

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

14x16 - "Lust's Latinum
Lost (and Found)"

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 19x16 - "THE METHOD IN THE MADNESS"

Data warns Picard that Gatt, leader of the Fellowship, is not to be trusted. Gatt returns from the Machine and proves Data right - he will help the Machine to destroy subspace throughout the galaxy, leaving AI as the only relevant lifeforms. Gatt forces Data into torturing Akharin for information. Gatt offers the secret of AI resurrection to prove the Fellowship's worth, but the Machine finds the data irrelevant. True immortality comes from being copied over and over, not from a simple physical form. Gatt's own people are appalled - the Machine wants to absorb them into itself, letting the originals die. The Fellowship fractures and Data, Akharin and Rhea make their escape. *Enterprise* launches its own rescue mission, and an all-out firefight begins. Data interrogates Gatt and tries to persuade the Machine to stop. But the Machine decides the Fellowship is more trouble than it is worth - so it sends the ship tumbling towards the nearby black hole.

VOY 12x16 - "DUTY OF CARE"

Barclay completes his diagnostic - Dr Zimmerman's memory patch is *not* responsible for the EMH's recent problems; a series of unexplained power surges are to blame. Barclay cannot remove the patch - the only thing is for the EMH to seek counselling. That means talking to Cambridge, the very man whose relationship with Seven sent him down this path. Paris is trying to speak to his estranged mother when Seven calls - she needs his help. Icheb plants clues that the ex-Borg are fleeing Earth, when in fact Sharak has arranged for them to hide at the Tamarian Embassy. Paris brings in his mother - if she wants to care for children, here they are - while Seven hides out at Janeway's house to work on contacting Axum and Riley via their catoms. On Aldebaran, Sharak detects another "impossible" agent spreading the catomic infection on purpose. But instead of killing herself, this one seems determined to kill Sharak...

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. FERENGINAR SURFACE - DUSK

The woodlands of Ferenginar, with a light *fripping* rain creating a haze around the mouldy, fungus-cruste trees. A HAND reaches in to pluck a MUSHROOM off one of the trees...

...and QUARK pops it into his mouth with a sigh of delight. He wears rustic woodland attire suitable to the environs.

He treads slowly through the wood, gazing out at the view in bliss. The trickling river nearby, the soft croaks of the local swamplife, the squishy ground beneath his feet, the drizzle against his face... everything is *perfect*.

He reaches the banks of the RIVER, looks down and GASPS...

...because the river is made not of water but pure LATINUM, thick flowing amber liquid that glitters in the moonlight as it oozes over the rocks. The rain bounces right off its surface, rolling to the sides - the two liquids don't mix.

Quark is astonished, breathless, even aroused - this is practically an erotic experience for him. Can't take his eyes off it, to the extent that he doesn't notice...

T'LANA

Hello, Shmun.

Quark is shaking... can it really be? Daren't even look...

T'LANA

When we last met, you told me I
should seek my own fortune. What
do you think of my outcome?

Finally Quark manages to drag his head up to look at...

...T'LANA, the Vulcan Love Slave herself. Tall and elegant, dressed as a high priestess in a long red robe with a cream coloured tabard and hood. The rain-dampened clothes cling to her curves without revealing anything, just enticing.

QUARK

T'Lana...!

This is the goddess Quark has worshipped since adolescence. He clears his throat, tries to act cool, fails utterly...

QUARK

I was just about to enjoy a closer look at the river...

T'LANA

Why don't we bring a bit of the river to you instead?

QUARK

We...?

Suddenly two other similarly robed females - an ANDORIAN and an ORION - step out from behind the trees and approach.

QUARK

I'm mud in your hands, ladies.

One on each side, they gently press on Quark's shoulders, forcing him to his knees on the mossy ground, holding him down with restraining caresses of his lobes. He shudders...

T'Lana steps closer, almost straddling him. She reaches down, nimble fingers unlacing Quark's leather bodice...

QUARK

Oh my...

...baring his chest. Then she sensuously pulls a BRICK of gold-pressed latinum out of her robes and holds it high...

...then uncorks a small plug from one end and turns it to POUR more of the thick amber liquid out. It drips slowly like molasses, stretching enticingly without breaking...

...Quark can't take his eyes off it, anticipating...

...and the entire scene is WIPED AWAY in a rush of photons, leaving only black with three WORDS hanging in mid air, etched in cursive fantasy script the colour of latinum...

FREE SAMPLE COMPLETE

Quark is lying on a cold metal floor, holo-projectors all over the cold metal walls around him, staring at these disembodied words in unbelieving horror and frustration...

QUARK

Noooooooooooo.....!

BLACK OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

2 INT. ALJULI APARTMENTS - RO'S QUARTERS

Late night, lights off. But there's a KNOCK at the door.
And again. And again. They're not going away.

RO finally drags herself out of bed with an annoyed GROAN,
slumps the small distance to the door of her room, pauses
before opening it, croaks out...

RO
Who is it?

QUARK (o.s.)
It's me! Quark! Open up!

Grits her teeth, clenches her fist, wishes painful death...

...and then opens the door. Does *not* let him in.

Quark stands in the doorway, only moments after leaving the
holosuite, still flushed with arousal and frustration. She
has seen that look before, and she's not in the mood.

RO
Quark... please tell me you're not
here for a booty call.

QUARK
What? No, that's not...
(sudden thought)
Unless you're offering...

Ro lets her glare tell him exactly what she's offering.

QUARK
Fine. But I do need your help.

Ro sighs... but lets him in at last. She slumps back to her
bed, sits on it. He closes the door, takes the desk chair.

QUARK
Can you let me see a flight plan?

RO
...what?

QUARK
I need access to all the flight
plans out of the Bajoran system.
I'm looking for the *Furyk*.

Ro processes it through her still sleep-fogged brain...

RO
Captain Rionoj's freighter?

QUARK
We have unfinished business.

RO
I bet you do.

QUARK
Not like that. Well... not exactly
like that. She came to the bar...

Ro sits and sighs. Whom did she wrong to suffer so?

3 INT. QUARK'S NEW BAR

The new bar in Aljuli, earlier that night. Quark and his staff are cleaning up after the party is over.

QUARK
Broik! If you have time to lean,
you have time to clean.

The Ferengi waiter BROIK wearily moves onto the next set of railings and starts to polish. Another voice sounds...

RIONOJ (o.s.)
Still running the place like a
despot, eh Quark?

Quark turns to see RIONOJ, the purple-haired Boslic ship's captain, strutting towards him. He takes a moment to admire her skin-tight silver outfit, then rights himself...

QUARK

I'm not a despot, I'm a business-
man. And this business is closed.
You'll have to come back in the
morning, Rionoj.

RIONOJ

But I'm here now...

She runs her finger over his ear... he shudders.

RIONOJ

I believe you once told me you
were in the market for entertain-
ment...? Well... I have something
to fulfil your wildest dreams.

QUARK

Still transporting questionable
goods?

RIONOJ

Oh no... I've moved on to a more
interesting, creative profession.
And it'll only cost you ten bars
of latinum.

Quark's shock breaks him out of his flirting mode...

QUARK

Ten bars? You once sold me a whole
shipload of salvage for three. And
I can buy a crateful of programmes
for two. What makes this worth it?

Rionoj shows him a DATA CHIP, places it in his hand.

RIONOJ

This will explain more than I ever
could. Try it out. I guarantee
you'll want it. I'll be back to
continue our conversation.

She turns and struts back out again, leaving Quark gazing
at the chip in his hand, undeniably intrigued...

4 **INT. ALJULI APARTMENTS - RO'S QUARTERS**

Ro stares at Quark, waiting for him to get to the point...

RO
Well? What was it?

QUARK
(with awe)
*Vulcan Love Slave, Part Four:
Lust's Latinum Lost.*

Ro remains unimpressed. But Quark starts to pace, overwhelmed at having such a masterpiece within his grasp...

QUARK
It was incredible. She looked so real, realer than ever... the way her robes clung to her figure...

RO
Quark, what makes you think I have any interest in listening to this?

QUARK
Right, right... sorry. The thing is, it was just a free sample. I need the real thing.

RO
So talk to Rionoj.

QUARK
I tried! But she already left. That's why I need to know where she went, so I can follow her. Please, Laren - will you help me?

RO
Quark... it's just a holosuite programme. You've got dozens of holosuite programmes.

QUARK
It's not just a holosuite programme! It's my salvation!

RO

...what?

Quark slumps back into the chair, suddenly worried...

QUARK

Yes, my holosuites are installed now. But Nog hasn't been able to get Vic Fontaine working for some reason. No-one's seen Morn since the station was destroyed.

RO

(surprised)

Is he alright?

QUARK

I have no idea. He definitely got off the station safe, I made sure of that. But since then... I've not seen lobe nor ledger of him.

RO

Wow... Morn...

QUARK

And on top of that, all your crew - they've got a whole planet to explore now, only a transporter trip away. I need something unique to Quark's Bar, something only I can provide - and this is it. If not... I'm done within a month.

RO

One holosuite programme can really do all that? Save your business?

QUARK

Vulcan Love Slave? One of the most beloved holo-programme franchises in history? If I can get exclusive rights? Damn right it can.

Ro considers it, getting the urgency now... alright fine.

RO
Okay, Quark. Come to the Control
Centre in the morning. I'll get
Slaine to track her down.

Quark jumps up, kisses her on the cheek...

QUARK
Thanks, Laren! You're the queen!
(beat)
So... as I'm here... you wanna...
(off her glare)
No...? Okay, see you tomorrow!

And he's gone, bouncing with joy. She sighs...

5 EST. ALJULI TOWN - MORNING

A standard establishing shot of the small Bajoran town...

6 INT. BAJORAN CONTROL CENTRE

Dalin SLAINE, the young Cardassian strategic ops officer,
looks up from the new combined situation / conference table
at the head of the room, having read its readouts...

SLAINE
The *Furyk's* registered flight plan
says it was heading straight for
the Gavara system.

QUARK
Gavara? But... that's in the Gamma
Quadrant. Are you saying she went
through the wormhole?

Major CENN responds from nearby, where he is busy doing his
own work and not really caring about Quark's problems...

CENN
Nope. The wormhole hasn't opened
since the freighter left Bajor.

QUARK
So the flight plan was fake.

SLAINE

Looks like it.

Quark turns away, sighs, hopes dashed. Then a new idea - he pulls the CHIP Rionoj gave him out of a pocket, pinpoints NOG at his own workstation nearby, and makes a beeline.

QUARK

Nog! I need to know who made this.

NOG

I'm working, uncle...

QUARK

But this chip could represent the salvation of the Ferengi race!

Nog is working at a large display, moving SCHEMATICS and DIAGRAMS around the screen, designing something bit by bit. He turns, looks dubiously at the chip in Quark's hand...

NOG

The entire race?

QUARK

Well, me. I represent the Ferengi race in this sector, don't I? You know about technology - you know how to find all those secret codes publishers put in their programs.

NOG

The digimarks.

QUARK

(no idea)

Yeah, the digimarks. This is just a little piece of a holo-novel, but I figure it probably still has that digi-thing in it.

Nog SIGHS, snatches the chip out of Quark's hand and goes to a different computer, Quark right on his heels. Nog plugs the chip in, works the controls, reads the result...

NOG

Hmmm... that's weird. There is no digimark. Just the title.

QUARK

So you can't find any clues about who made it at all?

NOG

Well, who made the other ones?

Quark thinks a second - his eyes go wide with revelation.

CUT TO:

7 **SCREEN**

GALLAMITE male (the ones with transparent skulls) CORDRAY gives a professional smile as his brain fluid sloshes...

CORDRAY (screen)

Broht and Forrester, publishers.

8 **WIDER**

Still in the Control Centre, Quark is using one of the wall screens under Ro's oversight. He swallows his revulsion...

QUARK

Oh hi, Cordray. Long time no see.

CORDRAY (screen)

Quark! I was just thinking about you. We've finalised our catalogue of new releases, and seeing how you're one of our best customers -

QUARK

Great! Great! That's what I was calling about. I hear you have a new sequel to *Vulcan Love Slave*...

CORDRAY (screen)

A sequel? No, there's nothing like that. Nothing past VLS-Three.

QUARK

Are you sure? I could have sworn I heard something -

CORDRAY (screen)

I think I'd know if there was a new *Vulcan Love Slave*, Quark. We'd be promoting the frinx out of it.

(beat, thinks)

Still, you know Broht, he likes to keep things close until the legal details are all locked up.

QUARK

A wise man. Do you think I could talk to him? I can promise him it'll be worth his while.

CORDRAY (screen)

Wish I could help you, Quark, but Broht's off-world. He's attending Holo-palooza. Should I get him to call you when he gets back?

QUARK

No... I have a better idea.

CUT TO:

9 AT THE CONFERENCE TABLE

Ro glares at Quark all over again...

RO

No, you can't borrow a runabout.

QUARK

Laren, I need to get to Wrigley's Pleasure Planet as soon as I can. What if I invited you along?

RO

I have responsibilities, Quark. I can't just run off with you every time you want an adventure.

CENN

There's a shuttle rental place in Aljuli, isn't there?

QUARK

Fine. I'll make my money back in holosuite charges anyway. But I'm going to need a flunky... someone to carry my bags...

NOG

(not looking)

Don't even think about it.

QUARK

Well, I can hardly take Treir, can I? She'll have to run the bar when I'm gone. And Broik is about as useful as a duranium parachute.

RWOGO (o.s.)

I'll go with you.

They all turn to see Inspector RWOGO, who was listening in all along. Now under the spotlight, she defers to Ro...

RWOGO

That is... with your permission, Captain. Honestly, I think I'd quite enjoy it. I haven't had much chance to explore the Federation, plus it would mean spending time with the honoured Ambassador.

Quark looks to Ro - she shrugs. Quark looks back to Rwego and nods grandly. Rwego is excited, almost bashful...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

10 EXT. WRIGLEY'S PLEASURE PLANET - DAY

A tree-shaded avenue lined with extravagant buildings in the form of famous landmarks from around the known galaxy - the Palais de la Concorde, the Klingon Great Hall, a Lurian penta-pyramid, the Sapphire Spire of Andor, dozens more.

QUARK strides purposefully down the avenue, consulting a PADD for directions, one of many visitors from all over the quadrant. RWOGO struggles to keep up as she pursues him through the crowd, gawping with amazement at the sights.

RWOGO

This is amazing! I had no idea any of this existed.

QUARK

Wrigley's Pleasure Planet fell out of favour when places like Risa started getting more popular. But it's had a revival since Risa was destroyed by the Borg.

RWOGO

Of course, I'd never even left the homeworld before coming to DS-Nine - but still... I was always taught the Tower of Commerce was the most impressive building in the galaxy.

QUARK

Well, there it is.

Quark points off-handedly, and Rwego stops... and sees a replica of the Ferengi Tower of Commerce, looking a bit flat and dumpy among the other magnificent constructions.

RWOGO

...Oh.

QUARK

Here we are!

Rwogo dashes to catch up with Quark...

11 ANGLE ON - ENTRANCE ARCH

A glorious FOUNTAIN whose bubbling water forms the shape of a mountain, all under a glittering arch with the words...

HOLO-PALOOZA
A BUSINESS CONFERENCE
OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE

Rwogo gazes at this in confusion...

RWOGO
"Holo-palooza" ?

QUARK
Always hated that name - some hew-
mon came up with it years ago, and
it stuck. But that's hew-mons for
you. Come on, stop dithering!

And he strides off, Rwogo struggling to keep up again...

12 INT. CONVENTION CENTRE - PUBLIC AREA

Wall to wall, floor to ceiling, a cacophony of sights and sounds promoting an endless array of holo-programmes, holo-novels and holo-games shouting to be heard over each other.

GALAXY OF BORG-CRAFT here, AUTHENTIC ARTIFICIAL LIFE DEATH EXPERIENCES there, DOMINION DOMINATRIX DETENTION across the way. Thousands of people from across the quadrant browse.

Rwogo stands with jaw dropped, excited and amazed. Quark just winces at the sensory overload.

QUARK
Don't say anything, don't touch
anything, don't get lost, don't
bother me, and don't turn off the
tracking device on your padd.

RWOGO
Where are you going?

QUARK
Broht and Forrester are in the
Omega Wing. You...
(gestures around
distastefully)
...enjoy yourself.

Quark strides off, leaving Rwego on her own. She shrugs,
and wades into the chaos, having a great time...

13 INT. CONVENTION CENTRE - B&F ARENA

A special area of the convention set aside for Broht and
Forrester, holo-publishers extraordinaire.

TOBY THE TARG, the child-friendly Klingon animal holo-pet
popular with kids of all races, gallops through excitedly.
ZIROMA the sultry Caitian pirate queen swashbuckles at the
head of her all-female pirate crew. Famous detective DIXON
HILL sprints through the crowd, chased by a spray of holo-
bullets from a 1940s *noir* heavy's holo-revolver. Even the
Vulcan Love Slave herself, T'LANA, raises a saucy eyebrow.

14 INT. B&F ARENA - ANTEROOM

An exceptionally ugly Nausicaan - FRANTI - wears a smart
suit and stands with arms folded, looking down at QUARK.

FRANTI
I don't recall seeing that name on
Mister Broht's schedule. Perhaps
there's been a miscommunication.

QUARK
(big fake smile)
Yes, I'm sure of that, Mister...
(peers at name badge)
...Franti. A miscommunication, but
we can clear it up right now. Just
tell Mister Broht I'm here. We've
been doing business for years.

FRANTI
Then you should know he never sees
anyone without an appointment.

Faking a confidence he doesn't feel, Quark reaches out and straightens the lapel of the Nausicaan's business suit.

QUARK

Listen, Franti. If you want to risk blowing a huge deal for your boss, that's fine. Maybe you have employment opportunities that require less thinking. But if I were you, I'd give Mister Broht the opportunity to make up his own mind. He needs to see me.

Franti glares down at him coldly. Quark wonders if he is about to get his ears ripped off. At length...

FRANTI

Please take a seat.

Quark does, acting like this is the only sensible course of action. Franti moves off. Quark lets out a breath...

QUARK

I knew I should have brought my own Nausicaan.

15 INT. CONVENTION CENTRE - PUBLIC AREA

RWOGO moves from one stall to the next, a cloth bag over her shoulder already bulging with the kinds of free crap these places always hand out as marketing - flyers, data chips, pens. The wall of sound and vision is overwhelming.

A simulated PHASER SHOT blasts out, disintegrating a holo-character and making Rwego JUMP with excited surprise and GIGGLE with delight - this is the best party she ever saw.

Holo-TENTACLES reach out and wind around her waist, pulling her gently towards the next booth - she goes happily, all in on the joke. A scantily clad muscular WADI male hologram beckons her closer, holding out a large data-chip...

WADI

Would you like a free sample?

RWOGO

Oh, why not!

WADI

In fact - here, you look like you
need this...

He picks up another cloth bag, this one emblazoned with the words WADI RULE, places the data chip in and sensuously hands them both to Rwego - she takes it with a BLUSH.

RWOGO

Well, aren't you a helpful young
man! Not to mention handsome...

And she heads off, ready to fill up a second bag with all the free crap she can grab...

16 INT. B&F ARENA - ANTEROOM

The Nausicaan is back, glaring down at the sitting Quark...

FRANTI

Mister Broht indicates that he has
a moment to exchange pleasantries
with an old friend.

QUARK

(stands, pulls
suit straight)

Well, of course he has. Didn't I
tell you that?

Franti turns, Quark follows...

17 INT. B&F ARENA - BROHT'S LOUNGE

BROHT, the Bolian male publishing magnate (seen in VOY 7x20 "Author Author"), welcomes his Ferengi guest garrulously. Quark goes into full schmooze mode, negotiator supreme.

BROHT

Quark! Care for a little *kanar*? I
developed a taste for it last time
I was on your station. Sorry to
hear about that, by the way.

QUARK

Thank you. And yes - that was just after you withdrew *Photons Be Free* from circulation, wasn't it?

BROHT

Yes, well - let's not dwell on the past. Now, what can I do for you?

QUARK

Well, my customers really enjoyed *Shmun's New Hope*. You knocked it out of the park with that one!

BROHT

I did, didn't I? Triple-bar sales the first week, and still doing steady business. I wish all our titles sold as well as that one!

QUARK

I wish all my titles rented as well! Everyone keeps asking me, "When is the sequel coming? When can I expect the next instalment of *Vulcan Love Slave*?"

BROHT

(laugh)

If I knew the answer to that, I'd be a rich man!

QUARK

But surely you're working on it.

(wink)

I heard rumours that you might be revealing a bit at the convention - just to pique appetites.

BROHT

(shakes head)

Trust me. I've been pushing my creative team for months. I can't seem to get a rise out of them.

QUARK

Huh... so there's no chance anyone would be zeta testing it, then...

BROHT

(darkening)

Not without my knowledge. And if anyone were to do it, it would be me - because it's my franchise.

QUARK

Technically the original story is in public domain. No-one knows the real author, so no messy estates to deal with. But I'm sure you're right. No-one would dare to mess with a publisher of your renown.

(stands)

Well, it's been nice visiting with you, Ardon.

But before Quark can reach the door, FRANTI appears from nowhere, blocking his way. Broht speaks dark and low...

BROHT

Why would you think there was a test version out there, Quark?

QUARK

(nervous chuckle)

You know how it is, Ardon. I keep my ears open in hopes of hearing profit in the wind, but more often than not it's a load of hot air.

BROHT

Great azure gods... you haven't seen a test version, have you?

QUARK

Me?! I should be so lucky. Come and see the new bar sometime. There's a bottle of *kanar* with your name on!

And he gets the *frinx* out of there while he can...

18 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

Quark and Rwego enter the shuttle. He goes straight to the replicator, punches its controls angrily, generates a glass of SNAIL JUICE. While he drinks, Rwego just watches...

QUARK

Well, that was a complete bust.

RWOGO

Not for me. Look at all this stuff I got. For free!

QUARK

If it's free, it can't be any good can it? Just drop it in a recycler and let's get out of here.

Rwego puts down her bags of swag carefully, with reverence.

QUARK

Broht didn't know anything about *Vulcan Love Slave Four*. Nobody does! Except for Rionoj...

RWOGO

Why don't you just ask the writers of the two earlier sequels if they know anything about this new one?

QUARK

Because no-one knows who the real writers are! You see the company name, that's all. Broht will never reveal the actual writers' names.

RWOGO

You can be strangely short-sighted, Quark. Of course Broht won't, but there are other people we can ask.

Rwego goes to the shuttle's computer, starts working it.

QUARK

What are you doing?

RWOGO

Investigating. That is my job, no?

(as she types)

I'm searching for the most popular
VLS discussion forums... creating
a new account... and asking some
pointed questions about the real
writers of the series. There!

(back to Quark)

Now we just wait for the comments.

Quark barely has time to sip his snail juice before the
PINGS start. Slow at first, then faster and faster. Rwego,
victorious, turns to the computer and starts reading...

RWOGO

That's not what I asked... Well
that's just vulgar... I wasn't
suggesting anything of the sort!
No, I didn't say... How rude!

Shocked and scandalised, Rwego quickly turns off the screen
with a shudder of disgust. Quark looks at her smugly...

QUARK

No luck?

RWOGO

I don't want to talk about it.

(regathers)

Perhaps you're right. Nobody wants
to discuss the writers. They're
happy to discuss the variables of
the stories. The different ways
you can twist them. And I do mean
twist them. There are some very
strange individuals out there.

QUARK

Strange is just money in the bank
to a clever entrepreneur.

Then a new BEEP. Rwego goes to check the computer again...

RWOGO

Incoming signal... voice only.

QUARK

Maybe Treir's calling to say we
actually have a paying customer.

Rwogo works the controls, and a woman's VOICE sounds out.

VOICE (comm)

Worm-Forty-Seven. I have observed
your query on the VLS fan site
Devoted Disciples of the Love
Slave. You are looking for me.

QUARK

To whom am I speaking?

VOICE (comm)

I am the individual about whom you
enquired. May I assume you wish to
pursue a more detailed discussion?

QUARK

(excited)

Yes, you may. And please, call me
Quark. And your name would be...?

VOICE (comm)

All in good time. If you wish to
meet, come to these coordinates
at twenty-three hundred hours.

The line drops, and the computer BEEPS with the incoming
coordinates, flashing onto the screen.

Quark looks to Rwogo, excited. She looks back, worried...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

19 EST. WRIGLEY'S PLEASURE PLANET - NIGHT

The main avenue at night - now an extravaganza of neon and flashing lights, holo-banners and animated displays, all declaring "The Hottest!" "The Biggest!" "The Best!" The ultimate in trashy late-night entertainment for the masses.

20 INT. RADIOACTIVE RESIDUALS BAR

A DIVE BAR in the not-nicest part of town, where no-one respectable would ever want to be seen - which is why it's so packed with all the same customers from the convention. Loud music, low lighting, strangers grinding on each other.

Most of the lighting comes from the beverages themselves, which shine with a toxic glow that brings to mind a warp core breach in progress. God only knows what they taste of.

QUARK sits alone at a table, watching the crowd. A shapely SILHOUETTE catches his attention. Unidentifiable in the low gloom, he can't help admiring her outlined figure.....

...then she approaches the table, sits opposite him. He still can't tell who she is - it's too dark. His heart is pounding, but he tries his best to act smooth and suave.

WOMAN

You are Quark?

QUARK

I am.

WOMAN

I appreciate your punctuality. You have questions for me?

QUARK

I have questions for the writer of the Vulcan Love Slave series.

WOMAN

And I am she.

Quark pauses, reorients... something about this woman's voice is familiar, but it's hard to tell in all this noise. Just then RWOGO reappears with two colourful drinks...

RWOGO

Free drinks tokens for convention attendees. Included with the free handouts you told me to throw out.

...and in the glowing radioactive light of the liquor...

...Quark finally sees that the woman is T'LANA herself.

QUARK

(gasp)

T'Lana!

The Vulcan woman grasps Quark's arm, grips it tightly. Rwego sits next to Quark, smiling quietly to herself.

T'LANA

Please lower your voice. You may address me by that name if you wish... but do it quietly.

Quark's pulse is pounding, his ears are throbbing...

QUARK

I didn't even know you were real.

T'LANA

I assure you, I am quite real. The character's holographic matrix was modelled on my own appearance. But I am not merely a holo-actress.

RWOGO

(impressed)

You're also a writer, a producer -

T'LANA

And a level eight holo-programmer.

QUARK

So you work for Broht.

T'LANA

I work for several publishers. But yes, until recently, I had a broad arrangement with Broht's firm.

QUARK

Are you responsible for the new VLS programme? And please don't tell me you don't know what I'm talking about.

T'LANA

I cannot take all the credit - but yes, I collaborated on the new sequel's creation.

QUARK

So Broht was lying! He knew about it all the time.

T'LANA

VLS-Four is not a Broht & Forrester project. My appearance at the sales arena today was a final contractual obligation to his company. Broht knows nothing about the new sequel.

Quark realises he may have stepped in it here...

QUARK

Uh... he might know now. I sort of suggested that one exists.

Rwogo shakes her head, exasperated. T'Lana just glares...

T'LANA

And how did he react?

QUARK

He didn't seem happy.

T'LANA

Then perhaps we should continue this conversation elsewhere.

T'Lana stands from the table, but now Quark is the one to reach out and GRAB her arm - an act he suddenly realises means touching the real Vulcan Love Slave in the flesh.

QUARK

That depends - do we actually have anything to talk about?

T'LANA

Explain.

QUARK

I know Vulcans are just as capable of deceit as anyone else. T'Lana from the holo-novels certainly is, and she's basically you. So I'm not going anywhere with you, and I'm not laying out another slip, until I have that programme in my hand.

Rwogo is impressed again. T'Lana considers it...

T'LANA

I offer to act as your purchasing liaison, and introduce you to my business partners. You may conduct your negotiations for the product directly. Is that satisfactory?

Quark considers it...

21 INT. PUBLIC SHUTTLE PARK

A multi-storey car park for space-capable shuttles. Quark and Rwogo scuttle down the aisle between the parked ships, squabbling over the PADD...

RWOGO

I'm telling you the shuttle is just around this corner.

QUARK

And I'm telling you we're going the wrong way!

T'Lana follows behind with an air of Vulcan exasperation.

They TURN THE CORNER in question, Rwogo with a smug smile as she sees their BAJORAN SHUTTLE exactly where she said.

...standing in front of it is FRANTI the Nausicaan. Quark swallows his stomach back down and dares to confront...

QUARK

Mister Franti. To what do we owe this pleasure?

FRANTI

Mister Broht requests a meeting.

QUARK

And you know I would just love to accommodate him, but I'm a very busy man. Why don't you tell him to make an appointment?

FRANTI

That will not do. Mister Broht wishes to see you immediately.

(beat, looks)

T'Lana. Of course. He anticipated that. I believe it would be best if you accompanied me as well.

T'LANA

I am no longer employed by Mister Broht. I have no interest in meeting with him.

FRANTI

And I have no interest in your interest.

Suddenly Rwogo steps forward, taking Franti's attention...

RWOGO

He doesn't want to see me, does he? I don't even know him.

The lumbering Nausicaan glowers down at Rwogo, trying to decide what to do. His instructions never mentioned another Ferengi. And in the moment's distraction...

QUARK

C'mon!

Quark grabs Rwego by the arm, making to run for it...

..but before they get a step, Franti grabs both of their collars and HEFTS them up into the air, feet dangling. The two Ferengi SQUEAL in that deafening, supremely irritating Ferengi way. Franti winces at the cacophony...

Rwego TWISTS in Franti's hand, begins to KICK and SCRATCH and HISS at the Nausicaan's face.

Quark is momentarily shocked, then decides this is a good idea and joins in - KICKS and SCRATCHES and HISSES. With both hands occupied, the Nausicaan cannot fight them off.

FRANTI

Stop it! You really don't want to make me angry!

The Nausicaan suddenly JERKS, goes stiff, and drops like a stone, dropping Quark and Rwego into a heap on the ground.

T'Lana delicately removes her hand from Franti's neck and looks down at them...

T'LANA

I suggest we depart. Now.

Quark and Rwego will not argue with that.

22 EXT. SPACE - WRIGLEY'S PLEASURE PLANET

A pleasant green-white world, a panoply of freighters and passenger liners all in orbit, calmly waiting their turn.

And one BAJORAN SHUTTLE zooming out at right angles to the rest, eager to get the *frinx* out of there.

23 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

RWOGO is at the controls, driving them onwards confidently, while QUARK knocks back another snail juice.

RWOGO
Where are we going?

T'LANA
Allow me.

T'Lana leans over Rwogo's shoulder and enters a series of new commands. Rwogo watches closely, then nods, impressed with the Vulcan woman's cleverness.

T'LANA
The course is laid in. You should not need to do anything for quite some time. Assuming we don't run into a quasar.

For all her bravado, Rwogo is not experienced out here. Was that a joke? Thankfully Quark is the one to speak up...

QUARK
Is that likely to happen?

But T'Lana's disdainful glare is all the answer he'll get. T'Lana pulls her own padd out of her robes and works it.

T'LANA
You both handled the Nausicaan well. You demonstrated bravery, if not logic, in confronting a larger opponent. You showed keen insight in devising a suitable distraction. Such efficacy was not anticipated.

RWOGO
(grin)
I think there was a compliment in there, don't you, Ambassador?

But Quark is just watching T'Lana read from her padd...

CLOSE-UP on T'LANA

...on her long, nimble fingers as they tap the surface...

FLASHBACK

...those same fingers unlacing Quark's bodice earlier...

CLOSE-UP on QUARK

...as he reacts to those memories, ears throbbing again...

CLOSE-UP on RWOGO

...who is watching Quark watching T'Lana, fully aware what he is thinking, but her own face unreadable...

BACK TO SCENE

Quark steps forward, putting on his most seductive voice...

QUARK

So... do you do all your own,
uh... "stunts" ?

T'LANA

(eyes on padd)

I cannot discuss trade secrets.

QUARK

I'm just curious as to the quality
of the product I hope to obtain.

T'Lana looks up at Quark, blank faced...

T'LANA

Satisfaction... is not guaranteed.

Quark grins wide, takes that almost as flirting...

QUARK

Rule number nineteen. I always say
I love a woman who knows the Rules.

On Rwego's reaction to that...

QUARK

(continuing)

But Rule number two-thirty-nine
says "Never be afraid to mislabel
a product". You wrote a great
first chapter, I have to admit.

But how do I know you can... how shall I put it... sustain that level of erotic tension?

T'LANA

The point is moot until you see it. Unless... you are suggesting some sort of demonstration?

QUARK

(*faux indignation*)

T'Lana! How could you even think I was suggesting such a thing!

(*beat, sly*)

Unless you're offering...

But T'Lana is already walking away, to the back cabin.

T'LANA

Standard Bajoran shuttle craft,
Janitza-class, one berth provided.
I will rest - do not disturb me
until we reach our destination.

And she EXITS. Quark is fairly vibrating with frustration.

QUARK

Nnggaahh! All these females!

RWOGO

What about all which females?

QUARK

Laren! Rionoj! And now T'Lana!
Getting me all worked up and then
casting me off like they don't
know exactly what they're doing.
A male can only take so much!

RWOGO

Are you saying you have no self-
control, Ambassador? That males'
lechery is all females' fault?
That would be... disappointing.

Quark turns to her, shocked...

QUARK

What? No, of course I'm not saying that. I would never - and believe me, I know all about self-control.

(unhappy mutter)

I've been controlling myself every day since I was a teenager.

RWOGO

I'm glad to hear it.

QUARK

(sigh)

But this is what it means to be a male, Rwogo. To always want what you can never have.

RWOGO

I wouldn't say never...

Rwogo KISSES Quark, hard and passionate. He pulls back...

QUARK

Wh... what are you doing?

RWOGO

Giving you what you want. You have a problem with that... Ambassador?

QUARK

Umm... no. No problem.

Rwogo grins, KISSES him again, and they slowly slide down the wall to the deck and off-screen...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

24 EXT. SPACE - BAJORAN SHUTTLE

The Bajoran shuttle flies at low warp...

25 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

QUARK and RWOGO slump to the deck, panting, clothes askew. She cuddles up close and runs her fingers across his lobes, while he is still trying to process what just happened.

QUARK

Wow... where did that come from?

RWOGO

It came from you, Quark. Although I should thank those other females for getting you so worked up.

QUARK

Yeah, but... you? And me? When...

RWOGO

Can you blame a female for being a little starstruck? I get assigned to the same station as the famous ambassador, brother of the Grand Nagus, hero of the Dominion War, visionary of the Gamma Quadrant...

(sigh of love)

...and I find not only is he even more handsome than his official portrait, he's a progressive too!

QUARK

I am not!

RWOGO

Oh, come along. A female assistant manager, a male *dabo* dolly - you promote equally and you exploit equally. If that's not being a progressive I don't know what is.

QUARK

And... you like that in a male?

RWOGO

I think I proved that, didn't I?
Of course, there is this whole
Vulcan Love Slave obsession...

QUARK

You don't think I'll get it?

RWOGO

Actually, your perseverance in the
face of your own total inability
to complete a simple holo-novel
acquisition is... endearing. It
brings you down off your pedestal.

An insistent repeating BEEP from the shuttle's systems.
Rwogo stands languidly and struts sexily to the console,
checks it... but then stiffens with alarm.

Rwogo uploads an IMAGE to the screen - an unfamiliar ship.
Rwogo stares at it a moment, then starts getting dressed.

QUARK

What's going on?

RWOGO

Get dressed. I'll get T'Lana.

26 **EXT. SPACE**

The Bajoran shuttle... and another SHIP following it.

27 **INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT**

T'Lana inspects the image of this ship on the screen...

T'LANA

I recognise that configuration.
It is Broht's company yacht.

QUARK

Evasive manoeuvres!

T'Lana turns to look at Quark, takes in his half-dressed, bedraggled, flushed state. Turns to look at Rwego, who is in much the same condition. Eyebrow goes up - *Ah. I see.*

T'LANA

It would be advisable to increase our speed.

RWOGO

We're already at warp three. That's as fast as this little ship goes.

QUARK

What?! Why didn't you hire the deluxe model that goes warp nine?

RWOGO

Because you didn't want to spend the money.

QUARK

Then... fire photon torpedoes!

RWOGO

(sigh, facepalm)

It's a passenger shuttle. It has no weapons. The deluxe model -

T'LANA

Excuse me.

No time for squabbling Ferengi, T'Lana reaches past them and works the helm console again. The shuttle LURCHES onto a different course. Quark staggers at the sudden change...

QUARK

Well, one good thing. He's got no weapons either. What can he -

BOOM. A bone-shattering impact, throwing Quark right on top of Rwego across the console. She smirks saucily, while he just struggles to right himself and regain dignity.

Quark hits the comm panel... BROHT's furious face appears on the screen in place of his ship...

QUARK

Broht! Whatever you're doing, stop it - or I'll sue you for damages!

(aside to Rwego)

Why didn't you sign for the extra insurance? The deluxe model -

BROHT (screen)

That was just a little tap, Quark. Franti thought it might get your attention. Come to a full stop right now, or I'll have Franti give you more than a little tap.

T'Lana checks the console, then turns calmly to Quark...

T'LANA

You should comply.

QUARK

What?! I am the Ferengi ambassador to Bajor, *frinx* it. I have high-level Federation connections. I -

T'LANA

We are no longer in Federation space.

RWOGO

We're not? When did that happen?

T'Lana reaches out and takes Quark's hand, holds it...

T'LANA

Quark... trust me. Come to a full stop now.

Quark is powerless at the mercy of the Vulcan Love Slave. He slowly turns and works the helm console...

28 **EXT. SPACE**

The Bajoran shuttle drops out of warp. A moment later, Broht's company yacht does the same.

29 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

While Broht talks to T'Lana, Quark and Rwego watch, turning their heads back and forth like at a tennis match...

BROHT (screen)

I'm glad you're finally willing to see reason. But I'm surprised at you, T'Lana. Conspiring with this Ferengi dunsel...

QUARK

Dunsel?!

T'LANA

Conspiracy is a harsh accusation. Quark and I are simply engaged in a private business transaction.

BROHT (screen)

You're trying to cut me out of my own franchise! If you've written a new *Vulcan Love Slave*, you have an obligation to sell it to me!

T'LANA

My previous contract with you was non-exclusive. It is now expired, so I have no obligation to you whatsoever. Further, you overlook the fact that *Vulcan Love Slave* has long been in public domain.

Broht grinds in fury, changes tack, composes himself...

BROHT (screen)

T'Lana, my old friend. Why are we fighting? You know I'll pay you more than that bartender will. Surely you can see the logic in extending our relationship?

T'LANA

It is not my decision alone. My business partners also have some say in this transaction.

T'Lana looks to Quark and Rwogo, including them...

RWOGO

Well, I know which out of the two
options I'd choose.

The Vulcan and the two Ferengi turn as one to face Broht on
the screen - a united front. The Bolian turns purple...

BROHT (screen)

Franti - ram them!

T'LANA

I would not advise that, Ardon.

Suddenly new ALARMS all over the shuttle - and on Broht's
ship as well. T'Lana gestures calmly to the window...

30 **EXT. SPACE**

As the shuttle and the yacht sit side by side...

...a third ship UNCLOAKS - a massive behemoth that dwarfs
them both, bristling with weapons but with no identifying
markings or symbols.

31 **INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT**

Quark is panicking. Rwogo is curious. T'Lana is calm...

VOICE (comm)

Trespassers. You will identify
your business in this sector.

BROHT (screen)

I am Ardon Broht, of Broht and
Forrester, purveyors of popular
holo-novels. I am attempting to
reclaim my rightful property from
the people on that shuttlecraft.

QUARK

I am Ambassador Quark. I'm just
trying to get home to Bajor.

VOICE (comm)

We do not recognise outsiders' property disputes or diplomatic credentials. Both are irrelevant. Your vessels will be confiscated.

QUARK

I protest! You have no authority to do this. I have high-level -

But he interrupts himself as he feels T'Lana holding his hand again, gazing at him with the power of the Love Slave. She leans closer to the comm panel, enunciates clearly...

T'LANA

Wildflower.

A long pause, as Quark and Rwego wonder what is going on...

VOICE (comm)

Acknowledged, Wildflower. What would you have us do?

T'LANA

We request safe passage through your sector. And we would like you to invite Mister Broht to return the way he came.

BROHT (screen)

What? How dare you? I have -

Suddenly, on the screen, Franti the Nausicaan whispers in Broht's ear. The Bolian looks shocked and terrified...

BROHT (screen)

They're what? Quark, you're doing business with the Orion Syndicate?

Quark is equally horrified...

QUARK

T'Lana, we're doing business with the Orion Syndicate?

Rwego is intrigued, but also a little disturbed...

RWOGO
I didn't know we're doing business
with the Orion Syndicate...

VOICE (comm)
Wildflower, please convey to your
associate that the debt has been
repaid.

T'LANA
I shall.

VOICE (comm)
Publisher, ambassador, you may
depart. Now.

BROHT (screen)
T'Lana -

VOICE (comm)
You may depart. Now.

QUARK
You heard what the whatever-it-is
said. Let's get out of here.

Rwogo gets into the pilot's seat, works the console...

32 EXT. SPACE

Broht's yacht backs away slowly, careful not to startle
anyone. The Orion Syndicate ship follows it, just to make
sure there are no... accidents...

Meanwhile the Bajoran shuttle continues on its way, soon
jumping back to WARP...

33 INT. BAJORAN SHUTTLE - COCKPIT

T'Lana calmly takes the seat beside Rwogo, leaving Quark to
flail in horror behind them...

RWOGO
Where to now?

T'LANA

Resume the initial course I input when we left Wrigley's Pleasure Planet. We should reach Bajor within four hours.

QUARK

Bajor? You mean we've been heading towards Bajor this whole time?

T'LANA

Until we required assistance in dealing with Mister Broht, yes.

QUARK

And you just happened to know that the Orion Syndicate considers this sector their turf? And they just happened to owe you a favour?

T'LANA

Happenstance had little to do with it. But I would recommend that you avoid these coordinates in future.

QUARK

(incredulous)

Bank on it.

T'Lana sits perfectly calmly, looking out at the stars as they warp past.

Rwogo drives the ship on, grinning, enjoying the adventure.

And Quark gazes at T'Lana, caught between lust and horror - who *is* this woman he is in bed with now?

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

34 EXT. ALJULI TOWN - MORNING

Morning in the small Bajoran town, locals and Starfleet on their way to work...

35 INT. QUARK'S NEW BAR

QUARK stomps in, customary bad mood in full flow. He looks around - very few customers. It doesn't help his mood.

QUARK

Treir! Put a call in to Rom - I'll try to put those shuttle repairs on diplomatic expenses. Idiot shuttle salesman tried to blame me for the damage - I'm the victim here!

His scantily clad Orion assistant manager TREIR is talking to customers at a table. She does not turn at Quark's rant.

QUARK

Treir! I'm talking to you.

Treir finally turns. We can't see the customers past her...

TREIR

And we're talking about you.

She steps aside - and her customers are T'LANA and RIONOJ. Quark sees them together... and nods with understanding.

QUARK

I should have known. You did say business partners, plural.

TREIR

Oh, not me. I'm just here to enjoy the look on your face. Well, I'll leave you to it, ladies. I'm sure you can handle him.

Treir struts off with a smirk. Quark sits at the table.

QUARK

So... do we have a transaction to discuss? Or has this all been one big joke on poor old Quark?

RIONOJ

No joke. I promised you a quality product, and I'm here to deliver.

T'LANA

We agreed that you would require a "risky road", as you Ferengi put it, to convince you of the profit potential of the product.

RIONOJ

The actual programme, the whole thing, is here now. In fact it's already installed up in holosuite two, ready and waiting for you.

Quark looks to the staircase along the wall, following it up to the balcony level, where the holosuites are.

QUARK

What if I don't like the product?

T'LANA

An unlikely outcome. But if that is your appraisal, then we have, as you know, an alternate buyer.

Quark jerks back in horror - he'll be damned if Ardon Broht gets his mitts on this before him. Well, that decides it. He gets up, takes the stairs two at a time...

36 EXT. FERENGINAR SURFACE - DUSK

Back to the woodlands of Ferenginar, the light *frippering* rain bouncing off the latinum river, the soft croak of the local swamplife among the marshy ground.

Quark is back in his rustic woodland bodice, breathes with relief to be back home again - better than the real thing. But he can't be satisfied with just this...

QUARK
Computer, skip to another chapter.

A RUSH OF PHOTONS...

37 **INT. SEX DUNGEON**

...and Quark is standing in a small room of cushions and silks, no windows, a large RING hanging from the ceiling.

He can just about reach the ring if he stretches up to his toes... and grasp the CHAIN of gold-pressed latinum that is threaded through it. As he admires the glittering metal...

...the chains COME TO LIFE and wind around his wrists, yank his arms to the ring. They wind down his legs towards his ankles, wind around those and tighten so he cannot move.

QUARK
(worried)
What the - this is supposed to be
Vulcan Love Slave, not Ferengi
Love Slave!

T'LANA emerges from behind the silks, stalks towards Quark.

T'LANA
It's time for me to give you your
bath, Shmun. But first -

QUARK
Skip to the last chapter!

Another RUSH OF PHOTONS...

38 **INT. CASINO**

...and Quark is standing in a casino, more luxurious than any from a Bond film. LATINUM fountains trickle and feed into STREAMS that wind between the GAMBLING TABLES packed with players - all genders and races, all barely clothed.

The CLINK of money is more beautiful than any sound Quark ever heard. He stops a waitress - the ANDORIAN from sc 1...

QUARK

Can a thirsty traveller get a
drink around here?

ANDORIAN

Drinks are served free of charge
to those who play the game. The
buy-in is five strips.

Suddenly worried, Quark looks down at his outfit - now the
Ferengi version of a tuxedo; Shmun has worked his way up in
the world - and pats down the pockets. Nothing.

QUARK

Umm... I don't seem to have any
strips on me.

ANDORIAN

We accept other forms of payment.

And suddenly the ORION woman from sc 1 is back too - they
grab his arms and pull him towards the central *tongo* table,
force him to sit. A little worried, it takes him a second
to realise there is only one other person at the table...

...T'LANA. Quark gazes at the beautiful Vulcan, unable to
resist her. Even as all the other players gather to watch.

T'LANA

I've been waiting for you, Shmun.
Would you like to play with me?

QUARK

Oh yes. More than you can know.

T'LANA

Then let's begin. Acquire!

T'Lana casts her first slip of latinum, and the game is on.
The entire room seems to SPIN in time with the *tongo* table
between them, a dizzying display that would throw Quark off
his game if he wasn't completely caught up in T'Lana...

QUARK

Evade!

39 **MONTAGE - THE GAME**

The game continues, cross-cutting and dreamlike. Quark and T'Lana make competing wagers, calling their bets. The crowd make their own bets on which one will win, *ooohing* at each success, *awwwing* at each loss. The room continues to spin, making Quark dizzy, sweating with nerves - he has to hold on, has to focus on the ever seductive T'Lana...

40 **BACK TO SCENE**

T'LANA, her sultry gaze boring right into Quark...

T'LANA

Confront.

QUARK

I'm... I'm converting my reserves!

Another loud *Ooooooh!* of excitement from the crowd, except for one crowing voice that cackles with amusement...

VOICE

You don't have any reserves!

QUARK

Well... there's more than one way to win a *tongo* game! I'll wager...

...and he realises. The most valuable thing in the room.

QUARK

I'll wager... my love slave.

A GASP of shock around the room. Quark looks at T'Lana, and the Vulcan actually looks sad, shocked that he would risk her like that. He feels bad, but it's the only way to win.

The wheel spins... the room spins... faster and faster...

Another RUSH OF PHOTONS...

...and all the crowd are gone. The gamblers are gone. Even T'Lana is gone. The only other person in the room is...

...RWOGO. The Ferengi inspector smiles wide from across the *tongo* table. Quark is confused, indignant, embarrassed...

QUARK

Do you mind?! You're interrupting my private time.

RWOGO

Oh, Quark... So strangely short-sighted, like I said. Come along!

The truth finally dawns on him... she sees it dawn...

QUARK

...you? You're the third partner?

RWOGO

I may be a female, and a security inspector, but I'm also a Ferengi, Quark. So when Rionoj came into the old bar a few months ago, and mentioned off-hand that she knew of a holo-novel programmer who was looking for some new partners...

QUARK

You saw an opportunity for profit.

RWOGO

That's where you came in. Every holo-novel needs a holosuite to play in - and who better?

QUARK

So all that grub-fu about me being a hero and a visionary - that was all to butter me up for the deal?

RWOGO

Oh no. That was for real. I just saw my chance and took it, that's all. But I see no reason not to mix business with pleasure.

QUARK

A female... writing about money...

RWOGO

I know you're not stupid, Quark, so stop pretending you are. Join me in the twenty-fourth century, why don't you? People like Broht have been ignoring a huge market with their VLS programmes.

QUARK

You mean... females?

RWOGO

My partners are working on a series of programmes that cater to all tastes. You can even reconfigure the Vulcan Love Slave as a male.

QUARK

That's just sick! Good luck selling that filth on Ferenginar.

RWOGO

Don't need luck. We have a meeting with Ishka and Leeta next week.

QUARK

Oh Gint... they'll use the profits to support female charities...

RWOGO

...A distribution network that knows how to transport merchandise in and out of tricky situations...

QUARK

Rionoj... she's the one who's in league with the Orion Syndicate...

RWOGO

...A writer and producer who's very familiar with the subject matter...

QUARK

T'Lana... she knows what sells...

RWOGO
And me, who found them a buyer.

QUARK
(trying his luck)
Exclusive rights?

RWOGO
(*faux* sigh)
Fine. For half a year, anyway.

Quark breathes heavy - *he did it*. He got the programme. His business is saved. And as he looks across at Rwego, who seems equally as aroused at the prospect, he realises...

...maybe he has more.

41 EXT. ALJULI TOWN - NIGHT

The formerly quiet Bajoran street is now alive with pulsing music, shining neon lights and crowds of people of all species queuing up to get into Quark's Bar.

42 INT. QUARK'S NEW BAR

CANDLEWOOD, NOG and SLAINE reach the front of the line...

SEBRIGAR
Tickets.

Candlewood gulps in the face of SEBRIGAR the Nausicaan bouncer, who clearly does not intend to let them pass.

NOG
We don't have tickets. We're on
the list. My uncle Quark's list.

Sebrigar glowers at them... then lets them pass. They walk on to the next step, where HULPESH the diminutive Sti'ach *maitre d'* perches on his high stool behind his lectern.

HULPESH
On the list, you say. Well, we'll
see about that. The Ferengi, the
Cardassian... and the weird one.

CANDLEWOOD

Ex-cuh-yuuse me?

SLAINE

Well, you are weird, John. Come on, let's get in there before -

But her breath is caught as they all turn to see...

...the bar jam-packed. Every table taken, every *dabo* wheel full, every spot at the bar busy, every inch of floor space filled with happy, partying people drinking and dancing.

Nog fights his way through the crowd towards the bar, where QUARK himself stands gazing with pride at his empire.

NOG

Wow, uncle - you weren't kidding. Are all these people here for *Vulcan Love Slave Four*?

QUARK

Rwogo said they were aiming for a broader audience... I hate to say it, but maybe she knew what she was talking about.

HETIK (o.s.)

Number forty-seven! You're up!

Nog turns and sees HETIK at the top of the stairs, shouting down to the crowd. A HUMAN man makes his way to the stairs, his friends clapping him on the back - *Go get 'em, tiger*.

Meanwhile Candlewood spots his ex-boyfriend and waves up to him from the main floor - Hetik waves back with a big grin.

NOG

I was going to put my name on the list, but by the look of this place, I don't think I'll get in till I'm an old man.

(back to Quark)

Don't suppose there's any way to get my name higher on the list...?

QUARK

Twelve slips. You can pay Hetik.

NOG

Twelve slips?! But I'm family!

QUARK

Rule number six, Nog. You got in for free. Don't push your luck.

RWOGO now sidles up to them both, glowing with happiness.

RWOGO

Quark! Have you seen the numbers on holosuite seven?

QUARK

Yes, I have. And I don't pay you to keep tabs on my customers.

RWOGO

You don't pay me at all, Quark. Try to keep up.

NOG

Wait, what's going on?

QUARK

The inspector here brought home every damn premium offered to her at Holo-Palooza. Even the crap normal people would throw away.

NOG

Okay. So what's the problem?

RWOGO

The "problem" is that mixed in with all that crap was advance copies of new programmes. New programmes that won't be on the market for weeks!

QUARK

Exactly - it won't last. Within a couple of weeks, the whole galaxy will be playing those programmes.

RWOGO

But until then, it's a perfect way to distract these people while they wait for their VLS number to come up. And since I paid my own way into the convention, everything I got in there is mine, not Quark's.

NOG

Which means you make the profit off it, not him.

(to Quark)

She's got you there, uncle.

QUARK

Yeah well... they're my holosuites. I still get the rental fee.

RWOGO

But not for long.

Rwogo saunters off with a victorious grin. Despite himself, Quark can't help watching her as she walks away...

...which Nog notices. Quark turns back to Nog, sees he's been caught looking, looks away again blushing furiously...

...and Nog smiles with amused intrigue - *Ah. I see.*

NOG

Love's Latinum Lost... and found, apparently.

Then he turns back to watch the crowd again, smirking...

FADE OUT

END OF SHOW