

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x03 - "Steppin' Out."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

TEASER

FADE IN:

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

Just the usual establishing shot...

2 **INT. VIC'S LOUNGE**

VIC himself is on stage, full band behind him - and they launch into Irving Berlin's "Steppin' Out With My Baby"...

VIC
(singing)
If I seem to scintillate
It's because I've got a date
A date with a package of
The good things that come with love
You don't have to ask me
I won't waste your time
But if you should ask me
Why I feel sublime...

The crowd is middling busy - mostly holographic period lounge patrons, a few lower Starfleet sprinkled in. They are politely appreciative but not massively enthusiastic...

VIC
(continuing)
I'm steppin' out with my baby
Can't go wrong 'cause I'm in right
It's for sure, not for maybe
That I'm all dressed up tonight.

Vulcan security non-com SEVAK (9x20 "Slave") observes both the crowd and Vic with detached, emotionless curiosity...

VIC
(continuing)
Steppin' out with my honey
Can't be bad to feel so good
Never felt quite so sunny
And I keep on knockin' wood.

Vic steps down off the stage into the first few tables...

VIC
(continuing)
There'll be smooth sailin'
'cause I'm trimmin' my sails
In my top hat and my white tie
and my tails.

As Vic weaves around the crowd, Sevak looks closely at his back, and frowns, confused - *Vic doesn't have a tail.*

Vic makes his way back up onto the stage for the finale...

VIC
(continuing)
Steppin' out with my baby
Can't go wrong 'cause I'm in right
Ask me when will the day be
The big day may be tonight.

Even before the music has fully died, Sevak turns and walks to the exit. Vic watches him go, sad and disappointed.

Then smothers it with a big fake grin for his audience...

VIC
Ladies and gentlemen, thank you,
thank you. But I'm afraid it's
time for me to say goodnight.

Some politely disappointed moans from the audience...

VIC
(coy, playful)
Hey, didn't you hear the song?
I've got a big night planned
tonight!

He winks playfully, the audience chuckles in response...

VIC (cont)
But please, enjoy the rest of your
evening. And don't forget to kiss
your loved ones goodnight.

A last burst of applause as Vic steps off the stage into the wings...

IN THE WINGS

Cocktail girl GINGER swaps Vic's microphone for a cloth to mop his brow and a glass of champagne. As he uses both with relief, she gushes in a thick Noo Yoik accent...

GINGER

Great show tonight, Vic.

VIC

Eh, it was okay. Kind of a thin crowd, though. Guess people had better things to do.

GINGER

Better than you? Ain't no such thing, Vic honey.

VIC

That would be more convincing if you weren't programmed to say it. But I appreciate the effort.

(passes her the
empty glass)

Now go on. I know you got a good night of your own all planned out. You and Bobby swapping googly eyes all night? Poor sap could barely keep his drumming straight.

GINGER

What about you?

VIC

(grin)

Doesn't anybody listen? I keep saying I got a big night planned.

GINGER

Well, okay. 'Night, Vic.

VIC

'Night, Ginger.

Ginger moves off. Vic takes a moment, straightens himself, steps back out into the main lounge room...

MAIN LOUNGE

The crowd is thinner than ever. Waitresses clean up empty glasses, wipe down tables, closing down for the night.

Vic weaves slowly through, nodding politely at the lounge's employees and the last remaining guests.

Eventually he approaches the entry passage, the small ante-room that leads off the holosuite and into the station...

ENTRY PASSAGE

Vic pauses, looking out of the holosuite doors and onto the upper corridor of Quark's bar. The distant sound of drinks *clinking* and dabo players *cheering* comes to him.

Then, with a small smile, he WALKS OUT of the holosuite...

3 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR (CONTINUOUS)

...and down the upper corridor to the spiral stairs. Passes a few station residents at tables - they smile and *cheers*.

Down the stairs, past more civilians and crew, nods more acknowledgements, exchanges meaningless pleasantries...

...to the main floor of the bar - and he pauses to look at the crowd. It's late here too, but the place is still busy.

TREIR works the *dabo* table with her usual pzazz - gamblers fall over themselves to adore her. Vic smirks at the sight.

QUARK sidles over to Vic and puts his arm around him...

QUARK

Vic, my man. Word has it I missed another spectacular show. Swear I saw Sevak almost crack a smile.

Vic is more grateful to hear Quark say this than when Ginger said it. It feels more genuine coming from him...

VIC

I ain't a miracle worker.

They walk together towards the open door of the bar...

QUARK
Your usual table's ready and
waiting for you.

VIC
You're a gentleman and a scholar.

QUARK
Tell that to Ro.

Quark leaves Vic with a wry grin, heads back to his bar.
Vic steps over the threshold, out onto the Promenade...

4 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)

...with its usual mix of crew, civilians, visiting aliens,
ambling around and seeing the sights. Vic smiles gently.

Bajorans file out of the shrine, a prylar at the door to
see them off. Among them are Major CENN and Captain KIRA.
The latter spots Vic, waves warmly before moving on.

He strolls to the next spiral staircase, climbs up to the
second level, finds Quark himself just laying out a drink
for him at a small table on the Promenade...

Vic takes the seat at the table, picks up the drink, takes
a slow sip, looks out the window at the star-speckled black
of space. He nods quietly to himself, satisfied...

VIC
Big night.

On Vic's face...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

KIRA lies on a bio-bed, watching as a full-body scanner moves gradually over her body, head to toe. She's nervous, not sure she wants to know what it will tell her. BASHIR reads the results off a nearby screen...

KIRA

So... am I going to explode?

BASHIR

Well, if you do, it won't be because of the new heart. As far as I can tell, everything is in perfect working order.

KIRA

"As far as you can tell?"

BASHIR

Nerys, relax. That's just my attempt to be witty. I can tell everything, and you're fine.

KIRA

So I can play springball? I can eat a steak?

BASHIR

You can play springball while eating a steak and shouting at junior officers all day long if you want. It takes more than a knife through the chest to bring down the mighty Kira Nerys.

KIRA

How about Ro?

(anticipates
his protest)

Within the boundaries of doctor-patient confidentiality.

BASHIR

Etana is working closely with her to ensure she's sticking to her exercise routine. I have seen nothing to preclude her continuing to serve as security chief.

KIRA

Good enough. Thanks, Julian.

Kira jumps down off the bio-bed and heads for the door, and Bashir turns to put away his equipment. As Kira exits...

...DAX enters. Strolls about, a little too nonchalantly. Here for a reason, trying to pretend she's not. At last...

BASHIR

Ezri? What can I do for you?

DAX

Oh, nothing, nothing. Just thought I'd pop in and say hi.

Dax picks up pieces of equipment, examines them for no reason. Bashir is not fooled, just carries on putting away his equipment while waiting for her to get to the point...

BASHIR

Okay. Hi! How are you?

DAX

Fine, fine. Had a message from Worf on Qo'noS.

BASHIR

How is he?

DAX

He's fine. Apparently Alexander got a promotion on the *Ya'Vang*. He's the new bridge communications officer. Worf whined a bit, but I know he's proud really.

BASHIR

Good. Good for him.

DAX
Any plans for tonight?

Bashir pauses. Could this be the point of all this? Dax is trying to be casual, like it's no big thing. But underneath she's clearly nervous about something...

BASHIR
Not really. Why?

DAX
I was just thinking of taking a trip to Las Vegas. Wondered if you wanted to join me. Seems like forever since we took in a show.

Dax is trying to keep it light, but it sounds like she's asking him out on a date. Bashir is pleasantly surprised...

BASHIR
That sounds like a great idea.

DAX
(muted relief)
Great!

BASHIR
What time were you thinking?

DAX
How about we meet in Quark's about twenty-one-hundred?

BASHIR
It's a date.

Dax's relieved expression falters a little, like that wasn't quite the right thing to say... Bashir notices the change... but then Dax brightens again...

DAX
Alright then. See you later.

Dax turns and leaves, step somewhat lighter now that this trial is over. Bashir watches her go, happily bemused...

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

Just a moment, focusing on the docking ring...

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

Vic strolls, casually exploring like a tourist. He turns a corner -- and further along is Lieutenant NOG, stretched out and elbow deep in the guts of some panel or other...

VIC
Need a hand there?

Nog jerks a little, narrowly missing bonking his head on a bulkhead. Pulls his head out, turns to see the newcomer...

NOG
Oh, hey Vic. What are you doing
wandering around the halls?

VIC
Y'know, just taking in the sights.
I ain't due on stage till tonight.
Gotta fill the time somehow.

NOG
Maybe you do. I've got to fix the
proximity sensors on this docking
array, then I'm going over plans
for upgrades to the *Defiant's*
computer mainframe with Leishman
and Candlewood, then when that's
done, I'm going back to school.

VIC
School?

NOG
Yeah... Because I never officially
finished all the engineering
courses at Starfleet Academy,
Admiral Ross wants me to do as
many remote courses in my down
time as possible. Like anybody
'round here has down time.

VIC

You've already been king of the castle for two years. What more is there for you to learn?

NOG

Always something, unfortunately.

VIC

(re open panel)

Well, don't you have any dogs bodies you can hand this stuff off to, so you can hit the books?

NOG

Dogs...?

(never mind)

All of my work crews are busy with this, that or the other. I didn't have anybody else free to do this, and I didn't want the Bajor shuttle crashing into the docking ring and killing two-hundred people when it arrives in an hour.

VIC

That's... understandable.

NOG

But if you were serious about giving me a hand...

VIC

(brightening)

Absolutely.

Vic crouches, sitting cross-legged on the deck with Nog...

VIC (cont)

I can't say I'll know what any of these doodads do, but I can follow instructions like any numbskull.

NOG

Great! You can start by holding this for me while I fix that...

Nog hands Vic a tool, dives back inside the open panel...

NOG

(muffled by
machinery)

Sorry I haven't been in to catch a
show in a while, Vic. I've just
been up to my ears in repairs. You
know how it goes.

VIC

(shrug)

Don't cry for me, Argentina.

NOG

I promise I'll find the time soon.

Vic nods, accepting Nog's promise, wistful. Nog holds his
hand out for the tool - Vic passes it to him. As he does,
Vic warms up, happier to be hanging with his pal...

8 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

A replicator creates a mug of steaming tea. VAUGHN reaches
in to grab it, carries it with him back down the stairs to
the central table. Dax is there, just keeping track...

DAX

(off panels)

The regular Bajor shuttle will be
docking within twenty minutes,
Commander.

VAUGHN

Mm-hmm. Any problems?

DAX

Nope. Nog got the repairs done in
plenty of time.

VAUGHN

Good.

DAX

Commander... would you take the
helm for a minute?

VAUGHN
Certainly.

Dax turns and trots up the stairs to Kira's office...

9 **INT. DS9 - KIRA'S OFFICE**

Dax pokes her head into the office, where Kira sits behind her desk reading from a padd...

DAX
Nerys, have you got a minute?

KIRA
Interrupt me, please. Anything to avoid reading more reports from the Chamber of Ministers.

Dax lets the door close behind her, takes the seat opposite Kira, who tosses the padd down in disgust...

KIRA
Politicians. As many words as possible to say... nothing.

DAX
Hey, I used to be a politician, you know.

KIRA
And?

DAX
And... it's worse than you think.

KIRA
So what do you need?

DAX
Just looking for a little advice, actually.

KIRA
From me? I thought you were the font of ancient knowledge.

DAX

In this case, you're the only one
I can talk to about this. Except
for Quark, and somehow I don't
think he'd be impartial.

Kira pauses - then nods with understanding...

KIRA

Julian.

DAX

I'm planning to tell him tonight.
Any helpful hints?

KIRA

Just be straight-forward and blunt
with him, I guess. You're not a
couple anymore. You don't owe him
anything... except honesty.

10 INT. DS9 - OPS CENTRE

At the central table, Vaughn sips at his tea. He turns at
the sound of the turbolift rising into Ops...

...and sees Vic riding the lift with a couple Ops officers.
Vic steps off the lift and wanders into Ops, a little out
of place and nervous to be here...

VAUGHN

Mister Fontaine. You're not
exactly a frequent visitor to Ops.
Do you need something?

VIC

Just exploring. Wondered if there
might be a couple of pretty young
ladies in here who wouldn't mind an
old showman's company for lunch.

VAUGHN

(smirk)

Dax and Kira are just up in the
office. They won't be long.

Vic nods, still looking around the room...

VIC

Whew. Quite an operation you guys are running here. I feel like I'm in a super-villain's evil lair or something. You ain't planning to hold the world to ransom, are you?

VAUGHN

Not unless there's been a change in orders, no.

As Vaughn grins with Vic, Kira and Dax exit the office...

DAX

Vic! This is a nice surprise. What are you doing here?

VIC

Hey, dollface. A man has to eat, and the best way to do it is with two gorgeous gals by his side. Care to join me for lunch?

KIRA

How could we resist such a flattering offer?

(to Vaughn)

Commander, you're in charge.

Dax and Kira take an arm each, Vic puffs up and struts up the stairs to the turbolift with them on either side.

Vaughn watches them go, then turns back to the central Ops table with an amused shake of the head...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

11 INT. VIC'S LOUNGE

Another night in Las Vegas. Tables pushed to the edges to create a dance floor. The band plays fun, danceable swing music. It's busier than last time, but not exactly packed.

DAX and BASHIR enter, both dressed to look fabulous and in tune with the environs. Not holding hands, and there is a nervous tension between them, if for different reasons.

Vic is nowhere to be seen. They make their way to the bar, perch on stools. Not sure how to start the conversation, so they just watch the crowd foxtrotting around the floor.

After a few moments, Ginger arrives...

GINGER

Hey, doc! Vic's been hoping you'd drop by. What can I get you?

BASHIR

(peppy)

Champagne, I think.

Dax isn't quite as enthusiastic - Julian is just being too excited about all this for comfort - but after a moment's hesitation, she accedes and nods to Ginger...

GINGER

Great! Back in two shakes.

Ginger leaves... Bashir tries again...

BASHIR

You want to get a table?

DAX

I guess.

They hop back off the bar stools, make their way into the crowd. At the edge of the dance floor, they spot...

...engineering Lt jg CANDLEWOOD (8x19) and Bajoran dabo boy HETIK (8x16) sat together, enjoying the spectacle.

Hetik wears something dabo-ish but rather more dignified, appropriate to the setting. Candlewood wears a nice dinner suit that he looks nervous enough to sweat right through...

DAX
Hi, John! Hetik.

CANDLEWOOD
(jumps to his feet)
Oh! Lieutenant. Doctor.

DAX
(waves him back down)
Oh, sit sit sit. We're all off
duty. You two having a nice night?

Candlewood glances back towards Hetik, and the two share a mildly embarrassed but distinctly flirtatious smirk...

CANDLEWOOD
So far.

BASHIR
Is this is your first time in
Vic's, Hetik? You've got that
wide-eyed "I have no idea what's
going on here" look.

HETIK
(nodding)
It's, aah... it's an experience.

BASHIR
You'll get the hang of the lingo
soon enough.

DAX
Come on Julian - we're cramping
their style.

BASHIR
(re Dax's words)
For example.

Bashir lets Dax lead him away. She spots an empty table and heads for it. Bashir makes sure to get there before her --

-- and pulls out the chair, all gentleman-like. Her smile falters again, but she takes the chair and sits...

DAX

Thank you, Julian.

...then he takes the chair opposite. Ginger arrives, places two glasses of champagne before them...

GINGER

Here you go, lovebirds.

Again, Dax falters, but Bashir grins. He raises one of the glasses in a toast, waits for Dax to raise the other...

BASHIR

To... new beginnings.

Dax takes a whole different meaning of that from the one Bashir intended. But she agrees nevertheless...

DAX

New beginnings. Exactly.

They clink their glasses, sip, and place them back down...

DAX

It's nice to see him dating.

BASHIR

Who, Candlewood?

DAX

(nods)

I know he has this reputation on duty for being a prankster and the life of the party, but I get the feeling he's not actually all that good at socialising in real life.

BASHIR

Is it really dating if it's with a dabo boy, though?

DAX
You tell me - you dated Leeta.

BASHIR
Touché.

The band ends one song. There is polite applause from the crowd, some dancers take the chance to rest their feet and take a seat. Others stay in spot, ready for more dancing.

When the music restarts with a new tune, they begin again. Bashir stands and formally holds out his hand to Dax...

BASHIR
Speaking of dating... would you
care to dance?

DAX
(shy smile)
I'd love to.

She stands, takes his hand -- and the two of them sweep onto the dance floor. Bashir leads Dax into a basic but serviceable quickstep. As they swoop around the floor...

...Dax slowly lets go of her nervousness, starts relaxing into the music and the fun of the evening...

12 INT. DS9 - NOG'S QUARTERS

Have we ever been in Nog's quarters since he was made Chief Engineer? I'm not sure. Anyhow, he's there now, hunched over screens filled with technical schematics and reports.

Nog goes from one to the next, back to the first, checking things against padds in his hands, making notes in other padds, and generally looking like a student cramming for his finals.

He takes a moment and sags in defeat. He presses a control and the computer bleeps...

COMPUTER
The time is twenty-one hours and
twenty six minutes.

He ponders it for a moment - can he spare the time? He really wants to...

NOG

No. Can't. Got to concentrate.

(sigh; recites
from text)

The basic principles of quadri-
spectral subspace geometry are as
follows...

13 INT. VIC'S LOUNGE

Dax and Bashir are still spinning around the floor. The song comes to an end, and they pause to clap politely, then head back to their table. The band takes a break and the other dancers head to either their own tables or the bar.

DAX

That was fun! I'm a little out of
breath.

BASHIR

You're just out of practise. If we
were to start dancing regularly
again, you'd be waltzing them off
the floor.

DAX

Not everyone has genetically
enhanced stamina, Julian.

Bashir wiggles his eyebrows suggestively, and Dax realises with horror that he took that as a sexual come-on...

DAX

(nervous)

That's not what I meant...

BASHIR

(smirk)

Oh I know, I'm only playing.

But Dax can't help but worry that he's not. This is getting out of hand. Best to just deal with the issue right now...

DAX

Julian... I suppose you've figured out that I had an ulterior motive for asking you out tonight...

Bashir realises Dax is getting serious, so he tamps down his enthusiasm to reflect that...

BASHIR

I did.

DAX

And there's something that I need to talk to you about, because it involves you.

BASHIR

I was hoping you'd say that.

DAX

(pressing on)

The thing is, I've been thinking about some things a lot over the past couple of months. Do you remember back when we were --

An ANNOUNCER interrupts - a big booming voice...

ANNOUNCER (o.s.)

Ladies and gentleman, please welcome to the stage of the fabulous Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas, the man with the golden touch... Mister! Vic! Fontaine!

The crowd CHEERS and CLAPS. Bashir turns and joins the applause, but Dax sighs in mild annoyance. She finally plucks up her courage, and then gets interrupted.

After a moment, Vic himself appears from the wings, takes his place at the front of the band. But he is not the usual boisterous showman - he is subdued, a little down.

The band strikes up, and with no pre-amble or opening patter, Vic launches straight into a somewhat sad version of Cole Porter's "Every Time We Say Goodbye."

VIC
(singing)
Every time we say goodbye
I die a little
Every time we say goodbye
I wonder why a little...

While Vic continues in the background, Dax attempts to get Bashir's attention, in hushed tones...

VIC
(continuing)
Why the gods above me
Who must be in the know
Think so little of me
They allow you to go

DAX
So, Julian, like I said, there's
something I want to talk --

BASHIR
(interrupting;
gently)
Ezri, shush. Vic's on. We can talk
in a minute.

Frustrated, Dax bites her tongue, gives up for the moment.
She turns to watch Vic's show...

VIC
(continuing)
When you're near
There's such an air
Of spring about it.
I can hear a lark somewhere
Begin to sing about it

There's no love song finer
But how strange the change
From major to minor
Every time we say goodbye

Now Dax is paying attention. As she watches Vic on stage,
it becomes clear that Vic is feeling these lyrics for real.

She glances over to Bashir, who is enjoying the show but doesn't seem to pick up anything worrying.

Dax continues to watch Vic's performance...

VIC

(repeats)

When you're near
There's such an air
Of spring about it.
I can hear a lark somewhere
Begin to sing about it

There's no love song finer
But how strange the change
From major to minor
Every time we say goodbye

Finishing on Dax, who is beginning to suspect something is rather wrong with Vic...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

14 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Dax and Bashir sit across a table with half-drunk glasses, both still in their finery. It's the end-of-night drink...

TREIR (o.s.)

Top up on the nightcap?

They look up - TREIR has sidled up silently, to Bashir's relief. He lets Dax decide, still hopeful for tonight...

DAX

No thanks, Treir. This is fine.

Hetik and Candlewood descend the spiral staircase, holding hands and exchanging cute glances. They pause, and share a romantic goodnight kiss. Treir purses and mutters...

TREIR

Careful with the public displays
of affection, boys.

DAX

What do you mean? Are they not
supposed to kiss because he's a
dabo boy?

TREIR

I just mean you do not want to get
an Orion girl jealous. Believe me.

She loves it really. With a smile, she wanders off. Hetik and Candlewood separate, and Hetik moves off towards the back rooms of the bar. Candlewood floats towards the door, glowing. Dax and Bashir both smile, amused at the sight...

BASHIR

Almost enough to put ideas in a
man's mind...

Bashir reaches across the table to grasp Dax's hand, but Dax yanks her hand away, flustered...

DAX
Julian... no. That's not what
tonight was about.

Bashir is now more confused than ever. Dax knocks back the
last of her drink and stands. The evening is over.

DAX
I should go. Thank you for a nice
evening. I'll see you tomorrow.

BASHIR
But... what about what you wanted
to talk to me about?

DAX
You were right, it can wait. The
moment's passed.

She turns and walks away, still flustered by how the whole
evening went so wrong. Bashir is left at the table alone...

15 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

A moment to indicate time passing...

16 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Dax walks along the corridor, back in uniform. Further down
the corridor, a door opens and the SOUNDS of a busy morning
at home burst out. Dax blinks at the sheer chaos of it...

Counsellor MATTHIAS (last seen 9x09) hovers in the doorway,
calling back into the room - a professional mostly-human
woman in her early 40s, with a full family life...

MATTHIAS
Alright, I'm off. No fighting, you
two. Eat your breakfast, do what
daddy tells you, and have a good
day at school, alright? Love you.
 (to Sibias)
See you later, hun.

She exchanges a quick and familiar kiss with her husband
SIBIAS (Bajoran male, briefly seen in 8x18).

He takes her COFFEE MUG, replaces it with a PADD, and then she's off. She strides down the corridor, and spots DAX...

MATTHIAS

Morning, Lieutenant. Were you looking for me?

DAX

Counsellor. I was wondering if you had time to chat this morning...

MATTHIAS

Sorry, I've got appointments all morning. But we can walk and talk if you like. Hold this a sec...

Matthias hands the padd to Dax, pulls some HAIRPINS from a pocket, starts doing up her hair, continuing to walk the whole time. Dax is nonplussed, scuttles to keep up...

MATTHIAS

So what's on your mind?

DAX

Oh. Right. I was in the holosuite last night, in the Las Vegas lounge program, and it looked like Vic, the lead character... well, he seemed depressed.

MATTHIAS

Okay. And...?

DAX

Well, I was looking for a second opinion from another psychologist. Do you think I should talk to him about it? Or just keep out of it?

MATTHIAS

Keep out of what?

DAX

Of Vic's personal life. I feel like I should help him, but I don't want to intrude.

They reach a turbolift, Matthias presses the call button...

MATTHIAS

I'm still not sure I understand the problem. This is a hologram we're talking about, yes?

DAX

Yes, but a very perceptive one. He knows he's a hologram, and he can move around from program to program whenever he wants. He's helped a lot of us in the past.

The door opens, the two women board, the only ones there...

17 **INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT (CONTINUOUS)**

MATTHIAS

Level fourteen, please.

The turbolift moves. Matthias still isn't sure what's going on here, but wants to be helpful if she can. She ponders, tries to come up with something that might be useful...

MATTHIAS

Alright, well... I know there's been all this talk on Earth lately about holograms demanding better rights and working conditions. The tabloids are calling it a "holo-strike". If he's as self-deterministic as you say, maybe he got himself caught up in all that.

DAX

Is that so bad? People should have good working conditions.

MATTHIAS

All due respect, Lieutenant, but holograms aren't people. They're tools that we design to do a certain job, and if they can't do that job, you talk to a computer programmer, not a psychiatrist.

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

The lift door opens, and Matthias strides out, Dax a couple of steps behind, appalled at Matthias' seeming unconcern...

DAX

I can't believe what I'm hearing.
How can a counsellor of all people
reject the idea of equal rights
for everybody? I thought society
was centuries past some people
being better than others.

MATTHIAS

Lieutenant, we're talking about
a computer program created for
entertainment. And I resent your
implication that I'm some kind of
racist. I resent it very much. Did
you miss the part where I'm the
result of an inter-racial marriage
myself? I'm one-eighth Vulcan, and
I also married a Bajoran man.

DAX

(flustered)

You know what? You're right. I
apologise. I'm just a little
emotional about this because
I have an attachment to Vic.

They reach a door - where Matthias stops and stands back a little, folds her arms. Inspecting Dax, figuring her out...

MATTHIAS

Lieutenant, I think you should
consider the possibility that
your urge to help this fictional
character with his emotional
problems is more about you than
it is about him.

DAX

(caught off guard)

Well... that's maybe... not... out
of the realms of possibility.

But Dax doesn't really want to go there right now...

DAX (cont)

Look, will you at least just come and talk to him with me? Make your own analysis based on your own observations, and we'll take it from there.

MATTHIAS

I'm not free right this minute. I've got real people's mental states to worry about. But come and find me this afternoon, and I guess we'll give it a shot. If only to put your mind at ease.

Matthias opens the door and enters her office, leaving Dax alone in the corridor...

19 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Dax perches nervously on a bar stool. Officers, some random aliens, Ferengi waiters moving back and forth.

QUARK appears behind the bar - follows her eyeline out onto the Promenade to see who Dax is waiting for...

QUARK

Somebody need to see a doctor?

DAX

What?

QUARK

You're waiting for Bashir, right? Rumour has it you two had quite the romantic evening last night.

DAX

(uncomfortable)

Don't listen to rumours, Quark.

QUARK

Hard not to with these ears.

Matthias enters and strides firmly towards Dax...

MATTHIAS

Alright, Lieutenant. Let's get on
with it.

Dax pops off her stool, and they walk together towards the
holosuites. Quark's face is blank with surprise...

20 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR, UPPER CORRIDOR

Dax and Matthias walk along the corridor to the holosuites.
Dax stops at the panel of one, reads the screen...

DAX

Program's running. He's online.

Matthias nods for her to continue. Dax taps a control - the
holosuite doors OPEN, and the two women walk through...

REVERSE ANGLE

...onto a replica of the upper corridor of Quark's. They
continue through sheer inertia before even realising where
they are. They stop, look around themselves, confused...

MATTHIAS

What the...

Frowning, Dax turns around, walks back through the door...

FIRST ANGLE

...and onto the upper corridor of Quark's. She stops again,
looks back through the door --

-- to where Matthias waits on the other side, an identical
upper corridor of Quark's, looking back at her.

Dax walks back through the door to join Matthias...

REVERSE ANGLE

...Dax emerges from the door and stands next to Matthias.
They are both very confused...

DAX
What's going on here?

MATTHIAS
You tell me.

Together they walk to the railing, look over it...

ANGLE

...and see the main floor of Quark's bar, identical to the bar they started in - a mid-afternoon crowd, some officers, some random aliens, Ferengi waiters moving back and forth.

DAX
This is a holographic recreation of Quark's. But the computer said that Vic's Las Vegas program was running in here.

MATTHIAS
Was the computer confused?

No idea. Then Dax notices a certain table down on the main level. Vic himself sits at it, with some unidentified lunch companions, in the middle of some amusing anecdote.

Dax frowns, more confused than ever. She turns, annoyed, hurries towards the spiral staircase...

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

...and emerges onto the main floor, Matthias close behind. They look around a bit more, and see things about exactly as you'd expect. Quark is behind the bar, MORN sits on his regular stool, Treir is at the dabo table.

Dax makes a bee-line for Vic's table, focusing on his happy and laughing face, not paying attention to his table-mates (but we might notice the shoulder of a Starfleet uniform).

DAX
Vic? What the hell is going on?

Vic reacts, a total caught-out-there shock. He looks up at Dax, dumbstruck, floundering for words...

VIC

Oh... hey... dollface...

Dax looks at the others sitting with him at the table --

-- and there is DAX. Another copy of Ezri Dax sits at the table, joining Vic for lunch, with KIRA sat beside her.

Real Dax's jaw drops with shock. She feels violated...

DAX

You made a copy of me? Of everyone?! What the hell is wrong with you, Vic?

Vic gets to his feet, flustered, trying to cover, trying to calm her down...

VIC

Doll, look, I can explain...

DAX

(to Matthias)

Do you believe this? You wanted to know if a hologram could need a psychiatrist. I guess you got your answer.

That takes Vic aback. And since the best defence in a good offence...

VIC

I beg your pardon? You been telling people I'm crazy?

DAX

(gestures around)

Well, what do you call this?

VIC

(defiant)

I call it having a nice meal with my friends. Not talking behind their backs to a damn head shrinker!

MATTHIAS
Mister Fontaine --

VIC
You got no business waltzing in
here laying down the law. Get out.

DAX
Vic, hang on a minute --

VIC
Get out of here and leave me
alone!

Vic WAVES his arm - the bar around them DISSOLVES, taking
him and all the other characters with it...

22 **INT. DS9 - HOLOSUITE**

...leaving Dax and Matthias alone and somewhat shaken on
the bare holosuite grid.

MATTHIAS
Now what do we do?

Dax has no idea. She shakes her head, more worried than
ever about Vic. The two of them turn to leave.

Watching Dax and Matthias leave, the door onto the upper
corridor of Quark's opening for them...

...VIC has appeared again, standing alone on the holosuite
grid, at the back of the room. He watches them leave, face
filled with churning emotions - anger, guilt, shame...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

23 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

A senior staff meeting. Kira at the head, with Dax, Vaughn, Bashir, Nog, and Ro (still using the supports) elsewhere...

DAX

I feel like it's all my fault. If I hadn't blown up at him, made him feel all defensive...

BASHIR

It's alright, Ezri. It would be a shock for any of us.

KIRA

Putting aside the question of why he did it for the moment, do we know how he did it?

NOG

Based on what Lieutenant Dax said, I looked into the activity logs of Vic's program. It turns out he's been keeping tabs on us all for a while now. The program somehow generated spontaneous connections between itself and the replicator files, medical records, duty rosters - he knew everything about where we were and what we were doing.

VAUGHN

...and he incorporated all of that data into his simulation, to make it as realistic as possible.

NOG

Yes, sir.

KIRA

And how does a holosuite program manage to do all of that?

BASHIR

We've known from the start that Vic wasn't just any old holosuite program, Captain.

DAX

All of us have wondered at one time or another whether he meets the criteria for an artificial intelligence. We just never actually got around to trying to answer the question.

NOG

Maybe with his program running permanently for so long, the matrix has developed enough complexities and nuances that he actually does, now.

RO

(irritated)

Captain, can we cut to the point here? I can't be the only one feeling more than a little violated. This thing has been following us around the station, watching our every move. I don't exactly enjoy knowing he can access any bit of information about me whenever he wants.

BASHIR

But if he is an artificial intelligence --

RO

(interrupting)

That's irrelevant. If he's just a program, then he's a program that's out of control. If he's not, then it's no different from any flesh and blood crew member using the computer to... to stalk us. Either way, it's wrong.

VAUGHN

She does have a point, Captain. Ro and I may not have the personal connection to this man that the rest of you do, but that doesn't change the fact that what he did was a huge invasion of privacy.

Kira pauses to consider all the opinions...

KIRA

You're right, it was. But I don't want to do anything drastic without giving him a chance to explain himself.

DAX

Let me talk to him, Captain.

Kira looks up - clearly, Dax feels strongly about this...

KIRA

Okay. Let me know how it goes.
Dismissed, everyone.

People begin to stand. Vaughn helps Ro to her feet and to grab her walking stick. Bashir watches Dax exit the room, curious about what's going on there...

24 INT. DS9 - HABITAT RING CORRIDOR

Bashir emerges and jogs a couple of steps to catch up with Dax. They walk and talk...

BASHIR

Ezri? I just wanted to say I'm sorry I didn't believe you the other night. When you said you thought something was wrong with Vic. Obviously you were right.

DAX

Oh, don't be silly. You have nothing to apologise for. I could just as easily have been completely insane.

BASHIR

No - you saw something I didn't.
You're an excellent counsellor.
When am I going to learn?

Bashir is being deliberately flattering. Dax kind of knows it, but he's so earnest that she falls for it anyway...

DAX

Thank you, Julian.

BASHIR

I could come with you, if you want.

DAX

I suppose you are the one who
brought him to the station...

BASHIR

And once this is taken care of,
we can get back to our dancing.

DAX

Maybe. We'll see.

Dax walks on with an uncertain smile, legs stretching out a bit beyond Bashir, unconsciously distancing herself...

25 INT. VIC'S HOTEL SUITE

Vic stands in his own doorway, in a dressing gown, a bit messy and bedraggled. Hasn't slept well, holding a drink. He stays at the door, not letting Dax and Bashir in...

VIC

I'm fine. Just peachy.

Pause. None of them know what to say next. Vic doesn't want to be bothered - he would rather wallow.

DAX

Look, Vic... I'm sorry I yelled at you. I should have been more understanding. But given a little time to consider it, I'm sure you can see why I was upset.

VIC
(small, surly)
Of course I can. I'm not an idiot.

DAX
Then can we come in, and talk
about it? Please, Vic.

Vic pauses... sighs... turns around to slouch back into his living room. Slumps onto his sofa, slugs back his drink.

Taking that as an opening, Dax and Bashir enter, perch on low chairs. He looks at them, their wary expressions...

VIC
Look at the pair of you. Anyone
would think you'd come to tell
someone they was dying. Cancer of
the imaging sequencer, is it?

DAX
Nobody's dying, Vic.

VIC
Wait - that's it, ain't it? You're
gonna turn the damn program off.
Well, go ahead.
(mutter)
Not like anyone'll notice.

BASHIR
Vic, we're not turning you off.
We just wanted to talk, find out
what's going on with you, before
we decide what to do about this.

VIC
(grumpy)
I think I'd rather you just
switched me off.

DAX
Okay, I guess that's for the best.
I'll tell Kira that's what you
want. I'm sure Quark'll be happy
to have the holosuite free again.

She stands, heads to the door. Bashir blinks, surprised...

VIC

(sad chuckle)

Reverse psychology? Please.

DAX

(turns back)

Not at all. The fact is we'd be completely within our rights to turn you off. You violated our trust, Vic. A lot of people are pretty pissed off with you.

That seems to genuinely get through to Vic at last...

VIC

(quiet)

Really? I never wanted that.

DAX

(takes the opening)

What did you want, Vic? You must have known we'd be upset if we ever found out what you were up to. Creating fake versions of us in the holosuite, and playing with us like toys?

VIC

And look how long I managed to get away with it, eh? Right under your noses all this time, and ain't nobody smelled a thing.

BASHIR

So you did it just to push our buttons? To get attention?

VIC

No! I... I was just... exploring. You guys talk about the station out there all the time... just wanted to see it for myself.

Dax comes back to him, sits again on the low chairs...

DAX

And did you get what you wanted
out of it?

VIC

(half-hearted)

It was... nice. To see everyone.
Just hang out for a while.

DAX

But it's not real, Vic. You know
that, right? I feel ridiculous
saying this to a hologram, but
it's a fantasy. There's no way to
leave the holosuite for real.

VIC

I'm your fantasy life. You can't
be mine?

DAX

It's not the same. I...

(flustered)

Vic, enjoying fantasies is fine.
In fact, it's better than fine -
it's a necessary part of a healthy
life. But all it does is give you
a break, a time out. It avoids the
problem - it doesn't fix it.

All of a sudden, Vic is on topic. It comes out slowly,
quietly. Not with any accusation, just sad...

VIC

The war was hell for you. I could
tell that even from in here. But
there was something good came out
of it - me. You guys were always
in here to forget your troubles,
and I was happy to help. I felt
like I was doing some good.

BASHIR

Everyone united in common cause
against the Dominion... But the
war's been over for two years.

VIC

And look at me now. You don't need me anymore. Sure, you still came around for a while. But it was just habit. When was the last time any of you came to a show, huh?

DAX

(gently)

Is that what this is all about?
That we haven't been to see you?

VIC

It's why I'm here, isn't it? The reason I exist. To make music for you guys. You two, Kira, Quark, Odo, Nog... God help me, even Worf.

(quiet)

I miss you guys. You're my friends.

Sympathising, Dax nods to herself - she understands.

DAX

Vic... I'm so sorry. You're right - things haven't been the same since the war.

BASHIR

Of course they haven't. Things change, Dax. It's the only real universal constant.

DAX

(turns to
Bashir)

But he's right, Julian. You must feel it too. Everyone's too caught up in their own stuff. The old gang may have moved on, but we haven't made any effort to create a new gang.

BASHIR

Then what do we do about it?

DAX

I don't know...

BASHIR

What we need is something to bring the station together. Some kind of event, that everyone can come to and enjoy together, as a community. One might even call it... a show.

Bashir looks meaningfully to Vic. It takes a second, but Vic gets the hint...

VIC

Hey doc, I'd love to help. Really I would. But it ain't gonna happen.

DAX

Julian, you can't be serious. There's thousands of people on this station at any one time. You can fit maybe a dozen into this room at best. It's a nice idea, but Vic's right... it'll never work.

BASHIR

Oh, I think we can figure it out. Just let me place a few calls.

On Bashir's victorious grin...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

26 INT. VIC'S LOUNGE - IN THE WINGS

VIC walks out from backstage into the wings, in his very best suit. Eyes wide with nervousness, straightening his collar, bow-tie, pocket-square. Everything must be perfect.

NOG, BASHIR and KIRA wait near the curtains...

NOG

Vic, stop fidgeting. You look as smooth as a...

(to Bashir)

What's something that's smooth?

BASHIR

Silk?

NOG

That's the one. Smooth as a silk. So relax. You've done this a thousand times.

VIC

Not for a thousand people. If Frank could see me now...

(to Kira)

You really think I look okay?

KIRA

You're gonna knock 'em dead.

VIC

I'll settle for entertained.

(stops to listen)

Sounds kinda quiet out there...

BASHIR

Stop worrying. I've got it all under control. You ready?

Vic gulps, readies himself, heads out onto the stage...

27 **INT. VIC'S LOUNGE - MAIN ROOM**

...only to stop dead, jaw dropping. The room is completely empty, except for Ginger the waitress waiting by the bar.

Ginger pours a glass of champagne, hands it to Vic as the group pass. Vic looks at the glass, not sure what to do...

Nog nods - *go ahead, you'll need it*. Vic knocks back the drink, hands the empty glass back to Ginger...

GINGER

Break a leg, Vic.

Bashir holds the curtain for him, into the entry passage. Still not sure what's going on, Vic walks through...

28 **INT. VIC'S LOUNGE - ENTRY PASSAGE**

... the group gather in the small anteroom. Kira opens the door -- and the ROAR of an enormous crowd comes through...

VIC

Doc, we've been over this. There's
no way to --

Bashir holds up an object for Vic -- the MOBILE EMITTER from *Voyager's* EMH. Bashir clips the device to the lapel of Vic's jacket like a flower. Vic's image FRITZES, resets...

BASHIR

It's called a Mobile Emitter, and
you have no idea how many favours
I had to call in to get hold of it.
It's due back at Jupiter Station
as soon as we can possibly get it
there. So this is a one-night-only
event. Make the most of it.

Bashir walks through the door, out onto the upper level of Quark's bar. He turns, looks back, daring Vic to follow...

...and Vic realises what Bashir is implying. He takes a small and hesitant step... and another...

...and then he's over the threshold. For real.

29 **INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR, UPPER CORRIDOR**

Vic looks around, listening to the sounds, gaping in awe,
as Kira and Nog follow him out and the door closes...

BASHIR

Your audience awaits, Vic.

VIC

(mostly to self)

Big night.

Still absorbing, Vic follows the others round the balcony.
Past the spiral staircase, and on towards the upper exit
out of the bar onto the Promenade. The door opens...

30 **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (CONTINUOUS)**

... onto the upper walkways of the Promenade, and a sea of
faces. The ROAR of people is huge. MORN, TREIR and HETIK
stand outside the door, beaming at him with anticipation.

A full LIVE BAND are tuning up on the crossover bridge.
Real instruments like the ones Vic's holographic band
plays. A mix of Starfleet officers, civilians and friendly
aliens. Kira notices Vic's thunderstruck expression...

KIRA

I put a call out for all the best
professional musicians from all
over the station and Bajor. I've
had them practising non-stop for a
week now.

NOG

I handled the power distribution,
and made sure the Promenade's
acoustics are just right.

KIRA

Quark even pulled the entire
Promenade Merchants' Association
together to cater for everyone.
Almost the entire station has
turned out to see you, Vic.

VIC
(shell-shocked)
No pressure or nothin', huh?

OUTSIDE SECURITY

RO stands near her office, in her supports. Keeping a close eye on the massive crowds filling every inch of space out there. Major CENN pushes out of the crowd towards her, very uncomfortable with all this and looking for refuge...

CENN
Prophets, I hate crowds.

RO
(sarcastic)
Really? I never guessed.

CENN
Who is this guy, anyway? What's the big deal?

RO
Frankly, I'm not sure myself. I went on one night out there, more than a year ago, and... well, I don't really get it.

CENN
I'm surprised you're letting this happen, Lieutenant. This many people has got to be a security nightmare.

RO
I've got every warm body working. I even pulled Etana back in just for the night.

(beat)
Speaking of which, shouldn't you be covering the replimat, Major?

CENN
Right.
(deep breath)
Prophets, I hate crowds.

He wades back into the melée, soon lost in the masses of people. Ro smiles a little, amused at his discomfort. A moment, and Quark is the next to melt out of the crowd...

QUARK

Laren - can you please tell
Sergeant Shul to stop bossing my
customers around? This is a night
to celebrate, not to be penned in
like *jebrets*.

RO

It's for everyone's good, Quark.

QUARK

Yes, well...
(small smile)
Nice to see you enjoying yourself
for a change.

Ro is taken aback for a second... but then a begrudging smile does break through after all. Quark smiles back...

QUARK

See? Knew you could do it.

And he melts back into the crowd.

PROMENADE - MAIN FLOOR

Outside the JUMJA KIOSK, two young children ARIOS (m, 7-ish) and MIREH (f, 5-ish) hover and pout. Both dressed to the nines - an adorable miniature suit and party dress...

ARIOS

Mummy! Can I have a jumja stick?

...revealing MATTHIAS and SIBIAS, both also dressed their best. Matthias pretends to have been harassed into it...

MATTHIAS

Okay. Just this once.
(to kiosk owner)
Four jumja sticks, please.
(then sotto)
Two of them sugar free.

The kiosk holder hands over four sticks, arranged in pairs. Matthias hands two to the kids, one to Sibias, keeps the last for herself. Before they can eat, she crouches down...

MATTHIAS

Now, I'm letting you both stay up past your bed time because it's a special night. But that means I don't want any arguments when I say it's time to go to bed, okay?

MIREH

We promise, Mummy.

MATTHIAS

Well okay then. Stay close...

...and they move into the crowd, the kids sucking happily on their jumja sticks. Sibias and Matthias follow behind, also sucking on theirs. Sibias leans in close...

SIBIAS

You look beautiful tonight, Phil.

MATTHIAS

Why thank you, kind sir.

SIBIAS

(tasting his jumja)

Ooh! We get the full sugar ones.

MATTHIAS

(flirty)

We may need the energy later.

The crowds have split into a natural break near the cross over bridge, making a front line that can look up to the bridge to see Vic and the band.

Just pushing their way to the front are VAUGHN and DAX. Matthias and family are also just arriving from the other direction - the parents shielding the kids from the mass.

MATTHIAS

Commander, Lieutenant. Quite a turn out.

VAUGHN

Indeed. Sibias, good to see you again...

SIBIAS

You too, Commander.

MATTHIAS

Lieutenant, I want to apologise to you for what I said the other day.

DAX

What did you say?

MATTHIAS

About having real people's feelings to worry about. Clearly, helping Vic with his problems has helped a lot of other people too. It's nice to see so many folks all enjoying the same thing. I shouldn't have been so judgemental.

DAX

Don't worry about it, Counsellor.

BASHIR (o.s.)

Ezri...

Bashir, Kira and Nog have come down the stairs, making their way over. TENMEI has arrived as well, joins Vaughn...

BASHIR (cont)

...he's about to go on.

Quark's VOICE echoes from speakers around the Promenade...

QUARK (o.s.)

Ladies and gentlemen! And... other genders. Please welcome to the stage, in a special one-night-only event exclusive to Deep Space Nine... Mister! Vic! Fontaine!

Roaring, deafening APPLAUSE. Vic struts to the centre of the stage, the true showman in full Vegas bloom...

VIC
Ladies and gentlemen...
 (no, that's
 not right)
...friends... I just want you to
know how much it means to this old
show horse to see you all here
tonight. And I promise, you're
gonna get the show of your lives,
because...

At Vic's signal, the band strikes up - a full big band
sound that fills the entire Promenade. It's the old classic
"You Make Me Feel So Young," by Myrow & Gordon...

VIC
 (singing)
You make me feel so young
You make me feel like
Spring has sprung
And every time I see you grin
I'm such a happy individual

As we pan around the crowd, thrilled with the show, I want
to see every station-bound recurring character we've got.
Matthias and family. Hetik and Candlewood. RICHTER and
ETANA. Nog standing with PERMENTER, LEISHMAN and T'RB.

VIC
 (continuing)
The moment that you speak
I wanna go play hide-and-seek
I wanna go and bounce the moon
Just like a toy balloon

Bajoran medic AYLAM is giving flirty glances to a totally
oblivious Doctor TARSES. BOWERS standing with the various
security team members from 9x20 "Slave" (minus Sevak), all
holding glasses of beer and having a great time together.

VIC
 (continuing)
You and I, are just like
A couple of tots
Running across a meadow
Picking up all forget-me-nots

Bashir reaches out to take Dax's hand... she lets him. Even giggles as he grabs her for a bit of on-the-spot dancing...

VIC

(continuing)

You make me feel so young
You make me feel
There are songs to be sung
Bells to be rung
And a wonderful fling
To be flung

By the security doors, Ro is bopping on the spot a little, joining in despite herself. Across the crowd, she spots Quark near his bar - and he is grinning back at her...

VIC

(continuing)

And even when I'm old and grey...

Vaughn rolls his eyes, but smiling the whole time...

VIC

(continuing)

I'm gonna feel the way I do today...

Bashir looks adoringly at Dax...

VIC

(continuing)

'Cause you make me feel so young.

Ending on Vic as he winds up his song, and the crowd goes wild, roaring their approval...

...and Vic smiles for his friends, truly content.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW