

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

8x04 - "Cold Fusion."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novels

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Avatar, Book 2*

Written by SD Perry

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Abyss*

Written by David Weddle & Jeffrey Lang

and the short story

*Star Trek: S.C.E: Cold Fusion*

Written by Keith RA DeCandido

**TEASER**

FADE IN:

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

Much as we left it, with the lower core gone, lights dimmed, and work bees buzzing around effecting repairs.

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

Moderately busy, lunchtime. NOG and SHAR sit eating side by side at the bar - Nog happily crunching on a plate of crab-like things, Shar munching an exotic-looking salad.

NOG

...So when Kira showed me that message from Odo, there wasn't really anything I could say. It's amazing - he's billions of light years away, on the other side of the galaxy, and that man can still intimidate me.

SHAR

I thought you worked together on the station for some time.

NOG

Yes, and when we first met, he was arresting me for shoplifting. But once he vouched for that Jem'Hadar monster, there wasn't much I could do. I guess he's here to stay. Don't have to like it though.

SHAR

Did you receive Colonel Kira's invitation to the gathering this evening? I believe it is intended to welcome Taran'atar and the new Executive Officer.

NOG

I did, and I'm thrilled to say I won't be able to make it.

SHAR

Why not?

NOG

Oh, I didn't tell you, did I? I came up with a great idea for how to fix the station. I've just got to run a few details past the Colonel, and then I'm off.

QUARK bustles up to the bar to interrupt them.

QUARK

Speaking of things being off, can you take a look at replicator three for me while you're here? It's malfunctioning again, and I wouldn't ask except I can't afford to hire anyone after the beating I took on your best friend's party.

Quark turns to Shar, really playing it up.

QUARK (cont)

But Jake Sisko means so much to my nephew, I knew it was the right thing to do. I couldn't turn away from family. Now that his father's gone, we only have each other.

NOG

Uncle, the station is in tatters. Entire sections are shut down to conserve power. I have to find a way to replace the fusion core, keep the station running on batteries in the mean time, and run a full repair on the *Defiant*.

QUARK

(mock offended)

After all I do for you, that you could deny me a scant moment of your time, just to offer an opinion on a simple replicator...

The guilt isn't working, so Quark just goes for begging.

QUARK

Nog, just look at it, would you?  
I'm your uncle.

NOG

Fine, I'll look at it before I go.  
Can we finish eating now?

QUARK

You're too kind.

Quark leaves in a huff, and PRYNN TENMEI, helm officer of the *Defiant*, wanders up from behind.

TENMEI

Afternoon, boys. Coming to the party later?

NOG

Hi Prynn. I'm going to be off saving the station, I'm afraid. You'll have to tell me all about it when I get back.

TENMEI

Well, I'm gonna be a little late myself, I have to finish some work on the *Defiant* bridge. But if it's to welcome the new First Officer, I thought I should probably make an effort to meet my new boss. You know anything about him?

NOG

Not a thing - just that he came in on the *Enterprise*, I think.

TENMEI

Can't be all that bad, then. See you later, Nog, Shar.

SHAR

Ensign.

Prynn heads out towards the Promenade. Shar's combadge chirps, and he answers with a tap.

SELZNER (comm)  
Ops to Ensign ch'Thane. This is  
Selzner. You have a call waiting.

SHAR  
Put it through.

SELZNER (comm)  
It's straight from the offices of  
the Federation Council, Ensign, on  
a directed channel, and authorised  
for immediate uplink.

Quark stops even pretending not to be listening, and gapes at Shar. Nog is surprised too. Shar is distressed, but covering it. This is embarrassing for him, but inevitable.

SHAR  
Would you send it to my quarters,  
please? I'll be there in a moment.

SELZNER (comm)  
Ah, right. Affirmative. Ops out.

QUARK  
Why is someone at the Federation  
Council calling you, Ensign?

SHAR  
(flustered)  
My mother works for the Council.

QUARK  
Oh really? That's interesting.  
What does she do? Secretarial  
work? Chef? Consultant?  
(racking his brains)  
ch'Thane, ch'Thane...

Shar shakes his head and gets up, looking like he wants to get out of there quick as possible.

SHAR

I apologise for leaving, Nog, but  
I've been expecting this call...

NOG

Hey, that's alright, I always take  
my father's calls, and -

QUARK

Your mother is Charivretha  
zh'Thane?

People look around - that was louder than Quark intended.  
Shar is mortified, instantly moves to go. Nog is confused.

QUARK

Wow. The blue science kid is  
zh'Thane's son. You have a talent  
for picking powerful friends, Nog.

NOG

What do you mean?

QUARK

zh'Thane holds the Andorian seat  
on the Federation Council. She  
represents her entire world.

Quark wanders away impressed, already wondering how he can  
make a profit from this. Nog just looks back towards Shar,  
who rushes away as if wanting to hide.

**3 EXT. SPACE - ESTABLISHING**

A small Starfleet vessel, the USS *Da Vinci*, travels at  
warp. It is Sabre class, a small, snub-nosed and punchy  
vessel only slightly larger than the *Defiant*.

**4 INT. DA VINCI - CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM**

A human male Captain, DAVID GOLD, white-haired, Jewish,  
70s, sits behind his desk watching his personal screen. On  
it is a recorded message from a younger woman, early 20s,  
Gold's granddaughter. He smiles as he watches the message.

WOMAN (screen)

...And Khor is really looking forward to meeting you eventually. I'll send another message soon, granddad. Love you.

VOICE (comm)  
Message from Deep Space Nine, sir.

GOLD  
On screen.

The woman's face is replaced by the Starfleet seal, then by the face of Colonel KIRA NERYS in her regular uniform.

GOLD  
Colonel. This is Captain Gold. Is everything alright?

KIRA (screen)  
Hello, Captain. Yes, everything's fine. Don't worry, this is just a simple diversion call.

GOLD  
So the last dispatch was correct? The Jem'Hadar who attacked your station were renegades?

KIRA (screen)  
They were. Unfortunately, in the process of stopping them we were forced to eject our fusion core.

GOLD  
Oy.

KIRA (screen)  
That about sums it up. We still need your help putting the station back together, just not here at the station. You're to rendezvous with one of our runabouts, the *Rio Grande*, in the Trivas system, and meet up with Lieutenant Nog, our chief operations officer.

GOLD

And this will help the station?

KIRA (screen)

Let's hope so. We need to get this place operational before we run out of power. The lieutenant will have all the details.

GOLD

Whatever you say. We're happy to be of service however you need us.

KIRA (screen)

Captain, the Starfleet Corps of Engineers has already been a great help to us. And to be honest, if you could accompany the *Rio Grande* back to DS9, we could probably use some more of that service.

GOLD

That should be doable. I've heard good things about your station. In fact, one of my engineers used to serve there. It'll be a privilege to visit, and to help out.

KIRA (screen)

The privilege will be ours, Captain. And I wouldn't worry about the mission either. Nog's a pro. I'm sure it will go completely smoothly.

Famous last words...

FADE OUT:

**END OF TEASER**



## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### 5 EXT. STATION - ESTABLISHING

Just enough to get us in, then:

### 6 INT. DS9 - OPS

A standard duty shift. The station feels dimmer, the pulses of the power system slower and duller than usual. EZRI DAX stands at the central operations desk, keeping an eye on things. SAM BOWERS is at tactical.

ELIAS VAUGHN browses slowly between the various stations, looking over people's shoulders, just learning his way around. TARAN'ATAR stands far back against the wall behind Bowers, silently observing everything. People give him a wide berth, still not entirely comfortable that he's there.

After a while, Kira exits the command office and walks over towards Vaughn. She is not wearing her earring, and is not quite as perky as before.

VAUGHN

Everything go alright with the *Da Vinci*?

KIRA

Oh yes. I made sure to appear as confident and unruffled as possible.

VAUGHN

I'm sure Captain Gold appreciated it. Nog seemed to know what he was doing. The kid is smart, and he has style to burn.

KIRA

Style? Nog?

VAUGHN

Sure. His little scheme. His solution for...

(gestures around)  
...all this. We clearly can't go on the way we are, running on barely a third of the power the station's used to. Starfleet even floated the idea of scuttling the station altogether if we couldn't come up with an idea soon.

KIRA

That's not going to happen. I admit I was a little sceptical, but I hate to discourage Nog's initiative, especially when he's so new at the job...

VAUGHN

And you didn't have any better ideas.

KIRA

Something like that.

VAUGHN

How are preparations coming for the party?

KIRA

Quark's got it all under control. He tried to sell me on another big party like the one for Jake, of course. But I made it clear - two hours, a dozen people, no more.

Vaughn subtly nods towards Taran'atar, who remains like a stone pillar watching everyone.

VAUGHN

And what about him? Will he be alright?

KIRA

I invited him. He wasn't sure what the point of the whole thing was, but he said he'd be there.

VAUGHN

Want a couple of extra security  
outside the door just in case?

Kira considers it. It might be prudent.

KIRA

No, we have to show him we trust  
him. He said he'd follow my  
orders, but I'll stick with him  
just to be sure.

7 **INT. DS9 - SHAR'S QUARTERS**

Shar stands before his personal comm unit, holding himself  
tight and official. On the screen is an older Andorian  
female, CHARIVRETHA ZH'THANE, wearing a complex hairstyle  
and with a regal and dignified bearing.

CHARIVRETHA (screen)

It is very good that you are well,  
my *chei*. When I heard of the  
attack on the station, I feared  
the worst.

SHAR

No, *zhavey*. This crew is very  
adept at handling... unexpected  
problems.

CHARIVRETHA (screen)

It only makes me wish even more  
strongly that you would come home  
now, where you are safe.

This is the subject Shar had not wanted to deal with. He  
tightens, but keeps his voice level and cool.

SHAR

I am needed here, *zhavey*.

CHARIVRETHA (screen)

Thirishar, you are our only child.  
We didn't bear and raise you with  
doubts about your obligations.

SHAR

No, *zhavey*.

CHARIVRETHA (screen)

You are a part of the whole. The covenant broken by one is lost by all.

SHAR

Yes, *zhavey*.

CHARIVRETHA (screen)

There's nothing for you to resolve.

SHAR

I know, *zhavey*.

Charivretha looks away, frustration showing through her professional face, disappointed that she is getting nowhere. Shar tightens more, reining in his own emotions. He feels guilty, and resents her for making him feel so.

CHARIVRETHA (screen)

You'll call very soon...

SHAR

As is my duty and privilege, *zhavey*. Until then, I find you whole in my thoughts.

CHARIVRETHA (screen)

As you are in mine.

She breaks the connection. He seethes under the surface, staring at the screen until the emotions finally break free. With a hiss he launches a powerful PUNCH into the monitor, shattering the screen in a shower of sparks.

For a moment he thrills in the anger and violence, then slowly brings himself under control and hangs his head.

**8**     **EXT. SPACE - ESTABLISHING**

A Starfleet runabout, the *Rio Grande*, sits stationary in space. Over the scene, we hear a horrific noise, something

like music but made out of teeth-shattering screeching sounds and crashing, grinding groans, much worse than any Klingon opera.

9 **INT. RUNABOUT COCKPIT**

Nog sits alone in the pilot seat, turned around to face the room and thoroughly enjoying the sound as it plays through the runabout's speakers. It's at full brain-melting volume, and he's blissing out to it and directing it like an orchestra, even singing along in some spots.

The ship's computer has to signal more than once before Nog notices it over the sound. He quickly hits some keys, silencing the music and checking the screens. One display shows an icon of a ship approaching, and as Nog looks out of the front window, he sees the *Da Vinci* emerge from warp some distance away. He opens a comm channel.

NOG

*Rio Grande* to *Da Vinci*. This is Lieutenant Nog. It's good to see you.

Captain Gold's face pops up on the screen.

GOLD (screen)

This is Captain Gold of the *Da Vinci* at your service, Lieutenant. We're ready to head to Empok Nor whenever you are.

NOG

Thank you, sir. Please set course one-eight-seven-mark-nine and proceed at full impulse. We'll be there in twenty minutes.

GOLD (screen)

Good. Lieutenant Commander Duffy has a full away team ready to go.

NOG

I'm transmitting beam-over coordinates now. They'll put us right at the access to the core.

GOLD (screen)  
Then let's get moving.

Nog cuts the connection and puts the runabout in motion.

**10**    **EXT. SPACE**

The *Da Vinci* and the *Rio Grande* fly in close formation. They approach the station EMPOK NOR - an identical twin to Deep Space Nine, but abandoned, and tilted at an eerie angle. It is mostly dark, except for the lower core area, which is still fully functional and seems to be powered up.

**11**    **INT. RUNABOUT COCKPIT**

Nog watches the approach to the station, worried. He's been to the station twice before and has bad memories of each. He reaches down and itches his prosthetic leg - a nervous tic. He checks readings on his panel, muttering to himself.

NOG  
If this place has been empty since  
Dukat's *pagh-wraith* cult left, why  
is life support still on, and why  
is the core running at full power?

The computer signals, and a male voice, Lt Cmdr KIERAN DUFFY (TNG 3x21 "Hollow Pursuits"), comes over the comm.

DUFFY (comm)  
*Rio Grande*, this is the *Da Vinci*.  
We're ready to beam over.

NOG  
So am I, sir.

He puts the runabout into park near the station, and sets the coordinates for the transporter. He steps onto the transporter platform, hits a button and dematerialises.

**12**    **INT. EMPOK NOR - LOWER CORE AREA**

Nog materialises into the same area where Vaughn and Kira fought Kitana'klan on DS9, but fully Cardassian in design,

no sign of Starfleet technology. The lights are dimmed, and the main power core hums and glows a dull grey-white.

Nine Starfleet are present, all in ops gold. Four humans and one Bolian are carrying phaser rifles - security.

The engineers are two more humans, a single BYNAR named SOLOMAN (short, genderless, large cranium, translation unit on his hip, as seen TNG 1x15 "11001001") and a NASAT named P8 BLUE (a large blue insectoid, about a meter tall, like a pillbug with a hard carapace, as seen TAS 1x16 "Jihad").

The security chief, Lt Cmdr CORSI, a tall, severe blonde female, begins directing her staff to take up positions. One of the engineers, a sandy-haired male, steps forward.

DUFFY

I'm Lieutenant Commander Duffy.  
I'm in charge here.

NOG

A pleasure, sir. If you don't mind, I need to check something.

DUFFY

Check whatever you want. We'll get started now.

NOG

Excuse me?

DUFFY

Don't worry. We'll get your core before you can eat a tube grub.

NOG

But sir, with all due respect, I've already -

DUFFY

Don't worry about it, kid.

NOG

Commander Duffy, I'm not a kid. I'm the chief operations officer of -

STEVENS

Hey Duffy, you better take a look  
at this. You too, Nog.

Nog and Duffy walk over to where STEVENS is at a console.  
Nog recognises the non-com engineer from the *Defiant*  
(4x07 "Starship Down").

NOG

Stevens, right?

STEVENS

Yup. Good to see you again, Nog.  
And congrats on the promotion.  
Take a look at this.

DUFFY

All the reaction chambers are  
online.

NOG

What? That's insane! We don't even  
keep all six active on DS-Nine.

CORSI

I thought this place was dead. The  
report from your first trip said  
it was just running on emergency  
battery power.

NOG

One of the chambers was brought  
online by the *pagh*-wraith cult  
that squatted here. But all six -  
it doesn't make sense.

CORSI

Someone's been here. We need to  
bring more people over.

DUFFY

Corsi, that isn't necessary.

CORSI



Commander, there's a very good chance that we're not alone on this station.

DUFFY

Actually, there's no chance that we aren't. We checked - there's no life signs except us.

NOG

Excuse me.

CORSI

Right now, maybe. But someone had to bring those reaction chambers online, and I doubt it was any cult.

NOG

Excuse me.

DUFFY

Keep your people on alert, and I'll let Captain Gold know. But we don't need any more security here. There's too many people as it is.

NOG

Excuse me.

DUFFY

(impatient)

What is it, Lieutenant?

NOG

Sir, I have already laid out a plan for the extraction of the core, and the transporting of it to DS9. If you'll just -

DUFFY

Look, Lieutenant, I appreciate you wanting to look good to your superiors. But don't worry about it. We're pros. We do this sort of thing every day. We'll have your

core out before you know it. Just  
sit back and watch us go at it,  
okay?

Duffy turns his back and walks over to talk to Soloman. Nog, who has been getting gradually more annoyed with Duffy's dismissive attitude, has had enough of being overlooked. But before Nog can say anything, he REACTS as if hearing a sharp sound.

NOG  
What's that noise?

DUFFY  
I don't hear anything.

Nog closes his eyes to concentrate, turns to follow the sound.

NOG  
It's... over there!

He points to where the Bolian security officer is walking along the catwalk. Suddenly the sound grows louder and energy crackles around the officer.

A large energy field appears covering the entire power core, looking like a tightly woven, flowing brown mesh. Contact with the field sends the Bolian FLYING across the catwalk, collapsing in a heap as the team reacts in shock.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### **13** INT. EMPOK NOR - LOWER CORE AREA

Where we were, as the team looks up at the brown energy mesh. Corsi, Duffy and Stevens all speak simultaneously.

CORSI / DUFFY / STEVENS

The Androssi.

Nog reacts to another sound, and a ball of the same kind of energy, a meter wide, appears in the middle of the catwalk.

CORSI

Androssi protocol one, now.

Corsi and the three remaining security quickly alter some settings on their phasers and fire at the ball. The ball disrupts for a moment, flickering in and out, but then reasserts itself and begins to fire back with arcs of electricity. Everyone takes cover; one security gets shot.

SECURITY 2

They've upgraded.

CORSI

Protocol two!

Corsi and the two remaining security continue firing. Nog, Soloman and P8 Blue rush under cover to the two downed security. Nog and P8 Blue grab dropped phasers, while the Bynar checks the security officers with his tricorder.

Nog observes what P8 Blue does with her phaser, copies it, and they begin FIRING on the energy ball, ducking from its shots. Duffy taps his combadge while the firefight rages.

DUFFY

Duffy to *Da Vinci*. We've got an Androssi security device here. Two guards are down, and the trick we used on Maeglin isn't working.

GOLD (comm)

Damn. So much for an uninhabited station.

DUFFY

Duffy to transporter room. Diego, please tell me you can get through the interference this time.

DIEGO (comm)

Sorry Commander, I lost the lock on you guys about a minute ago.

GOLD (comm)

Find a way this time, Feliciano.

DIEGO (comm)

Trying, sir.

One of the guards' shots succeeds in disrupting the ball again, but as soon as it reappears it shoots her down.

P8 Blue curls her insect body up into a hard-shelled ball and rolls herself over to the fallen body. Electrical discharges from the device hit her, but don't affect her.

Once there, she uncurls, checks the settings on the fallen guard's phaser, and calls them out to the team. Her voice has a tinkling, chime-like quality.

P8 BLUE

Level four, low frequency!

Everyone resets their phasers and FIRES. The ball fizzles and dies, and one phaser shot continues through the suddenly empty space and almost catches one of the guards. Nog stands up with a sigh, scratches his leg again.

DUFFY

Good work, Pattie. Soloman?

The solitary Bynar answers with a high-pitched, almost electronic voice. They are hesitant and pause a lot, as if expecting someone else to finish their sentences.

SOLOMAN

All three guards are... alive. But they will require... immediate medical attention.

DUFFY  
(taps combadge)  
Diego, any luck?

DIEGO (comm)  
Sort of. The interference is still there, but I can actually get a lock on Lieutenant Nog.

STEVENS  
I think I know why. Look at this, Duff.

Stevens shows Duffy his tricorder. Corsi aims towards the core with her phaser rifle.

CORSI  
Let's see if we can take out the mesh the same way.

NOG  
No! If you disrupt it, the phaser shots will go through the core.

CORSI  
Fine, we'll try something else.  
(nods to  
Nog's phaser)  
Nice work with that, by the way.

NOG  
Experience.

CORSI  
Right, DS9 was pretty much the front line for most of the war, wasn't it? Well, thanks for the assist.

DUFFY  
I don't believe this.

GOLD (comm)  
What is it, Duffy?

DUFFY  
Captain, these security devices  
are broadcasting a huge number of  
very specific interference  
patterns, all keyed to our  
combades. In fact, one of them is  
One-One-One's combadge.

The single Bynar reacts silently to the name of his former,  
presumably dead partner.

NOG  
I don't get it.

GOLD (comm)  
What it probably means is that  
we're dealing with Overseer Biron  
again.

CORSI  
Wait a minute. You mean to tell me  
that, when we were on Maeglin, the  
Androssi scanned and recorded the  
combadge frequencies of the entire  
*Da Vinci* crew and programmed them  
into their security devices, just  
on the off chance they'd bump into  
us again?

DUFFY  
That's exactly what we're telling  
you, Corsi.

STEVENS  
Hey, Feliciano, I got an idea. Can  
you use the signal you're getting  
from Nog as a booster for the  
overall signal?

DUFFY  
If that doesn't work, we might be  
able to take turns beaming people  
back and forth with his combadge.

STEVENS

We can make it work. Just modulate the pattern enhancer to the upper ranges and increase the annular confinement beam's range.

DIEGO (comm)

Or, I can just beam the Lieutenant up, hand him a pattern enhancer, and beam him back down.

Stevens and Duffy look at each other dumbfounded. Nog thinks this is the most obvious idea in the world.

STEVENS

Yeah, okay.

DUFFY

I mean, if you want to do it the sensible way, sure.

GOLD (comm)

Can the comedy, you two. Let's get the Lieutenant up so we can get the wounded out of there. Once that's done, we're going to yellow alert. If I know Biron, he'll be back, and I want to be ready. I want reports every fifteen minutes, Duffy, clear?

DUFFY

As a bell, sir.

CORSI

Sir, I recommend new combadges for the entire crew, and I'll need three more security guards too.

GOLD (comm)

Already on it, Corsi. Nog, get ready to beam up.

NOG

Yes sir.

The transporter effect shimmers around Nog.

DUFFY  
We'll get to work on the -

**14**    **INT. DA VINCI - TRANSPORTER ROOM**

Nog materialises on the transporter platform in a cramped room. The transporter chief, DIEGO FELICIANO, is surprised.

DUFFY (comm)  
(continuing)  
- field surrounding the core in  
the meantime.

DIEGO  
(caught unawares)  
You're a Ferengi!

NOG  
(frustrated)  
And you're a human. Can we get a  
move on, please?

DIEGO  
Right, sorry, just didn't realise.  
I'm Chief Feliciano. These are the  
pattern enhancers.

He brings the three, one-meter-tall tubular devices out and stands them next to Nog on the platform.

NOG  
Great. Let's get going.

DIEGO  
Just a sec, I'm supposed to wait  
on security. Look, I'm sorry about  
that Ferengi remark. You probably  
get a lot of that. I just wasn't  
expecting it, is all.

NOG  
It's okay. I'm sorry I snapped.  
Things have been a bit hectic.



The doors open and three female security guards walk in.  
The first tosses a combadge to Diego.

SECURITY 1  
New jewellery, Chief.

DIEGO  
I'm not into brooches.

The three of them step up onto the transporter platform.

NOG  
Energise, Chief.

Diego works the console, and Nog dematerialises again.

**15 EXT. DS9 - ESTABLISHING**

A different angle, favouring the *Defiant* sitting on the docking ring.

**16 INT. DS9 - BASHIR'S QUARTERS**

JULIAN BASHIR is checking himself in the mirror before the party. Ezri Dax comes up behind him and hugs him around the waist, picks a bit of fluff off his shoulder.

DAX  
You sure you're up to this?

BASHIR  
Of course. Genetically enhanced, remember. Nothing can keep me down for long.

DAX  
You're not invulnerable, Julian.

BASHIR  
I know that. I also know that...  
We may have made up last night,  
but we still need to talk about  
some things.

DAX

Absolutely. But we have a date.

They grin happily at each other and head out.

**17**    **INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

Quark is setting the last few dishes of food onto a table with one of his Ferengi waiters. Bowers, Vaughn, and two other random Starfleet are there. No Bajorans. Dax and Bashir enter, and Quark approaches them with a wide smile.

QUARK

Doctor, Lieutenant - welcome to the party.

DAX

Hi Quark.  
(sniffs the air)  
Ummm... What's that smell?

QUARK

You like it? It's my very best cologne, I only wear it for special occasions. The ladies seem to love it - even Leeta said she'd never smelled anything like it.

DAX

(politely blank)  
I can see why.

They move off, giving each other a secret "what the hell?" glance - the cologne is quite hideous - and go to Vaughn.

**18**    **INT. DS9 - CORRIDOR**

Kira walks down the corridor with Taran'atar.

KIRA

Just try to relax, mingle, engage people in conversation.

TARAN'ATAR

What shall I say?

KIRA

Well, talk about yourself, ask them questions about themselves. The idea is to let people get to know the real you, rather than just "a Jem'Hadar."

TARAN'ATAR

The real me does not relax, or engage in pointless conversation.

KIRA

Right... well... just try your best.

They reach the door to the Wardroom and enter.

**19    INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

Kira heads towards the food tables, while Taran'atar hangs back by the door, observing. He watches as Kira chats to Vaughn, Bowers chats to the other Starfleeters. He is just trying to learn the patterns of behaviour.

Bashir and Dax see him seeing them, and with a glance of agreement, they walk over to him. Taran'atar stiffens as they approach.

DAX

Taran'atar, I'm Ezri Dax. I want to welcome you to the station.

Taran'atar nods. A brief pause, then Bashir tries.

BASHIR

Taran'atar, I just wanted to say again that, ah, I'm very grateful to you for saving my life.

TARAN'ATAR

You owe me nothing.

DAX

Come with us. We can help you interact with the others. If that's your choice.

TARAN' ATAR

Thank you.

They lead into the room. Taran'atar is entirely befuddled but quite proud of himself for making it this far.

**20 EST. EMPOK NOR - ESTABLISHING**

The station listing on its eerie angle, the *Da Vinci* holding station nearby, the *Rio Grande* parked near (but not docked at) one of the upper docking pylons.

**21 INT. EMPOK NOR - LOWER CORE AREA**

The SCE team and Nog are working busily at various consoles and screens.

NOG

Can someone explain to me what, precisely, we are up against?

DUFFY

The Androssi. They first showed up in the Demilitarised Zone a few years back, trying to convince the Maquis to accept their help.

NOG

Help?

DUFFY

In a lot of ways, the Androssi are like the SCE. They offer to fix technical problems - for a price.

NOG

What's wrong with that?

DUFFY

Well, there's usually a big difference between what they ask for and what they actually take. They've also been known to cause the problem in the first place, so they can charge to come in and fix it. And most of the people they

"help" usually end up worse than they started, mainly because what they ask for is new technology.

NOG

What about altering old technology?

Duffy and Stevens walk over to join Nog at a console.

DUFFY

They've made modifications.

CORSI

What kind of modifications?

DUFFY

Not sure. The Androssi use these dimensional shifts in their technology. That's why their stuff sometimes doesn't show up until you interact with it.

CORSI

Okay, here's a question. Let's say they have modified the station. Do we have any reason to stop them?

NOG

We need the fusion core!

CORSI

So what? I remind you, Lieutenant, we're on an unclaimed station in unclaimed space. The Androssi have as much right to it as we do.

NOG

We're not just abandoning the station to these people. We have to have that fusion core.

CORSI

(to Duffy)

Commander?

DUFFY

I'm with Nog here, Corsi. You're right, the Androssi have as much right to the station as we do. But we have just as much right to try to dismantle their net.

SOLOMAN

Lieutenant Commander Duffy?

DUFFY

Talk to me, Soloman.

SOLOMAN

As far as I can... determine, the Androssi have upgraded their... technology since the last time... we encountered them. I do not believe I can interface with their technology... as One-One-One and I attempted the... last time.

DUFFY

Okay. Take a look at the station's computer, see if you can figure out what they did to it.

SOLOMAN

Yes sir.

The Nasat, P8 Blue, skitters over on all eights.

P8 BLUE

I have an idea, sir.

DUFFY

Good, we could use one.

P8 BLUE

The field was disrupted with a level-four, low-frequency phaser blast. But we can't fire on it without risking hitting the core.

DUFFY

We know all that, Pattie.

P8 BLUE

Right, but I'm thinking we could set up one of the rifles to emit a pulse at that level and frequency, that would dissipate on impact no matter what.

DUFFY

It's certainly worth a shot, if you'll pardon the pun. Set to it.

She trundles over to one of the security guards, takes the rifle, starts making adjustments. Stevens is poring over his console. The screen shows a graphic of the station, focusing first on the upper pylons, then the lower ones.

STEVENS

(to self)

Okay, the parts up on the pylons are in the same spots we put the weapons upgrades on DS-Nine. That makes sense. No wait, the ones on the lower pylons are different. They kinda look like... hoo boy.

P8 Blue gives the altered phaser rifle back to the security guard, who sets up and fires. The mesh disrupts, flickers, and disappears. Celebrations.

NOG

Yes!

DUFFY

Good work, Pattie.

STEVENS

Uh, Duff?

DUFFY

Yeah, Fabe?

STEVENS

I think I know what they've done here. You should look.

Duffy goes over to Stevens' panel, and reads what's there.  
His face drops.

DUFFY

I'd like to state for the record  
that this really, really sucks.

(taps combadge)

Duffy to Gold.

GOLD (comm)

Go ahead, Commander.

DUFFY

We've broken through the field  
round the fusion core, so now we  
can get at it.

GOLD (comm)

Good work.

DUFFY

The bad news is that the Androssi  
have made some modifications to  
the station's equipment. Without  
being a hundred percent sure how  
it works exactly...

GOLD (comm)

Spit it out, Duffy.

DUFFY

Aye, sir. The Androssi are turning  
Empok Nor into the mother of all  
mobile weapons platforms.

Off their dismayed expressions...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT TWO**



**ACT THREE**

FADE IN:

**22    INT. EMPOK NOR - LOWER CORE AREA**

The SCE team look at Duffy in dismay, as Stevens, Nog and Soloman continue to work at panels. Dark and spooky, and the people are dwarfed by the enormous power core.

GOLD (comm)  
You sure about this, Duffy?

DUFFY  
Completely? No. We'd need about a year and a full research team to figure most of this stuff out. But they've definitely put some upgraded thrusters onto the lower pylons and some very nasty weapons systems into the upper pylons. We're talking phasers at what I'd have to call level thirty or so.

NOG  
Sir, if I may?

GOLD (comm)  
Go ahead, Lieutenant.

NOG  
They've also made modifications to the core. Only one of the reactor chambers is actually running the station. The rest are powering a massive propulsion system that looks capable of up to warp six.

SOLOMAN  
Captain, I have interfaced with... the station's computer. It... confirms what the others have said, but there are also... preparations under way for the installation... of quantum torpedo bays in the docking ring.

GOLD (comm)

*Gevalt*. I think we can all agree that a weapons platform of that size and power, moving at warp six, is a tremendously bad idea. I want a full analysis and options of what we can do about it.

NOG

What about extracting the core?

VOICE (comm)

Sir, long-range scans are picking up a vessel on direct approach -

The signal is lost in static - everyone looks worried.

DUFFY

Duffy to *Da Vinci*, you're breaking up.

VOICE (static)

- figuration and po-... Androssi.

DUFFY

*Da Vinci*, come in!

CORSI

(taps badge)

Corsi to *Da Vinci*, come in.

**23**    **EXT. EMPOK NOR**

As the station hangs in the background, the ANDROSSI SHIP looms into view. It is much larger than the *Da Vinci*, a dull beige colour, and a remarkably uninteresting, boxy design. It FIRES on the *Da Vinci*.

**24**    **INT. EMPOK NOR - LOWER CORE AREA**

The sounds of weapons fire filter through, muffled by the metal of the station. Nog checks his tricorder.

NOG

There's some kind of jamming field  
- the combadges are useless.

CORSI

The Androssi came back to see  
who's been sleeping in their beds.

DUFFY

Fairy-tale references, now,  
Commander? That's new.

CORSI

Commander Duffy, this is serious.  
We need to -

DUFFY

- Keep doing what we're doing.  
What the Captain ordered us to do.  
Soloman, I want to know everything  
the Androssi have done.

SOLOMAN

It would be best if we -  
(wince at the slip)  
- if I did that work in the  
central computer core, Commander.

CORSI

I strongly recommend against  
splitting up, Commander. The  
Androssi might be boarding the  
station at any minute.

On cue, a faster, quieter and less ostentatious effect than  
Starfleet transporters reveals five armed ANDROSSI.

They are humanoid, various tones of brown-skinned, wearing  
beige jumpsuits, long brown hair in a ponytail and long  
beards. The general effect is of total blandness. Two wear  
two nose-rings each, two wear none, and one wears four  
(plus a shorter beard) - clearly the leader, HOWWI.

In response, Corsi and her security team instantly move to  
protect one of the engineering team each. Corsi places  
herself in front of Stevens. Duffy shoots Corsi a look not  
to fire first - she nods her understanding.

DUFFY  
Sub-Overseer Howwi.

HOWWI  
This is now the second time you've interfered in a lawful Androssi operation, Commander Duffy.

DUFFY  
That's your interpretation. We have as much claim to Empok Nor as you do.

HOWWI  
Perhaps. But we have a mission for the Elite to fulfil.

DUFFY  
So do we. Thousands of lives are counting on us to get this fusion core back to one of our stations.

NOG  
In fact, that's all we need. Can't we negotiate this? Most of your systems are in other parts of the station. We can extract the fusion core, and you're welcome to the rest of it.

Duffy shoots Nog a look - that is not how we do things. The noise of the battle going on outside filters through.

HOWWI  
Why do these lives you wish to save concern us?

DUFFY  
I beg your pardon?

HOWWI  
We are performing a mission for the Elite. You wish us to hamper that mission to preserve the lives of irrelevant aliens. We have

nothing to gain by allowing you to  
take the core.

(turns to the  
other Androssi)

Kill them.

The Starfleet people tense for combat. One of the Androssi touches a control, and a brown energy mesh appears around the five aliens. It begins shooting out electrical bursts.

CORSI

Fire!

The security team all fire, and the energy shield flickers and dies, leaving five rather surprised Androssi.

DUFFY

You're not the only ones with cute  
tricks, Howwi.

CORSI

On stun, and fire!

The team fires again, and all five Androssi go down, unconscious. The SCE team sigh with relief, while more sounds of battle come from outside.

DUFFY

You know, it's really nice when  
things go easy once in a while.

CORSI

We're not out of this yet.

DUFFY

I know. First we figure out how to  
get the Androssi tech separated  
from the Cardassian tech. Then we  
need to extract the core.

NOG

Sir, as I said, I already drafted  
a plan for extracting the core -

DUFFY

And I'm sure it's a fine one,  
Lieutenant, but we can handle  
that. I need you and Stevens to do  
something more important.

STEVENS

Why do I always get nervous when  
you smile like that?

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

Just for a moment...

**26    INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

Dax is chatting with Vaughn and Taran'atar.

VAUGHN

Starfleet has approved a  
substantial refit for the *Defiant*,  
if we're going to be taking it  
back into the Gamma Quadrant. Two  
science labs, biochem, stellar  
cartography, upgraded sensors...

DAX

That'll take weeks to be finished.

VAUGHN

There's no rush, not if what  
Taran'atar said about the Dominion  
is true.

TARAN'ATAR

The Founders have welcomed  
Starfleet into the Gamma Quadrant.  
We will not interfere.

DAX

Well, good. Any ideas who you'll  
choose for your command staff yet?

VAUGHN

Is that a hint, Dax?

DAX

Well, I have been thinking about some things since the attack on the station.

VAUGHN

Since you saved the station.

DAX

Exactly. Since I took command of the *Defiant*. It wasn't a decision I made to take command - more like a reflex. And I'm wondering where that might lead.

