

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

12x11 - "Death of a Salesman."

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

incorporating elements from

Star Trek: Articles of the Federation

by Keith RA DeCandido

TNG 17x11 - "I'M NO ANGEL"

The crew of a [Luna-class](#) ship, *Rhea*, is exploring an unusual star cluster when the Borg-controlled starship *Einstein* arrives. The crew are helpless as the *Rhea* is assimilated, but before she can be taken as well, Lt T'Ryssa Chen is inexplicably whisked away. *Enterprise* is assigned to chase down *Einstein* - the last loose end from the super-cube crisis - with extreme prejudice. T'Lana has taken leave, concluding that she is no longer mentally fit to serve. Picard agrees to take Chen as an adviser instead - she contacted entities on the planet, and calls them 'Noh-Angels' after the Japanese art form. She believes that the entire star cluster is sentient, and saved her. *Enterprise* also finds *Rhea*, frozen in time - the entity's attempt to protect it as well. Analysis suggests that Chen was moved by some kind of naturally occurring slipstream. If *Einstein* manages to assimilate that, they will be unstoppable.

TTN 1x11 - "SWORD OF DAMOCLES"

Dark days on *Titan* - while they explore a region heavy with dark matter, the crew are all on edge. Science officer Jaza has nightmares of dying in a shuttle crash. Riker and Troi are barely talking. Chief engineer Ra-Havreii is hiding in his quarters and interfering in other people's projects. Christine Vale worries that the Luna experiment is failing. Tempers are short and arguments are everywhere. They receive a distress call from deeper inside the dark matter region. As they approach, *Titan* is knocked out of warp by subspace waves from the planet Orisha, an insectoid society whose warp-fold experiments are causing the spatial disruptions. Vale leads an away team of Troi, Jaza, Ra-Havreii, Keru and Y'Lira, but a massive energy tesseract in orbit causes the shuttle to crash - just like Jaza predicted. As they go down, they witness what appears to be *Titan* being destroyed by the same phenomenon...

VOY 10x11 - "POST MORTEM"

Chakotay is in Venice, waiting to meet Janeway as they agreed. Her ex-boyfriend Mark turns up instead, and breaks the bad news. A memorial is erected and a grand state funeral held. Everyone is there - Chakotay, Seven, the Doctor, Tom, Harry,

Kaz, the various admirals and Janeway's family. On *Titan*, Troi breaks the news to Tuvok, and his grief overwhelms her senses. On her tiny slipstream shuttle somewhere in the Beta Quadrant, B'Elanna receives the report, and roars that a warrior is coming to Sto'Vo'Kor. Kathryn's sister Phoebe exhorts Starfleet to revenge against the ones who took Janeway from them. A broken Chakotay promises that she will get it. Flashbacks reveal their last dinner together, just before *Voyager* left for the Yaris Nebula. It was the night they finally admitted their feelings for each other, and agreed that when he came back, if nothing had changed, then they would meet in Venice.

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. FEDERATION PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

A padd is SLAMMED onto the desk in a fury. President BACCO is on her feet, looming across her desk and staring daggers into her closest advisor, Esperanza PIÑIERO.

BACCO
Esperanza, what the hell is this?

PIÑIERO
I'm sorry ma'am, I left my psychic powers in my other pants...

BACCO
Nobody likes a wise-ass. Why the hell are we renewing a trade agreement with Aligar?

PIÑIERO
(it's obvious)
We've been trading with them for kellinite. We had to, during the war, the way we were going through ships...

Bacco harrumphs back into her seat, casting the padd aside.

BACCO
That's nice. Do you know how they mine the kellinite?

PIÑIERO
I assume with the usual mining equipment -

BACCO
Slaves, Esperanza. They use slaves.

PIÑIERO
I... didn't know...

BACCO

Well, I did know. You know how I know? They tried to peddle that crap to Cestus. I was all ready to sign, and then we did a little research. They oppress ninety percent of their society. That's not a typo - ninety percent. Nine out of every ten people is owned by the other one. Why the hell are we involved with these people?

PIÑIERO

It was war, ma'am, we -

BACCO

Oh for the love of everything, Esperanza. I know there was a war on, I was there. Desperate times, strange bedfellows, whatever damn other wartime cliché you want to throw at me. But the war's been over for four years. Is there any compelling reason we should be setting our principles aside now? Or has it just become habit?

PIÑIERO

No, ma'am. And I think you should make that argument tomorrow. But, there's something else, ma'am...

BACCO

(rubs forehead)

Esperanza, I'm already cleaning up the mess from the bloody slaughter of thousands by the Borg, trying to prepare for my summit with Martok and Tal'Aura, working on a really good level-six headache...

PIÑIERO

I'm sorry, ma'am. But this could be big. It's about the Ferengi...

That takes Bacco aback. She wasn't expecting that.

2 EST. DEEP SPACE NINE

Bringing us home to the station...

3 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

A padd is SLAMMED onto the bar in a fury. QUARK is on his feet, looming across his bar and staring daggers into his best dabo girl (and assistant manager) TREIR.

QUARK

Treir, what the frinx is this?

Treir doesn't even look up from her own padd, where she is leisurely scrolling through the news bulletins, as she sits on a bar stool with legs crossed and swinging.

TREIR

What is it now, Quark?

QUARK

You renewed the trade agreement with Balancar? Are you crazy?

TREIR

(long-suffering)

We need syrup of squill, Quark. Morn gets through a crate of the stuff by himself every month.

QUARK

Balancar is notorious for overcharging for squill - faking a drought, raising their taxes, whatever other trick I've probably pulled myself. I was just waiting for the contract to expire so I didn't have to pay the early termination fee, and then I was gonna drop their frunks.

TREIR

Well, maybe if you'd told me that before you gave me responsibility for the contract renewals...

QUARK

Oh for the love of Gint. That's exactly the kind of thing you're supposed to check for, Treir, it's a basic part of the job.

TREIR

(looks up;
genuinely)

Okay - I'm sorry. I didn't check what I should have checked. It won't happen again, Quark.

QUARK

(totally wrong-footed)

What? Oh. Well. Yeah. You should be. So... just think on.

Treir returns to her news scrolling, while Quark looks at her with suspicion, not quite sure what just happened.

Then Treir begins to CHUCKLE at something on her padd. Quark bitterly assumes he's the target of a joke.

QUARK

What?

TREIR

Oh, don't worry. You'll like it.

The COMM SCREEN behind the bar suddenly burbles with an incoming message. Quark looks back and forth between the screen and Treir, not sure who he should pay attention to.

TREIR

You should get that.

Quark is still suspicious, but he does turn towards the panel. He works the controls, and the screen shows...

...ISHKA, Quark's elderly mother, sniffing in tears.

QUARK

Moogie? Is that you?

ISHKA (screen)
Quaaaaaarrrrk.....

Confused, Quark looks back and forth between the sniffling, hitching Ishka on the screen and the smirking, chuckling Treir sat at the bar watching them both.

QUARK
Moogie, what is it? What's wrong?

ISHKA (screen)
Oh, Quark! It's terrible!

QUARK
Take a deep breath and tell me what happened.

ISHKA (screen)
It's Zekkie. He's... he's...

QUARK
He's what?

ISHKA (screen)
He's diiiiiieeed!

She bursts into messy sobbing tears. Quark is momentarily appalled and sad for his mother, until a new idea occurs and he shares a grin with Treir, who got there long before.

QUARK
I get to throw the funeral.

With his mother heartbroken on the screen behind him, Quark's head is filled with dreams of profit...

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN

5 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE

Commander RO LAREN crosses her arms and looks askance at Quark, who stands before her as she leans against her desk.

RO

How exactly do you get to throw the funeral?

QUARK

Why shouldn't I? I'm an important officer of the Ferengi government, I'm a renowned proprietor and host, and the Nagus was obviously a close friend of the family.

RO

The former Nagus. Anyway, what I mean is, why aren't they doing it on Risa, where he lived? Or, oh I don't know, on Ferenginar itself?

QUARK

I'm sure there'll be all sorts of overblown, undignified spectacles all across the planet. But there's only one man who gets to perform the Ceremony of Divestiture to desiccate the body, and create the official Seal of Dismemberment.

RO

So basically, you exploited your mother's misery and heartbreak for a chance to get attention and profit for yourself.

QUARK

Obviously. Sixth rule, hundred-and-eleventh rule...

RO

(sigh)
Fine. What do I need to know?

QUARK
(hands her a padd)
The ships of every important
Daimon or private businessman in
the Alliance will be coming here
over the next few days. They'll
all need VIP accommodations and
security. I'll be adding extra
security to the bar myself.

RO
How magnanimous. Look, Quark...
I'm sorry for your loss. I know
Zek meant a lot to you.

QUARK
(sneer)
He used to. He used to be a symbol
for all Ferengi - of the power of
profit, the glory of greed. Then
my mother got her teeth into him,
and he became a pitiful shell.
Now... he's just a way for me to
make more profit.

RO
Why do you lie like that?

QUARK
(wrong-footed again)
What? What do you - I'm not lying.

RO
Okay, Quark. Whatever you say.
(re padd)
I'll take care of this. I'm sure
you've got a lot to take care
of... Mister Ambassador.

Slightly upset at apparently now being on bad terms with
Ro, Quark nods his acknowledgement and turns to leave.

A view of the TOWER OF COMMERCE against the usual drizzly, cloudy, lightning-strewn sky of FERENGINAR. The tower shines with more LIGHTS than normal, beams that shine out into the rainy atmosphere, reflecting off the water.

TILT DOWN until we see a crowd of FERENGI all standing in the Sacred Marketplace below the Tower. They are all CRYING, wailing in the rain, throwing their hands in the air, beating themselves about the head in their anguish.

Finally we PAN ACROSS to roving Ferengi reporter SPODE, who stands with a microphone, looking directly INTO CAMERA as the rain and wind lashes his face. He too is crying, but battling through it for the sake of this important story.

SPODE

And here in the Sacred Marketplace beneath the Tower of Commerce, the grief that has gripped Ferenginar in the wake of the beloved former Nagus's passing is very clear.

(in tears)

Now back to the studiooooo!

CUT TO:

7 **INT. NEWS STUDIO**

...where a Ferengi newsreader also looks INTO CAMERA, the tears threatening to derail his report. While he speaks, the whole right third of the screen, and a scrolling feed along the bottom, continue to present breaking news from the financial markets in shifting FERENGI ORTHOGRAPHICS.

FLODGE

(through tears)

Thanks, Spode. Meanwhile, the Congress of Economic Advisors has declared today a day of mourning, while the current Nagus, Rom, has left home for the Bajoran system, where his brother, Ambassador Quark, will perform the blessed Ceremony of Divestiture.

Flodge wipes tears away onto his sleeve with a SNORT and a HONK, then turns to the side...

FLODGE

And now for the weather. Nimba?

CUT TO:

NIMBA, the female Ferengi weather reporter, with her tight fitting dress showing maximum leg and cleavage, standing before a WEATHER MAP showing nothing but clouds and rain.

NIMBA

It gon' rain!

CUT TO Flodge at his desk:

FLODGE

Thanks, Nimba.

CUT TO:

8 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR / PROMENADE

Quark STABS the controls of his comm screen with a finger, turning away in disgust. Arrayed before him are his staff, including TREIR, HETIK, PIF and the Ferengi waiters.

QUARK

See? So undignified. We'll show them. We'll do this right. Those ships will be arriving later today, so I need you to be on your best behaviour, wearing your best suits - thongs, collars, whatever - and show all these powerful businessmen just why Quark's Bar, Grill, Embassy, Gaming Hall and Holosuite Arcade deserves to host such a solemn occasion.

They all nod their understanding and move away to their tasks. Quark straightens his jacket and heads towards the door of the bar. There, NOG is busy attaching LATINUM SLOTS to both sides of the doorway, inside and out.

Quark stands admiring Nog's work, while Security Chief EVIK strolls towards them both from the security office. Quark remains inside the door, while Evik remains outside.

EVIK

What are these, Quark?

QUARK

Fram slots. If they want to come in to celebrate the life of the greatest Nagus that ever lived -

Nog gives him a glower; Quark ignores it.

QUARK (cont)

- at the only official event, and be seen doing it, then they'll have to pay for the privilege.

EVIK

Makes sense. But why are you having them fixed to both the inside and the outside? They have to pay to get out as well?

NOG

That only makes sense too, doesn't it? No-one wants to be forced to pay for leaving the greatest party of the year. So they'll stay.

QUARK

And while they do, they'll spend more at the bar.

EVIK

You've thought of everything.

QUARK

I try.

NOG

Okay uncle - I think these are good to go now. Activate?

Quark nods grandly. Nog flicks a switch, and a FORCEFIELD snaps into place across the doorway.

Quark smiles proudly, then pulls a SLIP of latinum from his jacket. He DROPS the slip into one of Nog's new slots, and then with a slight hesitation, walks into the forcefield...

...and passes right THROUGH it. Now standing outside on the Promenade with Evik, he smiles with satisfaction.

EVIK

How did you do that?

QUARK

The slots are keyed to allow one person - and one person only - through at a time, and only in response to getting a slip of latinum. Here, you try it.

Quark pulls out another slip of latinum, hands it to Evik. The security chief shrugs, drops the slip into the slot...

...and BOUNCES right off the forcefield with an OOF. Quark and Nog chuckle as Evik attempts to regain dignity.

QUARK

The final test! That was a fake slip I gave you. The slots can tell the difference. Don't want just anyone getting in here.

EVIK

It must have taken some serious investment for that kind of tech.

QUARK

He's worth it.

(catches himself)

The party is worth it. I'll make the money back, don't worry about that. Nog, make sure you do the doors on the upper levels as well.

NOG

Yes, uncle.

Before anyone can question him further, Quark pulls out a third slip, drops it into the slot, and passes through the forcefield into his bar, where he can get on with his work.

9 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE

An entire fleet of Ferengi SHIPS of various classes - the heavy D'Kora-class cruisers (as in TNG "The Last Outpost"), the tiny Na'Far-class shuttles (as in DS9 "Little Green Men"), the mid-size Ulis-class (as in ENT "Acquisition").

All of these surround the station, waiting their turns to settle onto the limited number of docking airlocks.

10 INT. DS9 - DOCKING RING CORRIDOR

Ro, now in her Starfleet DRESS WHITES, stands with Evik, Nog and BASHIR all in their likewise, and Quark in his best suit. They wait solemnly for the airlock to roll open...

...revealing ROM in his grand Nagal regalia, with LEETA following close behind, tiny baby girl BENA holding her hand and stepping carefully over the lip of the airlock.

RO
Grand Nagus. Welcome back to Deep
Space Nine.

ROM
Thanks, Commander. Hello brother.

QUARK
Rom, you idiot. Get over here.

Quark and Rom both grin, knowing this is just Quark playing it up. They grab each other into a warm brotherly hug. Ro and Nog both half-hug Leeta in greeting, and Bashir gives her a peck on the cheek.

RO
Leeta, great to see you again.

BASHIR
You look wonderful.

LEETA

You too. I was sorry to miss you both last time we were here.

BASHIR

Yeah, sorry. We were off saving the galaxy, you know how it is.

Bena has been half-hiding behind Leeta's leg, unsure of so many strangers. Leeta gently beckons her out of hiding.

LEETA

Bena, sweetie? This is Nog, do you remember? He's your half-brother.

ROM

She's shy around strangers.

LEETA

And I'm quite happy about it.

NOG

Don't worry. We have plenty of time to get to know each other.

RO

If you'll join me, Grand Nagus, your mother's transport from Risa should be docking just along here any minute now.

ROM

Thanks, Commander.

The group moves on down the corridor...

They turn a corner and approach another airlock, gathering in front of it while it cycles open. It does...

...revealing Ishka, wearing her large, expansive and garish caftan with elaborate earrings, just barely controlling her sniffles. At the sight of her family, she BURSTS into new floods of tears and throws herself on Quark and Rom.

ISHKA

Quaaaaaarrrrrk...

ROM
Moooooogeeeeee...

But instead of joining the hug, Nog GASPS out loud.

As they all turn to see what he is gasping at, they see who else is in the airlock, stepping cautiously along the short corridor and looking very nervous...

...PRINADORA. Rom's first wife, and Nog's mother. Quite pretty for a Ferengi, slim and delicate, and unaccustomed to the simple travelling dress she is wearing. (Last seen [DS9 9x12 "Satisfaction Is Not Guaranteed"](#)).

Nog stares at her, surprised and unsure how to react...

NOG
Moogie...?

Off their mutual awkwardness...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

11 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Former Grand Nagus ZEK lies in state on a plinth of purest gold-pressed latinum, in the centre of the bar. No expense has been spared in extravagance and garishness.

Around him in a circle, unfamiliar FERENGI EXTRAS wail and howl and weep and yank on their lobes, making a performance of their grief. One reaches out a tentative, pleading hand, only for it to BUZZ against a forcefield surrounding the body, at which he pulls the hand back with a yelp.

Quark himself stands back, watching as he leans against the bar. The room is packed with Ferengi, mostly male but some female too, all bawling their eyes out, wailing in anguish. Senior officers mingle among them, trying to make polite conversation. Quark watches it all dispassionately.

Bashir sidles up to Quark, speaks gently.

BASHIR

How are you holding up, Quark?

QUARK

I'm fine, Doctor, thank you.

BASHIR

I do wish you had let me do an autopsy, or at least a scan. We don't know what he died of. It could be contagious.

QUARK

Absolutely not. Nobody is allowed to touch the body before the Ceremony of Divestiture. Any contamination would bring down the price. Besides, he was old. His health had been deteriorating for a while. And he's in a stasis field. You're in no danger.

BASHIR

Very well. If you're sure.

(beat)

Haven't you paid your respects?

QUARK

I'm the host. I'm not going to debase myself with fake mourning.

BASHIR

Fake?

QUARK

You think all these people really felt so strongly about the Nagus?

BASHIR

The former Nagus.

QUARK

They're just performing. It's what you do at funerals. You put on a big show so everyone can see how devastated you are. Thirty-third Rule - you still suck up to the boss, even when he's dead.

A loud SHRIEK catches Quark and Bashir's attention. They look over to the door, where a well-dressed Ferengi businessman - ZOID (seen [DS9 9x11 "Sale of the Century"](#)) - cowers and stares in horror down at the floor, because...

...PIF, the green-furred doglike Aarruri *maitre d'*, sits grinning up at him, tail wagging happily.

PIF

Welcome to Quark's!

ZOID

W... w... what is that?

QUARK

(hurries over)

Zoid! I see you've met my very best *maitre d'*, Pifko Gaber.

ZOID

This thing works for you? Are you insane, Ambassador?

QUARK

Far from it, Zoid. But neither am I afraid of animals like some kind of simpering child.

ZOID

(terrified)

Well... no, of course! Neither am I! I'm not afraid!

PIF

Let me show you to your seat. Come on, follow me!

Pif trots off quite happily. Still vibrating in horror, Zoid staggers off after him. Quark turns to the bar.

QUARK

Broik! Get me a drink. Now!

The Ferengi bartender quickly pours a blue liquor, which Quark knocks back at top speed, shuddering.

12 INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT

Nog is in his dress whites, with CANDLEWOOD and TENMEI likewise. Nog is clearly tense as the floors zoom by.

CANDLEWOOD

Nog? Are you alright? You've been very quiet.

TENMEI

John, his grandfather in all but name has just died.

NOG

It's not that. It's just... my moogie is going to be there too. My real moogie.

CANDLEWOOD

Okay. Why is that bad?

NOG

We barely know each other. I was so young when we left home. I have no idea what to say to her.

TENMEI

I'm sure she still cares about you, Nog. You're her son.

NOG

I'm not so sure. The last time we met, she didn't even recognise me.

The turbolift comes to a halt, and the doors open onto...

13 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE

The Promenade is packed with even more FERENGI EXTRAS, all surging back and forth, unable to afford or fit into the bar so doing whatever they can to get as close as possible. Every one of them is wailing, crying, hitting themselves.

Nog looks at this nervously, while Candlewood and Tenmei are just bemused at the spectacle. Nog takes a deep breath.

NOG

Right. Let's do this.

And he launches into his own well-practised SCREECHES and WAILS and florid displays of grief, pushing into the crowd.

Candlewood and Tenmei share a look of shock and horror, before shrugging and deciding they might as well join in. They WAIL in play-grief, flailing their arms and pushing out of the turbolift into the crowd.

They force their way through until they stand in front of the forcefield-blocked doorway. Nog digs out three slips of latinum and hands two to his friends.

As the other Ferengi who cannot enter look on in envy, Nog drops his slip into the slot by the door, and walks THROUGH the forcefield. Tenmei and Candlewood follow his example...

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

Now inside, Tenmei spots Pif and reaches down to scritch behind his ears. Pif's leg pounds against the deck in joy.

TENMEI

Hi, Pif. How's it going?

PIF

I'm enjoying myself, actually. All these Ferengi are terrified of me.

CANDLEWOOD

Why would that make you happy?

PIF

Hey, you get your entertainment wherever you can.

Off-screen somewhere in the bar, there is the sound of another SHRIEK followed by the SMASH of a dropped glass.

PIF

That'll be little Tiffo. I'm so proud!

Chuckling, Candlewood and Tenmei follow Nog into the crowd.

At one of the quieter tables under the stairs, Ishka, Rom, Leeta, Bena and Prinadora all sit. Young Bena, about three years old, has one of Pif's PUPPIES in her lap, happily tickling its belly. The other Ferengi are horrified.

ISHKA

How can she do that?

LEETA

It must be the Bajoran half of her. She's fearless!

NOG (o.s.)

Hi, Dad. Grand-Moogie.

They look up and see that Nog has joined them, standing to the side and still awkward.

ISHKA

Noggles! My, do you clean up well
in that uniform.

ROM

That's my handsome boy.

Prinadora looks at him, knowing this is *her* boy as well,
but not sure how she feels about that. Ishka notices the
tension, and gets to her feet.

ISHKA

Rom! You're the Nagus, you can buy
me a drink.

Rom is confused, but Leeta has picked it up as well. She
ushers Rom along, pulling Bena and her puppy with them.

LEETA

Rom, sweetie, let's leave Nog and
his mother to talk, okay?

ROM

Oh. Right. Okay.

And they wander off. Still unsure, Nog sits down at the
table opposite Prinadora. They sit silently for a moment.
She is sweet, guileless, but very simple and uneducated.

NOG

Hello, moogie.

PRINADORA

Hello. It's Nog, right? That's a
nice name. We met a couple of
years ago, I think.

NOG

Moogie... I'm your son.

PRINADORA

I know. Ishka told me. She's told
me a lot of things since my father
went to prison.

NOG

I'm sorry about that.

PRINADORA

It's okay. He was plotting against the Nagus, and apparently that's bad. So he should be in prison. I'm lucky Ishka took me in.

Off-screen, another SHRIEK of fear followed by the SMASH of glass. Clearly, Pif has claimed another victim. A whirl of emotions, Nog tries to gather himself, takes another tack.

NOG

How are you enjoying living on Risa? It must be very different from what you're used to.

PRINADORA

Everything's different from what I'm used to. Like this dress - I wish I could take it off. It just feels wrong wearing clothes in front of all these males.

(beat)

Ishka tells me I should love you too - since you're my son and all.

NOG

That's okay. You don't have to.

PRINADORA

No, I'd like to. It sounds nice, to love somebody. Ishka loves Zek. Rom loves Leeta. They both seem happy. I think it would be nice.

NOG

It does sound nice. And it's not your fault that you don't love me. That was the world you grew up in. It's going to take time.

PRINADORA

Maybe one day I will.

Nog and Prinadora smile tentatively at each other. Then there is another off-screen SHRIEK and SMASH, and they both giggle together at the broken tension.

At the bar, Quark knocks back another drink. Then his notice is drawn by a familiar voice from outside the bar:

BRUNT (o.s.)
Brunt! F-C-A!

Horrified, Quark turns to see his old nemesis, BRUNT, stood just outside the forcefield, smiling insincerely at Quark. Two NAUSICAAAN THUGS stand behind him.

Quark steps towards the door. Rom, Leeta and Ishka are soon there to back him up. They do not open the forcefield.

QUARK
You're not welcome here, Brunt.
And you're not F-C-A anymore.

BRUNT
How could I not be here, Quark?
I had to pay my respects. No-one
loved the old man as much as me.

ISHKA
You spent your life trying to ruin
him and my entire family.

LEETA
And look where it got you.

QUARK
She's right, Brunt. Last I heard,
you were destitute. And this party
is for paying customers only.

Sneering with barely suppressed glee, Brunt pulls out a small bag and shakes it, JINGLING with slips of latinum.

BRUNT
You'd be amazed how much people
will pay for a man with a former
F-C-A Liquidator's skills.

ROM

Brother, you can't let him in here. He's evil.

BRUNT

Oh, but Quark can't possibly turn down a paying customer, can he? Greed is eternal, after all.

QUARK

Fine. But just you. Not your... associates.

Smiling, Brunt makes a big meal of reaching into his bag of money, fishing out one slip at a time, and handing them to both of his 'associates', all while Quark grits his teeth.

That done, Brunt deposits his slip in the slot, and passes THROUGH the forcefield. The Nausicaan thugs do the same.

Once they are all through, Brunt looks down at Pif, who is sitting nearby and growling under his breath at the thugs. Brunt shudders in disgust before turning back to Quark.

BRUNT

Now the party can really get started. I'm especially looking forward to the auction. I wonder how many pieces of Zek I'll be able to afford to buy?

He JINGLES his bag of money again, taunting Quark and his entire family, before sweeping into the crowd and beginning the traditional WAILS of grief.

Quark glowers in a fury after him...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

15 EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - NIGHT

Back on Earth...

16 INT. PALAIS - MONET ROOM - NIGHT

Not the large semi-circular office, but the smaller room used by Jaresh-Inyo, as seen in [DS9 4x11 "Homefront"](#). It now serves as a general meeting room with conference table.

Bacco looks along the table, at the councillors sat down both sides. Vulcan T'LATREK, Tellarite GLEER, Bajoran KRIM, Andorian ZH'FAILA, human MAZIBUKO, Centauri HUANG. Upon the walls are portraits of former presidents including Bolian [ZIFE](#), Efrosian [RA-GHORATREII](#), and Grazerite [JARESH-INYO](#).

At last the final councillor arrives, looking around rather nervously at the august company. This is the [TRIEXIAN](#) representative, ARTRIN. He ambles in with his three legs and three arms, and takes the seat at the opposite end.

BACCO

Thank you all for coming at this late hour. I apologise for being cryptic, but it was necessary.

T'LATREK

Madam President, should not this meeting be held in open council?

BACCO

It may come to that, but I want to keep this off the record for as long as possible. I'm going to tell you something my staff just told me, and then I want Artrin to tell his side of the story.

They all look at Artrin, who is as surprised by this as they are. On the wall behind him hangs the reason for this room's name - Monet's "Bridge Over a Pool of Water Lilies".

ARTRIN

My side of what story, ma'am?

BACCO

On Five Torus, in the year of the Fortril on Triex, you rendered a judgement in your capacity as SMA to imprison a Federation citizen named Wusekl, without a trial.

T'LATREK

There is no record of Councillor Artrin rendering any judgements as Supreme Magisterial Authority.

ARTRIN

It was classified. Fortril was eight years ago. Antwerp had just been bombed by the Dominion.

MAZIBUKO

And the paranoia over changeling infiltration was at its height.

ZH'FAILA

What was this Wusekl accused of?

BACCO

Funny you should ask - being a changeling infiltrator.

GLEER

Was he?

ARTRIN

He was witnessed changing shape.

BACCO

Hardly surprising, since Wusekl is a Chameloid. The Founders aren't the only shape-shifters out there.

ARTRIN

We couldn't be sure it wasn't a Founder posing as a Chameloid.

BACCO

So you opened an investigation,
did a full medical, got testimony
from friends and family...

ARTRIN

That would not have been prudent.

HUANG

You feared a public outcry.

ARTRIN

Exactly. Madam President, I do not
see the issue. We were at war -

BACCO

Nobody say that to me again. EVER.

Bacco's coldly furious outburst quiets the room. A pause...

T'LATREK

Regardless, that is not correct,
Councillor. War was not declared
for one year and seven months
after Five Torus Fortril.

ARTRIN

That's not the point. My actions
were wholly within Triexian law.

KRIM

Your actions were wholly in
conflict with Federation law, sir.
More to the point, they were in
conflict with natural law.

ARTRIN

My people were scared. When Wusekl
changed shape, he was almost
lynched. Yes, we could have done a
medical exam to prove he was not a
changeling, but it wouldn't have
mattered. The people were calling
for his blood. What I did was for
his safety, as well as my people.

BACCO

For the safety of your political career - not to mention mine - you're going to go into Jorel's press room tomorrow morning and announce your resignation. And you're going to tell them why. I want to send the message out far and wide that we are not this. We do not trade with slavers, and we do not imprison innocent people. And the first sign that this is so will be your resignation tomorrow. Is that understood, Councillor?

The room goes quiet. Artrin still doesn't believe he did anything wrong, or at least not excusable. But no-one else at the table seems to feel the same. Finally, he relents.

ARTRIN

Very well, Madam President. I will resign first thing in the morning.

BACCO

Wrong. You'll come to my office first thing in the morning, and we'll go over your resignation speech together. That'll be all.

ARTRIN

Thank you, Madam President.

He stands on three legs, and leaves the room. Bacco sags.

BACCO

Thank you all for your support.
I'll see you tomorrow.

All but T'Latrek get to their feet with a quick chorus of "Thank you, Madam President", and leave the room as well.

T'LATREK

May I stay a moment, ma'am?

BACCO

Of course. What can I do for you?

T'LATREK

I have served under almost every president on those walls. I was there when Ra-Ghoratreii signed the first Khitomer Accords. What is not widely known, however, is that he thought the Accords were a terrible idea. That the Klingons would use them only to distract us while they rebuilt their forces, and then they would attack. But he also knew that he could not turn his back on the opportunity, so he signed the Accords anyway.

BACCO

But he was wrong. Aside from that one blip, the Klingons have been our staunchest allies for decades. I'm about to meet Martok tomorrow and make sure it stays that way.

T'LATREK

People in your position often make mistakes, Madam President. What matters is how those mistakes are dealt with afterwards.

BACCO

I sometimes feel like taking this job was one big mistake.

T'LATREK

That too is the nature of your position, Madam President. One of many reasons I have never sought the position myself.

BACCO

You're a smarter woman than me.

T'LATREK

That goes without saying, ma'am.

T'Latrek's eyes twinkle with amusement. Bacco chuckles.

17 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

Quark stands beside the golden plinth which carries Zek. This is a dignified moment, one that must be observed with solemnity. But it is also a personal moment for Quark.

The room around him is mostly quiet except for the sniffles and whimpers of overwhelmed Ferengi supplicators. Rom and Leeta stand at the front with Bena. Ishka and Prinadora. Nog, Candlewood and Tenmei. Ro and Bashir. Plus Brunt and his sneering thugs. Quark looks around at them all.

Finally he looks back down at Zek... and speaks.

QUARK

No-one in this room would argue that Zek was a great man. A beacon for prosperity. Both a paragon of traditional Ferengi values, and able to see new paths to profit, at home and across the galaxy. We will never see a Nagus like him again in our lifetimes.

ISHKA

(muttered warning)

Quaaarrrrk...

ROM

That's okay, moogie. He's right.

QUARK

We gather today to send Grand Nagus Zek on his final journey across the Great Material Continuum to the latinum-lined vaults of the Divine Treasury, where the wealth he accumulated in life will purchase the greatest afterlife any Ferengi has ever known. We will not forget -

BRUNT

Oh, get on with it!

The entire Family Quark, plus all the Starfleet officers present, all glare at Brunt with undisguised hatred. He doesn't care - he is here precisely to wind them up.

Quark turns back to Zek's body, and takes a last look at his old, lined, lifeless face. Then Quark reaches down and presses a BUTTON on the side of the plinth...

...and the forcefield surrounding the body turns OPAQUE with golden glitter. The entire room is silent, watching the sacred ceremony. Then a big KER-THUNK...

...and a palm-sized disc DROPS out from under the plinth into a hanging wire-frame tube. This is the [Memorial Disc](#), carrying a portion of Zek's desiccated remains. The top of the disc gleams with an iridescent Seal of Dismemberment.

Then KER-THUNK - another disc drops on top of it. KER-THUNK - another. Then another. Gradually speeding up, the discs drop into the tube, as everyone in the bar watches. As one tube fills up with discs, the next tube takes its place.

QUARK

Exactly two-hundred-and-eighty-five discs, one for every Rule of Acquisition Zek dedicated his life to upholding. The Sacred Auction will begin as soon as all discs have been produced. Thank you.

SHRIEK. SMASH. Quark grits his teeth as somewhere in the bar, a tiny puppy goes YIP YIP YIPping away.

The crowd mills away for a moment, waiting for the auction to begin. Ro steps up to Quark, speaks quietly.

RO

That was very touching, Quark. I'm sure he would have appreciated it.

QUARK

I don't care what he would have appreciated. I just care how much money I'm going to make once I've sold off every piece of his dead body. House always takes a cut.

He walks away. Ro watches him go, sad for him. Instead she spots Ishka and Prinadora in the crowd, and goes over.

RO

Ishka. I just wanted to say again how sorry I am for your loss.

ISHKA

Thank you, Commander, that's very kind of you.

PRINADORA

But he's not really dead.

ISHKA

(jumping in)

She means as long as we remember him, he'll always be alive, isn't that right? Now come along, dear.

Ishka drags Prinadora away by the arm, leaving Ro to wonder what that was all about.

DING. The production of the discs is complete. Quark returns to the funeral plinth, and everyone gathers around. Nog stands by his side, with a padd to record the bids.

QUARK

Everyone, the Memorial Discs are ready. Please prepare your wallets - the auction will now begin.

BASHIR

(hand up)

Quark... you said two-hundred-and-eighty-five discs, right?

QUARK

That's right, one for every Rule.

BASHIR

But there are only two-hundred-and-eighty-four.

GASPS go around the room. Brunt crows with delight.

BRUNT
He's trying to cheat us!

QUARK
Don't be ridiculous! I'm sure the
Doctor is mistaken.

BASHIR
I'm sorry, Quark. There are only
two-hundred-and-eighty-four discs.
One is definitely missing.
(taps head)
Believe me, I've counted.

SHRIEK. SMASH. YIP YIP YIP. Quark grits his teeth again.

ROM
Uhh... brother?

QUARK
Not now, Rom.

ROM
But... did that furry thing buy a
piece of Zek already?

QUARK
Of course not!

Rom points... and there across the bar, its little claws
skittering over the deckplates, one of Pif's puppies has
got one of Zek's Memorial Discs in its mouth and is making
a run for it.

Every Ferengi in the room GASPS in horror...

BLACK OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

18 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S BAR

The puppy SKITTERS away, the disc clamped in its mouth...

QUARK

After it!

But everywhere the puppy runs, Ferengi JUMP out of the way, terrified of the thing, especially now it seems everywhere.

One Ferengi CRASHES into a table, sending drinks flying.

Brunt SHRIEKS and dives behind the bar.

The whole room is in an uproar and a panic.

PIF

Fett! Put that thing down at once!
I'm sorry everyone, she's such a
trouble maker...

A third Ferengi runs SCREAMING for the door, only to BOUNCE off the forcefield and slump to the floor with an OOF.

A fourth Ferengi crouches in a ball in a corner as a puppy jumps all over him and licks his face.

FERENGI

AAAH! Get it off me!

Grand Nagus Rom stands with legs and arms wide, the puppy running right towards him...

ROM

I've got it, I've got it...

Except that as the puppy RUNS on past, Rom cringes away, eyes closed in terror and whimpering...

ROM

I don't got it!

Brunt cowers behind the bar, until he looks up and sees TIFF the puppy standing on the bar and grinning at him.

TIFF

Hi!

BRUNT

Aaaaah!

Brunt skitters away behind the bar, only to bump off another body. He looks up - TREIR glares down at him.

TREIR

You're pathetic.

Brunt struggles to his feet, desperately trying to reclaim some kind of dignity in front of this female...

...except that he slips on spilled liquor and goes CRASHing back to the floor. Treir walks away, shaking her head.

Out on the floor, Quark steps up to Ro, who is chuckling.

QUARK

A little help, please?

RO

Why? This is hilarious.

QUARK

(harrumph)

I have to do everything myself.

He turns back to the room, locates the puppy by following the sound of SHRIEKs and SMASHes and Ferengi leaping out of the way in terror. Determined, he strides into the fray.

QUARK

Hey! Furball! Get back here now,
or your father is fired!

Pif GULPS.

Quark calculates where the puppy is running to, and strides purposefully to cut it off at the pass.

The tiny, adorable puppy skitters towards him, spines erect and tail wagging happily, memorial disc in its mouth...

ZOID

Ambassador! Save yourself! That thing will savage you!

Quark stands his ground. The puppy gets closer, closer...

...and Quark reaches down, grabs the puppy around the belly, raises it up and holds it in front of his face. He reaches out, PLUCKS the disc from the puppy's mouth...

QUARK

Thank you.

...and puts the puppy down again, where it skitters off none the wiser.

Every Ferengi in the room looks at him in astonishment.

ZOID

Ambassador...

ROM

My brother, everyone!

Suddenly every Ferengi (except Brunt) surges forward in awe of Quark, wanting to meet the brave man who faced down the vicious furry monster. Quark accepts all the adoration.

QUARK

Thank you, thank you. Now can we please get back to the auction?

The crowd parts for him to return to the funeral plinth. As he goes, he realises with disgust that the disc he is holding is covered in puppy slobber. Ro is waiting...

RO

I'll buy that one.

QUARK

(throws it at her)

Sold.

At the door, Pif calls out loud...

PIF

Puppies, in a line, please!

From all over the bar, the six puppies come running, and join their father at the door. As everyone breathes a sigh of relief, Quark turns back to his adoring audience, who are all now basically worshipping him, and orates.

QUARK

Everyone here knows how valuable these Memorial Discs are. I would say they were priceless - except that if you want to be able to say you own a piece of Zek himself, you'd damn well better come up with a price.

(crowd chuckles)

Nog, get your padd ready - I am now opening the bidding! What am I bid for the first piece of Zek?

Brunt steps out from behind the bar where he has been cowering, trying to look powerful and intimidating. The liquor stains all over his suit do not help in that regard.

BRUNT

I'll pay one thousand bricks of gold-pressed latinum for exclusive rights to every last piece.

The room GASPS. Quark remains calm.

QUARK

I'm afraid that won't be possible.

BRUNT

No-one in this room can pay more, Quark. And that's my final offer. So why don't you put an end to this farce and hand them over. And I will own... the 'great' Zek.

Quark smiles, takes a moment to enjoy this.

QUARK

The thing is, Brunt not-F-C-A,
you're banned from the auction.
You are not permitted to bid on
any of it, much less all of it.
That's by order of the widow.

Brunt looks in horror at Ishka, who is looking back at him smugly, surrounded by Rom, Leeta, Bena and Prinadora.

BRUNT

That's ridiculous. Females have no
say in where the husbands' wealth
goes. Especially not the proceeds
from their death auction.

QUARK

Aww, you don't know the new rules?
It is now very much legal for a
widow to say where her husband's
money ends up after death. And in
this case, it's going to a variety
of funds, including charitable
societies dedicated to promoting
women's rights.

Females around the bar, including Ro, Tenmei, Leeta and Treir all WHOOP with delight. Brunt is appalled.

QUARK

So why don't you just put an end
to this farce... and leave. But
thanks for the three entry fees.

Barely controlling his fury, Brunt turns on his heel...

BRUNT

Boys...

...and stomps to the door, his thugs joining him.

Except that Pif and his line of six puppies are blocking
the door. Brunt is on the verge of exploding in horror.

TIFF

Hi!

Brunt has to hold back the vomit. Taking their time, the Aarruri slowly step aside and clear the path to the door...

...where Brunt is confronted by the forcefield, forced to dig into his bag of jingling latinum, grudgingly handing out slips to his thugs just to get out. The indignity!

Finally Brunt and his Nausicaan thugs are gone. Pif looks down to his puppies, beaming with pride.

PIF

Puppies, you all get extra treats tonight.

All six puppies YIP in delight.

QUARK

Alright! Enough entertainment - let's all get down to business, shall we?

As Quark launches into his auction spiel...

19 MONTAGE

-- Quark holds up discs in turn, and takes excited pledges from Ferengi all over the room.

-- Nog records the bids in his padd, his fingers flying at warp speed to keep up with it all.

-- Ro bounces the disc she owns in her hand, considering it, watching Quark do his thing like a born showman.

-- Ferengi fall over each other to top bids, hands flying up to try and catch Quark's attention.

-- Prinadora watches the whole thing with bemusement, not sure what is going on but caught up in the excitement.

-- Ishka watches with wobbling lip as her beloved Zekkie is cut up and sold off, to profit causes she believes in.

-- Ro smiles, finally coming to a decision for herself.

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

Bringing us back to the centre of Federation government...

21 **INT. PALAIS - MONET ROOM - NIGHT**

It is the absolute death of night, but President Bacco is still sat at the end of the large table, working through a pile of papers and jotting notes on each before flipping to the next. She is exhausted but refusing to give in.

The door opens and Esperanza Piñiero pokes her head in.

PIÑIERO

Ma'am?

BACCO

Crying out loud, Esperanza, go home already! It's after midnight.

PIÑIERO

I've told you before, I leave when you leave. Not a moment sooner.

BACCO

(re papers)

Well, I'll be here a while yet. This here is Bill Ross's latest suggestions for the summit. Hey, did you send the message to Ambassador Derro's office?

PIÑIERO

Yes, ma'am. The Federation has offered its official condolences on the death of the former Grand Nagus. But I'm afraid he's not the only one who's died...

BACCO

I may look like a corpse, but I bet I'll surprise you yet.

PIÑIERO

No, ma'am. What I mean is... the former president passed away.

BACCO
(sags in seat;
sad nod)
Ah, damn. Well, I suppose Thelian
was bound to -

PIÑIERO
No, ma'am. Not Thelian. It was
President Jaresh-Inyo.

Shocked, Bacco looks up to the portrait of the Grazerite
former president on the wall.

BACCO
Damn it. Was it the Borg attack?

PIÑIERO
Oh no, no. He died in his sleep in
his home on Mars.

BACCO
I'll have to talk to his wife.
When's the funeral?

PIÑIERO
That's the problem. Jaresh-Inyo
was apparently a follower of the
semtir tradition.

BACCO
Not familiar.

PIÑIERO
A Grazerite philosophical custom.
The traditional death watch calls
for the body to be completely
destroyed in front of friends and
family... and it has to be done
immediately, within one Grazerite
day of the death.

BACCO
The funeral's tomorrow? Damn it,
Esperanza, I have the summit, I
have this nonsense with Artrin...

PIÑIERO

I know. But you really can't not attend. On the plus side, because it has to be so soon, we won't have to go all the way to Grazer. They're going to do it on Mars.

BACCO

Well, small blessings I guess. Get Fred working on the speech as soon as he wakes up. See if you can get hold of Thelian, Amitra and Zife as well. Do we know where Zife is?

PIÑIERO

I'll find out.

BACCO

Good. Thanks, Esperanza.

PIÑIERO

Thank you, Madam President.

Piñiero ducks back out of the room. Bacco stares again at the portrait of Jaresh-Inyo on the wall.

BACCO

Damn.

Leaving Bacco alone in the Monet room, surrounded by the ghosts of her predecessors...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN

22 INT. DS9 - QUARK'S QUARTERS

The window out onto the stars. Then PAN across until we find the Family Quark - Rom, Leeta, Bena, Nog, Ishka and Prinadora, sat companionably together in the social area.

ROM

And then he kicked Quark out of his own quarters, and he had to come and live with me!

ISHKA

You two could never share so much as a tooth sharpener, much less a room. How soon was there blood?

NOG

When I got back to the station, I had to clean up the mess. I needed another vacation after that.

They all chuckle. Prinadora wriggles in her pretty dress.

PRINADORA

Can I take this thing off now?
It's so itchy.

ISHKA

Okay, fine, you can take it off.

Prinadora eagerly whips the dress off over her head, leaving her sitting there naked and much more relaxed. (Obviously tastefully positioned so as not to show.)

Almost against his own will, Rom's head slowly turns to look... Leeta gently grasps him by the lobe and steers his eyes back away from his naked ex-wife, changing the topic.

LEETA

So who do you think that last mysterious anonymous bidder was?

NOG

It had to be Brunt. He was so mad at Uncle Quark for banning him from the auction. I bet he set up an anonymous account the moment he left the bar.

ISHKA

That filthy slug. Always trying to get his slimy little hands on my Zekkie's money.

ROM

He must be really rich now. Those last seven memorial discs were the most expensive of the lot. I'm not sure I could have afforded them.

Quark sits slightly separate from the others, watching his family with a small wistful smile - this is nice.

The door bell CHIMES. Quietly, not wanting to disturb the pleasant party, Quark gets up and goes to answer it. The door opens... and there is Ro.

RO

Hi, Quark. Hi everyb - oh!

She averts her eyes from Prinadora's nudity. Quark smirks.

ISHKA

Commander Ro - come on in!

RO

Oh no, I don't want to intrude. I just wanted to give Quark a gift.

QUARK

A gift? Of what?

She pulls out the one disc he sold to her.

RO

Here. I wanted you to have this, to remember Zek by. Don't worry, I dried it off first.

Quark takes the disc, looks down at it with a small smile.

QUARK

Thanks, Laren. Really. But you should keep this.

He hands it back. Ro rolls her eyes, exasperated.

RO

Quark, are you still trying to convince me you didn't care about Zek? You should know I know you better than that by now.

QUARK

That's not it. I don't need that disc... because I already have seven of my own.

Quark walks over to a cabinet, opens up a small section... and pulls out the seven final discs of Zek.

QUARK

I set up an anonymous account... and I bought the last seven discs of Zek. To remember him by.

ROM

Brother! That must have cost you a fortune - all your auction fees!

QUARK

Oh, I've got enough left over to still turn a tidy profit.

RO

That's very sweet, Quark. And also very selfish. Seven discs, all for yourself?

QUARK

They're not all for me.

He walks over to his family, and gradually hands out six of the discs to them one by one. They are all touched.

QUARK

Zek was a good man. He did a lot for me and my family.

(to Rom)

He made my idiot brother the most powerful Ferengi in the galaxy.

(to Leeta)

He welcomed an alien female onto the throne of his homeworld.

(to Bena)

He made sure this precious little girl will never want for anything.

(to Nog)

He helped turn my nephew into a pioneer for all Ferengi.

(to Prinadora)

He saved an innocent woman from being a slave to her father.

(to Ishka)

He looked after my mother, gave her the best years of her life.

Quark crouches down with his mother, the final disc held between them. They are both on the verge of tears.

QUARK

I know you were lonely, moogie, after father died, and Rom and I left home. I'm glad you found someone, and you were able to make each other happy, even if only for a short while. We'll all miss him.

ISHKA

You're a good boy, Quark.

Mother and son hug each other tight. After a moment, Rom and Nog join the hug too. Ro watches from afar, touched.

Eventually the hug separates. Quark comes back to Ro.

RO

That's why you arranged to have the funeral here, isn't it? So you could bring your family together.

QUARK

Tell no-one. Will you stay?

(re the disc
in Ro's hand)

You're basically part of the
family now.

Smiling warmly, amazed at how nice Quark can be sometimes, Ro takes his hand and they walk back over to join the group. She settles in next to him, and they all start sharing MOS stories about Zek.

23 EST. PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE - DAY

Now focusing on the lower levels of the building...

24 INT. PALAIS - PRESS ROOM

The next morning. As seen in "Read All About It" - a podium with the Federation seal behind it, journalists from all over the galaxy sat in rows to fill the rest of the room. Many of these faces were also seen in the previous episode.

The President's acerbic Bajoran press liaison, KANT JOREL, lurks at the side of the stage. But the podium is currently occupied by the harried Triexian councillor, Artrin, who is taking pointed questions from the press corps.

EDMUND

So why talk about it now?

ARTRIN

My superior, the President of the Federation, ordered me to do so. Let me repeat that I deeply regret the decision that I made, and the damage it did to Wusekl's life. What I do today is all I can offer him in recompense. But he is the damaged party here - not the people of Triex, not the people of the Federation, not my fellow councillors, and not President Bacco. I owe them no apologies.

MARIA

Where is Wusekl now?

ARTRIN

I honestly don't know. He was granted his freedom six years ago and left Triex.

MARIA

So you never kept up with him? Checked to see how he was doing?

ARTRIN

To do so would have violated the same law that prevented me from discussing the matter before now.

EDMUND

Do you know who'll be replacing you as Triex's councillor?

ARTRIN

The Triexian Curia will vote on a replacement to serve out my term. Thank you, that is all for now.

Ignoring the barrage of questions being thrown at him, Artrin scuttles off the stage as quickly as a three-legged man can. Jorel steps up to take his place.

JOREL

Alright, now before you pester me with questions, I have just one announcement. By now you'll have heard of the sad loss of former president Jaresh-Inyo. The death watch will be taking place today, at the Squires Amphitheatre in Endurance, on Mars. Perhaps you might drag yourselves to attend.

MARIA

That's where Jaresh-Inyo retired to after leaving the presidency, isn't it, Jorel?

JOREL

Your powers of deduction remain ordinary, Maria. That's all for now. I'll have another briefing this afternoon.

They all start to clamour with questions again, but Jorel presses the button on his podium...

...and all the journalists DISSOLVE into nothing, their holographic forms dissipating into the transmitters placed equally around the room. Jorel turns away, satisfied.

JOREL

(to self)

I must say, I do love being able to turn them all off like that.

OZLA (o.s.)

We all figured that out a long time ago, Jorel.

Jorel turns back in shock, and sees that one journalist did not disappear, because she is really here - OZLA GRANIV.

JOREL

Ozla...

As Ozla stands from her seat, Jorel runs down from the podium and grabs her into a firm hug. He actually cares.

JOREL

Oh, thank the Prophets. You're safe. I was sure we'd lost another one to that hell hole Tezwa.

OZLA

(pushing him away)

I wasn't on Tezwa - at least not at the end. I was on Deneva, being held by the Orion Syndicate.

JOREL

The Orion Syndicate?! But -

OZLA

Luckily for me, I have a friend in Starfleet who was able to get me out and back here in one piece. Now listen, Jorel. I need to speak to the president, and I need to speak to her now.

JOREL

Ozla, you know journalists don't get access to the president just like that. Otherwise my life would be even more meaningless than it already is.

OZLA

I'm not talking about an interview, Jorel! I know things.

Jorel takes a step back, looks at Ozla properly. The young Trill journalist looks thinner than before, more intense, balancing on a knife's edge. She has clearly been through some stuff. Jorel is genuinely worried for her.

JOREL

What do you know?

OZLA

I know the reason Zife resigned.

JOREL

We all know the reason.

OZLA

We all know the reason he told us. But I know the real reason. And unless you get me in a room with President Bacco right now, I'll print it in the *Seeker* for the entire Federation to see. Then billions of people will know what really goes on in that nice big office on the fifteenth floor.

JOREL

What are you talking about, Ozla?

OZLA

I'm talking about the news that's going to shake Nanietta Bacco's presidency to its foundations. And believe me, Jorel, this will make my Gavlin award-winning exposé on the Orion Syndicate look like a high school term paper. If she thought trading with slavers or imprisoning a man without trial were scandals... oh, she has no idea what I could do to her.

JOREL

Ozla... what has happened to you? Why would you do such a thing?

OZLA

Because the people deserve to know the truth, damn it! Because that's my job. I don't actually want to bring down the entire Federation. But if you don't get me face to face with Bacco by the end of the day... I'll do it, Jorel. May the gods forgive me, but I'll do it.

BLACK OUT

END OF SHOW