

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x16 - "Baby Steps."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novel

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine
Mission Gamma Book 1 - Twilight

by David R George III

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

A nice, peaceful shot of the station, with an important-looking ship just settling onto the docking ring.

2 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR

KIRA stands at attention, in finest lilac Bajoran Militia dress uniform. One Starfleet (SEVAK, 8x10) and one Bajoran security (SHUL, 8x06) flank the airlock.

The airlock cycles open and out steps a Trill male, GANDRES - pleasant, civil, elegant. Kira steps forward...

KIRA

Welcome to Deep Space Nine. I'm
Colonel Kira Nerys.

GANDRES

Seljin Gandres, Trill Ambassador
for the Federation. And this is
one of my aides, Hiziki Gard.

Gandres introduces another Trill male, GARD. Handsome and intense, his stocky form and vigilant eyes mark him as security. Gard slinks past his boss shakes Kira's hand...

KIRA

Welcome to the station.

GARD

Thank you, Colonel. A pleasure to
meet you.

KIRA

We've planned a reception for all
the delegates this evening. In the
meantime, I'd be happy to conduct
you on a tour of the station, if
you're interested. Or I could have
you escorted to your quarters.

GARD

Pardon me Colonel, but would it be possible to inspect those quarters before occupying them?

GANDRES

Forgive my aide's impertinence, Colonel, but he is in charge of security for our contingent, and he is... thorough.

GARD

(firm,
not cowing)

I intended no disrespect.

KIRA

Not at all, Mister Gard. I assure you, station security has been tightened considerably for the summit. I have full confidence in my security chief. We also haven't announced the summit to anyone on board, and First Minister Shakaar has not made a public announcement yet, so few people are even aware it will be taking place.

GANDRES

I appreciate your diligent efforts to ensure our safety.

Nearby, a turbolift door opens and Admiral AKAAR emerges, uncrumpling his large body from the small space. Kira is slightly annoyed to have him butting in on her territory.

Akaar approaches the group, and he and Gandres smoothly do the Capellan heart-and-hand gesture to each other...

AKAAR

Colonel, Ambassador. I welcome you with an open heart and hand.

GANDRES

L.J., how are you?

AKAAR
I'm well. Colonel Kira has been
most hospitable.

Kira is a bit surprised by the compliment, but covers it.

AKAAR
I'd like some of your time today,
Seljin. There are some issues I'd
like to discuss before tomorrow.

GANDRES
Of course, I can talk right now.
Is there somewhere we can go?

AKAAR
How about back aboard your vessel?

GARD
I would recommend that as well, at
least until I can verify security
precautions on the station.

Gandres acknowledges with a nod, then turns back to Kira...

GANDRES
Thank you for welcoming us to Deep
Space Nine, Colonel. I'll be in
touch with you later.

KIRA
You're welcome, Ambassador.

Gandres leads Akaar back onto the ship. At Kira's nod,
Sevak leads Gard away. Shul remains, and Kira walks back to
the turbolift, still befuddled by Akaar...

3 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

KIRA sits at her desk, talking to an image of KASIDY on the
comm screen. Kasidy is sat in her home on Bajor, looking
concerned and increasingly pregnant...

KASIDY (screen)
Is there anything you can do?

KIRA

Like what?

(composes herself)

Sorry, I didn't mean to snap. It's just... I've tried really hard these last few months to live with the Attainder. But I'm getting no support from Shakaar, half the Bajorans on the station won't even look me in the eye. And now I've got this pushy admiral breathing down my neck and holding the whole future of Bajor at gunpoint over whether or not I can put on a good show at the reception tonight.

KASIDY (screen)

You don't have to apologise, Nerys. It sickens me what Yevir did to you. That's why I wanted to warn you about this. If there's a problem in the Vedek Assembly, like Prylar Eivos said, they may try to blame you for that too.

KIRA

And they might be right. I'm not saying that I agree with their actions, but I did upload the Ohalu translation, and I defied a Vedek to do it. I did it because I believed it was the right thing to do, and I'd do it again.

KASIDY (screen)

But if he holds you responsible...

She drifts off, not needing to elaborate. Kira looks past Kasidy on the screen, and sees a window behind her...

KIRA

It's snowing there.

KASIDY (screen)

Yes, a couple of days now. We've got about a dozen centimetres.

KASIDY (cont)

When the wind dies down, I like to go out for walks. It's very peaceful and quiet when there's so much snow on the ground. You ought to come for a visit.

KIRA

I know - I will. When I can. In the meantime, don't worry about me. I'm fine.

KASIDY (screen)

I know you're not fine.

KIRA

I am. I won't tell you I'm happy, but I'm dealing with it. The only thing I want you worrying about is that little baby you're going to have in a couple of months.

KASIDY (screen)

Not much chance of me forgetting about that. I'll talk to you again soon, Nerys.

KIRA

Okay. Bye, Kas.

Kasidy disappears, replaced by a Bajoran comnet symbol then a blank screen. Kira sits back and ponders her life...

4 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

About a dozen in, nowhere near enough to make QUARK happy as he plods into his empire. He is definitely in a grumpy mood. A shout of "Dabo!" rings out, and Quark looks over --

-- to see four people around the dabo table with his new Orion dabo girl TREIR, her scanty outfit barely covering her decency. Quark is not best pleased.

MORN catches Quark's attention by waving his empty glass - Quark heads behind the bar, pours Morn a large red drink.

QUARK

Thank the Blessed Exchequer there
are some constants in this world.

(hands drink
to Morn)

Well, my friend, I hope you're
having a better day than I am.

Morn winks at Quark, raises his glass and is about to drink
-- when a loud CRASH sounds from across the room.

Quark looks over with a scowl - one of his servers, FROOL,
has dropped a tray. There's smashed glass everywhere. Quark
stalks over, growing less and less happy...

QUARK

(furious hiss)

Frool, you idiot!

(to the bar)

Everything's fine, folks. Nothing
to see here. Go back to your
drinking and gambling. Plenty of
room at the dabo wheel.

(to Frool)

Clean that up now. And it's coming
out of your wages.

(to a passing
stranger)

You just can't get good help these
days.

Another shout of "Dabo!" goes up, and Quark cringes. He
heads over to the wheel, angrily gritting his teeth behind
a fake smile. Treir is just handing over money to a player.

QUARK

What's going on?

Treir smiles warmly, much better at faking it than Quark,
and drapes herself sensuously over him...

TREIR

We're paying off another lucky
winner here at Quark's. Just like
we always do.

QUARK

Well, stop it. And get some more people gambling.

TREIR

Get 'em yourself. I can't force people to come into this... place.

QUARK

It's your job to get customers to come in here and gamble.

Uncomfortable with the increasing tension, two of the people at the wheel get up and go to another table...

QUARK

See what you're doing? Now you're chasing customers out of here.

TREIR

You'd better watch it, Quark.
You're about two seconds away from chasing me out of here.

QUARK

Listen, if you want to leave --

Quark was about to begin a good solid rant, but he suddenly turns his head, as if having heard something. Nothing seems to be amiss, so he turns back to Treir...

QUARK

Just do your job.

He stalks out of the bar, glowering at Frool on the way. Treir can't help wonder - what's gotten in *his* ears?

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT

TARAN'ATAR at attention, alone, watching the walls rush by. He is actually nervous about what he is about to do. But Jem'Hadar must not be nervous. As the turbolift slows to a stop, he SHROUDS himself. The door opens...

6 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR (CONTINUOUS)

...and he steps out into the corridor - invisible. Passes a pair of EXTRAS walking together and chatting. He turns to watch them go, totally unaware of his presence. He sneers.

He reaches a door and waits by it. A moment... then the door opens and a Starfleet WOMAN walks out.....

WOMAN

Okay, bye.

She walks away, not noticing him, and he slips in...

7 INT. DS9 - STATION PRE-SCHOOL (CONTINUOUS)

Like the Ward Room, but as a kindergarten. A dozen young children, mostly Bajoran or human, bustle about the room, putting away mats, pillows and toys under the guidance of two male civilians, GAVI (Bajoran) and JOSHUA (human).

Once they are done, the children sit in a huddle in the middle of the room, and the men perch against the table...

GAVI

Who wants to look at some animals?

The children send up a SHOUT of approval, so Gavi reaches behind him and picks up a set of large CARDS...

GAVI

Okay, what animal is this?

He flips the first card - a vaguely horse-like animal. The children yell back their answers, mostly correct...

GAVI

That's right, this is a *pylchyk*.
This animal lives on Bajor, and
the people there use it to carry
supplies and to tend their fields.

Gavi flips through half a dozen animal cards - a Ferengi
rabbit-cat-thing called a *jebret*, a *targ*, a kangaroo.

Meanwhile, Taran'atar's attention strays around the room,
taking in the shelves, the tables, the decorations...

Wandering, one small boy bumps into something invisible -
it UNSHROUDS to become Taran'atar's leg. The Jem'Hadar
looks down - the child holds his hands up happily...

BOY

Look at the alligator. Up!

JOSHUA

Hey, get away from him!

Turning and gasping at the sight of Taran'atar, Gavi slowly
approaches with his hands outstretched, scared...

GAVI

Don't do anything. They're only
children.

Taran'atar squints at him, intrigued - what relevance does
their age have? Gavi tries to GRAB at the boy's sleeve, but
the boy pulls his arm away - he wants to play with the
alligator! Gavi grabs him more firmly, pulls him away...

GAVI

Take him, Joshua.

Joshua approaches and pulls him to the back of the room
where he has gathered all the children. They are not scared
at all, just curious. Gavi's eyes never leave Taran'atar...

GAVI

What do you want?

Taran'atar has not moved or reacted at all. He appraises
Gavi dispassionately before replying...

TARAN'ATAR
Only to observe.

GAVI
I think... I think you should
leave.

TARAN'ATAR
Yes.

He turns and heads for the door. As it opens, he stops and
turns, looking back at the little boy --

-- who is holding his arms out to him, not afraid at all.

BOY
But alligator...

Taran'atar turns and leaves, now more confused than ever.

8 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Ro in the guest seat. Kira sits behind her desk, nursing a
cup of *raktajino*. She is exasperated, tired...

KIRA
So how are the Trill delegates
settling in?

RO
They're fine. Mister Gard has been
sticking his nose in a bit, but I
can handle him. Minister Shakaar
and his party are due to arrive in
about two hours, and then the rest
of the Andorian delegation two
hours after that.

KIRA
All your precautions are in place?

RO
Yes, Colonel. Not that I object to
doing my job, but what's all this
actually about?

KIRA

I'm sorry you've been kept in the dark, Ro. Admiral Akaar wanted to keep things as quiet as possible. But... the summit is about Bajor's petition to join the Federation.

Ro's face drops. She gazes off...

RO

I guess it's no surprise he'd want to keep me out.

KIRA

Who, Akaar? Do you know him?

RO

Yes, from when I was in Starfleet. We had a... disagreement. I'd prefer not to discuss it, Colonel.

KIRA

Alright. But I have to ask if this disagreement with the admiral will have any effect on your duties.

RO

Colonel, the admiral doesn't like me. I don't like him either. He probably doesn't think I'm capable of doing this job, or any other. Frankly, I don't care. I'm going to do my job the way I'm supposed to, the way you expect me to. No matter what the admiral thinks.

KIRA

That's good enough for me. Keep me updated on any new reports.

RO

Yes, Colonel. Thank you.

Ro gets up and leaves the office...

9 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Ro strolls towards the security office. As she passes the bar, she looks in, sees him, pauses to watch. Quark is too busy haranguing one of his waiters again to notice her...

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

While Quark sends his waiter scurrying off, Treir is at the dabo wheel. Standing next to her is a big, handsome hunk of a Bajoran man. Young, dark and packed with muscles, as scantily dressed as Treir herself. This is HETIK.

As Treir leans seductively across the wheel, reaching for the playing jack, her naked arm brushes against Hetik's. He seems to have the same effect on her that she does on most males. She is quite flustered, trying to control herself...

TREIR

So, that would pay off on...?

HETIK

Pass five and half under.

TREIR

Right again, my *cheltol*.

HETIK

Cheltol?

TREIR

Uh, it's an Orion term for a...

uh... capable... male student.

Now, you give it a whirl.

She reaches out, takes Hetik's hand, places the jack into it, curls his fingers closed over it. Hetik grasps the edge of the wheel and gives it a strong SPIN, then tosses the jack in, smoothly, as if he'd been doing it for years.

QUARK (o.s.)

Treir.

They both look up to see that Quark is staring over, still glowering. Treir steels for the inevitable confrontation.

TREIR

Stay here.

She walks over to intercept Quark, slinking her arm around him as sensuously as she can, putting on a sexy voice. She tries to subtly lead him away from the dabo wheel...

TREIR

Quark. What are you doing here?
Morning shifts are my time.

QUARK

What are you doing? We don't allow gamblers to touch the wheel, let alone let them make spins. Wasn't that the first thing I taught you?

TREIR

Don't worry about it, Quark.
There's no latinum on the table.

QUARK

Then what's he doing? Rigging the wheel so you two can steal me deaf later?

TREIR

Be careful what you say, Quark.
That young man's name is Hetik. He made a pilgrimage here to see the Celestial Temple for the first time, and he --

QUARK

I don't care what his name is or why he's here. I want him to stop touching my dabo wheel. And tell him to put some clothes on.

TREIR

He's wearing more than I am.

QUARK

You have more parts that people want to see.

TREIR

Some people. Other people would rather see Hetik's parts.

QUARK

What's your point?

TREIR

My point is, Hetik can bring in new customers and improve profits.

QUARK

I don't think so.

TREIR

Well that's too bad. Because he's your new dabo boy.

Quark's mouth GASPS open and closed, fluttering like he's having a seizure, before finding his stunned voice...

QUARK

He's... my... what?

TREIR

Your new dabo boy. I hired him.

QUARK

He's... he's... you...

TREIR

Listen to me, Quark. Just because you're a misogynist, doesn't mean everyone else is. If some people will come in here to see me, then others will come in to see him.

QUARK

No-one's going to see either of you once I have you both thrown out an airlock. I want him gone by the time I come in tonight.

He turns to stomp away again. Treir looks back to Hetik, who knows he has been the subject of their argument...

By the exit, Ro has been watching the exchange, chuckling.
But now she sees Quark coming, she turns to leave...

Before she can, Quark turns his head again as if he hears
something. On a hunch, he GRABS an empty glass --

-- and LOBS it into the air. The glass FREEZES mid-air --

-- and then Taran'atar's hand UNSHROUDS around it, followed
by the rest of him. The Jem'Hadar does not react...

...but customers drop their drinks and get to their feet
all around, terrified of him.

QUARK

Quark to security. We've got a
serious disturbance in the bar.

RO (o.s.)

I'm right here, Quark.

Quark turns surprised - Ro is already entering, pretending
like she wasn't listening in. Quark is distracted by her...

QUARK

Laren...

RO

Quark, what is it? What's wrong?
Taran'atar, is there a problem?

TARAN'ATAR

Not with me.

RO

What did he do?

QUARK

He was skulking around here, being
invisible. And then he appeared
out of nowhere and terrified
everybody, me included.

RO

(re the glass)

Has he been drinking?

QUARK

What? No. That's just how I got
him to uncloak.

Ro rolls her eyes and relaxes, greatly dismaying Quark. She
turns to Taran'atar, who has remained stood still...

RO

Taran'atar, what are you doing?

TARAN'ATAR

I am observing, nothing more.

RO

You're not here to hurt anyone?

TARAN'ATAR

No.

RO

Alright. Then I'm not needed.

QUARK

What?!

RO

Quark, he hasn't done anything.
You can't deny someone entry just
because of their species. Being a
Jem'Hadar isn't a crime.

QUARK

But disturbing the peace is. And
incitement to riot.

RO

All I see right now is incitement
to not play dabo.

QUARK

That should be a crime too. I'm
not kidding.

RO

I know you're not.

With an indulgent smile, she turns to leave. Nervously, he takes his chance to speak to her more intimately...

QUARK

Laren? I... haven't seen you in here a lot lately...

RO

I know, I'm sorry. I've been very busy. But when I get off duty, maybe I'll come back here and play a little dabo myself.

QUARK

You will?

RO

Might be fun. I've been thinking about taking a few risks.

QUARK

(re: Taran'atar)

You have to do something about him. This isn't just about me, Laren. It's about the people on the station being able to enjoy the vital services I provide.

RO

Alright. I'll talk to Kira.

She leaves with a smile. Quark is caught again between admiring her, and annoyance and fear of Taran'atar.

Meanwhile Treir has been watching them - *ah, I see...*

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira sits behind her desk. Taran'atar stands at attention.

TARAN'ATAR

I was doing as the Founder
instructed me - as you suggested
yourself. When a high percentage
of experiences in the Operations
Centre began to repeat themselves,
I decided I should go elsewhere.

KIRA

Where did you go?

TARAN'ATAR

I took the opportunity to explore
the *Defiant* before its departure.
The gem merchant followed, then
the security office, the childcare
facility, the flower merchant, and
the Ferengi's establishment.

KIRA

But why did you shroud yourself?

TARAN'ATAR

Onboard the *Defiant*, I encountered
a Starfleet officer who reacted
with great fear. Such a reaction
interfered with my mission.

KIRA

Then why unshroud today?

TARAN'ATAR

(annoyed at himself)

I underestimated Ferengi hearing.
And at the childcare facility, I
was... distracted. A child bumped
into me, forced me to unshroud.

KIRA

(stifling a smirk)

I see. Taran'atar, a lot of people still aren't used to you being on the station. When you unshroud in front of them, it makes them feel like you've been spying on them.

TARAN'ATAR

I have been.

KIRA

Yes, but until they get used to you, I think it'd be a good idea not to shroud anymore when you're observing them.

TARAN'ATAR

But it's clear my presence can be disruptive.

KIRA

But that's the point. You need to give people the chance to get used to you, so your presence won't be disruptive anymore.

Taran'atar tries to think about that...

12 INT. VIC FONTAINE'S LOUNGE

Quark is plonked miserably in an empty chair in the off-hours lounge. VIC is in the seat opposite...

QUARK

I should never have hired that Treir. She's only been here a month and she already thinks she's in charge of the place.

VIC

Seems to me, if a farmer puts a fox in charge of the henhouse, and then the fox eats the hens, well then it ain't the fox's fault.

QUARK

That's not all. I've got monsters chasing away the few customers I have... and romance is dead.

VIC

Mister Quark, not only is romance not dead, it ain't even sick.

A waitress places two DRINKS on the table. Muttering under his breath, Quark picks up his, takes a sip and promptly SPRAYS it back out, coughing and spluttering...

QUARK

That's... not... snail... juice.

VIC

Course it's not. This is 1962. If there's somebody on Earth drinking liquefied snails in 1962, I don't know about it, and I don't wanna know about it. It's vodka and orange, same as I'm havin'.

RO (comm)

Lieutenant Ro to Quark.

QUARK

(suddenly hopeful)

This is Quark.

RO (comm)

Sorry to bother you. I stopped by the bar, Treir said you were up in the holosuite. I've got a bit of a break before I'm needed. Wondered if you'd like some company.

QUARK

I'll be right there.

RO (comm)

Great. Ro out.

Quark gets up, a grin on his face. Vic is just smug...

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

Quark and Ro stroll side-by-side, gently flirting...

RO
Wait, what about the apprenticeship with the district sub-nagus?

QUARK
I decided to leave that.

RO
You're not telling me everything.

QUARK
Are you going to interrogate me?

RO
You'd like that, wouldn't you?

QUARK
The sub-nagus... requested that I leave. Well, suggested... he told me to leave. Ordered me, really.

RO
Now, why would he do that, if he regarded you so highly?

QUARK
I was also highly regarded by his sister. What - can I help it if females find me attractive?

RO
No, I guess you can't.

They reach a T-junction in the corridor, and pause...

QUARK
Well, which way now? Aren't your quarters that way?

RO
I won't ask how you know that.

QUARK

A new security chief is assigned to the station, and I don't know where they live? Please.

RO

What was I thinking. Quark, may I ask you a question?

QUARK

The answer is yes.

RO

You don't know what the question is yet.

QUARK

I trust you.

RO

Don't be so sure. Umm... do you... do you think women like that cologne you're wearing?

Expecting a much more intimate question, Quark sags...

QUARK

Not anymore.

RO

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. You obviously like it, and I'm sure Ferengi women must like it too.

QUARK

It's alright. I appreciate you saying something. The last thing I want to do is repel you.

RO

Oh well, even without the cologne, you still repel me.

With a grin, they head off again, away from her quarters...

14 **INT. DS9 - GUEST QUARTERS**

The door opens onto the empty room, and Kira leads First Minister SHAKAAR into the room, security visible outside. She is back in her dress uniform to receive him.

KIRA

These will be your quarters while
you're here, First Minister.

SHAKAAR

Thank you.

KIRA

(turning to leave)

I'll see you tonight at the
reception.

SHAKAAR

Would you like to come in for a
few minutes?

She takes a moment to respond, surprised at the invitation. She is somewhat uncomfortable after their last discussion.

SHAKAAR (cont)

...unless you really need to get
back to Ops.

KIRA

No, not at all.

She comes in, curious, and the door closes behind her.

SHAKAAR

It's good to see you, Nerys. And
you can still call me Edon. Or
have things degenerated that badly
between us?

KIRA

(too fast)

No, of course not. Unless there
are any Bajorans listening. Maybe
then we'd better argue with each
other.

SHAKAAR

(laughing)

That actually might work best for me. You've probably got more political enemies than I do.

That's not quite so funny for Kira. Shakaar sobers up...

SHAKAAR

I was wondering who you favour as the next Kai, Nerys.

KIRA

Oh. Well, I guess it's a foregone conclusion at this point that Vedek Yevir will be elected.

SHAKAAR

No - not who you think will be. Who you think should be. Or did I misunderstand you?

KIRA

No... No, I don't think Yevir would be a good Kai.

SHAKAAR

More than that, you think he'd be a bad one, don't you?

KIRA

I think he might actually be dangerous.

SHAKAAR

Dangerous? How, like Winn?

KIRA

No, not like Winn. I don't think he's driven by ambition. And don't get me wrong, this isn't about revenge for the Attainder.

SHAKAAR

What, then?

Kira has to think a moment to put her worries into words...

KIRA

He has a strong faith, and a genuine commitment. But his faith is... unthinking. He believes so fully that the Prophets guide his every decision, that he doesn't really consider the consequences of his actions.

SHAKAAR

Then who? Pralon? Ungtae?

KIRA

I'd probably be happy with him. He's a good man, humble. But he's just so... plain. I'd rather have a Kai who inspires the people, not just satisfies them.

SHAKAAR

Someone like Opaka.

Kira smiles, and nods, at the mention of the former Kai...

KIRA

What about Admiral Akaar?

SHAKAAR

For Kai? I don't think we have robes big enough to fit him.

They LAUGH together at the joke, and relax a little. It's still not the close relationship they once had, though...

KIRA

No, I mean what do you think of him?

SHAKAAR

He's a Starfleet Admiral. Like all the rest. Perhaps a bit more serious than some. A little...

KIRA

Secretive?

SHAKAAR

Is that a problem?

KIRA

I don't know. It makes me uneasy.

SHAKAAR

About the Admiral? Or about the Federation?

KIRA

I think I've come to terms with that. I even believe it will benefit us. It's just that, with all the rapid changes Bajorans have experienced in the last century, we've had to struggle to maintain our own identity.

SHAKAAR

And you think Bajor will join the Federation and become homogenised? Because my experience has been that all the member worlds are very different. Believe me, Nerys. I've been working on this issue for months. There's nothing to worry about. Everything is proceeding exactly as I'd hoped.

What should be reassuring words are somehow nothing of the sort for Kira. Perhaps even disturbing...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

15 EXT. DS9 - ESTABLISHING

The Trill ship is still there, along with a number of Bajoran ships and the Akira-class USS *Gryphon*...

16 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

HETIK works the packed dabo wheel like a natural. All the gamblers - mostly women but some men too - are gazing enraptured at his rippling muscles and dazzling smile...

...and so is Treir behind the bar. The replicator distracts her as a plate of something baked and glazed whirs to life. She grabs it, slides it across the bar to MORN...

TREIR

Here you go. Skorrian fritters in
a Kaferian apple glaze. Don't eat
it too fast - I know one of your
stomachs must still be full with
all the Maraltian seev-ale you
drank last night.

Morn rolls his eyes and nods. Treir grabs a glass of water and goes back to watching Hetik - a mix of pride and lust. She spots Quark in the doorway, watching the dabo table...

QUARK

Is this all Hetik?

TREIR

What do you think?

Quark whistles, acknowledging the impressive difference...

TREIR

So, are you ready to start talking
about a contract?

QUARK

Contract? Forget it.

TREIR

Are you sure? I mean, I already told Hetik he'd only be here for another six days.

QUARK

You what?

She leans seductively across the bar, working it for all she's got. He plays along, enjoying the attention...

TREIR

Is that a problem? I realised after you left earlier that you really didn't want Hetik here, so I told him we'd be letting him go.

QUARK

Now let's not be hasty...

She comes around the bar between them, and slinks her arm around Quark's waist, purring, playing the coquette...

TREIR

Quark. Is there something you want to tell me?

QUARK

Yes, of course... Hetik can stay.

TREIR

Anything else?

QUARK

Your idea to hire him was a good one. You're an asset to the bar.

RO (o.s.)

Well, that's almost a declaration of love.

They turn to see Ro watching them, amused by them. Quark pulls away from Treir guiltily...

QUARK

Laren! I mean, Lieutenant Ro.

RO
Hello, Quark. Please, don't let me interrupt. Finish your business.

QUARK
Uh, we were done.

TREIR
Actually, I wasn't done.

She runs a finger sensuously across the edge of his ear.
Against his better judgement, he responds...

TREIR
If I'm such an asset to the bar,
then perhaps I'm underpaid.

QUARK
I don't think so.

TREIR
Then perhaps a change of position.

QUARK
What kind of... position... did
you have in mind?

TREIR
Oh, I don't know. Junior partner
sounds interesting.

QUARK
I don't know about that, but maybe
we can discuss a... merger.

RO (o.s.)
Quark.

They realise that Ro is still there. She is now hard-faced
and stern, no longer amused by their innuendo...

RO
Colonel Kira wants to see you in
her office right away.

QUARK

Kira? But I didn't do anything.

RO

No. Of course you didn't.

She turns sharply and leaves, hurt and angry, trying but failing to hide it. Quark is only worried about himself.

Treir, on the other hand, has been watching closely, and knows exactly what is going on here...

17 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira sits behind her desk, inspecting a padd that Quark has just given her. She forgot to change her dress uniform.

KIRA

How did you get *foraiga*?

QUARK

Colonel, I've been doing business in this system for more than a decade. And I'm a Ferengi. I know how to get things.

KIRA

You also know how to overcharge for them.

QUARK

Fine, take it off. I just thought Minister Shakaar would enjoy it, but if it's too expensive --

KIRA

I never said Shakaar would be at the gathering.

QUARK

My mistake. I just assumed all this fine Bajoran food wasn't just for you and Ro. Besides, you don't normally wear your dress uniform just to walk around Ops.

KIRA
Alright, Quark.

QUARK
And I was lucky to find that. The
shipment won't even arrive until
two hours before the gathering.
The fees I had to pay just to have
the ship diverted to Deep --

KIRA
Alright, Quark.

She confirms the menu, hands the padd back to him...

QUARK
I'm sorry, Colonel. Perhaps if I'd
had more time --

KIRA
Yes, you're right. Thank you,
Quark. I'll try to give you more
notice next time.

QUARK
I was curious, Colonel, what the
occasion was for a gathering of
such an eclectic group of people.

KIRA
(deadpan)
We're celebrating my naming day.

QUARK
If you don't want to tell me,
Colonel, that's fine.

KIRA
I don't want to tell you.

QUARK
That's fine.

KIRA
Good. Then I won't keep you from
getting ready for the gathering.

QUARK
Of course.

He turns and leaves...

18 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

...and SLAMS the padd down on the bar, not at all happy.

QUARK
There's something going on on this
station and I don't know about it.
Idiocy must run in my family.

TREIR
Hey, how did it go with Colonel
Kira? Didn't she approve the menu?

QUARK
Yes, yes she did.
 (hands her padd)
Here, can you take care of this?

TREIR
Um, sure...

As Treir takes the padd away, Quark heads behind the bar,
rummages in a drawer, pulls out an ISOLINEAR ROD, turns to
a comm panel, slots the rod in, and presses buttons...

The words LOCATE LIEUTENANT RO appear on the screen,
followed shortly by LIEUTENANT RO IS IN THE WARDROOM.
The comm signals, surprising him. He taps a panel...

QUARK
Quark's...

TARAN'ATAR (comm)
I want to use a holosuite.

QUARK
I'll send somebody with your
program up to holosuite one.
 (closes the link)
Not only are they ugly and nasty,
they're also rude.

Closing the comm system, he looks around for a free server. But everyone is busy - his waiters serving, Treir working on the padd, Hetik at the dabo table.

With a harrumph, he grabs another rod and heads upstairs...

19 INT. DS9 - HOLOSUITE CORRIDOR

Quark walks up in a huff, shoves the rod at Taran'atar...

QUARK

Here.

Taran'atar takes the rod with a dispassionate glare, places it into the holosuite controls, starts pressing buttons...

QUARK

Why are you here?

TARAN'ATAR

I am here to train. This program
simulates --

QUARK

No, why are you here? On Deep
Space Nine?

TARAN'ATAR

I am on this station to observe
life in the Alpha Quadrant. I am
also here to keep an eye on you.

Quark's blood runs cold, until he realises what he means...

QUARK

Odo sent you here.

TARAN'ATAR

The Founder sent me, yes.

QUARK

And you believe the Founders are
gods.

TARAN'ATAR

The Founders are gods.

QUARK

If that's true, then how could
they have lost the war?

TARAN'ATAR

The Founders did not lose the war.
The Jem'Hadar failed them. The
Cardassians betrayed them.

QUARK

Of course, it's never the leaders'
fault. You know, I knew Odo longer
than anyone on the station, and I
never thought of him as a god.

TARAN'ATAR

That demonstrates nothing about
the Founder... only something
about you.

QUARK

It demonstrates that I'm
observant.

TARAN'ATAR

It demonstrates that you court
death.

Quark refuses to be cowed - he's on a roll...

QUARK

What else did Odo say about me?

TARAN'ATAR

He said you were a lawbreaker,
scurrilous, loutish, avaricious,
deceitful, devious... and short.

QUARK

There, you see? He was wrong, so
how can he be a god?

TARAN'ATAR

I have observed nothing to suggest
the Founder's description of you
is inaccurate.

QUARK

Alright, let me ask you this. If I'm a lawbreaker, doesn't that mean Odo should have arrested me, put me in prison? But here I am, free. Which means either Odo was wrong and I'm not a lawbreaker, or he was right, but he wasn't a good enough chief of security to catch me. Either way, I'd say that doesn't make him much of a god.

He stands back, quite proud of his logic. Taran'atar is trying to figure it all through. Quark turns to leave...

TARAN'ATAR

Wait.

(Quark does)

The Founders created the Jem'Hadar. Created them. Is that not a characteristic of divinity?

QUARK

With enough latinum and the right scientists, you can create just about anything. So what?

Taran'atar stops to think again, really thinking...

TARAN'ATAR

What do you most desire? Wealth?

QUARK

What? Yes, wealth, of course.

TARAN'ATAR

If a Founder chose to, he could become a brick of gold-pressed latinum. Or a thousand bricks.

QUARK

That's not the same thing. He couldn't spend himself.

TARAN'ATAR

And why do you spend?

QUARK

To acquire things, of course.

TARAN'ATAR

The Founders do not need to acquire anything. They can become anything they wish. They are free from the need for wealth, because they already have everything. They already are everything.

QUARK

Yes, but...

He doesn't really have an answer. That stuns him.

Taran'atar turns back to the computer...

TARAN'ATAR

Computer, begin program.

The doors open, and we don't see what is inside, but hear a blood-curdling ROAR. Taran'atar smiles and heads inside.

Quark stands there, dumbfounded...

QUARK

Odo has everything he ever wanted.
Justice, Kira, the Great Link.
And I can't get anything I want.
Anything at all.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

20 INT. DS9 - WARDROOM

Bajorans, Trill, Andorians, KIRA, AKAAR and their various security contingents all mingle in their finest. Ferengi servers carry food and drinks. RO stands keeping an eye on it all, while ETANA and SHUL stay under cover as guests.

The room hums with voices and activity. Kira is having a good time, amiably chatting with SHAKAAR, GANDRES and Etana. Andorian councillor VRETHA floats over...

KIRA

Councillor zh'Thane. I hope you're having a pleasant evening.

VRETHA

I am, thank you, Colonel. The food is the best I've had since leaving home. The *foraiga* is delicious.

KIRA

I'm glad you like it. It's just Bajoran hospitality. Have you ever been to Bajor before, Councillor?

VRETHA

I have not. But your polar icecaps seem like quite an exotic setting. I look forward to visiting them one day.

Behind them, the door opens and QUARK enters, carrying a tray of fruits. He scans the room, spots Kira...

QUARK

Colonel, have you seen Ro?

KIRA

No, I haven't.

QUARK

Is that her...?

He thrusts his tray at Kira - she takes it instinctively.
He hurries away into the crowd...

KIRA
Quark! ...Councillor, if you'll
pardon me.

VRETHA
Of course, Colonel.

Kira takes the tray back to the food tables. Ro stands near
them, Akaar nearby in the crowd, pointedly ignoring Ro...

KIRA
Lieutenant, my compliments on the
security arrangements. A fine job.
(Ro nods
acknowledgement)
Quark was in here looking for you.

RO
Quark? What did --

Suddenly Quark is there, butting in. Ro ignores him...

QUARK
Laren. I need to speak to you.

RO
Not now, Quark. I'm on duty.

QUARK
Laren, listen. I need to know
what's going on here.

KIRA
Quark, did you ever think that if
we didn't tell you, it might not
be any of your business?

RO
Colonel, if everything's under
control here, there are other
matters I need to attend to.

She leaves, and Quark looks like he has been struck...

KIRA
I believe you were about to serve
more desserts.

Quark doesn't move, just gazes after Ro. Kira leans in...

KIRA
If you don't start serving, I'm
going to penalise your breach of
contract by closing the bar.

Kira walks away too, and heads over to talk to Akaar...

KIRA
Good evening, Admiral. I hope
you're having a pleasant time.

AKAAR
I am. Thank you for inquiring.
(glances around)
I'll tell you something, Colonel.
I do not care for Cardassian
architecture at all. I have so
far, however, been very impressed
with Bajoran hospitality.

Kira's eyes open wide to hear her own words repeated. Is
that a signal of some kind?

With a knowing smile, Akaar excuses himself, walks away...

21 EXT. DS9 - ESTABLISHING

The Trill ship, Andorian ship, Bajoran ships, and the
Gryphon. Just enough to indicate time passing...

22 INT. VIC FONTAINE'S LOUNGE

Quark and Vic back at the table in the empty lounge again,
late, after the show. Vic flicks cards, Quark drinks vodka
and orange with a grimace after every sip...

QUARK
I'm an idiot. Right now I'm even
more of an idiot than my brother.

VIC

The brother who's in charge of the whole shebang back home?

QUARK

Not to mention ruining the entire Ferengi economy. Don't remind me.

VIC

So that's why you're blue?

QUARK

I'm... blue, because something's going on here on the station and I don't know anything about it.

VIC

(shrug)

You can't know everything, right?

QUARK

I make it my business to know everything on this station.

VIC

You missed this one. You'll catch the next one. It's just business.

QUARK

Just business?! I'm a businessman. More than that, I'm a Ferengi businessman. Business is my life.

VIC

Yeah, I know that's what you say.

QUARK

I'm not just saying it. It's true.

VIC

(hands up)

Okay, okay, who's arguing?

QUARK

You are.

VIC

look... you say business is your life. But how many times you been in here cryin' in your beer over some dame or other? First Jadzia, then Ezri, now the green one.

QUARK

So I have a weakness.

VIC

Oh, I'm fond of the ladies myself.

(gesturing around)

What about this place? Don't wanna bite the hand that feeds me, but you're lettin' this light show run twenty-six hours a day. That don't make the best business sense.

QUARK

I like this place.

VIC

And didn't you risk your life to rescue your mother from the bad guys during the war? I mean, that's great, she's your mother. But it ain't exactly business.

QUARK

She had the Grand Nagus's ear.

VIC

Didn't you also risk your life helping the Feds take this place back from the bad guys?

QUARK

(weakly)

Better customers.

VIC

What about all those rumours about you running food and medicine to the Bajorans back when the bad guys ran the show?

QUARK

That's all speculation. I don't want to hear that outside this room. What's your point, anyway?

VIC

My point is, you're always in here claiming to have this ideal of the Ferengi businessman that you want to live up to, but you're always doing something to mess that up.

QUARK

Exactly. So I'm an idiot.

VIC

Maybe. Or maybe that's not what you really want out of life. Or maybe you just don't know how to deal with getting what you want.

(sigh)

Mister Quark, you're not an idiot. But you know what I think? I think business isn't the only thing you're worried about messin' up these days. Black hair, nice figure, wrinkled nose...

QUARK

Laren. I messed that up too.

VIC

Doesn't surprise me.

QUARK

She probably wasn't interested anyway.

VIC

I got news for you, pallie. The dame digs you.

Quark looks up, wondering if that could possibly be true. And has he ruined it all?

23 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Ro walks out of a turbolift, across the night-dimmed Promenade, and into the security office --

24 INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

-- where Quark is already waiting for her. She pushes past him, takes her seat and starts working, ignoring him...

RO
Quark, I really don't have time
for this right now.

QUARK
Laren, just give me a minute, and
I promise I'll go. You don't even
have to say anything.

RO
(folding arms)
Alright. One minute.

QUARK
I just wanted to apologise.

RO
Great. Now you can go on your way.

QUARK
Laren, I'm sorry. How I behaved
with Treir was wrong, whether you
were there or not. But especially
so because I hurt your feelings.

RO
(simply)
Why, Quark? Why did you do it?

QUARK
I'm not sure. But I think it was
out of fear.

RO
Fear?

QUARK

I've been enjoying the time we've spent together lately. And... I hope you have too.

RO

...Maybe.

QUARK

So I think I got scared. That you might get to know me better... and then not enjoy spending time with me anymore. Or scared that... I might actually get something I want for once. Especially something as valuable as... well, as you.

RO

I can't say I entirely understand, but thank you, Quark.

She finally takes his apology and relaxes back. He sits down, feigning nonchalance...

QUARK

You're welcome. So... umm... how's the conference going?

Rolling her eyes, she finally gives in and tells him...

RO

Actually, they're calling it a summit. They're meeting about the issue of Bajoran membership in the Federation. They'll finally decide one way or --

(sees his face)

Quark? What's wrong?

QUARK

Is it going to happen?

RO

I don't know. Why, what difference does it make to you?

QUARK

If Bajor joins the Federation,
then I really am ruined.

RO

What? Why would you --, oh, of
course. The Federation has an
essentially moneyless economy.

QUARK

Exactly - I won't be able to make
a living from running the bar.

RO

Quark, I'm sorry. I never thought
of that. What are you going to do?
Wait - what were you going to do
three years ago, when Bajor nearly
joined then?

QUARK

Three years ago, I was a younger
man. But I think I've known for a
while that, whenever Bajor finally
did join the Federation, it would
be time for me to move on.

RO

I know the feeling.

He looks up confused - he doesn't follow.

RO

Starfleet.

They both look at each other sadly...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

25 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

SHAKAAR appears on a Promenade comm screen, residents and crew stood watching. Similar crowds at other points nearby.

SHAKAAR (screen)
Good day to all of you. For years, since the earliest days after the Occupation, many have wondered if our people would one day join the Federation. Opinion will likely always be divided, but in recent years, a majority of Bajorans have come to favour becoming part of that larger community.

26 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira sits alone behind her desk, watching the screen...

SHAKAAR (screen)
Three years ago, on the counsel of the Emissary, we opted not to join. Since the end of the war, however, I have spent time on Federation worlds. I have spoken with their representatives, and on behalf of the Bajoran people, I officially requested our petition be renewed.

27 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Quark stands behind his bar, watching. Treir is nearby, Hetik at the dabo table. A large crowd pay close attention as the announcement rings through the station...

SHAKAAR (screen)
Today, here on Deep Space Nine, a summit commenced to consider that petition. Attending with me are representatives from Andor, Trill --

QUARK
Yeah, we know who the players are.

TREIR
Shush.

SHAKAAR (screen)
Today, after less than one day of discussion, I am happy to report to you that Bajor's petition for membership in the Federation has been approved.

A CHEER goes up around the crowd. Quark does not join in...

28 INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE

Kira gasps...

SHAKAAR (screen)
There are many issues still to be resolved. But six weeks from now, the signing will take place. On that day, Bajor will become a member of the United Federation of Planets. Congratulations to all of Bajor. Walk with the Prophets.

Kira sits back, a little stunned...

29 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

RO (o.s.)
I'm sorry.

He turns to see Ro sat at the bar with a sympathetic look. Treir immediately clues in and moves away...

RO
So, what are you going to do?

Quark takes a deep breath, thinks a moment, then reaches behind him and touches a panel. A double CHIME rings out...

QUARK
The next round is on the house!

Another CHEER goes up. Quark grabs two glasses, fills them both, passes one to Ro, lifts the other. As the party goes on around them, they toast to their questionable fortunes.

QUARK

Not everything turns out the way
you expect. And you know what?
That's not always a bad thing.

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

Kira strides purposefully along a corridor. She reaches a door, taps the panel. The door opens, and she looks inside.

31 **INT. DS9 - AKAAR'S QUARTERS**

Admiral Akaar is sat at the low central coffee table. The room is sparse and mostly undecorated. He does not stand.

AKAAR

Colonel. This is unexpected.

Kira steps inside and does the heart-and-hand gesture...

KIRA

I come with an open heart and an
open hand.

AKAAR

Indeed. Then I must certainly
greet you likewise.

He stands, and does the gesture. She begins to pace...

KIRA

I have to tell you, Admiral, I'm
not sure what to make of you.

AKAAR

I am a Starfleet Admiral, simply
executing my duties.

KIRA

And do those duties include
interrogating me?

AKAAR

Interrogating you? Yes, they did.

KIRA

Why? To understand Bajor through me?
I'm not an elected representative.

AKAAR

You believe I have been trying to
judge Bajoran society through you?

KIRA

Haven't you?

AKAAR

No, Colonel. I've been attempting
to judge you through your feelings
about them. I believe that how a
person sees their society, how
they fit in - and do not fit in -
can say a great deal about them.

KIRA

The Attainder...

AKAAR

It is not the Attainder that
interests me, but how you have
dealt with it. You have carried
on, not just for yourself, but in
continued service to your people.

KIRA

Then perhaps I owe you an apology.
Or perhaps you owe me one.

AKAAR

Perhaps neither. I suspect you and
I have similar feelings about our
peoples, Colonel. For a long time,
I wished for the opportunities the
Federation would bring to Capella.

KIRA

Will it ever happen?

AKAAR

Certainly not within my lifetime.
I find myself envious, Colonel.
Bajor has come a long way since
the Occupation. Be proud of that.

KIRA

I feel privileged to serve.

AKAAR

And you will continue to do so.
I'm not supposed to tell you this
yet, but when the Militia is
absorbed into Starfleet, not only
will you be offered a captaincy,
you will also be asked to remain
in command of Deep Space Nine.

Kira lets out a breath she didn't know she'd been holding.

KIRA

Thank you.

AKAAR

It was not my decision alone, but
those were my recommendations.

KIRA

And what were your recommendations
about Lieutenant Ro?

AKAAR

(tightens)

...They differed considerably. My
opinions about Ro Laren have been
on record for a long time.

KIRA

I dare say opinions about Capellans
have existed for a long time too.
But maybe in the future, how they
conduct themselves going forward
will matter more than the past.

AKAAR

...Perhaps.

32 **INT. DS9 - KIRA'S QUARTERS**

Kira sits in casual dress in her quarters, chatting again to Kasidy on the comm system...

KIRA

I will, Kas, I promise. As soon as
I can get away.

KASIDY (screen)

Nerys, if I have to wait for you
to have free time, this child will
have a command of his own sooner.
So how are you?

KIRA

I guess... I'm pretty excited.

KASIDY (screen)

That sounds good. About what?

KIRA

About Bajor.
(blank look)
You haven't heard, have you?

KASIDY (screen)

Apparently not. Tell me.

KIRA

Bajor's been accepted into the
Federation. The official signing
will take place in six weeks.

KASIDY (screen)

I didn't realise this was so close
to happening.

KIRA

I don't think any of us did.

Kasidy's shocked smile drops, becomes more wistful...

KIRA

Kas... are you alright? Does this
bother you?

KASIDY (screen)
I'm fine. I'm just... not sure how
I'm supposed to feel about this. I
mean, I'll be living in Federation
territory, so that's good. But...

KIRA
Kas - you had a sacred vision. You
know that Benjamin is with the
Prophets. He must know about this.

KASIDY (screen)
You're right. I'm sure he's very
happy about this.

KIRA
It's all happening because of him.

KASIDY (screen)
He really was - he really is -
something, isn't he?

KIRA
Yes, he is.

33 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

It's late again, the lights dimmed. Ro is just locking up
the security office, heading home for the night...

QUARK (o.s.)
Well, what a coincidence.

She turns and sees Quark just locking the doors to his bar,
and begins walking towards him...

RO
I don't believe in coincidences.

QUARK
What are you suggesting? That I
stood right here, staring over at
the security office and waiting
for you to come out, when I could
have closed up half an hour ago?

RO
Well, didn't you?

QUARK
Actually, it was more like forty-five minutes. May I walk you to your quarters, Laren?

RO
(stretching it out)
Well, I suppose since you've been waiting here sooo long...

QUARK
Now that's what I like. A female who knows her own value.

With a smile, they stroll down the Promenade together...

34 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Still strolling amiably along...

RO
You're not wearing that cologne anymore.

QUARK
You didn't like it. Three-hundred-and-fifth Rule of Acquisition - "Always be considerate."

RO
No, really?

Quark feigns offence. They reach the same intersection as before. Ro begins to head to her quarters, but Quark hovers back nervously...

RO
Aren't you coming? I thought you were going to walk me to my quarters?

QUARK
Laren, may I ask you a question?

RO
The answer is yes.

QUARK
(thrilled)
You haven't heard the question yet.

RO
I trust you.

QUARK
I, uh... I wanted to, uh, know...
I wanted to know if you'd like to
go out with me?

RO
You mean on a date?
(Quark nods)
Then the answer is yes. Now walk
me to my quarters. I'm exhausted
and I need to sleep.

They start moving again, towards Ro's quarters.

As they walk off into the distance, corridor light bathing
them in a sunset-like glow, Ro's hand reaches out and takes
Quark's. They walk along hand-in-hand...

FADE OUT:

THE END