The doors open and Shar enters. He really doesn't want to face people right now. Before he's taken more than a step inside, Quark is at his side. Shar notices the odd smell.

QUARK

Shar! I'm so glad you could make it. Try these - fresh Bajoran vegetables, marinated in *p'losie* wine. Exquisite!

Shar nervously takes a piece, sniffs it, tastes it.

SHAR

Very good. Do you know if Lieutenant Ro is coming?

QUARK

Of course! Why do you think I'm wearing this cologne? I don't just put it on for no good reason. What do you think?

SHAR

I've never smelt anything like it.

QUARK

Exactly. As long as we're talking, I've been meaning to ask you, I had this incredible idea about establishing new shipping lanes into the Beta Quadrant, and -

RO

Hey Shar!

Shar is relieved and turns to see LIEUTENANT RO entering. Quark is torn between admiring her and being annoyed at her interrupting his flow. She points across the room.

RO

Quark, look - Lieutenant Bowers is holding an empty glass. You're not catering for a flat fee, are you?

QUARK

(resigned)

If you'll excuse me... perhaps we can pick this up again later.

SHAR

(to Ro)

Hello, Lieutenant.

RO

Sorry about Quark. Now that the news about your mother is out, he thinks if he can get in good with you, he'll have a direct line to the Federation Council.

SHAR

Of course. It's always the same.

RO

Like anyone cares who your mom is.

SHAR

You don't care...?

RO

About your mother? Why would I? I don't know her.

Shar brightens a little.

Across the room, Bashir brings a new drink to Dax. Vaughn leaves them be, and takes Taran'atar to talk to Bowers. Off her dazzling grin...



BASHIR

I take it your conversation went poorly.

DAX

I'll have you know you're looking at the new unofficial assistant commander for the *Defiant's* first trip into the Gamma Quadrant.

BASHIR

Ezri, that's wonderful. And you're sure this is what you want?

DAX

Positive. I just finally realised with as much potential as I have, I could stand around for years contemplating my choices, or I could just get on with it.

BASHIR

Well I'm happy for you.

DAX

And it might do you some good to remember that as much as I love you, you'll probably have to call me 'sir' before long.

BASHIR

(low)

I can call you 'sir' right now, if you like.

DAX

(smirk)

Ask me again later.

**27**    **EXT. EMPOK NOR**

The battle between the Androssi ship and the *Da Vinci* continues. The *Da Vinci* scores a decent hit on the Androssi, pulls a good evasive manoeuvre, but still suffers a particularly nasty return hit.

28 INT. EMPOK NOR - LOWER CORE AREA

The crew reacts to the noise of that attack. The visual of the battle still plays on a screen as everyone works, casting nervous glances at the screen. Nog jumps as more attack sounds ring through the hull of the station.

DUFFY

Keep your mind on your work,  
Lieutenant. There's nothing we can  
do for the *Da Vinci* from here  
anyway. Except this...  
(works more keys)  
Got it! Nog, you're in.

29 EXT. EMPOK NOR - UPPER PYLON

The *Rio Grande* comes to life as lights come on inside. It surges away from the station, using its shadow to hide in, and coming at the Androssi ship from behind.

30 INT. EMPOK NOR - LOWER CORE AREA

DUFFY

Sensor readings are still spotty,  
but it looks like the *Da Vinci* has  
taken a lot of damage. Their  
shields are completely gone!

NOG

The Androssi's starboard shields  
are down.

DUFFY

So fire phasers there.

NOG

No wait, I have a better idea.

DUFFY

Lieutenant, I gave you an order.

NOG

I know the *Rio Grande* better than  
you do, Commander, and I know what

it's capable of. Its phasers won't make much difference on that hull.

**31**    **EXT. EMPOK NOR - THE BATTLE**

The *Rio Grande* fires phasers on the Androssi's port side, where the shields still hold. The Androssi ship begins to turn towards the runabout, leaving its vulnerable starboard side open to the *Da Vinci*.

**32**    **INT. EMPOK NOR - LOWER CORE AREA**

DUFFY

Okay, you've got them distracted.  
Come on, Captain, see the opening...

**33**    **EXT. EMPOK NOR - THE BATTLE**

The *Da Vinci* launches photon torpedoes towards the Androssi's unshielded starboard side, and they all score.

**34**    **INT. EMPOK NOR - LOWER CORE AREA**

DUFFY

Yes! Multiple hull breaches on the Androssi ship. Power levels are failing... and they're retreating. Well done, Lieutenant.

Duffy and Nog look around as an Androssi transporter effect takes Howwi and the other two unconscious officers. The two workers (the ones without nose-rings) are left behind.

CORSI

I guess these two are prisoners?

DUFFY

I suppose. We'll turn them over to a starbase, or maybe remand them to Maeglin.

(turns to Stevens)

How's the station?

STEVENS

Remember last time, when all their  
tech just disappeared?

CORSI

Let me guess.

STEVENS

Yep, they did it again. It all  
fell into whatever dimension they  
hide it in when they're not using  
it. As far as I can tell, they  
left Empok Nor exactly as they  
found it.

NOG

Not exactly. The structural  
integrity of the fusion core's  
been compromised. I don't think we  
can safely tow it back to DS-Nine.

On Nog's disappointment in that, we...

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FADE IN:

**35    EXT. EMPOK NOR - ESTABLISHING**

Quiet now as the *Da Vinci* rests, the *Rio Grande* nearby.

**36    INT. EMPOK NOR - OPS**

The same as DS9 Ops, but dark, dingy, most of the consoles don't work. A place that is running down and unused. Nog and the SCE team stand or sit around the central table.

The Androssi prisoners have been beamed back to the *Da Vinci* with two security - the other security stay on the upper level out of the way. Nog's expression is not happy.

DUFFY

All right, people. I want options  
and I don't care how ridiculous  
they sound.

SOLOMAN

Can we not fix the... structural  
integrity field?

P8 BLUE

Not without Cardassian emitters.  
We don't have replicator patterns  
for them, and I doubt we could get  
Cardassia to ship us any.

STEVENS

Even if they could, it would take  
them over a week to get here.

NOG

We don't have that kind of time.  
If we don't get this replacement  
core to Deep Space Nine within ten  
days, the station will no longer  
be viable.

DUFFY

We know that, Lieutenant.

CORSI

Can't you put it in a forcefield?

DUFFY

Not and tow it at warp. And if we stick with sublight, it'll take a hell of a lot more than ten days.

STEVENS

Maybe if we use the runabout's warp engines - create a static warp bubble around the core so it can handle the forcefield.

P8 BLUE

The stresses of the warp bubble would tear it to pieces. Besides, those things only work about half the time anyway.

DUFFY

Okay, so that's out.

Nog has been watching as the four engineers throw about these increasingly complicated and technobabble solutions, mostly ignoring he is even there. Finally, when there is a lull, he states what he thinks is obvious.

NOG

Why don't we just move the whole station?

Silence for a few seconds as they all look at him.

DUFFY

Excuse me?

NOG

Move the whole station. Get a bunch of ships to tractor it at warp to the Bajoran system.

STEVENS

Uh, Nog... if I'm remembering right, DS-Nine is about fifteen-

hundred meters by three-hundred-seventy meters, right? And this place has the same dimensions.

NOG

Yes.

DUFFY

And you want to tow it at warp?

NOG

Low warp, but it can be done. We'd need twelve ships, one on each pylon and six on the docking ring.

P8 BLUE

They'd all need to be the same general size and class, otherwise the tractor beams would be incompatible.

NOG

No they won't. The *Rio Grande* can take point and make sure the warp fields and tractor beams stay coordinated.

DUFFY

Yeah, but you'd only be able to do that at warp two, and then you'd never make it in time.

STEVENS

(inspiration hitting)

We can do it at warp four.

DUFFY

Fabe...

STEVENS

I'm serious, Duff. The *Da Vinci* just took a major pounding from the *Androssi*, and it can still do warp four. It's baby steps. Think out of the box for a change.

DUFFY

Don't get cute, Fabe. Besides, think about what kind of subspace disruption you're going to cause. Communications will be spotty at best - how will you coordinate everything when you can't even stay in constant contact?

NOG

I'm not sure, but there has to -

P8 BLUE

Oh that's easy. There's a new method of close-range ship-to-ship using tight-beam tachyon pulses. The Romulans developed it, and finally decided to share it about a week before the end of the war.

NOG

I didn't know about that.

DUFFY

Neither did I.

P8 BLUE

You people really need to keep up on the trades. It's all they've been talking about in the "Journal of Engineers and Technicians."

DUFFY

(cut to the chase)

Can you make one?

P8 BLUE

Of course, I have the replicator pattern on the *Da Vinci*.

DUFFY

Well alright then. Duffy to Gold.

GOLD (comm)

Go ahead, Duffy.



DUFFY

We have a new plan, sir, that everyone seems to think can work. There's only one problem - we'll need twelve ships.

GOLD (comm)

(chuckling)

Oh, let me just make a call.

37 **EST. DA VINCI - ESTABLISHING**

Just to indicate time passing. Empok Nor in the background.

38 **INT. DA VINCI - CAPTAIN'S READY ROOM**

The door chimes as Captain Gold sits behind his desk.

GOLD

Come in.

The doors open and Nog enters, a little nervous.

GOLD

Lieutenant Nog. I've contacted the SCE liaison to the Admiralty, and informed him of your plan. His specific words were, "Have ye gone daft, lad?"

NOG

I understand it's a little outdid the established norms, sir...

GOLD

Oh, never mind that. Those norms are just guidelines, and your job as an engineer is to find a better way around them. Captain Scott actually complimented you on your *chutzpah*, but I'm afraid he could only arrange for nine ships. And once they get here, you'll have to persuade them to do what you want.

NOG

Leave that to me, sir. And don't worry about it - with *Da Vinci*, we'll have ten ships, which is actually one more than we need -

GOLD

Then why did you ask for twelve?

NOG

(nervously)

Fifth Rule of Acquisition, sir. Always exaggerate your estimates.

GOLD

(chuckling)

That was an engineer's axiom long before you people took it on. All right, Lieutenant, you've done well. Off you go - you need to start planning your persuasions.

**39    INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

Vaughn is relaxed and happy, enjoying the party. He looks over to where Quark is chatting to Ro with an adoring look, and decides to go rescue her. As he approaches, he sniffs the air a little, pulls a face, but doesn't say anything.

VAUGHN

Nice party, Quark. Though I should tell you, that fruit wine of yours is right on the edge of going bad.

QUARK

I'll have to look into that.

(back to Ro)

So, next week then.

After a sour glare at Vaughn, Quark bounces away happily. Ro is somewhat uncomfortable in Vaughn's presence.

VAUGHN

Lieutenant Ro, I'm Elias Vaughn.

RO

Commander.

VAUGHN

I hear you were top of your class at Advanced Tactical. I actually helped design their curriculum. I'd be interested in hearing what you thought of the training. We should get together some time.

RO (nonplussed)

That would be fine. I'm sorry, Commander, if you'll excuse me...

She heads over to Shar; Vaughn watches her go, as Kira approaches him.

VAUGHN

A intriguing woman. I wonder if she has any idea what Picard did for her after she returned to Bajor. Starfleet wanted her extradited, you know, because of that business with the Maquis. But he got them to drop the charges.

KIRA

I had no idea.

**40    EST. EMPOK NOR - ESTABLISHING**

Start at the usual, but then close in and angle until we see that the *Rio Grande* is now docked at one of the upper pylons. The *Da Vinci* is still parked at a distance.

**41    INT. RIO GRANDE COCKPIT**

Nog hunches over his console working on his plans as the music from earlier plays again, at the same ear-splitting volume. Like before, a comm signal has to beep twice before Nog notices it and answers.

An older human woman, Captain DEMITRIJIAN, comes on screen and winces at the sound, which Nog quickly silences.

NOG

Captain Demitrijian.

DEMITRIJIAN (screen)  
Lieutenant. I've been thinking  
about your proposal. I've gone  
over it with my chief engineer.  
She thinks you're categorically  
insane and refuses to accept any  
responsibility if we go through  
with this.

NOG  
(disappointed)  
Well, thank you for considering it  
at least, Captain.

DEMITRIJIAN (screen)  
I haven't said we won't do it,  
mister. Last time I checked, I was  
in command of the *Sugihara*, not  
Lieutenant Barbanti, and not you.

NOG  
I'm sorry, sir, I -

DEMITRIJIAN (screen)  
What I want to know is, what's in  
it for me?

NOG  
(on familiar ground)  
You'll have shore leave for your  
crew on Bajor, and whatever  
maintenance your ship requires...

DEMITRIJIAN (screen)  
Both of which I can get at  
Starbase 96, which at least has a  
working power source. No, I'll  
need more than that, Lieutenant.

NOG  
I'm not sure what else to offer...

DEMETRIJIAN (screen)

When you established the comm, you had some kind of music playing. It sounded like Sinnravian *drad*.

NOG

Yes! Yes it was. I can make a recording for you.

DEMITRIJIAN (screen)

Not for me, I can't stand that stuff. But my son is dating a Sinnravian, and he hasn't been able to get hold of Blee Luu's newest recording.

NOG

It's yours.

DEMITRIJIAN (screen)

Original, not a copy. Sinnravians are fussy about that. Something about their inner ears.

NOG

You'll have an original recording by the time we reach DS9.

DEMETRIJIAN

In that case, Lieutenant, the *Sugihara* is at your disposal.

NOG

Excellent! Thank you Captain. *Rio Grande* out.

Nog breaks the connection, sits back with a sigh.

NOG

Now, how am I supposed to get hold of Blee Luu's latest recording?

Nog starts up the music again, goes back to his plans. After a moment, the door opens and P8 BLUE enters. She immediately screeches, waving her pincers about violently.

P8 BLUE

Lieutenant, if you don't shut that horrible noise off right now, Deep Space Nine will need a new chief engineer, because the present one will be larva food!

NOG

Computer, terminate music.

It does. P8 Blue sighs, relieved.

P8 BLUE

First Abramowitz, now you.

NOG

Who's Abramowitz?

P8 BLUE

Our cultural specialist, and also my roommate. She just got the latest recording of that fecal matter you call music by Blee Luu, and it's driving me insane.

NOG

(smiling)

Really? Perhaps we can help each other out.

**42    INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

The crowd chats pleasantly, focus on Kira and Ezri. The door opens and KASIDY YATES hesitantly enters. Kira excuses herself, and approaches Kasidy with a nervous smile.

KIRA

Kas, I'm so glad you decided to come.

KASIDY

Actually, I'm not staying. I'm feeling a little tired. But I wanted you to know that I've decided to go ahead with my plans to move to Bajor.

KIRA

That's wonderful. I just know it's  
the right thing for you, Kas,  
after all you've done with the  
house, and...

(and Ben)

...and how much you've wanted it.

Kasidy pats her belly thoughtfully.

KASIDY

You're right. It's what I want.

**43    INT. DS9 - CORRIDOR**

Ensign Prynn Tenmei walks down the corridor, nervously  
straightening her uniform, wanting to look her best for the  
new first officer.

The door opens and she spots Vaughn standing across the  
room, chatting to Ro (he doesn't spot her). Her eyes go  
wide with surprise, quickly turning to anger.

TENMEI

Vaughn?! Oh God, he's the new  
first officer?

Shaking with rage, she turns before she can be spotted and  
walks back down the corridor. After a few steps, she breaks  
into a run, tears in her eyes.

FADE OUT:

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN:

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

Standard establisher, just with the lower core still dark.

**45    INT. DS9 - DAX'S QUARTERS**

Dax stands at a mirror, checking herself before leaving for the morning shift. She is now wearing a red command collar, with full lieutenant's pips. Bashir comes up from behind, hugs her round the waist, picks fluff off her shoulder.

BASHIR

You sure you're ready for this?

DAX

Absolutely.

BASHIR

You're not invulnerable, Ezri.

DAX

Stop worrying, Julian. I've made my decision and I'm comfortable with it. I am who I am, and it's time I started acting like it.

They kiss, and head out together.

**46    INT. DS9 - OPS**

Basically the same as at the top of the episode. Everyone is in the same place, except that Shar is sat at the science station, and Ezri Dax is wearing her red command collar. Vaughn approaches Shar just as his panel goes wild.

VAUGHN

Cardassian control interfaces take some getting used to, Ensign.

SHAR

(flustered)

Yes, sir.



VAUGHN

Relax, mister ch'Thane. Given the circumstances, it's no wonder the arrays are going haywire. Stay with it. I've found when dealing with alien computer systems, that it helps to keep the psychology of the people who created them in mind. In this case, meticulous and detail-oriented. Redundancies are to be expected.

SHAR

Thank you, sir.

The hissing of the office door indicates Kira's arrival. Vaughn heads to the central table as she descends.

KIRA

Something coming in?

VAUGHN

Certainly looks that way. A quite large something, at low warp.

KIRA

Nog?

VAUGHN

It had better be, or we're going to be a multi-gigaton smear of debris across the Denorios Belt.

KIRA

(to Shar)

But no hail?

SHAR

No sir, but we anticipated this. Something this big, when you consider subspace disruptions...

KIRA

(back to Vaughn)

Does it look like he's leaving  
himself enough room to brake?

VAUGHN

It depends on how much momentum it  
had when Nog took it to warp. Let  
him do his job, Colonel.

She's not entirely thrilled with his tone, but lets it go.

KIRA

(to Shar)

Anything on short-range, Ensign?

SHAR

(worried)

I was told that the short-range  
array was to be taken offline  
until further notice. Sir.

KIRA

(to Vaughn)

I don't remember authorising that.

VAUGHN

You didn't, I gave the order  
yesterday. You were busy dealing  
with the Cardassian liaison at the  
time. I didn't want to bother you  
with it. It was an easy choice -  
short-range sensors or lights.

KIRA

Right. Lights. Good call.

(to Shar)

Bring them back online, Ensign.

Shar hits a few keys, and the main viewscreen comes to  
life. Everyone turns to watch. On the screen, space begins  
to slowly split open with the hint of something emerging.

**47**    **EXT. SPACE - DS9**

With the station off to one side, the tear in space expands  
to reveal the remarkable sight of a tiny runabout leading a  
fleet of nine varied starships (including the *Da Vinci*).

The ships are arranged equally around Empok Nor (now at the proper angle), pulling it with tractor beams, one on each pylon and three around the docking ring.

As the whole arrangement drops out of warp, far enough away from DS9 to not cause a problem, the ships cut tractor beams in turn. It almost looks like two DS9s side by side.

**48**    **INT. DS9 OPS**

Everyone watches the screen with awe. After a moment, Kira breaks out with a whoop of success, followed by others.

BOWERS

Colonel, we're receiving a hail  
from the *Rio Grande*.

KIRA

About time. On screen, Lieutenant.

The screen changes to an image of Nog in the runabout cockpit, looking like he hasn't slept in days.

NOG (screen)

Lieutenant Nog reporting, Colonel.

KIRA

Nog, I...  
    (lost for words,  
    tries again)  
You realise this is going to spoil  
my view of the wormhole, don't  
you?

NOG (screen)

Not for long, Colonel. Once we  
transfer Empok Nor's lower core to  
Deep Space Nine, we can tow what's  
left of the station some place  
nearby and park it there for the  
next time we need spare parts.

VAUGHN

How did the station hold up?

NOG (screen)

Even better than my simulations predicted, Commander. I'll be able to start work on the fusion core transfer as soon as we've stabilised orbit.

VAUGHN

No, I don't think so. See that Empok Nor is stable, but I want you asleep in your quarters as soon as you're finished.

Nog is instinctively about to protest. Vaughn interrupts before he can get started.

VAUGHN (cont)

Don't force me to make it an order, Lieutenant.

NOG (screen)

Yes, Commander. Thank you. And Colonel, you should know the SCE really came through. I couldn't have done it without them, or the other ships in the convoy.

KIRA

I'll make sure to note that in my report. And Nog?

NOG (screen)

Yes, Colonel?

KIRA

Excellent work.

NOG (screen)

Thank you, Colonel.

Nog signs off, and Kira turns to Vaughn with a grin.

VAUGHN

I told you the kid had style.

Kira smiles back at him, admitting he has a point.

49     **INT. RIO GRANDE COCKPIT**

Nog sits back with a sigh of exhaustion as the connection drops. Another comm signal comes in, and he accepts.

GOLD (screen)  
I'm afraid we can't stay,  
Lieutenant. We've just received  
another, rather urgent mission.  
Please tell Colonel Kira I'm sorry  
I won't get to see the station.

NOG  
I will, sir.

GOLD (screen)  
You did good work here today, Nog.  
Any chance I can convince you to  
transfer here? I have a feeling  
you'd fit right in.

The image moves sideways as Lt Cmdr Duffy's face appears beside Gold's.

DUFFY (screen)  
He's right, Nog. I know we may not  
have seemed very hospitable at  
first, but - well, I was wrong to  
slap you down. I'm sorry for that.  
I'd be honoured if you'd join us.

NOG  
I'm flattered by your offer,  
Captain - and I accept your  
apology, Commander - but I have to  
say no. I'm very happy where I am.

GOLD (screen)  
It's our loss. Good luck, son.

NOG  
To you too, sir. Really, thanks.  
But on Deep Space Nine... I'm the  
chief.

Gold nods his understanding and signs off. Nog smiles, turns his music back on, and begins to work again.

**49**    **EXT. SPACE - RIO GRANDE**

Pulling away from the runabout as the music continues to play, and both stations and the other starships hang placidly in the background.

FADE OUT:

**THE END**