself up, suddenly worried, looking for her clothes. The bean-bag rolls as she works her way out of it.

QUARK

Why not?

RO

Pif finishes his shift at four.  
Get up! It needs to be all back  
how it was before he gets home.

With a sigh, Quark manoeuvres himself out from under the blanket. Tiff is still asleep. The two of them start to get dressed and straighten up the room. But Ro seems ponderous.

RO

We shouldn't have done this.

QUARK

Yep, there it is. "It was a  
mistake, I just want to be  
friends."

Ro turns to him, half-dressed, genuinely surprised.

RO

No. That's not what I mean. I  
mean, I do want to be friends,  
but... I don't regret what we just  
did. I'm just saying we shouldn't  
have done it in Pif's quarters.

QUARK

Oh. Okay. I think.

Ro relaxes, and they start getting dressed again as they talk and straighten up the room. They keep their voices and the lights low so as not to wake Tiff.

RO

But I don't think either of us are  
looking for a long-term  
relationship, are we?

QUARK

(chuckle)

Hey, you started it.

RO

And I'm glad I did. I just don't  
think I want to take it any  
further than that. Not yet,

anyway. Maybe someday, but not now.

QUARK

I can wait.

RO

No - that's what I'm saying. Don't wait. I'm not saying it'll never happen. Just... don't sit around waiting for it to happen, because it might not. Does that make sense?

QUARK

As much as anything about this ever makes sense, I guess.

RO

I like where we are now. I come to you with problems, you come to me with problems, and we help each other. We don't make any demands on each other. I like that. I don't want it to change.

(shy)

It's just that... we could also add in this other element. From time to time. If you like.

QUARK

Can you do that?

RO

It's all I've ever done. Actually no... it's more than I've ever done before. I've never really been much for relationships. Too emotionally damaged, I guess.

QUARK

Yeah, you're an absolute monster.

RO

But then I've never had this kind of nice, expectation-free

friendship that we have either.  
And I do value that, Quark.

QUARK

And you're not afraid we'll ruin  
it with sex?

RO

If you can't have sex with your  
best friend from time to time, who  
can you have sex with?

The room is straight and they're both dressed. And just in  
time, because they hear the door opening and Pif entering.

PIF (o.s.)

Hello? Commander?

RO

Hi, Pif. We're in here.

Pif trots into the bedroom, where they all stand and look  
at baby Tiff, fast asleep in the bean-bag bed. Pif looks at  
his son with total love.

PIF

I thought he might do that. He  
does it every night. I hope they  
weren't any trouble?

Ro looks to Quark, challenging him to answer.

QUARK

They were little angels.

RO

How was your shift with Bashir?

PIF

Quite educational. I think I  
learned some things about myself.  
But I'd really like to get some  
sleep now. Sett's home from Bajor  
tomorrow, and she generally  
prefers me conscious.

RO

Absolutely. We'll get out of your way. Night night, Pif. And Tiff.

Ro takes Quark by the hand and leads him out of the room. Pif jumps up onto the bean-bag bed, paws off the light, and curls up next to Tiff. Ready for sleep.

**19    EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Again, just enough to indicate some time passing.

**20    INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

The Security Office doors open and Ro emerges, carrying a padd. Then she starts at the sight of a surprisingly busy Promenade. While she's standing there, she glances up to the upstairs walkway.

She sees Quark and Rionoj. The freighter captain is slinked sexily around the barkeep, wheedling some deal out of him. She strokes his lobe as he shudders in delight. Ro sees this, and shakes her head in amusement. He never changes.

Ro climbs the steps to the upper level. When she emerges, Quark notices her, and instantly separates from Rionoj.

RO

Captain. How's the leg?

RIONOJ

Better, thank you, Commander.

(one last  
lobe stroke)

Till next time, Quark...

And Rionoj heads back into the bar.

RO

Don't look so panicked, Quark. I'm not going to hit you.

QUARK

(wary)

Are you sure?

RO  
Absolutely. You don't owe me  
anything. You can sleep with  
whoever you want.  
(second thoughts)  
Just not against their will.

QUARK  
Laren, I would never...!

RO  
Just messing with you, Quark. As  
you were.

Ro heads on her way, smiling to herself.

RO  
This is gonna be fun.

Still not sure what's going on, Quark gives up and heads  
into his bar.

**21    INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR (CONTINUOUS)**

As he enters, he thrills at the sound of a packed crowd. He  
goes to the balcony, gazes proudly down to the lower level.  
He sees Treir working the bar, Hetik at the dabo tables,  
his Ferengi servers buzzing busily about the customers.

Then he sees something that makes his blood freeze. Pif is  
stood at the door of the bar, welcoming new customers  
through the door. Quark glares in horror. Then he looks  
around the room again, and this time notices...

Puppies. Puppies everywhere. Customers cuddling puppies.  
Puppies sat on laps. Puppies eating from plates. Even  
someone letting a puppy spin the dabo wheel for him.

Quark immediately heads for the nearest staircase and  
stomps angrily down it.

He reaches the bottom, steps behind the bar, GRABS Treir by  
the arm. She firmly throws him off, keeping her big smile.

TREIR  
Hands off, Quark.

QUARK

Do you mind telling me what the  
*frinx* he is doing here?

TREIR

I hired him.

QUARK

You... did... what...?

TREIR

Doesn't the official Ferengi  
embassy deserve a professional  
maitre d'? Pif will greet the  
customers at the door with a  
friendly smile, show them to their  
tables, answer all their  
questions. He's perfect. And for a  
very reasonable wage.

QUARK

It is not your place -

TREIR

I hired Hetik, didn't I? And your  
dabo tables have never had more  
women gamblers. Which is funny, of  
course, because -

QUARK

Yeah, it's hilarious. But you  
can't just -

TREIR

Look at this place. Busiest it's  
been in months. They love him and  
the puppies. They buy snacks for  
them, bowls of water... This is a  
latinum-mine for you, Quark.  
Besides, think how happy it will  
make Commander Ro.

Quark looks guiltily at her - does she know? Treir smirks  
and leans in close, whispering.

TREIR

I'm an Orion. There's not a thing  
about pheromones I don't know.

Quark looks around the bar again. It is busy, no matter how  
much he hates it. He harrumphs.

QUARK

You know, I'm starting to think  
it's not furry things I hate after  
all. It's green things.

Treir smiles, taking that as a victory. Hiding his anxiety  
again, Quark heads over to Pif at the door. Treir slinks up  
behind, enjoying this...

QUARK

Look, Pif -

PIF

Quark! Thank you so much for this!  
Doctor Bashir said I should find  
something that fits my skills, and  
this couldn't be better! It was so  
good of you to offer.

TREIR

I told him it was your idea.

QUARK

(grits teeth)

You're welcome, Pif. Just... try  
to keep the little ones out from  
under foot. I don't want them to  
get... hurt.

PIF

Don't worry about a thing.  
(sniffs the air)  
Wow. Ferengi must smell stronger  
than I thought. I could smell you  
and Commander Ro all over my  
quarters this morning. Guess you  
must have had a good time playing  
with the puppies all night!

TREIR

Yeah. The puppies.

Quark sends Treir a "shut up" glare, but Pif has already gone back to his job. Quark turns back to his bar...

TIFF

Hi!

...and JUMPS at the sight of Tiff back up on the bar again. Treir chuckles, leaving Quark to recover his wits.

Out on the Promenade, streams of new arrivals emerge from the airlocks, including Pif's wife Sett. She spots Pif, and heads over with a big toothy grin. They nuzzle a greeting.

PIF

Hi! How was your trip?

SETT

Ah, it was alright. Bajor's a beautiful planet, and Jake and Rena were very welcoming, but... I don't know. Too many people trying to pet me on the head.

PIF

I know! Isn't it great?! And I have a job! Quark's been so nice, everybody's nice, and the puppies are having a great time...

SETT

I guess we're staying here, then?

PIF

If that's okay with you.

SETT

I think it's gonna be just fine.

They nuzzle noses happily again. We drift away, into a nice panning shot of the busy bar to close out, except...

Last cut to Candlewood, at one of the tables.

CANDLEWOOD

Really? This whole time and nobody  
made an "in the doghouse" joke?  
You people disappoint me.

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW