

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

12x12 - "Life of a Statesman."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and on the *Star Trek* tie-in novels
by Pocket Books

TNG 17x12 - "THE LIBERATED"

Enterprise explores the sentient star cluster looking for *Einstein*. Communing with the Noh-Angel entities, T'Ryssa Chen understands that they sent the Borg ship away, separating it and *Rhea* without taking sides. Suddenly a Borg ship appears, but it is not *Einstein* - it is the [Liberated Borg ship](#) commanded by [Hugh](#) (TNG 7x01 "Descent, pt 2"). *Einstein* is coming right behind him to assimilate the Noh-Angels' natural slipstream. But when *Enterprise* engages, the Noh-Angels interfere again, refusing to allow them to fight. It sees both sides as squabbling children, amusing to watch but no real threat. Chen cannot seem to get the entity to understand that the Borg are dangerous and must be stopped. Meanwhile, Hugh asks Crusher for help in making his Liberated Borg fertile so they can solidify their new community - an awkward request since she and Picard are currently in conflict over whether to bring a child into such a dangerous world.

TTN 1x12 - "FEAR IN A HANDFUL OF DUST"

After their shuttle crash, Jaza and Y'Lira find what appears to be the wreckage of *Titan*. They have moved through time, thanks to the energy tesseract in orbit. Elsewhere, the rest of the away team bickers - Vale is sure *Titan* is destroyed, Troi tries to maintain hope, Ra-Havreii blames himself. They find the same wreckage, but a thousand years old. Devastated, Troi admits that she suffered a miscarriage, and her emotional turmoil has been transmitting to the crew, hence all the arguing. In the past, Jaza explains his faith in the Prophets' plan. As a child of the Occupation, he did not always believe, but now he does - this is where he is meant to be. In the present, Orishans attack and kidnap Ra-Havreii and drag him back to their base, deep underground. The others give chase, and are captured too. But luckily, Ra-Havreii has worked out that the crashed ship out there... is not *Titan* at all.

VOY 10x12 - "REVENANT"

Disgraced former Starfleet cadet [Nick Locarno](#) (TNG 5x19 "The First Duty") helps the privateer crew of *Celtic* access a crippled Starfleet ship. When he realises it is *Reston*,

assimilated by the super-cube (VOY 10x09 "Hungry"), he wants to run, but *Celtic's* captain Walsh insists this is a unique opportunity. Boarding the abandoned ship, they find dead drones everywhere, looming and haunting. Locarno tries to restart the *Reston's* computers, but the Borg tech identifies *Celtic* as a threat and destroys it, Walsh included. The surviving crew turn on each other, imagining monsters round every corner. When one of them is assimilated, he reveals that they have a traitor - Walsh brought them here deliberately, and they have been slowly assimilating since they stepped on board. Starfleet has standing orders to destroy *Reston* if found, and they cannot operate the ship to escape because they are not Borg. Locarno realises that the only way to survive... is to become Borg.

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. PALAIS - MONET ROOM

A portrait of former president [THELIAN](#) hangs on the wall - a middle-aged Andorian *thaan* with receding white hair.

Move sideways to the next portrait in line - AMITRA, a female [Pandrilite](#), a bulky blue-skinned species with a monkey-like nose and flopping pointed ears.

On to the next portrait - [JARESH-INYO](#), the male Grazerite seen in DS9 4x11 "Homefront" / DS9 4x12 "Paradise Lost".

Then to [MIN ZIFE](#), the male Bolian seen in several earlier episodes. Next to the hefty Jaresh-Inyo, he looks tiny.

And finally to the face gazing solemnly at all four of these portraits - NAN BACCO. She is the latest in their line, and today she feels that weight more than ever.

Behind her, the door opens and PIÑIERO enters. The two old friends are alone. They are both wearing traditional formal Cestus dress - a tunic that reaches down to mid-thigh and up to the throat, forcing the chin up, plus black leggings.

PIÑIERO

We're almost ready ma'am. Agent Wexler is giving the shuttle a last check, our course is set for Mars, and Fred's working on your speech as we speak.

Bacco smiles a bit at the word play, but doesn't otherwise respond. She just keeps gazing at the portraits.

PIÑIERO

Everything alright, ma'am?

BACCO

It's a hell of a responsibility, Esperanza. One person responsible for the lives of billions. I know - I'm stating the obvious.

PIÑIERO

You carry it well, ma'am.

BACCO

Do I? Well, I guess that's up to history to decide. But look at these people. Look at what they all had to deal with.

She sweeps her arm around the room, revealing the other Federation presidents who preceded Thelian - a line that goes back 200 years and among whom we can recognise the Efrosian male [RA-GHORATREII](#) ("The Undiscovered Country"), the human male [HIRAM ROTH](#) ("The Voyage Home") and right at the beginning, the human male [JONATHAN ARCHER](#) (*Enterprise*).

BACCO (cont)

Ra-Ghoratreii signed the Khitomer Accords, balancing an entire Federation's century-long distrust of the Klingons with the one-in-a-million chance for lasting peace.

(beat)

Roth had an alien probe visit his homeworld and nearly boil it to death just to talk to some whales.

(beat)

Thelian was in office at first contact with the Cardassians... and we all know how that went.

(beat)

Jaresh-Inyo signed the peace treaty with Cardassia, thereby inadvertently creating the Maquis. And then he let paranoia about changeling infiltration trick him into a Starfleet coup.

(beat)

And Zife. The second Borg attack. The Dominion War. The Gateways. The Trill symbiont crisis. The Ontailians... and Tezwa.

Piñiero stiffens at the mention of that world.

BACCO (cont)

Kind of a shame that history tends to be broken up by conflict, don't you think? Everybody talks about remembering this war or that fight or the other invasion, but nobody mentions the periods of peace in between. But I think those are the more interesting bits. And a lot harder to pull off if you ask me.

(re portraits)

History records every one of these people... but it doesn't record everything. It doesn't know about the kind of decisions that have to be made. It just sees the results.

PIÑIERO

Ma'am... none of us has any control over what history will think of us. All you can do is the best you can do at the time. I believe Zephram Cochrane said something along those lines.

BACCO

Who we now know was a raging alcoholic.

PIÑIERO

Yes, but that's kind of the point, isn't it? Personal failings don't detract from genuine achievements. Conversely, they say Dukat loved his daughter. Doesn't mean he wasn't a war-mongering despot.

BACCO

I feel like we've got off topic.

PIÑIERO

I'm just trying to say... buck up, I guess. You've got a job to do.

Bacco straightens her tunic and turns to face Esperanza.

BACCO

Well! After such an inspired bit
of motivation, how can I refuse?

The door opens again, and Admiral ROSS enters.

ROSS

Sorry to interrupt, Madam
President. But the shuttle is
ready to take you to Mars.

BACCO

Thank you, Admiral. Please tell
Agent Wexler I'll be right there.

ROSS

Yes, ma'am.

Ross leaves the room again. Bacco purses.

PIÑIERO

I already told him I would fetch
you. He's the Starfleet liaison to
the President, not your keeper.

BACCO

I seem to recall it was your idea
to give him the job.

PIÑIERO

Well, you know what they say,
ma'am. Keep your friends close...
but keep your enemies closer.

Bacco and Piñiero exchange a look. That wasn't a joke. Then
they draw themselves up and exit the room together.

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN

2 EXT. MARS - SQUIRES AMPHITHEATRE - DAY

A WIDE SHOT of a large public space, a gigantic stadium or auditorium laid out in a semi-circle, with a stage along the diameter. The place is standing-room-only with family, friends, dignitaries and other well-wishers.

PIÑIERO and one of her deputies, PHIRI, stand at the back, looking out across the giant crowd towards the stage, where Jaresh-Inyo's entire extended Grazerite family stand around a marble plinth which carries the former president's body.

Also visible on the stage are Bacco, former president Amitra (seen in one of the portraits), and a Starfleet honour guard of four, in their dress whites.

PHIRI

Standing room only. Which means a lot more to a Grazerite than it does to a human.

PIÑIERO

He was a good man. He deserves the accolades - and to have a thousand people at his funeral.

PHIRI

Isn't it *de rigueur* for all living presidents to attend this kind of thing? I see Bacco and Amitra. But I don't see Thelian or Zife.

PIÑIERO

Thelian's too old and frail. His advisors told me if they put him on a flight from Andor to Mars, there'd be a second state funeral by the time he got here.

PHIRI

What about Zife?

PIÑIERO

Haven't a clue. And it's not for lack of trying. I got in contact with several of his staff members, who weren't overly happy about talking to one of the people who took their jobs. But no-one seems to know where he is. If we can't find 'em, we can't get 'em here.

On the stage, the Starfleet honour guard steps forward, carrying a triangular piece of cloth. Between them, they fold it out, until it reveals a large FEDERATION FLAG. They drape the flag over Jaresh-Inyo's body, covering it head to toe, hanging off the edges of the plinth, then step back.

A moment later, the flag-draped body disappears in a TRANSPORTER BEAM. A SIGH passes through the gathered crowd.

PHIRI

(whisper)

Well, the tradition does call for complete destruction of the body. That's one way of doing it.

BEEP BEEP. Piñiero's comm is beeping. As the people nearby look around at her, she grits her teeth in annoyance at the *faux pas* and instantly turns to exit through a nearby door.

3 INT. SQUIRES AMPHITHEATRE - CORRIDOR

A grey concrete corridor where concert-goers might exit, currently deserted. She pulls out her comm, taps to answer.

PIÑIERO

What is it, Ziff?

Z4 BLUE (comm)

I asked you not to call me that.

PIÑIERO

When you contact me in the middle of a state funeral, you'd better be glad that's all I call you.

Z4 BLUE (comm)

Jorel just contacted me. He says he has a journalist in the press room who's demanding to speak to the president immediately.

PIÑIERO

The president's busy.

Z4 BLUE (comm)

I know, but Jorel said this woman was so insistent, he felt he ought to at least pass on the message. And Jorel was so insistent, that I felt I ought to do the same.

PIÑIERO

(sigh)

Did she at least say what it was about? What was so urgent?

Z4 BLUE (comm)

She said that she knows the real reason Zife resigned.

Piñiero blanches, struck dumb. This is very, very bad.

Z4 BLUE (comm)

Esperanza?

PIÑIERO

Yeah, I'm here, Zee. The president is about to give a speech at Jaresh-Inyo's funeral. But tell this woman that as soon as we get back to Earth, I'll meet with her.

Z4 BLUE (comm)

Are you sure? If it's just some crazy conspiracy theorist...

PIÑIERO

I'll speak to her, Zee-Four. Just tell this woman, whoever she is, that she'll have to be patient.

Z4 BLUE (comm)

Understood. Palais out.

The line drops. Piñiero puts her head in her hands, takes a moment to absorb the sheer badness of this. Then she rallies and returns to the amphitheatre.

4 EXT. MARS - SQUIRES AMPHITHEATRE - DAY

Piñiero returns to stand next to Phiri.

PHIRI
Everything alright?

PIÑIERO
(covering)
Fine. What did I miss?

PHIRI
The president's about to speak.

Phiri gestures towards the stage, where we can see Bacco taking the central position next to the now-empty plinth. There is an auto-prompter before her, and she is presumably wearing a microphone because Piñiero and Phiri can hear her perfectly clearly, even at the back of the amphitheatre.

BACCO
About a hundred-and-fifty years ago, the people of the Federation elected a wonderful Trill woman by the name of Madza Bral to the office of president. She was the first person not from one of the five founding worlds to serve in that office. "The Presidency," she said, "is perhaps the worst job in the Federation. The hours are long, the work is difficult, your successes are unappreciated, your failures blown out of proportion. Having said all that, I would never, under any circumstances, trade these years for anything."

(beat)
I only met Jaresh-Inyo a handful of times, but I found him to be a

good man. It's easy to criticise him now as the leader who failed to foresee the Dominion threat, or who let Earth be put under martial law. It's just as easy to ignore his achievements - expanding the rights of sentient beings. Opening new relations with the Children of Tama. Normalising relations with the Cardassian Union. None of this was the stuff of salacious news reports. But it cannot be ignored.

(beat)

This Federation is remarkable. We now have one-hundred-and-fifty-four members, many with more than one world under their purview. That's hundreds of planets. The president's job is to keep those worlds, populated as they are by the most diverse and cantankerous collection of species you're likely to find in this universe, from flying apart. Any president who comes to the end of their term with the Federation still intact, has done the job. I've only been in office for a few months, but I've already learned that that's the only true test for success.

(beat)

Jaresh-Inyo passed that test. For that, and for so much else, we honour him today. I am proud to be part of the same family as him. As President Amitra. As Presidents Thelian and Zife, who couldn't be with us. And as President Bral.

(beat)

I close, as I began, with her words. "What matters, in the end, is that the Federation endures." Because of Jaresh-Inyo, we've endured. Thank you.

Bacco steps back. The crowd erupts in thunderous APPLAUSE. At the back of the room, Phiri joins in enthusiastically.

PHIRI

Damn, that was a hell of a speech.

Piñiero nods, applauding somewhat more demurely. Everything that should have just sounded encouraging and uplifting, now sounds ominous as hell, given what she might face next.

5 **EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - DAY**

The lower levels of the central government building...

6 **INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM**

Esperanza Piñiero enters, finding the room deserted - the empty podium on the stage, the empty rows of seats tidily filling the room. All except for one, which is occupied by OZLA GRANIV.

The young Trill journalist looks up as Piñiero enters, and stands. She looks tired, but still determined.

PIÑIERO

Ms Graniv. I'm Esperanza Piñiero, President Bacco's chief of staff. My apologies for the delay. The president and I were off planet, at Jaresh-Inyo's funeral on Mars.

OZLA

I suppose I can't argue with that. But if you're back, then she is too. And I didn't ask to speak to you, I asked to speak to her.

PIÑIERO

One thing you need to understand before this goes any further, Ms Graniv. Nobody gets access to the president without going through me. Not the councillors, not the admirals, and not journalists who are threatening to tear down her administration. What you have to

say, you will say to me. I will then decide whether to bring it to her attention. Is that clear?

OZLA

It's clear. But I'm not making a threat, Ms Piñiero. I'm simply doing my job. Through good old-fashioned journalism, I uncovered the truth about why Zife resigned, clearing the way for Nan Bacco to take that office. I want to give her the chance to tell me her side of the story, and maybe even to convince me why I shouldn't run with it. If she either can't do that or is unwilling to try, then I will have no choice but to do what my conscience requires of me - and print what I know.

Piñiero pauses to consider this. If there is even a chance that Ozla could make good on this threat...

PIÑIERO

I'm afraid the president isn't available right now.

OZLA

Don't you dare fob me off -

PIÑIERO

I'm not. Today alone so far, she has overseen the resignation of one of her councillors and spoken at the funeral of her predecessor, and is now attending a summit with her counterparts from the Klingon and Romulan empires. The first two were emergencies that could not be ignored, the last has been planned for months. I hope you see that maintaining peaceful relations with the Klingons trumps whatever you believe you have discovered.

OZLA
Peace with the Klingons, eh?
That's ironic.

Piñiero covers her reaction again. Maybe Ozla does know.

PIÑIERO
Please understand that I am not
minimising your concerns. I am
merely asking you to be patient.

OZLA
I've already waited for hours -

PIÑIERO
And if you want to speak to the
president, you'll have to wait a
few more. I advise you to cool
your engines, Ms Graniv, if you
want to reach your destination.
Rash decisions help none of us.

A moment's consideration, and Ozla gives in. Her story is
worth a little more patience. Piñiero sees this reaction.

PIÑIERO
Thank you. Do you have somewhere
to wait? The Palais is not
equipped with personal quarters.

VAUGHN (o.s.)
I can help with that, Ms Piñiero.

Piñiero turns, shocked and worried that someone has been
overhearing them. VAUGHN stands there, in uniform, having
entered the room silently.

PIÑIERO
Who the hell are you?

VAUGHN
Forgive the intrusion. Captain
Elias Vaughn of the *James T Kirk*
at your service.

PIÑIERO

Hmmm... The president's ride to Cestus and back. She mentioned she'd had a very interesting conversation with you.

VAUGHN

I'm flattered. In fact, I'm here with Ms Graniv. I came to her aid recently regarding a situation with the Orion Syndicate, and I brought her to Earth to speak with the president. She's welcome to stay with me aboard the *Kirk*.

OZLA

Where I'll be safe from anyone who wants to stop me from talking.

PIÑIERO

(stunned)

What the hell kind of people do you think we are?

OZLA

I guess I'll find that out when I speak to the president. Won't I?

VAUGHN

The *Kirk* will remain in orbit, Ms Piñiero. We'll be expecting your call. Have a nice day.

Vaughn opens the door for Ozla, who joins him in leaving the room. Piñiero stands there, rubbing her forehead, stunned at how badly this is going...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

7 EST. DEEP SPACE NINE

Bringing us home to the station...

8 SCREEN

The SCREEN shows a view of Jaresh-Inyo's funeral, with Bajoran ideograms along the bottom of the screen. The image then changes to our regular Bajoran newsreader TIANA FEEN.

TIANA (screen)

After that stirring speech from President Nan Bacco, the gathering went on to hear from Jaresh-Inyo's close family. Bacco, meanwhile, has returned to Earth to prepare for her summit with Chancellor Martok and Praetor Tal'Aura.

9 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

QUARK stabs the channel closed in disgust.

QUARK

The speech wasn't that great. Mine was better. But do we get half the coverage? Do we frinx. No-one gives the Ferengi any respect.

ROM sits opposite him, in everyday clothes rather than his Nagal regalia, a glass of snail juice on the bar.

ROM

Don't worry about it, brother. I thought you did a great job.

QUARK

You'd be impressed with any old half-plagiarised garbage.

Rom looks sadly into his drink. Quark takes pity.

QUARK

I'm sorry, Rom. When do you leave?

ROM

Soon. I just wanted one last look at the old place. I don't get to just sit and enjoy a snail juice.

QUARK

No, you get a hundred servants bringing you any drink you want the moment you say the word.

ROM

I think I preferred it the old way. I dream about it sometimes.

QUARK

Don't you dare. You've got the greatest job in the Alliance. So what if a Cardassian vole could do it better than you? You're the Nagus, dammit. Now act like it.

ISHKA (o.s.)

Quark! Be nice to your brother.

The brothers turn to see ISHKA entering the bar, PRINADORA and NOG (carrying a travelling bag) trailing behind her.

QUARK

That's what I'm trying to do. He doesn't make it easy.

ISHKA

Rom, sweetie, we're ready to head back to Risa. I thought you might want to say goodbye...?

She unsubtly hints towards Prinadora, his ex-wife and Nog's mother. She is hovering back, still not sure of herself.

ROM

You're right, moogie. Prinadora, it's been good seeing you again.

PRINADORA

You too, Rom. You seem nice. I think I probably must have liked being married to you. Leeta does. You should stay married to her.

The younger Ferengi woman is completely naive, too innocent to lie or have any ulterior motive. It's endearing, really.

ISHKA

Nog, would you help your mother to the docking port?

NOG

Sure. Come on, moogie.

Nog guides Prinadora back towards the door. The others watch them go, Ishka and Quark shaking their heads.

ISHKA

Poor woman. Had the brains all but bred out of her by her father. But she's learning, slowly.

(beat)

Rom, sweetie? Are you okay?

ROM

I guess. Just sad to leave.

Rom looks around the now almost-empty bar...

FLASHBACK - THE FUNERAL

The bar is packed to the rafters with shrieking, wailing, clothes-rending Ferengi, all worshipping the dead Zek.

FLASH - BACK TO SCENE

He looks around himself now. No-one is worshipping him.

ROM

Moogie... do you think they'll ever love me like they loved Zek?

ISHKA

Rom... they love you now.

Quark SNORTS with derision. Ishka glares his way - Quark rolls his eyes and moves away further down the bar.

ISHKA

Rom... you're right that Zekkie was very popular as the Grand Nagus. But think of it this way. Now that he's dead... he can't overshadow you anymore. You're the one and only Nagus now.

Rom shrugs - that's vaguely uplifting, he supposes. She gives him a hug, looks over to Quark who was watching with a small smile, waves, and then turns to leave.

10 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

Nog walks along the Promenade, Prinadora at his side.

NOG

Have a nice trip back to Risa. Once you get back... I thought maybe we could stay in touch? We could write each other letters.

PRINADORA

I'm not very good with writing. But I could ask Ishka to help me. I think I'd like that.

NOG

Me too.

Nog passes the bag to Prinadora. She suddenly shouts...

PRINADORA

Oh! I almost forgot! Ishka says I'd forget my lobes if they weren't attached to me...

She opens the bag and rummages in it - and pulls out a toy, a [MARAUDER MO FIGURINE](#). She holds it out to Nog...

PRINADORA

I brought this for you.

NOG

I don't understand.

PRINADORA

Honestly, neither do I. When my father went to prison and Ishka took me in, she paid for all his assets to be packed up and brought to Risa with us. She said they belonged to me now, but I didn't really understand what she meant, so I didn't look at it for a long time. But Ishka was having a clean out recently, and she found this. I think it must have been yours from when you were little.

Astonished, Nog gently takes the figurine from his mother. It means more to him than he could have ever expected. She kept something from his childhood. She does love him. Just as he might be about to burst from the emotion of it, Ishka catches up with them, all large and flouncy.

ISHKA

Right! Let's get on that ship and back to the beach.

PRINADORA

Zek's probably waiting for us.

Prinadora turns to enter the airlock. Still stunned, Nog turns to his grandmother in confusion.

ISHKA

Poor thing. She hasn't accepted it yet. I'm not entirely sure she understands what happened.

With a sad nod, Nog hugs his grandmother and they part at the airlock. Nog watches the door cycle closed, waving with one hand while the other holds the figurine...

NOG

Bye, moogie.

15 **EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - AFTERNOON**

The upper levels of the central government building...

16 **INT. PALAIS - MONET ROOM**

Bacco sits with the array of portraits behind her. Klingon Chancellor MARTOK sits to one side, his boisterous armour and medals filling the space. Romulan Praetor TAL'AURA sits on the other, economical and precise, in an elegant dress.

BACCO

So it is agreed. The Klingon Empire will cease its current expansionist policies... And in return, the Federation will renew several trade agreements and open up a few new ones, including more extensive technology sharing.

MARTOK

Agreed. Regarding the Remans...
(insincere smile
towards Tal'Aura)
Since the move to Klorgat Four is complete, the Empire will withdraw from its role as protector.

BACCO

Thank you, Chancellor. Now, there is one more thing I'd like to bring up. It wasn't on the agenda, so we don't have to, but I do think it's important.

MARTOK

The agenda was due to the labours of the High Council and Ambassador K'mtok. I feel no need to adhere to their demands, Madam President.

They grin at each other. Tal'Aura remains stony.

BACCO

Are you familiar at all with a scientific organisation called the

Matter of Everything? I believe
the Klingons call it *HapHoch*.

MARTOK

The *HapHoch* was condemned by the
Science Institute for -

BACCO

For violating every tenet of known
scientific enquiry, I know. The
problem is, the Science Institute
used to sponsor the *HapHoch*. They
only withdrew their support when
the group brought in one scientist
in particular - a Mizarian.

MARTOK

Mizarians are the vermin of the
galaxy. You cannot ask me to
reverse centuries of -

TAL'AURA

- of Klingon bigotry?

Martok must stop himself from stabbing her where she sits.

BACCO

There's a human cliché, Praetor,
that people who live in glass
houses shouldn't throw stones. Or
shall we go into Romulan treatment
of the Remans, the Miridians -

TAL'AURA

Point noted, Madam President.

BACCO

Fine, then shut the hell up.

(back to Martok)

Just a couple of weeks ago, I met
Benjamin Sisko. He told me a story
from the war, about how your ship
rendezvoused with the *Defiant*
because you wanted to see the
Starfleet doctor instead of the
one in your own sickbay.

MARTOK

What does that have to do with -

BACCO

I am fully aware of the Klingon prejudice against good medical practise, and also that that has changed in recent years, in part thanks to your own initiatives. That sounds to me like reversing centuries of tradition for the sake of something better - longer-lived, healthier Klingons who have the opportunity to extend their record of battle and have a better chance of entering *Sto-Vo-Kor*.

Martok pauses, eventually growling his way into a grin.

MARTOK

K'mtok told me to be wary of you. Very well, Madam President. It is a long time since I have been able to convince the High Council of anything. But I will tell them I wish the Empire to support the *HapHoch*. Despite the Mizarian.

BACCO

Thank you, Chancellor. The galaxy is too small for us to keep hiding behind neutral zones. And I think, my friends, that that's it.

TAL'AURA

I'm afraid there is one more thing I must discuss with you both.

Tal'Aura has said so little this whole time that this comes as a surprise. Bacco checks with Martok.

BACCO

Well, I already went off playbook, so I'm in no position to argue. Chancellor?

MARTOK

Given how hard her people worked to get her here, at a summit that was only supposed to be between the Empire and the Federation, I confess I am morbidly curious.

TAL'AURA

(icy look)

Since the slaughter by the madman Shinzon, I have fought to hold the Star Empire together. Donatra has opposed me every step of the way. Now... she has seceded altogether.

BACCO

Intriguing. Do you know her plans?

TAL'AURA

She will announce herself "Empress Donatra", and declare Achernar Prime, plus all the worlds in that system and several more besides, to be the Imperial Romulan State.

MARTOK

And what do you want from us?

TAL'AURA

To not recognise the Imperial State. To refuse to trade with them, to impose sanctions upon them, and to aid me in retaking their worlds for the Star Empire.

MARTOK

You expect me to commit Klingon warriors to fight for a united Romulan Empire?

TAL'AURA

If you don't, my people will starve. Donatra has stolen all our most fertile farming worlds.

BACCO

There, we'll be happy to help you.
If your people need food, we'll
provide it. But we're not gonna
take sides in your own conflict.

TAL'AURA

Then you condemn the Romulan
people to a miserable death.

Bacco speaks with more iron than Martok would have guessed.

BACCO

No, Praetor. You did that, when
you put a thalaron bomb in the
senate on Shinzon's behalf. That
is what set you on this path, and
if you now find that you can't
turn around, I'll sympathise, and
I'll help wherever I can. But I'll
be damned if I will let you foist
the blame on me. If the Imperial
State does indeed declare itself a
sovereign entity, the Federation
will carefully consider whether or
not to recognise it. But I can
tell you this for damn sure - what
makes your life easier will be
extremely low on that list.

TAL'AURA

I assume that the Klingon Empire
trails behind the Federation like
a pet eager for approval?

MARTOK

No. The Federation may require
time to make that decision, but
the Empire's is already made. We
recognise any political entity
that breaks the Romulans further.

After a long and icy pause, Tal'Aura stands and walks to
the door. Outside we see a Romulan guard, a Klingon guard
and Agent WEXLER. Tal'Aura sweeps out, the Romulan guard
following her. Wexler quietly closes the door behind them.

BACCO

I'd say this summit is concluded,
Chancellor. I think we've done
some good work here. I hope it
isn't the last time.

MARTOK

My only hope is to die in battle
and cross the river of blood to
Sto-Vo-Kor. Whatever happens on
that journey, happens.

BACCO

I'm a little more concerned with
getting the most of out this life.
But I think we've done a pretty
good job on both ends.

She stands and holds out her hand to shake - he takes it.

BACCO

Qapla', Martok, son of Urthog.

MARTOK

Qapla', Nan Bacco.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

17 EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - EARLY EVENING

The sun is beginning to set across the Paris cityscape...

18 INT. PALAIS - RECEPTION AREA

The ante-room to President Bacco's office. Her personal bodyguard, Agent Wexler, stands at the ornate double doors. Her ancient Vulcan male secretary SIVAK sits at his own desk nearby. The doors to the turbolifts open...

...revealing Ozla Graniv, with Esperanza Piñiero and Elias Vaughn just behind her. They step out together into the foyer. Ozla gulps with nervousness. Sivak looks up from his desk, unimpressed, and stabs a comm control.

SIVAK

Madam President, Ms Piñiero is
here with her... guests.

BACCO (comm)

Send them in, Sivak.

Sivak looks back down at his work, not bothering to pass on the message they obviously overheard. Instead Wexler opens the double doors and we see...

19 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

...President Bacco sat at her desk, calmly waiting for them, the grand picture window making a dramatic backdrop.

As Piñiero, Vaughn and Ozla pass through the doors, Wexler joins them. Ozla can't help but feel wary of the black-clad and armed agent, who is clearly very capable and dangerous. He shuts the door, closing them all into the office.

PIÑIERO

Madam President - may I present
Ozla Graniv, Palais correspondent
for the *Seeker*.

OZLA

Thank you for agreeing to see me,
Madam President.

BACCO

You didn't give me much choice in
the matter, did you? Take a seat.

Hesitantly, Ozla does so. Vaughn joins her.

BACCO

Thank you, Esperanza, I'll take it
from here. You too, Steven, we'll
be fine. While you're at it, tell
Sivak to take a break too.

PIÑIERO

As you wish, Madam President. But
you know he'll protest.

BACCO

He can protest all he likes as
long as he does it somewhere else.

Piñiero covers a smirk, and then she and Wexler leave.

BACCO

Now then, young lady. Esperanza
tells me you seem to think you're
in some kind of danger. Is that
why you've brought the captain?

OZLA

Partially. He's come to my aid
several times in the past.

BACCO

It might interest you to know that
Captain Vaughn swore himself to my
side only a couple of weeks ago.

VAUGHN

Not to correct you, ma'am, but it
was my understanding that we were
all on the same side.

BACCO

I'm in no mood for word games, Captain. From what I've been told, this young woman is threatening to topple my administration. I'd like to hear her story straight before I decide what to do about it.

(back to Ozla)

Start at the beginning. Both of you. And you'd damn well better make it worth my time.

VAUGHN

I've already told you some of it - that I noted some anomalies about your election. Zife's resignation, sudden and in odd circumstances. The sheer speed of your campaign. Your lack of experience on the galactic scene. There was even a suggestion that you conspired with First Minister Asarem of Bajor in return for including her closest advisors in your cabinet, while she fomented a planetary crisis of her own to distract attention.

BACCO

You can't be serious.

VAUGHN

Extreme, perhaps. But not without precedent. But over-riding it all was an undeniable sense that the situation on Tezwa was connected to everything. That's when I became aware of Ms Graniv.

OZLA

I was already planning on going there anyway. Captain Vaughn tried to warn me off, but I talked him into helping me instead.

VAUGHN

We helped each other.

OZLA

I suppose. He helped me get to Tezwa even though somebody didn't want me there. I helped him by telling him what I found.

BACCO

Very well. What did you find?

OZLA

That Tezwa is a defeated planet. I'd been interviewing Starfleet, survivors, locals. My latest was a woman called Zelemka, who I heard was doing a lot for the orphans.

20 **INT. TEZWA ORPHANAGE**

A clutter of found items and half-repaired machines. Ozla sits at a kitchen table, opposite ZELEMKA, a Tezwan female - bird-like features with feathers instead of hair.

OZLA (v.o.)

We talked about how she got the house - apparently she was having an affair with one of the minor ministers and he bought it for their secret liaisons. We talked about how Starfleet was helping out with the recovery.

ZELEMKA

They've been so good. I always knew they'd be here to help.

OZLA

What do you mean, 'always'?

ZELEMKA

Well, the Federation's always been here to protect us. It became more overt after Kinchawn went crazy, but Olorun told me about how they gave us those cannons years ago.

OZLA

He... I'm sorry, say that again.

ZELEMKA

Say what again?

OZLA

Minister Olorun told you that the Federation supplied Kinchawn with the weapons he used to destroy the Klingon fleet? You're sure?

ZELEMKA

I don't see what the big deal is. The news said they were Starfleet weapons originally. I kind of wish they hadn't given them to us to be honest, considering what happened. But they've been making up for it.

21 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Bacco and Vaughn sit listening to Ozla's story.

BACCO

If that's all you've got, Ms Graniv, I'm not impressed. We all know the cannons were Starfleet technology, prototypes stolen by the Orion Syndicate.

OZLA

Zelemka specifically said she was told that the Federation provided them to the Tezwans.

BACCO

Told third-hand, by a low-ranking minister trying to impress his illicit mistress.

OZLA

I did actually consider these points, ma'am. That's why I didn't stop my investigation there.

22 INT. STORAGE ROOM

Ozla is huddled in a pile, her hands tied behind her back and her face bruised and beaten. She looks around herself at the nondescript storage space, filled with crates and boxes, stone walls with no windows, no identifying marks.

As a figure enters, she jerks backwards in terror, pushing herself back into the corner. The figure is IHASZ, a suave but threatening TAKARAN male (as seen in TNG "Suspicious").

OZLA

Ihasz.

IHASZ

The infamous Ozla Graniv. It's a pleasure to meet you at last. I've been wanting to thank you for your lovely exposé on the Syndicate.

OZLA

You wanted to thank me?

IHASZ

Absolutely. You pointed us towards several breaches in our hull, so to speak. Besides, it was a really excellent piece of reporting. And now... you're looking into some merchandise we moved to Tezwa.

OZLA

(evasive)

What makes you think that?

IHASZ

Don't play stupid, Ms Graniv. It makes me angry, and when I get angry, I shoot things. You spoke with Intral, you spoke with Fiske, you spoke with Tanaa... and *brava* on being able to hold your breath while in the same room as him, by the way. But I'm afraid you wasted your time. You should have just come straight to me.

OZLA

I beg your pardon?

IHASZ

Your presence on Deneva can result in only one of three things. The first is that you keep on asking questions, inevitably turning up more information on the Syndicate, and I'd rather that didn't happen. The second is that I kill you, but that causes more problems, as you are quite high-profile, and high-profile deaths tend to bring down law enforcement. The third is that I tell you what you want to know, and you go on your merry way. Yes, the Syndicate provided the nadion-pulse cannons to Tezwa.

OZLA

That's public record.

IHASZ

But where we got them from isn't.

OZLA

You're criminals. You stole them.

IHASZ

Exactly the cover story they were hoping for. Whereas in fact, the person who commissioned me to deliver those cannons to Tezwa, six years ago, was an Antedian gentleman named Nelino Quafina, who had just been made secretary of military intelligence by one Federation President Min Zife.

Ozla blanches at the implications of this news. It is a moment before she can find her croaky, quavering voice.

OZLA

Why are you telling me this?

IHASZ

When Zife resigned, I lost one of my best customers - before the final payment, I might add. When that happened, I took steps to discover who was responsible for Zife's removal from power.

OZLA

Nobody removed him, he resigned.

IHASZ

(chuckling)

Oh no no no, it's not that simple. You see, there was no reason for him to resign. No reason for the truth of our little arrangement to ever come out. If Zife talked, it would mean war with the Klingons. And if anyone in my organisation talked, well, I believe I already outlined the consequences of that.

OZLA

So who did find out?

IHASZ

The only other party who had no hidden agenda - Starfleet. One of their admirals, a human named William Ross, forced Zife out of power... at phaser-point.

OZLA

That's ridiculous!

IHASZ

Of course it is! As ridiculous as the Federation President secretly arming an independent world and sending his own troops, and the troops of an allied nation, to that world without revealing the weapons were there, then covering it all up afterwards. Ridiculous!

Job done, Ihasz stands. Ozla flinches back again.

IHASZ

That's everything. My guards will escort you back to your hotel. My only conditions are that you leave Deneva immediately, and that you do not print this story unless you are able to corroborate it from at least one other source. Follow those terms, and I have no doubt you'll be winning your next Gavlin Award before you know it. Violate them, and you'll be dead less than twenty-four hours later. Have a nice trip home, Ms Graniv.

Ihasz walks out of the room, leaving Ozla wondering what the hell she just got into...

23 INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Bacco sits absorbing the tale, expressionless.

VAUGHN

So that's it, Madam President. That's what our investigations turned up - that your predecessor was a craven idiot whose actions led to the deaths of millions of Klingons, Tezwans and Starfleet officers, and rather than face what he'd done, he fought to cover it up, at the cost of more lives, until a Starfleet admiral had no choice but to remove him by force.

BACCO

And you think that I am complicit in this, Captain, because I happened to benefit from it?

VAUGHN

Madam President, that's not -

BACCO

(turns on Ozla)

And you - you come to me for corroboration. So that you can print your story and start a war with the Klingons without getting killed by the Orion Syndicate?

OZLA

I don't want to start a war, damn it! I want you to tell me it's not true. I want this all to be some insane fever dream that I'll wake up from any minute and go back to reporting about water reclamation. But I need to know the truth!

BACCO

Are you sure? No going back.

OZLA

I'm sure. Tell me.

BACCO

Very well, then. Here's your corroboration - it's true.

VAUGHN

Madam President, you can't -

BACCO

That's the truth. Damn us all because every word of it is true. And I've known all along.

Off Bacco's resolve, and Vaughn and Ozla's amazement...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

24 EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - EVENING

The backdrop of Paris is darker now. As Bacco sits firm and stern, Vaughn gets to his feet in horror...

VAUGHN

You knew about this all along?

BACCO

Take a seat, Captain.

At that undeniable steel in her voice, the same steel she showed to Tal'Aura, Vaughn sits back down as ordered.

BACCO

And you can wipe that look of disgust and betrayal off your face as well. All that tells me is that you have no idea what it's like to be the one who sits in this chair.

VAUGHN

Ma'am... if you knew, why didn't -

BACCO

Haven't you been paying attention? If Martok knew the Federation was responsible for the deaths of thousands of his best warriors, we'd be back at war before I could finish the sentence. Are you that eager for more bloodshed?

VAUGHN

Of course not, but -

BACCO

I have spent every moment since I took this office just fighting to keep my head above water. Three days after I was sworn in - three days - Tal'Aura slaughters the

entire Romulan senate and sends a madman with a doomsday weapon in our direction. Then there's Remans pleading for help, a lost Earth colony from a different galaxy, a dead Tzenkethi baby and another damned Borg attack. I spent this morning eulogising the man who let the Klingon alliance fall apart, spent this afternoon making sure that never happens again, and I am sure as hell not going to let you try and guilt me into throwing it all away in the evening.

OZLA

Sounds to me like you're just trying to avoid a scandal.

BACCO

If I was worried about scandal, I wouldn't have just sold out one of my own cabinet to make a point. I don't care what people think of me. I care about the Federation, and I will do whatever it takes to make sure that Federation does not fall on my watch. Is that clear?

OZLA

Does that mean letting a Starfleet admiral stage a literal coup? Because that's what happened here. Ross removed a legitimately elected chief executive from office at phaser-point.

VAUGHN

(grudging defence)

It wasn't a coup. Ross didn't take over the government. He stopped a war, removed a criminal from this office and let the constitutional process play out. President Bacco was elected, not appointed.

OZLA

You're nitpicking, Captain.

VAUGHN

I don't think so. What Ross did may have been unthinkable, but what else was he supposed to do?

OZLA

He didn't have to do anything!

BACCO

So he should have just let Zife, Azernal and Quafina carry on as if they weren't responsible for the deaths of millions?

OZLA

Are you telling me you actually agree with what Admiral Ross did?

BACCO

Of course I don't agree with him! But the deed was done long before I ever sat my wrinkled old ass in this chair, so what the hell do you expect me to do about it?

Ozla goes quiet as she tries to figure out her answer.

BACCO

Alright, let me ask you this, Ms Graniv. Now that you've got your second source, do you still plan on publishing your story? Even knowing what will happen?

OZLA

I don't know.

BACCO

What will it take to convince you? What will you exchange... to let this nightmare die with us?

Once again, Ozla considers the question...

25 **EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - NIGHT**

Full dark now, the glittering skyline an ominous backdrop.

26 **INT. PALAIS - PRESIDENT'S OFFICE**

The room seems quiet. The double doors open, and Admiral Ross gingerly pokes his head in.

ROSS
Madam President?

He finds Bacco over at the replicator, where she is just picking up a glass of something strong.

BACCO
It's finally late enough to let
these things give me a decent
drink. Take a seat, Admiral.

He closes the door behind him. He sits, a little confused. Bacco sips her drink, looks out of the window.

ROSS
Was there an emergency, ma'am? Ms
Piñiero said you needed to see me
at once. Are the others coming?

BACCO
There are no others, Admiral. It's
just you and me. We need to talk.

ROSS
About what, ma'am?

BACCO
My predecessor in this office.

ROSS
President Zife? What about -

BACCO
(spins on him)
Cut the crap, Admiral. You and I
both know what he did.

ROSS
(jaw drops)
...how long...

BACCO
Long enough. At first, I was more worried about what Zife did than what you did. But what you did...
(pause, shakes head)
For the past six months, I have watched you come into this office every day, and I've wondered... what happens when I piss you off? Will you do the same to me?

ROSS
Ma'am, there are many reasons I am proud to serve in your cabinet, but the greatest is that I have faith in your inability to ever put me in the position Zife did.

BACCO
Maybe I should have said something when I found out. But I thought it was best to let it lie. We needed to move past what Zife did, and we couldn't do that if we rehashed Tezwa all over again.

ROSS
I take the fact that we're having this conversation to indicate that something has changed.

BACCO
There's a reporter in Jorel's press room right now, and she knows it all. She knows that Zife was responsible for the cannons. She knows that Quafina used the Orion Syndicate to get them to Tezwa. She knows that Starfleet found out, and they - or rather you - forced Zife to resign.

ROSS
(panicked)
You're not going to let her run
the story, are you? I mean, there
must be some way to stop her -

BACCO
What do you suggest, Admiral? That
we make this person disappear?
That's not how we do things.

The stricken look on Ross's face - that he tries to cover
up, but too late - provides Bacco a horrible realisation.

SMASH - the glass has slipped from Bacco's hand and crashed
to the floor. Stunned, she collapses against her desk.

BACCO
...Is it how we do things?

ROSS
Ma'am?

Ross pretends not to know what they now both know. Bacco
stares at him in horror, barely able to articulate it.

BACCO
Jaresh-Inyo's funeral. Esperanza
couldn't find Zife. Couldn't find
any sign of him. Nobody on Earth,
on Bolarus, anywhere knew where to
find the most prominent person in
the Federation for the last seven
years. It shouldn't be that hard,
if all he did was retire.

Ross looks back at Bacco, unable to admit it out loud.

BACCO
You know, when I started this
conversation, I was upset about
what I had to do. But the more I
talk to you, Admiral, the less
problem I have with it.

ROSS

I don't understand...?

BACCO

That reporter gave me an ultimatum - a much nicer one than you gave Zife. There is one condition upon which this story will in fact be buried where no-one can find it.

ROSS

(stands)

My resignation?

BACCO

The terms weren't that specific. Just as long as you go away. As long as you become an ordinary Federation citizen who has no influence at all over the running of the Federation or Starfleet.

ROSS

Then I'll resign immediately.

BACCO

No... not resignation. Resigning sends up red flags. People resign in protest or to avoid a scandal. Retirement though - that's normal, particularly for someone like you.

ROSS

Then I'll announce my retirement first thing in the morning.

She nods once, and turns away. He turns to leave.

ROSS

Thank you, Madam President.

BACCO

(one more thing)

Bill... why? I can understand why you had to remove him from power, but... why take the next step?

ROSS

Because they killed millions of people, directly or indirectly. Worse, they killed more just to cover up the crime, and they did it from a distance, so they could keep their hands clean. And so for five minutes last year, I became them. That reporter downstairs is absolutely right that there should be consequences for that. I'm only sorry I didn't take this action before it endangered you, ma'am.

After a long pause, during which Bacco tries to decide if she can believe that or not, she nods once again. Ross turns to leave. Bacco returns to looking out the window.

27 INT. PALAIS - RECEPTION AREA

Ross quietly pulls the double doors closed, resting his forehead against them for a moment as he absorbs the enormity of recent events. Then he turns and STARTS...

...because Vaughn is there, in the otherwise empty room.

ROSS

Captain...?

VAUGHN

I had a feeling all along. Even when I became convinced she was innocent, I knew they were in it somewhere. I could smell it.

ROSS

I have no idea -

VAUGHN

Section Thirty-One, Admiral.

ROSS

(furious whisper)
Keep your voice down!

Vaughn smiles sadly - he just tricked Ross into admitting it. Ross sees that too. Damn it.

VAUGHN

You used them... to assassinate a sitting Federation President, his chief of staff, and his secretary of military intelligence.

ROSS

They know how to keep secrets.

VAUGHN

Do you see the kind of people you're in bed with, Admiral? The kind of people you can ask to do such a thing... and they do it?

ROSS

You cannot ever let her know. Do you understand? She cannot know. If they even suspect she knows they exist, they'll kill her... somehow. And that cannot happen.

VAUGHN

Why not?

ROSS

Because she's the only one who might have the tiniest chance of standing up to them... and maybe even of stopping them one day.

Vaughn considers Ross for a moment... then nods and steps aside. Ross proceeds to the turbolift, enters, and holds Vaughn's gaze as the doors close.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN

28 INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM

Admiral Ross stands at the podium before a room packed with reporters. JOREL stands to the side. A reporter asks...

MARIA

So when can we expect your memoirs, Admiral?

ROSS

Oh no - no memoirs. My entire career is on record as it is.

EDMUND

Then what will you do now?

ROSS

I'm going to find somewhere very quiet and peaceful, and enjoy a well-earned rest.

Ozla sits silently towards the back of the room, lost among the other reporters who are clamouring for attention. She watches Ross from afar, hiding in plain sight.

T'NIRA

Is it not strange, Admiral, for two members of President Bacco's cabinet to resign in such close proximity? Does that speak to a fragility in her administration?

ROSS

Absolutely not. First, this is not a resignation, it's a retirement - and a long-awaited one. Second, President Bacco's administration is rock solid, and I have no doubt she already has a line of admirals eager to take my place. Third, as much as I admire the president, it was not her decision. It was mine.

From her place in the crowd, Ozla watches Ross lie.

ROSS

Thank you, that'll be all.

Ross steps back. Jorel steps up to take his place.

JOREL

Right, you heard the man. That's
all for now, I'll have more for
you this afternoon.

Jorel presses his favourite button, and the reporters' holographic projections all wink out one by one.

One of the last to go is Ozla... Jorel holds her gaze, as they both know that something else just happened here. Then she too is gone. Regretfully, Jorel turns back to Ross...

JOREL

Admiral.

...and walks out of the room. Ross is the last one left. He gazes out across the empty room, at the results of his actions. Then he too turns and leaves the room.

29 INT. PALAIS - MONET ROOM

The portrait of ZIFE sits on the wall, the middle-aged Bolian man looking ordinary and unimpressive.

President Bacco is back in the room, staring at him.

Behind her, Esperanza Piñiero quietly enters the room.

PIÑIERO

Ma'am...? It's done. Ross handed
in his notice to the Starfleet C-
in-C, and he's just finished his
announcement to Jorel's press
room. It's over.

BACCO

Been a hell of a day, Esperanza.
A hell of a day.

PIÑIERO

I know, ma'am.

BACCO

And it's not over, not by a long shot. It'll never be over until I'm up on that wall next to Zife and this all becomes the next poor sucker's headache.

PIÑIERO

It's worth that headache, ma'am. The Federation needs you in that office. Specifically you.

BACCO

Maybe I should just become a dictator like Kinchawn or Dukat, then. Bossing people around all day. I'd probably enjoy that.

PIÑIERO

How would we tell the difference?

Bacco gives her a withering look. They both know it's all in fun. Esperanza comes and stands beside her, looking up at the portraits, trying to be the old friend she is.

PIÑIERO

You have more right to be on that wall than half these people. Look at them. Ra-Ghoratreii almost didn't sign the peace treaty with the Klingons because he couldn't get past his own distrust. Jaresh-Inyo let the Dominion tear that treaty apart. Zife almost started a war with them. But because of you, that alliance is stronger, deeper, and more meaningful today than it has ever been.

(turns to her)

Look at me. Ma'am, please.

Bacco strains to tear herself away from the portraits.

PIÑIERO

Those people on that wall, they're the past. You're here now. And in the end, what matters is that the Federation endures. Because of you... we've endured.

Bacco smiles gratefully at her old friend, and pulls her in for a hug. As they separate and head towards the door...

PIÑIERO

Oh by the way, I bumped into Captain Vaughn on my way up here. He asked me to give you a message.

BACCO

Really. And what did he have to say for himself?

PIÑIERO

He said I should tell you, that look on his face wasn't betrayal. It was just disappointment...

(Bacco frowns
in confusion)

...that you really are only human, after all.

BACCO

Well that's just rude.

They leave the room together.

30 EXT. SPACE - PLANETARY ORBIT

A beautiful blue-green world, gently swaddled in wispy white cloud. This is RISA.

31 EXT. RISA - SURFACE

A remote bluff overlooking the sparkling blue sea. With golden sand below, palm trees dotted about, and one solitary house clinging precariously to the cliff.

32 INT. BEACH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM / BEDROOM

Ishka, still extravagant and flouncy, bustles through the doors, carrying her luggage. Prinadora trails behind her, still struggling to keep up with everyday life.

ISHKA

Maihar'du!

As she calls this into the otherwise deserted apartment, she directs Prinadora to start putting her things away.

ISHKA

Maihar'du!

Finally the enormous silent Hupyrian manservant MAIHAR'DU appears from another room. She is glad to see him.

ISHKA

Oh good, there you are. How is everything here? Okay?

Maihar'du nods enthusiastically. Ishka ushers him back the way he came - into the bedroom - and follows along.

ISHKA

Good. Everything went perfectly on Deep Space Nine. The funeral was lovely, we made a lot of money, and Quark played the dutiful host perfectly. I knew he would.

She begins flinging clothes off in a rush to strip naked. Maihar'du follows her around, catching whatever she flings.

ISHKA

He's a sweet boy, really. When he's not being a raging gumprat. I'm glad to be back though. I've been thinking about this mud bath since I left. It's so dry on that station. It's unnatural.

Now completely naked, the wrinkled old Ferengi female throws open the French doors, and emerges onto...

... the open air balcony. She walks up to the railing, looks out across the gorgeous view across the water.

Then she turns, sees what she's looking for, and grins...

ISHKA

There you are!

She rushes over to the big round mud bath, eagerly clambers into it, sinks down to her shoulders, and sidles up to...

ZEK, the former Grand Nagus, alive and well and sitting up to his shoulders in the muck.

ZEK

Ishka, my sweet! You're home!

They nuzzle their big rubbery noses together romantically and relax into the warm, soothing mud bath.

ISHKA

That's right, Zekkie. I'm home, and the plan worked perfectly. That clone fooled everybody -

ZEK

I hope so, I paid for the best.

ISHKA

And now everybody thinks you're dead. I feel a little bad lying to Quark and Rom - they're such good boys, in their own way.

ZEK

Ah, they're better off not knowing. And now Rom can run things however he wants.

ISHKA

And everyone can remember you as the greatest Nagus there ever was. And we have a huge auction payout to enjoy.

ZEK

But didn't you say that money was going to...

(swallows vomit)

...charity?

ISHKA

Most of it. But the rest is going into enough secret funds for us to live out the rest of our lives in peace and privacy in our personal paradise, on the best vacation planet in the entire galaxy.

Zek cackles with glee at that prospect.

ZEK

Oh, Ishka, my sweet. You're so devious. What would I ever do without you?

ISHKA

You'll never have to find out.

They nuzzle noses again, giggling all the way. We pan across to the gorgeous scenery, and...

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW