

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

12x07 - "Old Flames."

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 17x07 - "BEFORE DISHONOUR"

Since Remus became a Klingon protectorate (TTN 1x03 "Dead Man's Shoes"), Federation diplomats have negotiated a more permanent arrangement. Remans have voluntarily emigrated to Klogat VI, a Klingon-controlled world. Romulan ships have been harassing the transports, and a moon of Klogat 'accidentally' explodes. No Remans are hurt, but tensions between Qo'noS and Romulus are on the rise again. *Enterprise* and *Da Vinci* are assigned to investigate, leading to a reunion between LaForge and [Sonya Gomez](#) (TNG 2x16 "Q Who"), who is *Da Vinci's* XO. After some painstaking analysis, they conclude that a Romulan warbird commanded by [Admiral Mendak](#) (TNG 4x11 "Data's Day") is responsible. Romulan ambassador Kalavak presents Picard, Bacco and Klingon ambassador K'mtok with 'proof' that Mendak was a rogue agent, and that he and his entire crew have committed ritual suicide rather than be captured. No-one is entirely convinced Mendak was not under orders from Praetor Tal'Aura, but there is nothing more they can do.

TTN 1x07 - "SPIRIT OF THE HUNT"

Finally beginning their mission of peaceful exploration, *Titan* heads out to the Gum Nebula, a region of active stellar birth in the Beta Quadrant. Security chief Keru brings cadet Torvig up on charges - the eager young [Choblik](#) put nanoprobe in the replicators as an experiment on 'gut feelings'. Tuvok, Troi and all the other telepaths react to a psychic distress signal. They locate a school of the [space jellyfish](#) from TNG 1x01 "Farpoint", under attack by what appear to be their own kind, but dead and being driven by aliens called the Pa'haquel. Riker drives the *Titan* in between them, letting the star-jellies escape. Pa'haquel leader Qui'hibra is angry but willing to talk, so Troi beams over as diplomatic officer with Dr Ree, Keru and science officer Jaza. They learn that the Pa'haquel are part of a multi-planetary alliance much like the Federation, and that they need the star-jellies to use as weapons in a war.

VOY 10x07 - "NINE LIVES"

USS *Einstein*: Janeway awakes to the [female Q](#) (VOY 3x11 "The Q and the Grey"), who warns her that she is not indestructible. Earlier: Adm Batiste suggests for the third time that *Voyager* be sent back out to the DQ. Janeway forbids it. There is another problem - the dead Borg cube in Sector 10 (TNG 17x03 "Resistance"). *Voyager* has the most experience with the Borg, they should be recalled to handle it. *Einstein*: Janeway continues to argue with Q - this is the only way to keep *Voyager* safe. Earlier: Janeway checks in with Seven and the Doctor. Chakotay has left a message, but she can always call him back later. She commissions the science ship *Einstein* to take her out to the dead Borg cube alone. *Einstein*: Janeway confirms that the Borg ship is harmless - all its drones have been removed. But the ship itself comes to life and swallows her whole. "Told you so," says Q.

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT

The *Defiant* zooms along at low warp through open space.

2 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Cmdr RO LAREN sits in the centre chair, reading a padd as the business of the ship goes on smoothly around her. After a moment, she frowns at something she reads...

RO

Nog, didn't you say the plasma coolers were getting an overhaul before we left the station?

Lt NOG turns from the bridge engineering console to reply.

NOG

I tried, Commander. But I couldn't get hold of the parts.

Lt PRYNN TENMEI throws a barb from the helm console.

TENMEI

Oh yeah - that old chestnut.

NOG

Hey, it's not my fault if the sector quartermaster is out of plasma cooler interlinks.

RO

Couldn't you bribe him with something?

NOG

I tried! Turns out you can't bribe a Catullan - they only care about doing a good job. As if doing a good job and making money are somehow mutually exclusive.

TENMEI

So if we have bad plasma cooler interlinks, how much longer until we blow up?

NOG

About two years.

RO

Two years?! Then why do they need replacing now?

NOG

Because I care about doing a good job too. As well as making money.

Ro CHUCKLES. At the tactical console, Lt BOWERS purses. He hates this friendly banter on the bridge. Suddenly an ALERT sounds - Bowers checks his readings.

BOWERS

Commander - we're receiving a distress signal. A Cardassian freighter is under attack.

RO

By who?

BOWERS

It doesn't say.

RO

Prynn - how long?

TENMEI

(checks panels)

Twelve minutes at warp eight.

RO

Do it.

TENMEI

Aye, sir.

Tenmei works her panels, and we feel the ship turn and increase in speed.

RO

Sam, reply and let them know we're on our way. I guess they're lucky we were out here.

BOWERS

Aye, sir.

Still pursing - he shouldn't be referred to by his first name while on duty - Bowers nevertheless follows orders. Ro smoothly turns the discussion towards business...

RO

Where are they, and what do we know about it?

BOWERS

The freighter is on the outskirts of the Orias system, within the Cardassian Union.

TENMEI

Are we allowed to cross the border, then?

RO

For a distress call, yes. That was in the treaty. What else?

BOWERS

Orias is where the Obsidian Order built their secret fleet before it fell to the Dominion.

RO

I thought the name was familiar. The Maquis found out about it.

BOWERS

After that, it was just a standard Cardassian colony. Liberated by the Romulans during the war, then administrated by them until it could be handed back to Cardassia.

RO

So if it's just a regular colony now, and not a base for a secret fleet of warships, why is somebody attacking ships near there?

BOWERS

Unknown, sir. I suppose we'll find out in...

(checks panels)

...eleven minutes.

Ro nods, pondering that...

3 EXT. SPACE - DEFIANT

The *Defiant* zooms along, now at high warp...

4 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Another alert on Tenmei's panels. She checks...

TENMEI

We just crossed the border. We are now in Cardassian territory.

BOWERS

Going to yellow alert.

RO

Is that really necessary? We're not here under false pretences.

BOWERS

That we know of. I'd rather be cautious until we know more. Sir.

RO

Alright. Go ahead.

Bowers sets alert to yellow - the lights begin to flash.

NOG

Coming into sensor range...

RO

On screen.

Nog works his panels, and the MAIN VIEWSCREEN changes to show a firefight in the distance, too far away to clearly discern the participants.

RO

I recognise those weapons.

NOG

Sir, readings say that's a Galor-class warship. The *Trager*.

RO

Trager? That's Macet's ship. But you said it was a freighter that was under attack, not a warship.

NOG

Yes, sir. But it's not the *Trager* that's under attack. The *Trager* is the one doing the attacking.

Nog works his panels again, ZOOMing the image in, until we see a clearer image of a Cardassian GALOR-class warship firing on a small and defenceless GROUMALL-class freighter.

Ro leans forward in her chair, peering at this.

RO

What the hell is going on?

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN

5 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Picking back up where we left it - the viewscreen image of a Cardassian warship attacking one of their own freighters.

RO

Hail Macet.

Bowers works his panels, then nods to Ro to continue.

RO

Defiant to *Trager*. We are responding to a distress call from that barely armed freighter you're attacking. Please stand down your weapons and let's talk about this.

They wait in tension... until the *Trager* does indeed stop firing. Bowers receives another incoming signal. He turns to Ro - she understands his meaning and nods to continue.

The image of the ships changes to a close-up of GUL MACET (Cardassian male, last seen DS9 10x06 "The Dream Box").

MACET (screen)

Commander Ro. How pleasant to see you again - it's been too long.

RO

I wish I could say the same. Why are you attacking a defenceless freighter, Gul Macet?

MACET (screen)

(silky
threatening)

I might remind you, Commander Ro, that you are in Cardassian space. We have jurisdiction over our own ships and our own citizens, as agreed by the treaty between us.

RO

That same treaty also gives me the right to intervene in cases of humanitarian crisis, Macet - like when a freighter with barely enough weapons to nudge an asteroid out of its path is being obliterated by a fully armed warship. Who's on that ship, and why are you attacking them?

MACET (screen)

(grudging)

Criminals, Commander. Outlaws who it is my job to apprehend. I strongly suggest you withdraw and let me complete that job.

RO

I'm afraid I can't do that. They asked for my help, and I am now legally - not to mention morally - obligated to provide it.

(cooler)

Please, Macet. We've worked well together in the past. Let's do it again. Let me at least board the ship and give them medical care. You can even join me if you want. After that, if you still believe they're criminals, I'll let you take them away and deal with them in your own way.

On screen, Macet seethes for a moment.

MACET (screen)

Very well, Commander Ro. I'll meet you on the *Ashell* in ten minutes.

RO

Thank you, Gul. Ten minutes.

The signal drops, returning us to the image of the looming warship and the nearly crippled freighter. Ro stands.

RO

Ro to Doctor Bashir - meet me in the transporter room with a full trauma kit.

BASHIR (comm)

On my way, Commander.

RO

Nog, grab your repair kit too.
Sam, you've got the bridge.

As Nog stands and turns towards the exit, Ro joins him. But Bowers stands and intercepts her, speaking confidentially.

BOWERS

Commander, if I may... Gul Macet is correct. The Prime Directive forbids us from interfering in internal Cardassian conflicts.

RO

I'm not interfering, I'm helping.

BOWERS

And if he does decide to complete his job and deal with these criminals according to Cardassian law, will you 'help' again?

RO

It won't come to that. It's like Evik said - you just need to get them to put down their weapons first. Then when you've talked it out, weapons won't be necessary.

BOWERS

And I'm still afraid that's naive.

RO

Believe me, this is development for me too. A Bajoran former Maquis's first instinct when faced with a Cardassian warship is not to talk. But if it saves lives...

After a moment, Bowers nods his acknowledgement of that.

RO

Thanks, Lieutenant. Keep in touch.

Ro turns to leave. Bowers takes the centre chair.

6 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Trager*, the *Ashell* and the *Defiant* all rest in open space, stationary.

7 **INT. CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER - CORRIDOR**

A half-destroyed wreck of a freighter. Sputtering lights, fallen bulkheads, sparking wires, hissing vents. The usual.

Six Starfleet TRANSPORTER beams deposit six Starfleet officers into this - NOG, his deputy LEISHMAN, BASHIR, his nurse RICHTER, security officer ALECO, and RO in command.

RO

Alright, let's find somebody who's in charge here.

BASHIR

Shouldn't we wait for Macet?

RO

He said he'd meet me in ten minutes. He knew it wouldn't take me that long. He was giving us time to make a start without him looking over our shoulders.

NOG

Why would he do that?

RO

I know he looks like Dukat, but he's not Dukat. He's a good guy - for a Cardassian soldier, anyway. I have a feeling he's on our side in this, really.

A small EXPLOSION from a wall panel makes the team flinch back. Steeling herself, Ro leads the crew down the hallway, stepping over fallen debris and shouting out loud.

RO

Hello? This is Commander Ro Laren,
I'm with Starfleet. We responded
to your distress call.

NATIMA (o.s.)

Over here!

Ro leads the party towards the voice...

...and finds [NATIMA LANG](#), the Cardassian professor (last seen [DS9 8x18 "This Grey Spirit"](#)). Dirty and bedraggled, she presses her hand over a bleeding WOUND in her arm.

RO

Ambassador Lang? Is that you?

NATIMA

Ro Laren. Oh, it's good to see a
friendly face.

RO

You're the criminal Macet was
trying to catch? I thought you
were a Cardassian official.

NATIMA

It's a long story. Please, come
with me - we need help.

RO

Of course, whatever you need.

Natima turns and leads the Starfleet team further down the corridor. Leishman YELPS in surprise, causing Aleco to SPIN with his weapon raised. But she's fine - it was another EXPLOSION of sparks catching her off guard in the darkness.

As they walk, Bashir notices Natima is wounded...

BASHIR

You're hurt. Let me help.

NATIMA

It looks worse than it is. But we could definitely use your help.

(beat)

You were Elim Garak's friend, weren't you?

BASHIR

You have good memory, Ambassador.

NATIMA

I'm a Cardassian. Here we are...

They reach a room and enter...

8 INT. CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER - CARGO BAY

A large room stacked with crates and boxes and containers, although half of them are busted open and burned to a crisp. Ro reacts to the sight of...

...Three CARDASSIAN civilians, lying on the deck between the crates, WHIMPERING and GROANING in various states of bloody injury and maiming. Two other Cardassians tend to them as best they can, which is to say not at all.

Bashir and Richter push past Ro and rush up to the injured, do a quick visual inspection...

BASHIR

I'm going to need to beam them back to the *Defiant*, Commander.

RO

(nods, taps combadge)

Ro to *Defiant* - beam Doctor Bashir, Nurse Richter, and three Cardassians direct to sickbay.

BOWERS (comm)

Stand by, Commander.

Natima beckons the helpers away, letting the TRANSPORTER take the Starfleet medics and the Cardassian wounded. As if on cue, another EXPLOSION of sparks rocks the cargo bay.

RO
Lieutenants Nog and Leishman can help you with some of this damage too, if you like.

LANG
Happily. Korayn, would you show them the way to the engine room?

One of the civilians nods and leads Nog and Leishman out of the room.

Ro, Natima and Aleco are left alone with the last civilian, who begins trying to reclaim some of the contents from the broken crates. Ro notices. Natima notices her noticing.

NATIMA
Food, Commander. Nothing but food, for the colony on Orias Three.

RO
Why would that make you criminals?

NATIMA
Because the food wasn't provided via official Cardassian channels.

Frustrated, Natima turns and walks out of the cargo bay...

9 INT. CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER - CORRIDOR

Ro catches up with Natima, while Aleco follows, still wary.

RO
Ambassador Lang...

NATIMA
Call me Natima, you may as well.

RO
Okay. Natima, I don't understand.

NATIMA
They don't want you to understand.
They don't want you to know that

the government is incapable of feeding their own people. Not this far from Cardassia Prime, anyway.

RO

You mean Orias isn't the only one?

NATIMA

All the outer colonies - they're all starving, Laren. Cardassia can't spare the food, the tech, the medical supplies... so I help however I can.

RO

And that means going outside the law to get what you need.

NATIMA

Which is why Macet is trying to kill us.

RO

Look, we've both dealt with Macet before. We both know he's not the typical Cardassian military thug.

NATIMA

And yet he only stopped firing on us because you showed up.

RO

So let's use that. Keep it going.

Natima pauses to look at Ro, letting her indignation fade for a moment. It is good to see a friendly face.

NATIMA

You're right. If it helps the starving colonists...

RO

I'm sorry we haven't stayed in touch, Natima. Just that there's been a lot going on -

NATIMA
(grin)
Since we tortured Quark over a
drink in his bar, you mean?

RO
(laugh)
He's just so much fun to wind up
sometimes. I can't resist.

NATIMA
Oh believe me, I know.

RO
Can't help wonder how he'd react
knowing I was here helping you.

NATIMA
Well, now that you mention it...

Natima turns another corner into another room...

10 **INT. CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER - MESS HALL**

What serves as a meagre mess hall for this small Cardassian
freighter's small crew. At one of the tables, tending to
another injured and bleeding Cardassian... is QUARK.

He looks up as Lang enters - and he and Ro lay eyes on each
other with shock...

RO
Quark!

QUARK
Laren...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

11 INT. CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER - MESS HALL

Quark stands up in guilty shock. Ro steps further into the room likewise. Natima Lang beckons the injured Cardassian he was tending away, so as to leave Quark and Ro alone. As she turns to leave, she sees Aleco hovering there.

NATIMA

Ah. Ensign...?

ALECO

Aleco Vel, ma'am.

NATIMA

Well, Ensign Aleco - if I remember my Starfleet uniforms correctly, you're in tactical. Perhaps you'd join me on the bridge and take a look at our laughable defences?

Aleco looks to Ro for permission; Ro nods.

ALECO

Lead the way, ma'am.

After a last curious glance, Lang, Aleco and the Cardassian leave. Ro and Quark stand awkwardly in the mess hall.

RO

Quark...

QUARK

I'm helping, Laren.

RO

I can see that. I can barely believe it, but I can see it.

QUARK

(turns away)

Don't look at me like that. Like you're proud of me.

RO
Shouldn't I be?

QUARK
Natima asked for my help. She wanted to make use of my contacts. I know people who can get things done and don't ask questions.

RO
I realise that.

QUARK
People are starving out here.

RO
So you used your knowledge of the shadier side of the street to help out your ex-girlfriend. I get it.

QUARK
And I will not apologise for it!

RO
Then why does it sound like you're trying to apologise for it?

QUARK
Because it's... and she's...

RO
I'm not mad at you, Quark. I'm actually quite impressed. You're turning into a real -

QUARK
Don't say the F word.

RO
(deliberate taunt)
- Philanthropist.

Quark scream-moan-growls in disgust at the very thought, and throws himself back into the seat at the debris-strewn table. Ro quietly joins him in the opposite seat.

RO

What I don't get it why you just didn't tell me. I had no idea you were even off the station.

QUARK

It's not like you tell me every time you're heading off somewhere.

Ro gives him a look - come on, you can do better than that.

QUARK

Fine. I didn't want you to know I was doing something illegal.

RO

For a good cause.

QUARK

Or that I'd been in contact with Natima.

RO

Quark, we're not a couple. I said from the start that just 'cause we have sex occasionally doesn't mean we have any claim on each other.

QUARK

Exactly! I did nothing wrong.

RO

Then why couldn't you tell me?

Quark tries to figure out the right answer... and fails.

QUARK

Nnnggaaahhh! Females! Why do you have to be so confusing?!

MACET (o.s.)

I hope I'm not interrupting.

They both turn to see Macet standing in the doorway of the mess hall, clearly interrupting. Ro stands; Quark cowers.

RO

Gul Macet. You're right on time.

MACET

Naturally. Ambassador Quark - I did not realise you were on board the *Ashell*.

(no answer)

Commander, I would prefer we talk aboard *Trager*. I guarantee your safety, and there is marginally less chance of being electrocuted or bisected by a falling girder.

Ro covers a smirk, and taps her combadge.

RO

Ro to *Defiant* - I'm going on board the Cardassian warship. Please keep a transporter lock on me.

BOWERS (comm)

Acknowledged. *Defiant* out.

MACET

That was curiously candid.

RO

Why bother hiding it? You probably already know all the code words. Now we both know we both know.

(turns to Quark)

Nog's in the engine room.

QUARK

I'll let him know where you are.

With a smile of thanks to Quark, Ro goes to stand next to Macet. He taps a control on the wrist of his uniform, and he and Ro disappear in the golden swirls of a transporter. Quark is left alone, pondering everything that happened...

12 **EXT. SPACE**

The *Ashell* and the *Defiant* - but focusing on the *Trager*.

13 INT. CARDASSIAN WARSHIP - BRIDGE

Macet leads Ro onto the bridge of this Cardassian warship. It is of course filled with a dozen CARDASSIAN OFFICERS, who turn almost as one to inspect the new arrival.

Ro stops in her tracks at the sight of all these FACES silently hating the Bajoran stranger in their midst. It's not the most comfortable situation. Macet is also aware...

MACET

Attend your stations.

Reluctantly, they turn back to their jobs. Macet turns to enter his office - just off the bridge and slightly raised, much like Ro's own command office on DS9.

14 INT. CARDASSIAN WARSHIP - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

Ro follows Macet into the office, lets the door close.

RO

I thought Cardassians preferred a higher ambient temperature than most other humanoids. That was downright chilly.

Macet winces, gestures for Ro to take a seat.

MACET

This is a difficult situation, Commander. If I'm to be perfectly honest with you, I'm glad you arrived when you did.

RO

Why's that?

MACET

I have no desire to kill these people. Loyal Cardassian citizens merely doing what they must to feed and clothe themselves when the government to which they are loyal cannot do it for them.

RO
I had no idea things were so bad.

MACET
And that is by design. Cardassian pride is still what it always was, Commander... even if there is less to be proud of than before. But the Castellan has no more wish to see these people starve than I.

RO
So she gives you orders to shoot them down instead?

MACET
(weak argument)
Order must be maintained.

Ro sighs. Macet is no happier about this than any of them.

RO
We need another way out of this.

MACET
I am open to suggestions.

They both sit there, no answers coming to them.

15 EXT. SPACE

The *Trager* and the *Defiant* - but focusing on the *Ashell*.

16 INT. CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER - ENGINE ROOM

Nog and Leishman are working around the Cardassian warp core, with the help of the civilian KORAYN. Behind them, Quark enters the room.

QUARK
Nog!

Caught by surprise, Nog fumbles the device he was carrying and drops it - he and Leishman then fumble it back and forth until they finally DROP it right onto Nog's toe.

NOG

Aagh! Dammit dammit dammit...

(catches breath)

Uncle Quark...?! What the -

QUARK

Ro wanted me to tell you she's gone over to the Cardassian ship.

NOG

Okay, great. But what are you even doing here?

QUARK

Long story. Have you got this busted bucket of stembolts working again yet or not?

NOG

Not quite. They were hit pretty bad.

QUARK

Well, hurry up. Natima needs to get that food to Orias Three. What's left of it anyway.

NATIMA (o.s.)

Let him be, Quark.

They turn to see Natima entering the room. Quark brightens and immediately goes to her. Nog and Leishman share an amused look - it's as if they are suddenly invisible.

NATIMA (cont)

You were always far too harsh on the boy. And his father.

QUARK

It's called motivation, for all the good it did me.

NATIMA

(playful needling)

Your only motivation was money.

QUARK

If you believed that, Natima, you
wouldn't have called me.

NATIMA

(smile)

No. You always did have a bigger
heart than you wanted to admit to.
It's nice to see you using it for
a change. Spending time with Laren
must be a good influence on you.

Quark and Natima are completely engaged in their bantering.
Meanwhile, unnoticed in the background, a figure steps into
the doorway, shrouded in shadow for the moment.

QUARK

It's not all Laren - you had quite
the effect on me too.

NATIMA

Quark, we dated for a month. And
you stole from me.

QUARK

And yet here I am fifteen years
later, at your beck and call.

They grin, warmed with good memories. And as we PAN AROUND
them, we notice the figure in the doorway now identified.

It is RO, and she is watching Quark and Natima together.
Their warmth and humour. They haven't even noticed she is
there, but she has noticed what is happening between them.

NATIMA

Oh, you've always been the same.
You're all "females are the enemy"
and "money is all that matters",
and then some pretty lady bats her
eyelashes and kicks your ass, and
you fall head over heels.

Nog and Leishman chuckle - she's got his number alright.
Then Ro CLEARS HER THROAT and steps further into the room.

NOG
Commander!

Quark is a little caught out - but not as much as Ro might want him to be. After all, Ro did tell him not to worry. Burying her unexpected emotions, Ro gets to business...

RO
I've spoken with Gul Macet. He's open to negotiation about how we can resolve this without any more weapons fire.

NATIMA
That's good to know, Commander.

RO
How are things going in here?

NATIMA
Better than I have any right to hope. Your officers have been nothing but wonderful - as have certain other people.

Natima and Quark smile at each other again...

...and Ro blanches as she sees what is happening in front of her eyes...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

17 EXT. SPACE

The *Trager* and the *Ashell* - but focusing on the *Defiant*.

18 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

The door opens and Ro steps back onto the bridge, somewhat preoccupied. Bowers shoots to his feet from the chair.

BOWERS

Captain on the bridge.

The declaration startles Ro out of her doldrums. Tenmei is still at helm, but the other stations are filled by extras.

RO

Did I miss anything exciting?

BOWERS

The *Trager's* weapons remain powered down, Commander. Macet is keeping his word, so far.

Ro settles into the vacated seat - Bowers remains standing.

RO

I never thought he wouldn't.
Anything else?

BOWERS

Sensors detected more Cardassian warships at the limits of our range. They're staying there, not getting any closer. Yet.

RO

(figures it out)

Macet's under pressure from the Castellon to keep this situation under control. She probably sent those other ships to make sure he behaves himself.

BOWERS

That was my conclusion as well,
sir. I've maintained yellow alert.

RO

Alright, thank you, Lieutenant.

BOWERS

Sir.

Ro sits, pondering. Tenmei turns, notices her state.

TENMEI

Everything alright, Commander?

RO

I... think so. Not really sure.

(off Tenmei's
questioning look)

What do you do when someone does
something you don't like, and you
didn't know you wouldn't like it
until they did it. And you don't
have any good reason to tell them
not to do it, you promised you
wouldn't. But you really want to,
even though you know you shouldn't
want to... but you do.

TENMEI

...Are we still talking about the
Cardassians?

(off Ro's
bashful look)

We're not, are we? Ooh, spill it.
What's going on?

BOWERS

Lieutenant Tenmei. That kind of
talk is not appropriate to your
commanding officer.

RO

(half-hearted)

It's okay. I started it.

Yes, Bowers knows that. And it annoys him greatly. But he can't exactly say that, can he? Ro gets up, half-sits against the helm console, all chummy with Tenmei.

RO

Normally when I have a problem, I talk to Quark. But this problem is about Quark. He's here, with Natima Lang - his ex-girlfriend.

TENMEI

And that makes you... jealous?

RO

It shouldn't. I'm the one who wanted to keep it casual with Quark, friends with no strings.

TENMEI

Have you told him how you feel?

RO

I didn't know I felt anything until about half an hour ago.

TENMEI

Begging you pardon, Commander... but I don't think that's how it works. People have noticed...

RO

...noticed what?

Bowers has had enough. He stands and approaches Ro.

BOWERS

Commander. Could I confer with you in private for a moment, please?

RO

(shrug)

Sure, I guess.

Ro gets up and walks to the exit. Bowers follows. Tenmei returns to the helm. They reach the door...

19 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

They step out into the *Defiant's* corridor. Bowers stands at attention. Ro is much more casual.

RO
What's up?

BOWERS
Commander, I must reiterate that I do not believe it is appropriate for a commanding officer to have these personal conversations on the bridge. Especially when in a potential combat situation.

RO
(sigh)
You know what? You're right. This whole thing with Quark is a stupid distraction. I have to figure out what I'm gonna do about Macet.

She's still missing his point, but at least the result is what he wanted. He relaxes a bit, back on familiar ground.

BOWERS
Tactically speaking, we are the superior vessel. Politically speaking, we are very much at a disadvantage. Once humanitarian aid is rendered, it is against regulations for us to interfere in an internal Cardassian matter.

RO
No. I don't accept that. They asked for our help.

TENMEI (comm)
Commander Ro to the bridge!

The alarm in Tenmei's voice is clear. Ro immediately re-enters the bridge, Bowers on her heels.

20 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Prynn glances over her shoulder as they approach.

TENMEI

Those other Cardassian warships
that you said weren't moving?

BOWERS

Yes, Lieutenant?

TENMEI

They're moving now.

RO

How long till they get here?

TENMEI

Less than an hour.

Ro considers her options for a moment. They're not good.

RO

I have to talk to Quark.

And she turns and leaves the bridge. Bowers watches her go, astonished and more than a little angry.

21 **EXT. SPACE**

Focusing on the battered and defenceless freighter *Ashell*.

22 **INT. CARDASSIAN FREIGHTER - CARGO BAY**

Nog has his hands inside a wall panel, fixing the various doodads within. Quark stands nearby, leaning against the wall, ostensibly helping but really woolgathering.

QUARK

You know... Natima's right about
me. I do fall for strong women. I
blame Moogie. She twisted me.

NOG

I told you that two years ago.
Pass me that flux coupler.

Quark grabs a gadget and absent-mindedly hands it to Nog, who continues working.

NOG

There's a *hew-mon* psychological theory that says that the reason you go after women who remind you of your mother is that you really want to sleep with your mother.

QUARK

That's disgusting! Why would you say something like that?

NOG

I didn't, the *hew-mons* did.

QUARK

Yeah, well they're twisted too.

NOG

What are you doing here, uncle?

QUARK

What are you blithering on about now? I'm helping get the food to the colonists. I'm passing you a flux coupler.

NOG

Not that. What are you doing with Natima?

QUARK

I'm not doing anything with her. We're catching up, it's called being friends.

NOG

You weren't catching up. You were flirting. It was obvious to anyone - including Commander Ro. Pass me the coil spanner now.

Quark grabs another gadget, hands it to Nog.

QUARK

So what if I was flirting? I'm a free man. Ro told me to my face I could flirt with whoever I wanted to. We're not a couple, she said.

NOG

Are you really so dense? Flirting with your ex-girlfriend, a woman you called the love of your life for all of a month, is not like flirting with a dabo girl or some random bar customer. And nobody says what they really mean. Isn't that the Thirty-Ninth Rule?

QUARK

"Never tell your customers more than they need to know." You're right. So... you think Laren is upset about me and Natima? But... she said we were just friends.

(quibble)

Friends who have sex.

NOG

Yeah well, maybe she changed her mind.

QUARK

In the last hour?

NOG

All I know is the look I saw on her face when you were being all cute and coupley with Natima.

QUARK

But I don't want to hurt Laren.

NOG

Because you care about her.

QUARK

Of course I do.

NOG

Then why were you flirting with
Natima?

QUARK

Because... nnnnggaaahhh!!! Why is
this so complicated?

NOG

Now you know why I've never even
had a girlfriend, never mind an
ex-girlfriend.

Nog steps back from the panel, satisfied with his work.

RO (o.s.)

Quark!

Quark spins, instantly worried as Ro strides into the cargo
bay with a purpose.

QUARK

I wasn't doing anything!

RO

And I wasn't accusing you of
anything. But I must say your
innocence was very convincing.
Where's Natima?

QUARK

How should I know?

RO

I need to talk to her. I need to
talk to both of you.

Quark turns to look at Nog. Nog encourages him to talk
about it. Quark turns back, nervous and a bit scared...

QUARK

Look, Laren... I'm sorry about
flirting with Natima. I don't want
you to get the wrong idea about
the two of us -

RO

Quark, I told you I don't care about you and Natima. We've got bigger problems right now. The Cardassians are coming.

QUARK

(be careful; she
might be insane)

The Cardassians are already here. We're on a Cardassian ship.

RO

(exasperated)

Not those Cardassians. The other Cardassians. The ones who are much more likely to shoot you. That's why I need to talk to you and Natima - now.

QUARK

What do you want to know?

RO

How exactly you broke the law to get that food for the colonists.

QUARK

(warily)

...Why?

RO

(grin)

Because I wanna break some laws too.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

23 EXT. SPACE

A Cardassian warship gradually comes to a halt, joining two others that are already there...

...the three ships creating a circle around the stationary *Trager* and *Ashell*. There is no sign of the *Defiant*.

24 INT. CARDASSIAN WARSHIP - BRIDGE

Macet sits confidently in his command chair, in control of his domain. His officers work studiously around him. Macet nods to one officer, who works his panels. Macet turns his seat until he is facing...

...a TRANSPORTER PLATFORM to the side of the bridge, much like the one in DS9 Ops. A transporter signature forms...

...and deposits the captain of one of the other ships, GUL MOGAD (seen in [SCE 2x01 "Home Fires"](#)), an older male. Macet does not stand to greet him, remaining in his command seat. Mogad notices this but chooses not to comment - for now.

MACET

Gul Mogad. Welcome to the *Trager*.

MOGAD

A pleasure to be here, Gul Macet.
Do you require assistance?

MACET

Not at all. Why do you ask?

MOGAD

I noticed that your engagement with this smuggler vessel seemed to be taking longer than expected. I was worried for a fellow Gul.

MACET

I appreciate your concern for my welfare, Gul Mogad. But the *Trager*

and her crew are fully capable of handling this situation alone.

MOGAD

The Castellan will be glad to hear it. But then... why the delay?

With the sigh of one long bothered by an annoyance and glad to be finally rid of it, Macet finally stands from his seat and approaches his opposite number.

MACET

Starfleet interference, sorry to say. The *Ashell* sent a distress call before we were able to stop it. A Starfleet vessel responded.

MOGAD

Ah. Yes, we noted their presence as well. I do not see them here now, however.

MACET

Once their egos were satisfied, I sent them on their way. They left only recently - no doubt you recorded their warp signature.

MOGAD

So then the situation is resolved.

MACET

Yes. The *Ashell* and its cargo are impounded, its crew dead, and the smugglers' leader in my custody.

MOGAD

Why is this leader not also dead?

MACET

(conspiratorial
smile)

It is Ambassador Natima Lang of the diplomatic order. I assumed her superiors would enjoy the opportunity to interrogate her.

MOGAD

Lang... the dissident? A delicious catch indeed, Macet. I would very much like to see this for myself.

MACET

Not necessary. As you said, the situation is resolved.

MOGAD

(cold smile)

I must insist. My report to the Castellan should be as thorough as possible, don't you agree?

MACET

(silky)

You do not outrank me, Mogad. Your supervision is not required here.

MOGAD

(faux helpless)

I have my orders, Macet...

(subtle threat)

...just as you have yours.

Macet gripes silently to himself... but he has no choice.

MACET

Very well. Please follow me.

Macet turns and heads to the EXIT - Mogad preens himself at his victory, and follows. As they go, the junior officers exchange looks of worry behind their backs.

25 INT. CARDASSIAN WARSHIP - SECURITY CELLS

Again much like aboard DS9, on assumption they would follow a consistent design. Macet and Mogad both enter, Macet nods to the junior officer on guard, giving permission to leave.

As the junior officer does so, Macet leads Mogad forward to see NATIMA, sat on the small bunk behind the forcefield of one cell, cradling her wounded arm with a new nasty-looking bruise on her face and a look of absolute disgust at Macet.

MACET
(re Natima)
As I said.

MOGAD
(delighted)
Oh, wonderful. I arrested this
subversive several times myself
back in the old days, you know.

NATIMA
I remember you too, Mogad. I see
you and Macet are both still the
bloodthirsty tyrants I always
thought you were.

MOGAD
(about her,
not to her)
I never did understand Ghemor's
decision to make her his agent.
Well, regardless, he's gone now.
And what a joy to see this one
back where she belongs. You've
done well, Macet.

NATIMA
Done well?! He's allowing those
colonists - loyal Cardassians - to
starve just because the Castellan
is too weak to provide for them.

Mogad looks at Natima like a specimen on a tray, then turns
back to Macet.

MOGAD
This type always did think words
were somehow stronger than
weapons, didn't they?

Mogad turns away as if to leave, shaking his head with
bemusement. But then he turns back with a new idea.

MOGAD

Macet... I wonder if I might make
a request of you.

26 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Dark, running lights low - the ship is under CLOAK.

Ro sits in her own command chair, Quark standing at her side, listening as Mogad's voice comes over the comm. The rest of the crew likewise keeps silent and listens close.

MOGAD (comm)

(continuing)

I see you've softened her up for
interrogation already. I would
enjoy the chance to do the same.
Old times, you understand.

Quark is ready to kill someone at this. Ro grips his hand in her own and exchanges a look, keeping him calm. She looks back at the main viewscreen, which shows the *Trager* and the *Ashell* surrounded by the three other warships.

MACET (comm)

I wish I could, Mogad. But I've
already promised that pleasure to
my crew. One must keep up morale.

Ro listens with gritted teeth, no happier than Quark.

MOGAD (comm)

Ah well. It's good to know not
everything has changed since the
old days, at least.

27 INT. CARDASSIAN WARSHIP - SECURITY CELLS

...where Macet and Mogad stand gazing at the battered and bloody Natima in her security cell.

MOGAD

(continuing)

Thank you, Macet. I'll make my
report to the Castellan now...
(sly smile)

...perhaps with certain details left out. We'll expect you back at Central Command shortly.

MACET

Once I am certain that business here is concluded, yes.

(taps wrist-comm)

Macet to bridge. Gul Mogad is ready to return to his vessel - please engage transport.

VOICE (comm)

Yes, Gul.

The golden swirl of a Cardassian transporter beam takes Mogad away. Natima stands from her cell bunk, but Macet holds up a finger, telling her to wait...

VOICE (comm)

The other ships have returned on their course towards Cardassia Prime, Gul...

(pause)

...and they've gone to warp.

MACET

(relieved)

Thank you, bridge. Macet out.

Macet heads towards Natima's cell and hits the control to turn off the forcefield. As she steps over the lip of the cell, Macet taps his wrist-comm again.

MACET

Macet to *Defiant*. Are you there?

28 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Ro, Quark and the rest of the crew are likewise relieved.

RO

We're here, Macet. We heard everything.

MACET (comm)

And now you know the kind of attitudes I'm up against.

RO

Not like it was any big surprise to me anyway. We can be back with you in a few minutes...

MACET (comm)

No.

29 INT. CARDASSIAN WARSHIP - SECURITY CELLS

Macet and Natima...

MACET

(continuing)

Leave it a little longer - make sure Mogad is out of range. Many of our vessels now have Dominion sensor technology, remember. They might detect you even under cloak.

RO (comm)

Fair enough. How's Natima?

NATIMA

I'm fine. Tell Doctor Bashir his cosmetic work was very convincing.

30 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

Quark sighs with blissful relief that Natima is okay. Ro sees it, and is happy for him, but still can't help feel...

RO

I'm sure he'll be happy to hear that. *Defiant* out.

The line drops. Ro turns to Quark with a tense smile.

RO

You see? Everything's fine.

QUARK

Yeah. He just... he sounds so much like Dukat.

Ro nods and bites her lip - she knows what he means.

31 EXT. SPACE

Back with the *Trager* and the *Ashell* - and a sense of time having passed.

After a moment, the *Defiant* UNCLOAKS, its image rippling into view as it pulls up alongside the other two ships.

32 INT. CARDASSIAN WARSHIP - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

Macet and Natima are here - the latter with her fake bruise now removed. The door opens, and Ro and Quark enter...

...and Quark and Natima immediately RUSH to each other's arms for a big relieved hug. Macet reacts with a Vulcan-esque eyebrow and looks to Ro - whose reaction is equally controlled and emotionless, at least on the outside.

As Quark and Natima let go, Macet gets down to business.

MACET

Alright. Now that the immediate problem is solved, we return to the one that brought us all here.

RO

I've already spoken to both the Ambassadors about that, and I think we have a plan.

NATIMA

I'm going to stop smuggling food to the outer colonies...

(warm smile)

...and Quark is going to start.

MACET

Explain.

RO

Quark was already using his contacts to help Natima get what she needed. I'm just suggesting that he cut out the middle-man.

QUARK

The people get fed, and Natima's not breaking any laws. The kind of people I know will be only too happy to break them for her.

MACET

Forgive me, Ambassadors - but you've already broken the law. Regardless of the performance we just gave for Mogad's benefit, I cannot return to Central Command without something to show for it.

NATIMA

You'll have me.

RO

I don't understand.

NATIMA

I'll go back to Cardassia Prime as Gul Macet's prisoner. It's already on record that he arrested me - if he comes back without me, Mogad will know he lied.

QUARK

Natima, you can't -

NATIMA

I have to, Quark. The only way out of this that doesn't involve the infantry chasing us all down and killing us, Macet included... is for me to turn myself in.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN

33 INT. CARDASSIAN WARSHIP - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

Where we left it - with Natima have made her declaration and Quark horrified by it.

QUARK

You heard what Mogad said. We all heard it. You were a dissident before the war, Natima. They'd love to get hold of you again. Ghemor isn't around anymore to protect you, and Gint only knows what this new Castellan will do.

MACET

Rakena Garan may be cautious but she is no dictator, Quark. She will treat Ambassador Lang fairly.

QUARK

Can you guarantee that? Can you guarantee people like Mogad won't ever get their hands on her and indulge their fantasies of the good old days when he could abuse and torture anyone he wanted?

NATIMA

Quark, there's no other choice. Besides, I am a popular figure with the public. People like Mogad are the minority these days. And when I tell everyone what I was arrested for, it may do more to help solve this food problem than any amount of smuggling would.

QUARK

But they'll kill you!

(to Ro)

Laren, you can't let her do this.

Ro struggles to answer - this whole time, she has been watching Quark's extremely emotional display in Natima's favour, and realising how much he cares for her.

RO

Quark... I'm afraid she's right. Macet takes Natima, the *Ashell*, and the cargo - which was already half-destroyed anyway - back home. Then they're distracted while you and I take over the operation. I use Starfleet to get the food and supplies, you get it out to the colonies however you like. We can even drop the crew off at Orias under cloak. Mogad thinks they're dead anyway, nobody'll know.

(beat, reluctant)

It's the best way.

Quark looks at Ro, something astonishing and horrifying slowly occurring to him. He steps close, speaking quietly.

QUARK

Are you trying to get rid of her?
Get her out of the way?

Ro's jaw drops - she is genuinely hurt and upset that he could think that of her. Quark sees this and backs off.

QUARK

Okay, you're not. I'm sorry.
Forget I said that.

Ro takes a moment to reorient herself from such a personal attack. Quark is ashamed of himself. Macet and Natima both sense the tension but do not comment. After a moment...

MACET

So, then - we have a plan of action.

QUARK

I still hate it.

NATIMA

I'm not thrilled myself. Sitting in that cell, staring at Mogad's condescending, sneering face... I know exactly where I'm going. But I've handled worse. And it's the best thing for the colonists.

She reaches out and caresses Quark's face affectionately. Ro watches this with a tense jaw.

NATIMA

I'll be fine, Quark. Don't worry about me.

He clearly will worry, but she is obviously determined. Then she straightens - the meeting is concluded.

NATIMA

Thank you for everything, Laren - thank you both. It's probably best you were on your way now.

RO

Good luck, Ambassador. Gul.

MACET

Commander.

Quark still doesn't want to leave, holding Natima's hand till the last moment. But Ro guides him out of the room anyway, leaving Macet and Natima alone.

34 EXT. SPACE

The *Trager* and the *Ashell*, but focusing on the *Defiant*.

35 INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE

The door opens and Ro steps back onto the bridge, Quark at her side. Bowers shoots to his feet from the chair. The bridge is now back at regular non-cloak lighting.

BOWERS

Captain on the bridge.

Ro smiles indulgently as Bowers steps aside for her. She settles back into the command chair.

RO
Status, Lieutenant?

BOWERS
All the *Ashell's* crew - aside from Ambassador Lang - have been beamed aboard. Doctor Bashir is tending to them in sickbay.

RO
Good.

TENMEI
Commander - the *Trager*.

They all look to the viewscreen, which shows the Cardassian warship snaring the freighter in a TRACTOR BEAM. Once it is settled, the two ships begin moving off together.

Ro looks to her side - and Quark is watching the Cardassian ships leave with a look of anguished concern. Ro can't help but feel for him, but still... She pulls herself together.

RO
Okay. Prynn, set course for Bajor, and engage at warp one. After two minutes, raise the cloak, then reverse course and come right back to Orias. We have some colonists to feed.

TENMEI
Aye, sir.

Quark turns and leaves the bridge without a word. Ro watches him go. Tenmei watches Ro watching Quark, and winces in sympathy.

But then Ro turns back, sees Tenmei watching her, and points the helms-woman's attention back to her console.

Understanding that Ro doesn't want to talk about it, Tenmei sadly turns back to work and gets the ship moving.

36 EXT. SPACE

The *Defiant* zooms along at low warp - the CLOAK ripples and the ship slowly disappears from view.

37 INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR

Lights low now that we are back under cloak. Quark strolls the corridor, things on his mind.

Nog and Leishman are coming the other way, talking MOS over the contents of a padd. When he notices Quark approaching, Nog hands the padd to Leishman and ushers her towards a turbolift - understanding, she takes it, nods and leaves.

NOG

Uncle... how are you doing?

QUARK

Just great. Never better.

NOG

Sorry.

QUARK

I'm just confused, Nog. I'm not... "together"... with either Laren or Natima. So why does it feel like I just broke up with both of them?

NOG

Shar always used to say it's possible to love more than one person at a time.

QUARK

But I don't -

NOG

Yes you do. You've been in love with her from the day you met her. I knew it the moment I heard you offer to buy her a drink. You don't do that for just anyone.

QUARK

But she said -

NOG

I know she did. And yes - nobody says what they really mean. But she's said it so many times that you're not a couple... I think maybe it's time you believe her.

QUARK

But we slept together.

NOG

(gestures towards
turbolift)

So did Leishman and I. Well, not slept. But we talked it out, and we agreed that we should just be friends. Neither of us feel any more than that. So if Ro doesn't feel how you feel... maybe you should just be friends too.

Quark stares into the distance. Can he do that?

38 **INT. DEFIANT - BRIDGE**

Lights lowered for cloak. Tenmei checks her consoles...

TENMEI

Approaching Orias Three now,
Commander.

RO

Standard orbit, maintain cloak.

TENMEI

Aye, sir.

RO

I'd better go and get our guests
ready. Sam, you have the bridge.

Ro gets up and walks to the exit. Tenmei watches her go, and gets up to call after her.

TENMEI
Commander, d'you have a moment?

RO
Sure.

Tenmei enters a last few commands into her console, then rushes after Ro. They both exit into...

39 **INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR**

As they enter the corridor, Tenmei makes sure the door to the bridge has closed first. Ro turns to her...

TENMEI
Bowers would probably kill me for this, but...

Tenmei pulls Ro into a gentle, comforting hug. Ro is surprised, but goes with it.

TENMEI
I'm sorry, Commander.

RO
Thanks, Prynn. But I'll be fine.

Tenmei lets go of the hug and they both step back a bit.

TENMEI
I remember when I saw Shar going off with his bondmates. I felt ridiculous. I had no claim on him. I could see for myself how much he loved them. Still... it was tough.

RO
But I don't...

TENMEI
Well, I know that's what you say. But maybe you feel more than you think you do. I know how it can creep up on you sometimes.

RO
I don't even know where this came
from. It's stupid.

TENMEI
You've been on-and-off-ing for
four years. Maybe it's time you
made a decision, one way or the
other. Do you love him?

Such a simple question... how can she possibly answer it?

40 **INT. DEFIANT - CORRIDOR**

Quark walks along the corridor, considering what Nog said.

Ro walks along the corridor, considering what Tenmei said.

They both notice the other walking towards them, and stop.

RO
Quark. We're in orbit of Orias
Three now. Shall we?

QUARK
After you, Commander.

They turn together and enter a cargo bay...

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW