

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

11x05 - "The New Normal."

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     INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

ELIAS VAUGHN lies in his uniform on a bio-bed, watching curiously as a scanning device runs slowly down the entire length of his body and back up again.

JULIAN BASHIR also scans him thoroughly with a medical tricorder while Vaughn patiently waits. He's in no rush.

PRYNN TENMEI stands to the side, a whirl of feelings. Ecstatic that her father's home, impatient for the results of the scans, worried what the scans might show up.

Finally, Bashir has finished his scans. He puts away his machines as Vaughn sits upright.

BASHIR

Well, I've tried every scan known to Federation science, and I can't find a single thing wrong with you.

PRYNN

You're sure?

BASHIR

Absolutely. In fact, I find myself reduced to the most basic tool in a doctor's diagnostic bag.

(to Vaughn)

How do you feel, Commander?

VAUGHN

I feel fantastic. Renewed. Like I could run a marathon.

BASHIR

I'm not surprised.

(re scanners)

According to these, you are in the best shape you've been in for twenty years. Your bone density is up eighteen percent, to the extent

that I'd recommend taking you off the Ostinex altogether. Your eyesight is almost as good as mine. Even that scar at the base of your skull is gone.

(smile)

You're a new man, Commander.

VAUGHN

(cheerful)

I guess I have the Prophets to thank for that.

BASHIR

Well, that's up to you. But I can't find a single negative side effect of your experience.

VAUGHN

Thank you, Doctor. That's good to hear.

Bashir takes his leave. Prynn watches him go. The moment he's out of earshot, she launches on her father, hugging him fiercely. He holds her too, grateful to have her.

PRYNN

I'm so glad you're okay... I was terrified of what might have happened to you in there...

VAUGHN

I'm perfectly fine, Prynn. Better than fine.

Prynn bursts into tears, sobbing into Vaughn's shoulder.

VAUGHN

Hey hey hey... what's all that about? I said I'm fine.

PRYNN

I know, but... Dad, I'm sorry.

VAUGHN

For what?

PRYNN

For not getting you out. Or for trying to get you out when you told me not to. Or for not being there when you first got out...

Vaughn pulls back, looks at Prynn's tear-streaked face. He smiles, almost amused.

VAUGHN

Will you stop being so silly? I couldn't be happier about the way things turned out, except for the pain it caused you. I should apologise to you. But you did nothing wrong. Nothing at all.

Prynn smiles at him through the tears, relieved.

PRYNN

You sure you're okay?

VAUGHN

I've been given a new lease on life, Prynn. And I intend to make the most of it.

Off Vaughn's beaming, happy face...

FADE OUT:

**END OF TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

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

Establishing. As well as the *Defiant*, a small Sabre-class ship, the USS *Musgrave*, is docked at a lower pylon.

### **3**    INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE

A normal day. Vaughn rises into Ops on the turbolift, a calm and relaxed smile on his face.

As Vaughn takes his bearings and strolls towards the captain's office, BOWERS nods a greeting from tactical.

BOWERS

Welcome back, Commander.

VAUGHN

Thank you, Lieutenant. Good to be back.

Vaughn carries on, and the door to the office opens...

### **4**    INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

RO LAREN stands to one side of the desk, noticeably not sitting behind it. She looks almost guilty when Vaughn walks in. He shakes her hand, warm and friendly.

RO

Commander Vaughn.

VAUGHN

Commander Ro. Congratulations. And I've told you before to call me Elias, at least in private.

RO

(re desk)

I, uh... guess this is yours now.

VAUGHN

Why do you assume that?

RO

I was only given the promotion because you weren't here. Or Sisko or Kira or Dax. Now you're back, I'm quite happy to hand the desk back to you.

Vaughn strolls around to the back of the desk, and stands leaning on the back of the chair.

VAUGHN

(chuckle)

I have no doubt it will be all yours again soon enough. But as it happens, for now you're right. I just came from a subspace briefing with Admiral Batanides, and...

He pulls out a single rank pip from his pocket, and places it onto the desk.

VAUGHN

I have been officially promoted to captain and assigned as the new commanding officer of Deep Space Nine.

RO

Congratulations, Captain.

VAUGHN

Thank you. Take a seat.

He sits into the commander's chair, while Ro settles into the guest chair.

VAUGHN

So, what did I miss?

RO

You know about Kira?

VAUGHN

Yes, that took me by surprise, rather. In some ways, at least. In

others it seemed practically inevitable. I had a brief moment to chat with her down on Bajor.

RO

She's not the only one who's gone. Ezri went back to join the Starfleet contingent on Trill while she waits for a new assignment. Shar did the same - he's gone back to Andor to be with his family. Seems like everyone's going home.

VAUGHN

Is that so surprising? After all, isn't it exactly what you've done? You're Bajoran, and here you are on a station in the Bajor system.

RO

(small chuckle)

I never thought of it that way. But I guess you're right.

VAUGHN

What about Taran'atar?

Awkward pause.

RO

He's, ah... he's just gone.

VAUGHN

I'm sorry, Laren. I know you had your difficulties...

RO

It's okay. Kira says he went the way he would have wanted to.

VAUGHN

So that leaves us with some vacancies to fill. If I'm the captain, I'm going to need a first officer I can rely on.

RO

I'm sure whoever you choose will be excellent.

VAUGHN

I certainly hope so. I'm looking at her.

Ro blinks. And blinks again.

RO

Umm... are you sure? I mean, I was only in command for two weeks and the place kind of fell apart. When Admiral Batanides put me in charge, I told myself I could do it. But actually doing it...

VAUGHN

Do you think any command officer gets it right straight out of the gate?

RO

Once I heard you were back I resigned myself to going back to security. I was kinda relieved, actually.

VAUGHN

Well, you're not getting out of it that easily. Commander Ro Laren, I am officially inviting you to be first officer of Deep Space Nine.

RO

(deep breath)

Thank you, Captain. I accept.

VAUGHN

Good. Now, we'll need a new chief security officer to replace you. Unless you're happy to leave Major Cenn in the role. You know him better than I do.



RO

He's complained more than once about not having time to do his Liaison Officer stuff if he's busy with security stuff. We'd be better off with somebody new.

VAUGHN

(devil's advocate)

You don't trust him?

RO

I just know how much work that job can be. Whoever's doing it needs to be able to concentrate on it full time, or else things will slip through.

VAUGHN

(satisfied)

Wise decision. I'll put in a request. Now - science officer.

RO

There, I'd been thinking about promoting from inside. We have plenty of good junior science officers on the station, we should give them a chance.

VAUGHN

Why not do that with security?

RO

Our security force is mostly made of non-coms and untested ensigns. The chief needs to be someone with more experience. Science can muddle through.

VAUGHN

Spoken like a true tactical specialist.

(Ro protests)

Don't be offended, I happen to agree with you. I can think of plenty of captains who wouldn't agree, but they don't know DS-Nine like you and I do. I think you've made the correct choices for the unique challenges of this post. You're off to a fine start, Commander.

Vaughn's previously friendly, open demeanour cools off somewhat. He becomes a bit more intense, worried.

VAUGHN

Speaking of tactical concerns, I'll need a full report from everyone on what happened while I was away. The Dominion, the *Even Odds*, the Ascendants...

RO

Already underway, sir.

VAUGHN

I saw Nog's crews repairing the Bajoran shrine on the Promenade. How has the station's populace been reacting?

RO

Vedek Capril is holding services in an empty cargo bay until the shrine is back in operation. As for the people, they all pitched in to help. You'd be proud.

VAUGHN

Alright. I think that's everything for now. But don't go too far. I'll be needing you again soon.

Ro stands, ready to leave. But she pauses, gestures towards the captain's pip still sitting on the desk.

RO

Aren't you gonna put that on?

Vaughn looks at the pip, gives it a thorough pondering.

VAUGHN

Yes. Yes, I am.

He picks up the pip and attaches it to his own collar.

RO

Suits you, sir.

She turns to leave, but pauses again with another thought.

RO

Can I ask you something?

VAUGHN

Of course. No secrets anymore.

RO

Didn't you deliberately stay a commander instead of taking the promotion so as to stay beneath Section 31's radar? What changed your mind?

VAUGHN

(shrug)

Turns out Section 31 knew about me all along. Not an issue anymore. So I may as well enjoy the perks of seniority while I can.

RO

And what about all the meetings?

VAUGHN

(grin)

What do you think a first officer is for?

Ro groans, and Vaughn chuckles.

Ro finally turns and leaves. Vaughn stays, looks around his new office. Thinking. Lots of new things to think about. Not all of them good.

5 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

A normal day. The bar is middling busy, officers and aliens stroll the Promenade, and life goes on as normal.

Except for at the shrine. A cordon surrounds the entrance, stopping the public from getting too close. Security bodies stand watch, making sure. Sounds of work being done issue through the doorway - drills, cutters, spark-welders, and various other high-tech machinery.

6 **INT. DS9 - BAJORAN SHRINE**

Inside, it's a total building site. Engineering officers work all over, rebuilding the shrine. Refinishing the bulkheads, attaching delicate carved icons, fixing electrical cables. It's about half-way done.

NOG is among them, working hard in one corner of the room. After a while, he realises somebody is trying to get his attention over all the noise. He stops working, turns and sees JOHN CANDLEWOOD hovering nervously nearby.

CANDLEWOOD

Lieutenant? Have you got a sec? I wanted to talk to you about something.

NOG

Sure, John. What's up?

CANDLEWOOD

I was going through the updates before I came on duty, and I saw the notice about Commander Vaughn - sorry, Captain Vaughn - taking applications for the Chief Science Officer position.

NOG

You thinking of going for it?

CANDLEWOOD

I... think so.

NOG

You think you're thinking about it?

CANDLEWOOD

I'm just not totally sure I should.

NOG

Why wouldn't you?

CANDLEWOOD

Do you think I'm capable of it? I mean, I'm in engineering, not sciences. Do you think they'd even consider me?

NOG

They'll consider everyone. No matter how inexperienced.

CANDLEWOOD

Oh. Thanks.

NOG

You know what I mean. You've got a great record, you're a solid and dependable worker, and you deserve a promotion. I'd have no problems recommending you.

CANDLEWOOD

Okay. Good. Thanks.

Nog thinks the conversation is over, but Candlewood hovers.

NOG

What now?

CANDLEWOOD

It's just... I was worried about Lieutenant Leishman.

NOG

Mikaela? What about her?

CANDLEWOOD

Just that she's higher rank than me. Been here longer than me. Is it right for me to get promoted to senior staff before her?

NOG

Well, first of all, you haven't even applied yet, so don't get carried away. As far as I know she's happy being my deputy, she has no interest in transferring. And if she does, she can apply herself and it'll be up to Ro and Vaughn. It's no reason for you not to apply too.

CANDLEWOOD

You don't think it'll upset her?

NOG

That's her problem. You worry about you.

CANDLEWOOD

(deep breath)

Alright. I'll do it.

NOG

Okay. In the meantime, I still need those new environmental protocols installing.

CANDLEWOOD

Aye, sir.

Feeling more relaxed and sure of himself, Candlewood turns away and gets back to work. He's going to go for it.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

FADE IN:

**7     INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE**

A crate sits on the desk. Vaughn reaches in, pulls out a pile of old books, and carries them over to the shelves on one side, humming to himself as he goes. He arranges the books just so, then returns to the crate. He's quite happy just settling in, arranging the office how he wants it.

RO (comm)  
Ops to captain.

VAUGHN  
Go ahead, Commander.

RO (comm)  
Sir, Captain Sisko just arrived on the Bajor shuttle. He's requesting to speak with you.

VAUGHN  
Absolutely, send him in.

Vaughn pauses in his work, and turns to see the door open. SISKO enters, holding young REBECCA by the hand. Sisko is uncomfortable, not sure whether he'll be welcomed or hated.

VAUGHN  
Captain... and Rebecca! Hello, young lady. A pleasure to see you again.

REBECCA  
Hi, Mister Vaughn.

VAUGHN  
(grin)  
Well, aren't you polite.

SISKO  
Hello, Elias. Congratulations on your promotion. And please, call me Ben.



VAUGHN

(wry)

If you're sure you want me to.

SISKO

I hope so. I hope we can put the past behind us, Elias. I have no hard feelings - I'm perfectly satisfied with the way things turned out.

VAUGHN

I was just saying the same to Prynn. Now, what can I do for you? You didn't come all this way just to congratulate me.

SISKO

...No. Rebecca, honey, why don't you go and talk to Commander Ro? She can show you how they dock all the ships that come here.

Vaughn is curious about this sudden change, but goes along with it. He goes to the door again, opens it and calls out.

VAUGHN

Commander, would you mind, just for a few moments?

Ro thinks it's a strange request, but sees Sisko and Vaughn obviously want to have time alone, so she agrees. Rebecca dashes out of the office and down the steps to the table.

RO

Of course, Captain. Hi, Rebecca!  
I'm Laren.

REBECCA

Hi!

Vaughn smiles gratefully, then the door closes again, and Sisko and Vaughn are left alone.

VAUGHN

So what's the problem?

SISKO

I'm worried about Rebecca. She fell into an Orb, Elias. I have no idea what it might have done to her. So I brought her here hoping that Julian could take a look, make sure she's alright.

VAUGHN

I'm sure he'd be happy to. But surely there are doctors on Bajor who could help.

SISKO

We're celebrities down there. Everything we do is scrutinised by the media. I don't want to put Kas or Rebecca through that.

VAUGHN

Plus any Bajoran doctor would only tell you that the Prophets would never hurt the Emissary's daughter. And you'd rather have a more objective viewpoint.

SISKO

Something like that.

VAUGHN

Very well. No point hanging around here. Let's go talk to Julian.

Sisko sags with relief, and the two of them turn to exit the office.

**8    INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Now Rebecca is the one lying on the bio-bed as Julian passes scanner after scanner over her. Sisko is by the bedside, there for her. Vaughn stands out of the way.

BASHIR

Now, try to stay very still,

Rebecca. This may take a while.

REBECCA

Okay!

BASHIR

While we wait, why don't you tell me what you remember about what happened to you?

REBECCA

I was just skipping. And then the box opened, and then there was a big flash and then I was in the white place. And Mister Vaughn was there, and another lady who looked like Aunt Nerys but with bones on her face.

BASHIR

It didn't hurt at all?

REBECCA

No.

BASHIR

And you weren't scared?

REBECCA

No.

BASHIR

Why not?

REBECCA

There was nothing to be scared of. Mister Vaughn was there, and I know him and daddy are friends.

Vaughn and Sisko look awkwardly between each other. Rebecca is quite relaxed, unconcerned. Bashir continues to scan...

BASHIR

How did you know when it was time to come back?

REBECCA

Don't know. I was just tired.

BASHIR

And do you feel any different  
after this happened?

REBECCA

(shrug)

No.

Bashir has finished his scans. He steps back.

BASHIR

Okay, I've got all the readings I  
need. It'll take me a while to go  
through it all and confirm  
everything, but I'm not seeing any  
problems so far.

VAUGHN

Thank you, Doctor. Let us know  
when you're done.

BASHIR

Of course.

Rebecca swings her legs off the bio-bed, and Sisko helps  
her down.

REBECCA

I'm hungry, daddy. Can we get  
something to eat?

SISKO

Absolutely. Let's go to Quark's.  
Elias, would you like to join us?

VAUGHN

Thank you, Ben, but I'd better get  
back to the office. I'll see you  
before you leave, though.

(to Bashir;

acknowledging)

Doctor.

Vaughn leaves, heading towards the turbolifts. Sisko guides Rebecca out as well. But as Sisko leaves, he's not looking especially reassured by what Bashir told him.

**9**     **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Sisko leads Rebecca by the hand across the Promenade, and into Quark's bar. On their way they pass Candlewood strutting happily along. We follow him to the Replimat, where he finds a table featuring Nog and PRYNN.

Candlewood casts a padd down onto the table, proudly taking a seat next to the others.

                  NOG  
          What's this?

                  CANDLEWOOD  
          Take a look.

Nog picks up the padd and reads over it.

                  NOG  
          You got an interview!

                  CANDLEWOOD  
          Yep.

                  PRYNN  
          Interview for what?

                  CANDLEWOOD  
          Shar's job. Now he's history,  
          somebody needs to take over.

Candlewood sees the look on Prynn's face, and realises he's put his foot in it.

                  CANDLEWOOD  
          Crundle-nuts. Prynn, I'm sorry, I  
          didn't mean -

                  PRYNN  
          It's fine, John. Don't worry about  
          it. So you got an interview...

CANDLEWOOD

Of course. I do, after all, rule.

NOG

Not what you said this morning.

CANDLEWOOD

I was just being modest.

PRYNN

(amused roll eyes)

You're feeling confident, then.

CANDLEWOOD

(gets serious)

Actually no, I'm terrified. So I could use your help. Both of you. If you're willing.

NOG

Help with what?

CANDLEWOOD

Practising. Whenever I improvise under pressure, it always goes horribly wrong, so I wanna be as prepared as possible. Ro sent me the job description, but I need to go through it with someone. Talk it out. If that's not a conflict of interest or anything.

NOG

Not as far as I know.

PRYNN

I'm free tonight. What time?

CANDLEWOOD

Come round about nine-ish? I'll make you these fantastic new cocktails I created.

NOG

We'll be there.

CANDLEWOOD

Great! Thanks so much, guys. See  
you later!

Candlewood grabs the padd again, springs up from the table  
and bounces away again. Nog and Pryn timer watch him go, amused.

10 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Bashir is working. The door opens, and Sisko comes back in.

BASHIR

Captain. I'm afraid I'm not ready  
for you yet. It'll still take a  
few more hours.

SISKO

I understand, Doctor. I'm not here  
for Rebecca's results.

BASHIR

Did you forget something?

SISKO

Not as such. I left Rebecca with  
Quark and Treir. She's fine. I  
wanted to talk to you alone.

BASHIR

What is it?

Sisko looks over his shoulder, as if to make sure no-one's  
there. Or as if he's worried about what he's about to say.

SISKO

I want you to check me too.

BASHIR

Check you for what?

SISKO

When Rebecca was gone, I looked  
into an Orb for help.

BASHIR

What did you see?

SISKO

Nothing! That's the problem. The Orb didn't respond to me. Didn't acknowledge me at all.

BASHIR

They don't always, Captain.

SISKO

They do to me! No Orb has ever refused to respond to me, not since I first came to Bajor. You scanned me before, whenever my brain was affected by the Prophets. I need you to do it again and tell me what changed.

BASHIR

And what if nothing's changed?

SISKO

Then I guess... the Prophets just don't want to talk to me anymore.

As Sisko reflects on exactly what that means to him...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT TWO**



**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

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

Ro is perched on a stool at the bar, watching the crowd go about their business. After a moment, QUARK sidles up, bringing her a drink from a tray. She smiles warmly.

RO

What, no private table under the stairs this time?

QUARK

You're not the station commander anymore.

RO

(feigns indignation)  
I'm still the first officer!

QUARK

Ah, but that gets you the privileged position of being up here at the bar with me.

(grin)

So are you plotting your coup to seize back power yet?

RO

Hardly. I'm used to bouncing up and down the ranks like a spring ball. Doesn't bother me. And I don't think I was really ready to be in charge anyway.

QUARK

You'll get there soon enough.

RO

And when I do... what happens to us?

QUARK

What do you mean?

RO

Just that... my relationship with you as first officer is going to be different to the one I had with you as chief security officer.

QUARK

And what relationship is that, exactly?

RO

I guess that's the real question, isn't it? Who knows?

QUARK

Well, I can tell you one thing for certain. Whatever rank or position she is, Ro Laren will always be welcome at Quark's.

(expression sours)

Unlike them.

Ro turns to see what Quark is looking at, and sees the Aarruri family stepping over the threshold into the bar. She sighs with exasperation.

RO

Oh, Quark. Sooner or later, you're going to have get over it. They're not going anywhere.

QUARK

Why is it always me who has to get over it? Worf trashes the place, but I'm the bad guy. Taran'atar trashes the place and breaks your back, I'm the one with the problem. And now those things! You know, I thought the Federation was supposed to be about accepting people as they are. Well, this is how I am. Stop trying to change me.

RO

It's not intolerance to be  
intolerant of intolerance, Quark.

QUARK

(blank look)

Do you want to try that again?

RO

It means they've done nothing  
wrong. They're not hurting anyone.  
You're the one trying to ban them  
just for being who they are. The  
one is not equivalent to the  
other.

QUARK

Bah! Whatever. Enjoy your drink.

Quark turns away, annoyed.

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

A moment to express some time passing.

**13 INT. DS9 - CANDLEWOOD'S QUARTERS**

A *mezuzah* by the door, candlesticks on the windowsill. A small framed picture of him and Hetik on their date in Vic's lounge. Some nice picture books on the coffee table, and a huge bank of computers to one side.

The replicator generates two delicate glasses of brightly coloured liquid, and a small plate of tiny biscuits. Candlewood reaches in and brings them over to the couches, where Nog and Prynn sit around the coffee table.

PRYNN

Ooh, those look yummy.

CANDLEWOOD

New recipe of my own design. I'm quite the culinary whizz, you know. If you count programming a computer as cooking. Which my mother certainly wouldn't.

He hands the drinks over and sits down. Prynn takes a sip.

PRYNN

Nice. What's in it?

CANDLEWOOD

Fortified Ashalla spring wine,  
real Mexican tequila, rokassa  
fruit liqueur and my own secret  
special ingredient. I call it  
Candlewood's Curiosity.

NOG

It's not going to make my tongue  
turn purple and triple in size, is  
it?

CANDLEWOOD

If it does, it won't be my doing.  
Try it.

Wary of a possible prank, Nog takes a sip. Nothing bad happens, and it's actually really nice.

NOG

Reminds me of the rotten fruit  
from my uncle's store room.

CANDLEWOOD

Oh, thanks a lot.

NOG

That's a compliment. I liked the  
fruit from my uncle's store room.  
(picks up padd)  
So, let's take a look at this job  
description.

CANDLEWOOD

(settles in)

I've studied all of Commander Dax  
and Lieutenant ch'Thane's official  
reports to get an idea of what  
they expect from a chief science  
officer. But I need you to read  
out those requirements and

competencies, and I'll come up  
with proof I can do them.

Nog reaches for one of the biscuits and begins to nibble at  
it. Candlewood reacts...

CANDLEWOOD

Careful. Those things are really  
crumbly.

Nog brings his cocktail glass closer, eats over it. But as  
the crumbs fall into the drink, a chemical reaction causes  
foam to BURST up in a huge explosion out of the glass,  
hitting Nog in the face with a big messy splat.

Candlewood and Prynn burst into laughter at Nog's expense,  
while he splutters and tries to wipe the still-growing foam  
off his face. It's bubbling up and out all over his lap.  
Candlewood gets up and grabs a towel.

PRYNN

He got you, Nog. He got you good.

In retaliation, Nog grabs another biscuit and tosses it  
into Prynn's own drink, which also explodes in a massive  
tower of foam, smacking Prynn with an even bigger face-full  
of gooey goodness. They all laugh. Candlewood hands Nog the  
towel, goes to get another for Prynn.

CANDLEWOOD

This is proof I can be science  
officer! That secret ingredient -  
it's the starch in the biscuits,  
it reacts with the enzymes in the  
juice. That's science, that is!

NOG

It's abuse of a senior officer,  
that's what it is. This is how you  
ask for help?

CANDLEWOOD

This is how I show respect and  
affection. When I need help, I use  
my big sad puppy eyes.

Candlewood demonstrates his big sad puppy eyes.

CANDLEWOOD (cont)

But seriously, it's perfectly safe. It's not going to hurt you. And I do need your help.

PRYNN

(playing along)

I'm not sure you deserve our help now, after the ritual humiliation.

The door chime sounds, and Candlewood goes to the door. It opens, and Pif is sat there, spines erect and tail wagging.

PIF

Am I too late?

Candlewood gets down in a crouch, turns to face the others, puts his face next to Pif's and does the puppy dog eyes again right next to Pif's own sad puppy face. Nog and Prynn burst into laughter again. Pif has no idea what's going on.

**CROSS-FADE INTO:**

**14 INT. DS9 - CANDLEWOOD'S QUARTERS (LATER)**

Candlewood is up and pacing around the room, while Prynn, Nog and Pif sit on the couches. Pif is next to Nog, and Nog is visibly uncomfortable about it, but holding his tongue.

PRYNN

(from padd)

Okay, next question. The chief science officer must be able to show familiarity and competence in a range of scientific disciplines. Please demonstrate how you would do this.

CANDLEWOOD

Hoooo-kay. Let's see. My primary experience is in computers, but I completed the full range of

engineering courses at the Academy

-

NOG

Science. Not engineering.

CANDLEWOOD

Engineering is a part of science though, right? You can't fix a machine unless you understand how it works.

NOG

I guess.

CANDLEWOOD

So I have that experience. I've studied the previous science officers' logs, like I said.

PRYNN

Good - that shows an ability to use all the resources at your disposal, to not necessarily assume you know it all already.

CANDLEWOOD

Lord, no. I definitely don't. But I've been part of the *Defiant* crew on several important missions, not least the only exploratory mission into the Gamma Quadrant in years.

NOG

Didn't you help in sickbay during that 'cathedral' business?

PRYNN

There you go. Medicine is science.

PIF

You're all over-thinking it.

CANDLEWOOD

What do you mean?

PIF

All they want to know is that you want the job, you believe you can do it, and you'd fit into the team.

NOG

I think it's a bit more complex than that, Pif.

PIF

I don't. Nobody knows everything, and nobody expects them to. It's all on-the-job. And you've been a part of Nog's team already for years, so you can obviously do that. The biggest question is just this - why do you want it?

Candlewood stops and ponders the question.

CANDLEWOOD

Because I can do more. I'm sorry, Nog, I'm not saying I'm bored or anything. And if I don't get it, I'll still be quite happy being your computer specialist. But I'm capable of being more. I want a challenge. Maybe I'll fail, but I'll never know if I don't try.

Prynn and Nog smile proudly. Pif wags his tail happily.

PRYNN

Just don't put a whoopee cushion on their seats or make their padds explode in their faces.

CANDLEWOOD

I'll try to control myself.

Pif's wagging tail finally comes too close to Nog's face for his comfort. Before he can stop himself, he bats the tail away, probably harder than he needed to.

PIF

Oww!



PRYNN  
(admonishing)

Nog!

NOG  
I'm sorry. Pif, I'm sorry. It's just... oh, this is going to sound terrible. But my people have an instinctive discomfort with all furry things. I'm trying not to react, I really am. But sometimes I just can't stop myself. You creep me out, Pif. I'm sorry.

PIF  
I understand, I guess.

NOG  
You do? I'm not sure I would in your place. I've been laughed at and pointed at for being what I am myself. I should know better.

PIF  
Hey, it takes everyone a while to get used to new things. When Taran'atar first came on board the *Even*, nobody was comfortable with that.

NOG  
(chuckle)  
I hear that.

PIF  
One question, though. If Ferengi don't like Aarruri, how come your uncle has never said anything?

Nog, Prynn and Candlewood all exchange awkward looks.

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

Quark is carrying a tray of drinks around his bar. He comes to one table of guests, places half the drinks on their

table. He looks behind him, and sees one of the puppies sitting behind him, looking up at him happily.

He grits his teeth and tries to ignore it. He carries on to another table. But the puppy follows his every step. He gets to the other table, delivers the rest of the drinks. The puppy stops right behind him and waits, tail thumping.

He turns away again and mutters under his breath...

QUARK

Leave. Me. Alone.

But as he walks away again, the puppy happily follows again. Quark tries to lose it by taking a circuitous route, winding between the tables, but the puppy dogs his every step (ahem). Quark is getting more and more annoyed.

Finally he decides the only way to escape is to take the stairs. He jogs up one of the spiral staircases, thinking the puppy can't follow. But as he reaches the top, he looks behind him, and the puppy is climbing the stairs as well.

It hops up one step at a time, each step almost as big as its entire body. But it keeps trying, determined not to give up. Quark actually begins to feel sorry for it.

With an exasperated and reluctant sigh, he waits at the top of the stairs for the puppy to catch up.

QUARK

Well, come on then.

Finally the poor puppy makes it the next-to-top step. Quark sets off walking again, letting the puppy follow. As Quark walks on, he sees HETIK was there, and saw the whole thing.

QUARK

(growl)

Tell anyone and you're fired.

Hetik smiles at the weak threat. See, Quark can be nice.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

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

A moment to express some time passing.

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

The interview. Candlewood sits in the guest seat in front of the desk, holding himself tense and upright, trying to be confident. Vaughn and Ro both sit behind. Ro holds a padd and makes notes while Vaughn asks the questions.

VAUGHN

Your specialty is in computer science, correct, Lieutenant?

CANDLEWOOD

That's correct, sir, yes.

VAUGHN

And you're aware that the science officer has to be a generalist, rather than a specialist.

CANDLEWOOD

With respect, sir, the one doesn't necessarily preclude the other. Commander Dax was a specialist in exo-archeology, and Lieutenant ch'Thane was a specialist in cytogenetics. But they were both assigned to the position, and excelled in it. I believe I'm quite capable of doing the same.

VAUGHN

Based on what?

CANDLEWOOD

Based on past experience. Computers may have been my focus, but not to the exclusion of other

areas. Lieutenant Nog encouraged us all to study outside of our specialist fields, to take a wider view than just computers or life support systems. That's a transferrable skill that would apply just as much to science as engineering.

RO

The science officer position is a senior staff role, involving command of junior crew. Are you comfortable with giving orders?

CANDLEWOOD

When necessary. All Starfleet crew are trained to follow orders. But I would also encourage innovation and spontaneity. You get the best work out of people when they know their contributions are respected. So I wouldn't want to position myself as superior, just as having different responsibilities to them, which include managing their work. But then of course, there are times when a direct order is necessary. That's when I would hope that the trust I've shown in them previously would let them trust me in return when I give them that order.

Ro covers a quiet smile - that's a good answer. Vaughn is stoic and unexpressive.

VAUGHN

Can you tell us about an occasion when you've been forced to discipline a junior officer who was not performing as expected?

CANDLEWOOD

Um... not as such, sir, no. But then I've never been in a role

where it's been my place to do that, at least not as an officer. But I do recall an occasion at the Academy. I had been assigned as the lead on a research team where one of the members wasn't pulling their weight, wasn't contributing. And when they did, it was half-hearted and incomplete.

RO

How did you handle it?

CANDLEWOOD

With discussion, first of all. In cases like that, it may be that the person just isn't sure what they're supposed to be doing, or how to do it. Maybe they need extra training, and then they'd be fine. In this particular case, the person just wasn't overly interested in the task they'd been assigned. The problem was solved by shuffling the responsibilities around, until they found something they were good at and interested in, and then they improved enormously.

VAUGHN

Isn't it a junior officer's job to complete the task regardless of their personal feelings?

CANDLEWOOD

Yes, but that goes back to what I said earlier. You'll get better work out of them if they actually enjoy what they're doing. Push comes to shove, then yes, they have to do what they're told. But they'll be more willing to do that if you give them good reason to.

Vaughn and Ro both settle back.

VAUGHN

Alright, Lieutenant. I believe that's the end of our questions. Do you have any for us?

CANDLEWOOD

Only to ask when you think you'll be able to come to a decision.

RO

We have a couple more interviews. But we should be able to let you know by end of day tomorrow.

VAUGHN

And then you'd be expected to report for duty the day after. Assuming you got the job.

CANDLEWOOD

Not a problem, sir.

VAUGHN

Very well, Lieutenant. Thank you for coming. You're dismissed.

CANDLEWOOD

Thank you for seeing me, Captain. Commander.

RO

Thanks, John.

Candlewood stands and exits out to Ops, where Nog greets him, asks MOS how it went. Once the door is closed...

RO

I liked what he said about giving orders.

VAUGHN

(non-committal)

Mmm.

(beat)

Commander, would you excuse me a moment? I need to make a call.

RO

Of course.

Ro gets up and exits the room too, leaving Vaughn alone. He works the computer in front of him. The Federation seal comes on the screen.

He sits back and waits, and then after a moment, the face of KASIDY appears.

KASIDY (screen)

Elias... this is a surprise. I'm afraid Ben isn't here. In fact, isn't he up there with you on the station?

VAUGHN

He is. That's actually exactly why I called you.

KASIDY (screen)

Why, what's wrong? Is it Rebecca?

VAUGHN

(smile)

Oh no, nothing's wrong with either of them. Sorry, I didn't mean to worry you. It's just that I wanted the chance to talk to you when he wasn't around.

KASIDY (screen)

Elias, what's going on?

VAUGHN

Kasidy... I can see that you and Ben are having problems. He hasn't said anything to me. He's not talking behind your back. But it's clear enough that things are... sensitive.

KASIDY (screen)



(awkward)  
Elias, this isn't really...

VAUGHN

I just wanted to ask you to try not to be too hard on him. I know you have every reason to be mad, and I don't want to seem like I'm interfering in your marriage. God knows I'm hardly an expert there. But I saw him when he was about to do what the Prophets had asked him to do. He was heart-broken, Kasidy. He hated the very idea of leaving you and Rebecca and Jake. If he could have thought of any other way, he would have done it.

KASIDY (screen)

You thought of another way.

VAUGHN

I thought of the same way. I saw how much it was hurting him, so I took his place. You have your husband back. Please don't push him away again. I know if I had the chance to have Ruriko back, even for just a moment...

KASIDY (screen)

I'll... think about what you've said, Elias.

VAUGHN

That's all I ask. Maybe it might be a good idea to find someone you can both talk to. Someone you can confide in.

KASIDY (screen)

Maybe.

VAUGHN

Beyond that, are you well?

KASIDY (screen)  
Well enough. I'll be happier when  
Ben and Rebecca get back.

VAUGHN  
Good to know. Well, I'll leave you  
be, then. Goodbye, Kasidy.

KASIDY (screen)  
Bye, Elias.

And the signal drops. Vaughn remains sitting, thinking.

**18    INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Bashir and AYLAM, the Bajoran doctor, are working together  
in the lab. Sisko enters, leading Rebecca by the hand.

BASHIR  
Captain, thank you for coming. And  
Rebecca, seems like forever since  
I saw you!

REBECCA  
(giggle)  
It was yesterday, silly!

SISKO  
(nervous)  
Well, Doctor? What have you found?

BASHIR  
First of all, let me assure you  
that Rebecca is perfectly well.  
There was a very slight trace of  
verteron energy in her pre-cortex,  
as there is with anyone who has a  
Orb experience. But in the  
microscopic amounts she had, it's  
not even close to being dangerous,  
and it will dissipate over the  
next few days. I don't foresee any  
cause for alarm.

SISKO  
Thank you, Julian. Truly.

BASHIR  
Umm, Doctor Aylam?

AYLAM  
Yes, Doctor?

BASHIR  
I'm sure Rebecca would love to see  
the surgical suite.  
(playing to Rebecca)  
That's where we do all our most  
important and exciting operations.

REBECCA  
Okay!

Like the others, Aylam realises that Bashir wants time  
alone with Sisko, so she guides Rebecca away.

AYLAM  
Come with me, Rebecca. I'll show  
where we put a new heart into your  
Aunt Nerys!

Once they're out of the way, Sisko turns to Bashir,  
expecting the worst.

SISKO  
What about me, Julian? Tell me  
what you found.

BASHIR  
I'm very sorry to disappoint you,  
Captain... but there's nothing  
wrong with you either.

SISKO  
Then why won't the Prophets talk  
to me?

BASHIR  
I never fully understood why the  
Prophets did talk to you in the  
first place. In purely medical  
terms, Orb experiences occur when

verteron energy causes changes in your neuro-peptide levels. But it doesn't happen to everyone. Plenty of people have looked at an Orb without experiencing any visions. So the medical factors are not the only ones at play.

Sisko sags against a table or bench, trying to process it.

SISKO

But I told you, Doctor... I always have. Every time.

BASHIR

You do seem to be more susceptible than most. You have... well, I suppose I'd call it a sensitivity. Just like some people are more prone to migraines or allergies, you're prone to verteron-induced neuro-peptide events.

SISKO

Because of my mother.

BASHIR

Possibly. Going back over your previous records of major events, like when you discovered B'Hala or went to Tyree with Dax, the records do show an increasing sensitivity over time.

SISKO

As the visions became clearer, and more frequent. Sometimes without even needing an Orb.

BASHIR

That would seem to correlate. But, the readings I took yesterday show that your sensitivity has reduced again. Now you're almost back to the levels I'd expect of any normal baseline human.

SISKO

"Almost" ?

BASHIR

Captain, there's no way you could experience what you've experienced over the years and not be changed by it. Your brain chemistry has been permanently altered, but it still works. This is just the new normal for you now. There's nothing wrong with you, *per se*. You're just not as sensitive to visions from the Prophets as you used to be.

SISKO

(defeated)

But why not?

BASHIR

That I can't tell you. I'm sorry.

Ending on Sisko, processing what Bashir has told him...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

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

One of the standard Bajoran shuttles is docked at the station.

**20 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR**

An airlock is open and several people - Starfleet officers, Bajoran civilians - file out of it. A step out of the way, Sisko stands with Rebecca, and Vaughn is with them.

VAUGHN

If you're concerned about your privacy, it would be a moment's work to assign a runabout and a pilot to take you home.

SISKO

That's okay, Elias. The captain managed to find a private cabin for us. Besides, none of these people know why I was really here.

VAUGHN

I hope you got what you came for.

Sisko doesn't answer, just silently watches the civilians go by. There go the last of them.

VAUGHN

Ben... I don't want to intrude. But why didn't you bring Kasidy with you?

SISKO

She doesn't even know why I came.

VAUGHN

Is it wise to be keeping secrets?

SISKO

I didn't want her to worry. I just told her I wanted to... clear the air with you.

VAUGHN

Ah. And you don't want to do that?

SISKO

Elias, you saved me. And then you saved my daughter. I don't know any way to repay you for that.

VAUGHN

And you never need to. It was my pleasure to be able to give you more time with your family. Now you have it, make the most of it.

SISKO

I intend to.

VAUGHN

And most importantly...

(re Rebecca)

Make sure you take good care of this precious little lady.

Rebecca giggles sweetly at the compliment. Vaughn stands straight, and reaches out to shake Sisko's hand.

VAUGHN

If you need anything, even just someone to talk to, you know where I am.

SISKO

Thank you, Elias. Come on, Rebecca. Time to go home.

REBECCA

Bye, Mister Vaughn.

VAUGHN

Bye, Rebecca!

Sisko and Rebecca disappear into the airlock.

21 INT. DS9 - CANDLEWOOD'S QUARTERS

Candlewood stands in front of his mirror, fiddling with his new uniform - the one with the blue collar. He's happy but very nervous. As he stares at his reflection...

CANDLEWOOD  
Alright, John. Don't screw this  
up.

He pulls himself together and heads for the door.

22 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Candlewood emerges into the corridor and heads towards the turbo lift. But just before he gets there, Hetik arrives around the corner.

HETIK  
John! Glad I caught you.

CANDLEWOOD  
(breathless)  
Hetik... what are you doing here?

HETIK  
I heard you got a promotion. Chief  
Science Officer, that's amazing!  
Well done.

Candlewood just gazes love-struck into Hetik's eyes, barely able to form words.

CANDLEWOOD  
Oh... yeah... thank you.

HETIK  
So I just wanted to say  
congratulations. You look good in  
blue.

CANDLEWOOD  
Thanks.



HETIK

Okay, well... see you later then.

CANDLEWOOD

Yeah... see you.

Hetik moves on down the corridor. The moment he disappears around the corner, Candlewood breaks out into the "I Am So Awesome" dance, aka the dance of someone who has no dancing ability whatsoever. He sings tunelessly to himself...

CANDLEWOOD

I am so awesome, I am so awesome,  
I am so awesome...

Until Prynn and Nog appear around the corner and catch him at it. He stops immediately. They hide their smirks.

PRYNN

You okay there, John?

CANDLEWOOD

Fine, thanks.

NOG

Come on, Mister Chief Science  
Officer. We'll walk you to Ops.

Candlewood lets Nog and Prynn go on ahead. He follows, doing a smaller version of the "I Am So Awesome" dance behind their backs as they walk.

**23    INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Ro is at the central Ops table, working the boards. Bowers is at tactical. Other positions with extras as required. Ro turns at the sounds of the turbolift rising into Ops...

And sees Candlewood, Prynn and Nog together, stepping off the lift, excited to be here. She smiles to see it.

RO

Lieutenant Candlewood. Welcome to  
Ops. Please take your station.

CANDLEWOOD

Aye, Commander.

He heads towards the science station. As he steps into the alcove, Prynn sidles up to him.

PRYNN

Don't worry. I didn't put a whoopee cushion on your chair.

But the wry look on her face makes him worry what else she might have done. Uh-oh. She's going to get her revenge. He settles onto the chair - mercifully whoopee-free.

As Prynn moves off, Nog sidles up instead.

NOG

Good luck, John. I'm sure you'll be... "awesome."

Oh God, he saw the dance. Candlewood blanches as Nog moves off with a toothy grin.

Nog settles into the engineering station, while Prynn goes to the captain's office door. She enters...

**24 INT. DS9 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)**

...To find Vaughn sat behind the desk, staring at his screen. He looks up at her entrance, and smiles wide.

VAUGHN

Good morning, Lieutenant Tenmei.

PRYNN

Good morning, Captain Vaughn.  
(giggle)  
I thought I'd never say that.

VAUGHN

Life takes you places you never expected, Prynn. You may as well just enjoy the ride.

PRYNN

Singing my tune, dad.

VAUGHN

Sit down a moment, would you?  
There's something I wanted to talk  
to you about.

PRYNN

(she does)  
Sure, what's up?

VAUGHN

You know that I've asked Commander  
Ro to be my first officer.

PRYNN

Of course. So what?

VAUGHN

Just that I'm going to be spending  
a lot of time with her in the near  
future. She still has a lot to  
learn about command - don't tell  
her I said that - so I'm going to  
be mentoring her pretty closely.  
And I just wanted to warn you in  
advance that I might not be able  
to spend quite as much time with  
you as a result.

PRYNN

(smile)  
I'll try not to be too jealous.

VAUGHN

I'm just saying that I might not  
be here all the time... but I will  
be here when you need me.

PRYNN

Understood, Captain. Now come on,  
you should meet your new science  
officer.

Vaughn stands from the desk and rounds it to join Prynn.  
They move off towards Ops. But as they exit, we go around

the back of the table, and focus on the computer screen,  
the one Vaughn was just staring at before Prynn came in.

It features a headshot of Vaughn, and at the top of the  
screen are the words...

CAPT ELIAS VAUGHN  
APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER  
APPROVED

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW