

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

12x06 - "Mr Nice Guy."

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 17x06 - "QUINTESSENCE"**

'They' have destroyed countless universes for being boring, and 'They' are ready to do the same to this one. Whoever is the first to reach the test on Gorsach 9 will be the deciding factor - which is why Q has spent years making sure that person will be Picard. Remembering the hints given to him by Q over the years, Picard makes it through various tests. When he finally faces 'Them', one person representing an entire universe, he is amused by the absurdity of the situation and laughs out loud. 'They' consider this never-before-seen reaction a good enough reason to let this universe survive, leaving only Picard and Q with any memory of what happened. But what did forcing Picard to dress up as Robin Hood ([TNG 4x20 "Qpid"](#)) and rescue Maid Marian have to do with saving the universe? "I just wanted to see you in tights, Jean-Luc."

### **TTN 1x06 - "OFF WITH THEIR HEADS"**

The Sleeper is awakening, and all the worlds that it dreamed inside the Small Magellanic Cloud will soon wink out of existence. Fighting against the increasing anomalies, *Titan* and Donatra's fleet go to work rescuing as many Neyel as they can. Frane must deal with the guilt of having prayed for exactly this to happen. Then he remembers Holy Vangar, the asteroid habitat that brought the Neyel from Earth in the first place - they can use it as a lifeboat. The rescue efforts allow Tuvok and Akaar to bury the hatchet from their long feud. Eventually the anomalies grow too great to save any more, so they tractor Holy Vangar away and use the Bassen Rift to return to Romulan space, exploding the warp cores from Donatra's fleet to seal the rift. Back on Earth, Akaar disembarks but Riker asks Tuvok to stay as tactical officer. Frane agrees to help the rescued Neyel settle back into their ancestral home.

### **VOY 10x06 - "BE THANKFUL FOR WHAT YOU'VE GOT"**

Morale is low on *Voyager*, and Counsellor Cambridge blames Captain Miseryguts, moping around the Yaris Nebula. Cmdr Paris's passion for history suggests a traditional Thanksgiving party might help, an idea which Cambridge fully embraces. Chakotay is furious - given his Native *and* Maquis heritage, he

feels personally targeted. Cambridge isn't even American, he's British. While the crew enjoys a slap-up meal in the mess hall, Chakotay and Cambridge are at each other's throats. Paris must step in - Chakotay's sour mood sets a bad example, at least Cambridge is thinking of the crew. On the other hand, Cambridge takes a little too much glee in needling the captain. Paris suggests they both join the party and offer a wider historical perspective on events. That done, Chakotay sends a message to Janeway, eager to get home. Meanwhile, Paris receives a secret encrypted message from B'Elanna, telling him that her slipstream shuttle is ready, so she and Miral are leaving Earth.

**TEASER**

FADE IN:

**1     EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Standard establishing shot, the *Defiant* in place, maybe a couple of freighters.

**2     INT. DS9 - TURBOLIFT**

Commander RO LAREN stands alone as the lift travels through the station. It has been a stressful day, and she is looking forward to a beer at Quark's.

Her combadge BEEPS. She grits her teeth, really not wanting to be bothered right now. But she is the commander, so she has no choice. She taps to receive.

RO

Ro. Go ahead.

CENN (comm)

Minister Fandor is calling. Again.

Ro closes her eyes, sighs. Will this day never end? She looks up at the harsh fluorescent LIGHTS of the turbolift - bright and grating against the cold metal. She winces and rubs her forehead - the lights are giving her a headache.

RO

Please inform Minister Fandor that I am now off duty, and if the seven times I have spoken to him already today were not sufficient to assuage his concerns, he will just have to wait until I come back on duty in fourteen hours.

CENN (comm)

Okay, I'll tell him. Sir.

RO

Thank you. Oh and Major? I don't want to talk to any more ministers today, alright? I am off duty.

CENN (comm)  
Completely understood, Commander.  
Cenn out.

The line drops, and Ro acts as if to THROTTLE an invisible figure before her, GROWLING her frustration and exhaustion. The effort of doing so makes her headache worse, so she rolls her shoulders and cricks her neck from the tension.

Finally the turbolift glides to a halt, and the doors open onto the Promenade...

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

Ro steps out of the turbolift into the parade of civilians and crew, and looks around in amazement...

To the untrained eye the Promenade looks no different, but the change in atmosphere is apparent. The light is sunny, warm and soothingly diffuse. The SOUNDS are happy, a gentle whisper of friendly chatter unbroken by anything too loud.

As Ro stands watching, an ELDERLY LADY, rummaging in her shoulder bag as she walks, accidentally drops her purse. A passing SECURITY OFFICER stops, picks up the purse, hands it back to the lady. She thanks him profusely and moves on.

At the JUMJA KIOSK, a MOTHER and her CHILD are buying a jumja stick. The child wants the bigger one, but the mother can only afford the smaller one. The SHOPKEEPER waves off her concerns, handing the bigger one to the child anyway.

Ro steps out of the way for a small group of people to approach the turbolift. As the door opens, every one of them attempts to politely "after you" for the others, until one finally takes the invitation and boards.

She strolls on down the Promenade. A minor PRYLAR standing outside the station's SHRINE waves at her warmly as she passes - Ro waves back in happy confusion.

She passes the REPLIMAT on her other side, and sees a YOUNGER MAN generously volunteer his seat to an OLDER MAN to sit in. The older man gratefully receives.

Ro finally reaches the SECURITY OFFICE, where security chief EVIK NATH stands in the open doorway. The mature Bajoran Lt Cmdr watches this perfect sunny day on the Promenade with satisfaction and pride.

EVIK

Good evening, Commander. How was your day?

RO

Exhausting... until now. Is it just me, or is everybody in a really good mood today?

EVIK

I like to think so.

RO

You did this? How?

EVIK

I instituted a new policy among my staff. I've been trying to instil a sense that their role should be more than just a faceless horde of soldiers and security guards. So I've been training them in basic conflict management techniques. Teaching them to be peace keepers, not just rule enforcers.

RO

What's the difference?

Evik smiles demurely, and gestures for Ro to join him as they STROLL back down the Promenade again.

EVIK

I believe that if the average Deep Space Nine resident can see my officers as fellow people, there to help them when they need it, and not some intimidating army of cold regulation and impersonal law, then there will be no need for anyone to use force.

RO

It seems to be working. I've never seen the Promenade so peaceful.

(frown)

Now I think of it, the last couple of criminal activity reports Major Cenn has shown me have had much lower numbers than usual. Is that down to this new policy too?

EVIK

I certainly hope so. I've never been entirely convinced of the efficacy of imprisonment as a deterrent to crime. I recognise it's an ugly necessity sometimes, but I would rather not just lock everyone up and forget about them.

RO

I hope you're not suggesting that's what I did when I was the station's chief of security.

EVIK

Oh, not at all, Commander. But even if I were, it wouldn't be a criticism. Every security officer has their own style. This is just mine. My hope is that by tackling the emotional underpinnings and consequences of crime, I can help to eliminate it before it starts.

By now the pair have reached one of the many other shops along the length of the Promenade - this one a homewares and tchotchkes store run by the ETHRAKOIS (the battling alien couple seen in [DS9 11x13 "The Late Show! With Morn"](#)).

RO

Well, I can't fault your motives.

(looks around)

Or your results, by the look of it. How hard are these conflict management techniques to learn?

EVIK

Oh, not that hard. Why, what are you suggesting?

RO

I wouldn't mind if the rest of us got a bit of training in how to not get into fights or arguments. I'd like to extend this policy of yours. You think you could hold a few of these training sessions for the senior staff?

EVIK

I'd be delighted to, Commander. There's nothing I find more satisfying than helping people to resolve their differences and come together in peace.

A glass dish comes flying past Ro and Evik's ears, SMASHING against the bulkhead, accompanied by a SHOUT of annoyance.

MRS ETHRAKOI (o.s.)

Screw you, jackass!

Ro jerks back in shock. Evik just holds his smile.

EVIK

You see? Satisfying.

Off Ro's dubious expression...

FADE OUT

**END OF TEASER**

**ACT ONE**

FADE IN

**4     INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

Major CENN shoves Lieutenant BOWERS hard. Bowers may be big and tough, but Cenn is *really* pissed off right now.

CENN  
What the hell did you say to  
Lieutenant Kesh-u?

BOWERS  
Take your hands off me, Major.

CENN  
How many times do I have to point  
out to you that you are not the  
first officer of this station?

BOWERS  
And how many times do I have to  
point out to you that I am the  
next senior Starfleet officer in  
line after Commander Ro, and the  
first officer of the *Defiant*?

CENN  
(gritted teeth)  
We are not on the *Defiant*!

Suddenly Doctor BASHIR is there, gently placing himself  
between them without any physical contact.

BASHIR  
Gentlemen, calm yourselves. Now  
tell me, what's this all about?

Cenn and Bowers are both pretty steaming, but they grit  
their teeth and turn to Bashir.

CENN  
I ordered Kesh-u to repair the  
replicators in the ambassadorial  
quarters on level twenty-two.

(points at Bowers)  
But he took Kesh-u off that assignment and put him on the upper pylon torpedo launchers.

BOWERS

Lieutenant Kesh-u is a Starfleet officer, I gave him a direct command as his senior officer.

CENN

On this station I am your senior officer, Lieutenant. And you do not get to countermand my orders just 'cause you feel like it.

BASHIR

Now let's all stay calm, everyone. Lieutenant, is what the Major says true? Did you countermand his orders to Kesh-u?

BOWERS

(grudging)

I suppose I did, yes. But I didn't know about those orders at the time, and Kesh-u didn't tell me, he just did what I said.

CENN

Well, of course he did, he's a junior officer, what else is he gonna do? That's not the point!

BASHIR

Alright, Major. Now Lieutenant - can you explain why it was important to you that Kesh-u stop what he was doing and go to the upper pylons instead?

BOWERS

Because I considered the station's defences to be a higher priority than some random replicators.

CENN

They were not random replicators. They were replicators in the Barolian ambassador's quarters. An important trading partner who we are trying to get to join the Federation. But you didn't bother asking that, did you?

BASHIR

So what this sounds like to me is a failure of communication. Major Cenn, you didn't make Lieutenant Bowers aware of why Kesh-u's assignment was important. Bowers, you didn't check with either Cenn or Kesh-u if it was okay to change that assignment. And Kesh-u didn't feel able to volunteer that information to a senior officer.

EVIK (o.s.)

Okay, let's just pause it there for a moment.

All three men stop and turn together, to see...

Evik calmly watching this entire discussion from across the wardroom, about to offer gentle and constructive advice. Ro stands beside him, observing with arms folded.

EVIK

Doctor Bashir, I'm not certain calling the entire situation a "failure" is the best way to get the Lieutenant and the Major to see eye to eye.

BASHIR

I was just trying to show that there was no single person to blame, but rather they all shared the responsibility equally.

EVIK

A reasonable approach. But I'm concerned that calling people a "failure" when they're already agitated might just serve to make it worse. Instead try framing the situation in more positive terms.

RO

As an opportunity to be embraced, not a problem to be solved.

EVIK

Exactly. Instead of "failure of communication", you might say something like "there's a chance here to work on clarifying the chain of command, for everyone's benefit". Yes?

BOWERS

Doesn't sugar-coating it like that run the risk of just patching the cracks instead of solving what's at the root of it all? If you'll pardon the mixed metaphors.

EVIK

Well at this point in the process, Lieutenant, we're not even trying to solve the root problem. We're just trying to lower temperatures and get everyone to at least look at the situation dispassionately. The problem will never be solved when people are shouting at each other. Only when everyone can calmly explain their side of the story will progress ever be made.

Ro steps in, uncrossing her arms.

RO

Alright, I think that's enough for now. Thanks for coming, everyone. And nice acting performances, too.

Bashir, Bowers and Cenn file out of the room. Cenn is last, and takes the chance to mutter on his way out...

CENN

It wasn't all acting.

CUT TO:

**5 INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Bowers turns to Commander Ro, both of them shielded from attention in the tactical alcove on the top level. He glances to the side, where he sees NOG at the engineering console and CANDLEWOOD at sciences, both out of earshot.

BOWERS

Commander, I object to this.

RO

On what grounds?

BOWERS

It's a waste of my time. I have an overhaul on the tactical systems in the upper pylons to get done, and my time would be better spent making sure that this station can defend itself than learning how to be nice to criminals.

RO

If we were all a little better at defusing these situations before they arise, you wouldn't need those tactical systems.

BOWERS

With respect, Commander, that's naive. No amount of nice words will stop a well-placed torpedo from destroying this station if we don't have shields and phasers.

RO

Isn't it at least worth a try?

BOWERS

It's not my primary concern, no.

RO

Well, it's one of mine. Look at that business with the Androssi - you and I only managed to put the station in danger.

(gestures to Nog)

It was negotiation that got us out of it. So I think we could all learn to be a little less quick on the trigger. And I'm making it an order, Lieutenant. Clear?

The magic words - Bowers pulls himself up to attention.

BOWERS

Clear, Commander.

RO

Good. However, to put your mind at ease... Nog?

NOG

Commander?

BOWERS

While we're in this session with Evik, I'd like you to take control of the tactical maintenance in the upper pylons. Alright?

NOG

Aye, sir.

Ro looks to Bowers - he grudgingly nods acknowledgement. Ro, Nog and Bowers all head towards the turbolift.

RO

Mister Candlewood, you have Ops.

CANDLEWOOD

(snort of derision)

Yeah, right. Good one, Commander.

RO  
(pauses, glares)  
I'm serious, John. I'm leaving you  
in command.

Candlewood looks at Ro. Turns to look behind him. Behind him the other way. Finally looks back at Ro with a frown... which gradually shifts into a sly smile.

CANDLEWOOD  
Aaaah - you almost got me.

RO  
John, this is not a joke. With me,  
Cenn, Bowers and Nog all out of  
Ops, you're the only senior staff  
on duty. So you're in charge.

CANDLEWOOD  
But -

RO  
It's called the chain of command,  
you might have heard of it?

Ro walks off to join the others on the waiting turbolift. Stunned, Candlewood turns to watch them go.

Ro shakes her head at how exhausting Candlewood is. Nog gives him a nervous thumbs-up of encouragement. Bowers glowers, not happy about anything that just happened.

Then the turbolift takes them away. Candlewood turns to look back at Ops - a suddenly enormous expanse of junior crew and technological marvels that he is responsible for.

CUT TO:

**6    INT. DS9 - WARDROOM**

Major Cenn, Doctor Bashir and Lieutenant Bowers have just left the classroom. Ro turns to Lt Cmdr Evik...

RO  
Well, this was your show. How do  
you think they did?

EVIK

I think they grasp the basics. I may have touched a nerve with the scenario, however. Of course, practising in a controlled room and facing a real live situation are quite different things. But with a few more sessions, I think they'll be safe to release into the wild, so to speak.

RO

At least those three are actual grown-ups. It's the other three children I'm worried about.

CUT TO:

**7 INT. DS9 - ETHRAKOIS' SHOP**

One of Pif's young puppies, BIF, sits on the deck with tail thumping, looking up eagerly.

BIF

Hi!

MRS ETHRAKOI, the divorced alien woman who co-runs this shop, pauses her task of refilling shelves and looks down at the adorable puppy. She bends down to talk to him.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Well howdy, lil darlin'. What's a sweet thang like you doing on the Promenade all by your lonesome?

Bif launches into a well-rehearsed, perfectly recited spiel in his tiny, cute little voice.

BIF

Good afternoon, ma'am. My name is Bifto Eoba, and my daddy is...

(trouble with  
the big words)

Ambassador Quark's met... his metra... his doorman.

MRS ETHRAKOI  
He sure is, darlin'.

BIF  
My daddy says it's time all us  
puppies start to learn a trade -  
when we're not in school, anyway.

MRS ETHRAKOI  
You askin' for a job?

BIF  
If you have an opening, ma'am, I'd  
love the opportunity to apply for  
it. I promise I'll work hard.

MRS ETHRAKOI  
Well, ain't you just the sweetest  
thang that ever did? I seen yo  
daddy workin' at the bar. And yo  
entire family got the charm gene,  
ain't that right?

Bif smiles wide, his tail thumping and spines erect.

MRS ETHRAKOI  
You know? I gotta fill these damn  
shelves, and that means I ain't  
got time to chat up folks out on  
the Promenade and get 'em in the  
door. You work that charm for me,  
you got yo'self a job, darlin'.

Bif YIPS excitedly, tail thumping harder than ever.

MRS ETHRAKOI  
C'mon, I'll get you set up.

Bif follows Mrs Ethrakoi into the shop, past displays of  
shot glasses, figurines, souvenirs and memorabilia.

Slouched behind the cash register is MR ETHRAKOI, the Mrs's  
ex-husband. The male alien looks up from his magazine, and  
notices little Bif trotting after his ex-wife.

MR ETHRAKOI

The hell is this?

MRS ETHRAKOI

The kid needs a job. You remember those, jackass? That's where you get up off'a yo fat ass once in a while and do sump'n.

MR ETHRAKOI

If I wanted another mouth to feed, I'd-a given you children. But you was too ugly fo that, weren't ya?

MRS ETHRAKOI

Maybe if you moved yo fat ass off that chair more than once a month, I wouldn' have ta hire this sweet thang to get some damn customers while I do all the damn work.

MR ETHRAKOI

And maybe if you ain't so damn ugly, you ain't be chasin' away the few customers we got.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Screw you, jackass.

With that, Mrs Ethrakoi stomps on towards the store rooms at the back, while her ex-husband goes back to reading his magazine. Little Bif, who watched the entire exchange, begins to worry about what he has walked into...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO**

FADE IN

**8 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (UPPER LEVEL)**

A Bajoran MAN and WOMAN stand in front of one of the large oval windows, having a spirited discussion. The Woman is rummaging in her travelling bag.

WOMAN

I'm telling you, I don't have them.

MAN

Then where the hell are they?

WOMAN

If I knew that, I wouldn't be searching for them, would I?

MAN

It was your job to look after them.

WOMAN

Look, I know, okay? You yelling at me isn't going to help.

CANDLEWOOD (o.s.)

Excuse me! Anything I can do?

Caught off guard, the Man and Woman turn to look to see that Candlewood has approached them, smiling wide.

WOMAN

I beg your pardon?

CANDLEWOOD

I happened to be passing by and I noticed you seemed to be having problems. I was just wondering if there's anything I can do to help.

MAN

It's under control, thank you.

CANDLEWOOD

I am the chief science officer of  
the station, I may be able to -

MAN

Thank you. We're fine.

ACROSS the Promenade, Ro and Evik sit at a table outside  
Quark's bar, warily watching Candlewood's progress.

Back over by the window...

WOMAN

We seem to have lost our tickets  
for the shuttle back to Bajor.

MAN

You've lost them.

CANDLEWOOD

Have you made a report to station  
security?

MEN

We don't need station security,  
she's just absent-minded.

CANDLEWOOD

Oh, I'm sure that's not true. She  
looks perfectly sensible to me.

WOMAN

Thank you.

MAN

Are you hitting on my wife?

CANDLEWOOD

Ha! Obviously not, that's silly.

By their faces, that clearly just made it worse.

Across the Promenade, Ro face-palms.

By the window, Candlewood is starting to sweat.

CANDLEWOOD

I just mean, I have no interest in your wife that way.

WOMAN

So you're saying I'm ugly now?

CANDLEWOOD

What? No, of course I'm not saying that. I was just -

MAN

What the hell business is it of yours anyway? Why are you even talking to us?

Candlewood looks back and forth between them, unsure how he got in this mess. He steps towards the large oval window...

CANDLEWOOD

Excuse me a moment.

Candlewood OPENS the window, swinging it wide on a hidden hinge. He steps over the window sill and OUT into open space. He calmly closes the window behind him, and as the confused Bajoran couple watch, Candlewood drifts away into the darkness of space, politely waving them goodbye.

### **FLASH**

Candlewood stands where he was, horrified at the situation he got himself in, as the Bajorans glare at him.

Suddenly his combadge BEEPS. He taps it gratefully.

RO (comm)

Ro to Candlewood. Report to Ops immediately.

CANDLEWOOD

On my way, Commander.

(taps to close)

I'm sorry, I have to...

Nothing to say, so Candlewood just scuttles away in shame.

Across the Promenade, Evik tries to comfort Ro.

EVIK

It's okay. It takes some people a little longer to learn.

RO

How to act like a normal sentient life-form? Yeah. I wonder if Nog and Tenmei are doing any better.

By her expression, she doubts it.

**9 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE (LOWER LEVEL)**

Nog and TENMEI stroll along, looking for people to help.

TENMEI

I wonder if John's got himself punched yet.

NOG

He can't help it, it's not easy for some people.

TENMEI

You took to it smoothly enough.

NOG

(shrug)

It's no different from standard Ferengi negotiation techniques. You start from the universal truth that every person has something someone else wants. It's just a matter of knowing what. Any two people can find an understanding, you just facilitate it.

TENMEI

And then take a percentage of the profits.

NOG

Obviously.

BIF

Hi!

They have reached the Ethrakois' shop, where little Bif sits outside with a big grin and a thwacking tail. Nog instinctively cringes back, but Tenmei is delighted.

TENMEI

Bif! What are you doing here?

BIF

I work here! Would you like to come in and spend some money?

TENMEI

Ha! Can't fault your honesty. I'd love to. Come on, Nog!

NOG

(gulp)

Do we have to?

TENMEI

Aw, who could say no to that adorable little face?

Tenmei enters the shop, with Nog reluctantly following.

**10 INT. DS9 - ETHRAKOIS' SHOP**

Tenmei and Nog browse the shelves - they are the only customers in there. Bif waits helpfully nearby.

BIF

Is there anything specific you're looking for?

TENMEI

Actually, now that you ask, I was looking for something for the coffee table in my quarters.

BIF

Right this way!

Mrs Ethrakoi emerges from the store rooms at the back.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Well hello, darlins. My new hire  
earnin' his keep, ah see!

TENMEI

He certainly is! In fact, I think  
this -

(picks up thingy)  
- would look just lovely on my  
coffee table.

BIF

Can I work the register? Can I,  
can I?

MRS ETHRAKOI

(indulgent)  
Oh okay. Just be careful.

BIF

Yes!

Bif trots excitedly over to the register. Tenmei follows  
smiling at his eagerness, while Nog keeps his distance.

Bif JUMPS up onto the seat in front of the register,  
balances precariously on his hind legs while his front paws  
reach towards the controls. He taps one button...

...and the cash tray SHOOTs out at top speed, throwing the  
poor hapless puppy across the room where he CRASHES into a  
shelf of things and to the floor. Tenmei gasps in worry...

BIF (o.s.)

(from behind  
register)

I'm okay! I'm good!

Tenmei smiles in relief, but then Mr Ethrakoi comes  
stomping out of the back room...

MR ETHRAKOI

The hell was that damn noise?!

MRS ETHRAKOI

Don't worry about it. It's just the kid learnin' his way round the register. Go back to sleep.

MR ETHRAKOI

That furry lil' frelnik breakin' my damn shop?

MRS ETHRAKOI

He just made us the first sale we got all day, jackass. Meanwhile you passed out in the back like the fat lump o' useless y'are.

MR ETHRAKOI

You better shut yo damn face, woman, fore I shut it for ya.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Screw you, jackass.

Not wanting to get in the middle of this, Tenmei just hands over her credit chip to Mrs Ethrakoi, who scans it into the system and hands it back. Tenmei picks up her purchase.

TENMEI

Come on Nog, let's go.

Tenmei drags Nog with her back out of the store and onto...

**11 INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Nog and Tenmei pause outside the shop.

NOG

Why are we leaving? Isn't this what we're here to practise - resolving people's arguments?

TENMEI

I think this one is above our pay grade, Nog. That's a fight that's been going on for a long time. I'm just worried about Bif...

12 INT. DS9 - ETHRAKOIS' SHOP

Bif clambers back out from behind the register, shakes himself free of debris. Mrs Ethrakoi grabs a brush-and-dustpan and starts clearing up the mess from the crash.

BIF

Sorry, Mrs Ethrakoi.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Don't you worry about a thang,  
sweet thang.

MR ETHRAKOI

Damn should be worryin' about it.  
You bring that stoopid lil' thang  
in here, takin' money out'a mah  
pocket, and then he goes smashin'  
what he sponse'd to be sellin'.

MRS ETHRAKOI

(brandishes brush)

You too stoopid to notice how the  
only customers we had all day done  
scrammed the second you show yo  
fat ass around here? That's where  
yo money be goin' - out that door  
chased by yo ugly face.

MR ETHRAKOI

I'm warnin' you, woman.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Screw you, jackass.

She turns away to continue cleaning up.

Sneering his disgust, he approaches and KICKS her on the behind, knocking her sprawling to the deck with a CRASH.

She SEETHES, and in a moment of fury, grabs a glass paper-weight off a nearby shelf, turns and HURLS it at him.

The paper-weight HITS him right on the head, sending him to the deck and SMASHING more glass objects.

**13**    **INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Hearing the SMASH, Nog and Tenmei turn in worry...

**14**    **INT. DS9 - ETHRAKOIS' SHOP**

Shaking the cobwebs from his bloodied head, Mr Ethrakoi scrambles back to his feet, and advances in a BLIND RAGE on his ex-wife, who is still prone on the deck.

She sees the fury in his eyes, tries to back away...

He bends down towards her, raising his FIST to strike, and they disappear from view behind the cash register...

Little Bif has been watching all this, frozen in fear, tiny ears folded back, spines flat, tears in his eyes...

And as we stay on the poor terrified puppy, we hear Mr Ethrakoi PUNCH his ex-wife. She SCREAMS. He PUNCHES her again. She SCREAMS again. All hidden by the register, but the sounds are unmistakable... and continuing.

Tenmei and Nog RUSH back into the room, and seeing what is going on, Nog slaps his combadge.

NOG

Security and medical to the  
Ethrakois' shop, now! NOW!

Tenmei rushes to Mr Ethrakoi, grabs his arm and TWISTS it behind his back. He ROARS in frustrated fury.

Nog scoops little Bif off the deck and holds him safely to his chest, the tiny puppy quivering in fear as Mr Ethrakoi rages and Mrs Ethrakoi whimpers...

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE**

FADE IN

**14 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Mrs Ethrakoi lies on a bio-bed, sniffing away her tears as Bashir slowly, carefully passes a DERMAL REGENERATOR over her bruised, bloodied and swollen face. He speaks gently.

BASHIR

Mrs Ethrakoi... you can't go on  
like this.

She doesn't respond.

BASHIR

This is the third time I've healed  
your wounds. And this isn't even  
the worst time, is it?

She looks away, sniffles some more.

BASHIR

Mrs Ethrakoi... I don't want to  
pry where I'm not wanted. But as  
your doctor, I can't just stand by  
and let this continue.

MRS ETHRAKOI

You won't understand.

BASHIR

Maybe not. But that doesn't mean I  
can't listen. Doesn't mean I can't  
help. And my promise still counts  
- it doesn't leave this room.

She thinks about it for a moment, wipes the tears away.  
Finally she hauls herself up to sit sideways on the bed.

MRS ETHRAKOI

He used to love me. I'm sure he  
did. When we first got married,  
moved here, opened the shop...

BASHIR

I remember your first visit to the infirmary. I'm so sorry I couldn't save the baby.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Ain't yo fault, Doctor. He's the one who hit me.

BASHIR

And there's no excuse for that. You were right to divorce him.

MRS ETHRAKOI

And what did that get me? Ah get to sleep in peace once in a while. Still gotta face him every day.

BASHIR

Is there really no way you can get out of the business?

MRS ETHRAKOI

An' do what? That shop's my whole life. Ain't got no man, ain't got no children. Ain't gonna lose my livelihood too.

BASHIR

Sooner or later, it might be your livelihood or your life.

She nods silently. That already occurred to her.

MRS ETHRAKOI

I thought if I just stood up to him, gave back as good as I got... it wouldn't be so bad.

BASHIR

But that's not working, is it?

She shakes her head. No, it's not. Bashir gently reaches out to hold her hand in comfort... she lets him take it.

Mr Ethrakoi stands inside a cell, fists clenched and breath still heavy with rage. The forcefield buzzes over the cell. The blood and bruise is still on his head.

Outside the cell, Lt Cmdr Evik stands gazing at him, rather troubled by it all. How did this happen?

He turns away and heads back to the office.

**16**    **INT. DS9 - SECURITY OFFICE**

Evik re-enters the security office from the cells. Nog and Tenmei are waiting nervously.

TENMEI

Lieutenant Commander, I'm so sorry. I should never have left them alone.

EVIK

That's alright, Lieutenant. You had no way of knowing it would escalate to that extent.

TENMEI

But if we'd stayed, it might not have escalated at all.

EVIK

Lieutenant, you are not to blame for this situation. How's young Mister Eoba?

NOG

I took him back to the bar, his father's looking after him. The shop is closed for the day.

EVIK

Thank you, Nog.

RO (comm)

Ro to Evik - I'd like you to come to my office, please.

Evik hesitates - he has been waiting for this call.

EVIK

I'm on my way, Commander. If  
you'll excuse me, Lieutenants.

Evik walks out onto the Promenade, leaving Nog and Tenmei  
alone.

They look to the screens, which show Mr Ethrakoi...

**17 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE**

Ro is not happy.

RO

I want that man prosecuted, Mister  
Evik. Clapped in irons. Extradited  
back to his homeworld. Thrown into  
the damn sun.

Evik takes a deep breath.

EVIK

Commander... can we sit?

RO

I guess...

Evik leads them over to the couches, takes a seat. Ro picks  
up two mugs of coffee from the replicator, hands one to  
Evik, sits beside him.

EVIK

Mr Ethrakoi will be prosecuted, I  
assure you of that. Since we have  
witnesses, it's not a question of  
whether Mrs Ethrakoi presses the  
charges or not this time - charges  
will be pressed. But... I'm still  
hoping there's another way.

RO

What are you talking about?

EVIK

Commander - actually, may I call you Laren?

RO

We've known each other long enough, I guess. Sure.

EVIK

Alright, then. Laren... I truly, genuinely believe that the way to deal with these situations, with any situation, is with words. Not fists, not walls. Crime, in almost every case, is caused by imbalance of one kind or another. Somebody has something the other wants, feels something the other doesn't feel, believes something the other doesn't believe. If you can just resolve that imbalance, then you haven't just punished the crime, you've removed any reason for it to happen at all.

RO

It's an admirable idea, Nath. But is it realistic?

EVIK

I should hope so - isn't it the basis of the entire Federation? Look at the advances Earth has made, for example. Once unlimited power was discovered, replicators to make whatever you wanted... all inequalities were gone just like that. Problems that had troubled the planet for centuries - solved in a handful of years. Nobody wanted for anything anymore, so greed and jealousy disappeared...  
(shrug)  
...and with them almost all crime and injustice.

RO

I think it's a little more complex than that, Nath.

EVIK

Perhaps. But that's the goal. It's also a big part of why I wanted to join Starfleet, even before Bajor joined the Federation... because I admired its ideals. And by and large, it's achieved those ideals.

RO

Okay, answer me this. If you think greed and want are the source of all evil... how come you're such good friends with Quark?

Evik is surprised into a delighted BARK of a laugh.

EVIK

I honestly can't say. I suppose we just get along. I take him at face value, he takes me the same way. Plus... I've found that if you approach people with optimism, treat them as though they are a good person, with a good heart, they more often than not want to live up to the person you already believe them to be. They don't want to disappoint you. And the world becomes a better place.

RO

(smile)

Strange how two people who grew up in the same circumstances can come out of it with such opposite perspectives. I saw the pain, the starvation, the violence... and I only saw two options. Join in the fight, or run away. That's why I joined Starfleet - not because I admired them. But because I had nowhere else to go.

EVIK

Whereas I saw all the good things that came out of that horror. The people bonding in the face of adversity, surviving by any means necessary, still choosing love over hate even in such horrible conditions. It is possible. And I believe it might even be possible here. If I can just get Mister and Mrs Ethrakoi to sit down and talk to each other, if I can facilitate some kind of reconciliation, even after everything that's happened, isn't that a good thing?

RO

Is it, though? He beat his wife. Does the kind of man who can do that deserve any reconciliation?

EVIK

I know. I understand, I do. It's an almost impossibly difficult situation. But one's ideals mean nothing if one gives them up just when they are tested the most.

Ro sits back, sips her coffee. Evik has given her a lot to think about.

RO

When I ran away to Starfleet, I was lucky to find someone who believed in me. Someone who was prepared to give me a chance. It seems only right that I should pass on the favour.

EVIK

(relieved)

So you're going to let me try?

RO

You can try. I'd keep a tight hold on your expectations, though, if I

were you. They have to both want it... and even then there's no guarantee it'll work.

EVIK

I realise that, Commander. But it'll certainly never work if we don't even try.

With a deep breath, Evik gets to his feet.

EVIK

Thank you for the talk. I'll let you know how I get on.

Ro nods her understanding, so Evik places his coffee mug back in the replicator and heads back out to Ops.

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT THREE**

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

**18** INT. DS9 - WARDROOM

Mr Ethrakoi stands from his chair in a fury, bellowing:

MR ETHRAKOI

I ain't gotta defend nothin'!

Sat next to him, Lt Cmdr Evik speaks calmly but firmly.

EVIK

Mister Ethrakoi. Please remain  
calm and take your seat.

Seething, Mr Ethrakoi does as he is told - for now.

Evik regathers his wits, looks between Mr Ethrakoi sat next to him, Mrs Ethrakoi across the conference table from them both, and Counsellor MATTHIAS sat next to Mrs Ethrakoi.

EVIK

This is an official criminal  
proceeding, Mister Ethrakoi. You  
could be deported back to Barolia  
if I or Commander Ro deem it  
justified. I'm trying to help you  
avoid that, so it is in your own  
interest to cooperate.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Oh, just deport the jackass. Got  
plenty o' warrants waitin' for ya  
back home, ain't that right?

MR ETHRAKOI

You shut yo damn face, woman.

EVIK

(warning)

Mister Ethrakoi.

(deep breath)

In fact, your wife is correct.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Ex wife.

EVIK

My apologies. But the pressing of charges allowed me to investigate your past on your homeworld, and there are several outstanding warrants for your arrest. Public drunkenness, affray, petty theft.

MR ETHRAKOI

Ain't nothin'.

EVIK

Not so. They may be comparatively minor offences in the grand scheme of things, but they do establish a pattern of behaviour.

MR ETHRAKOI

Damn, you love yo fancy words, huh?

MRS ETHRAKOI

He saying you a jackass, jackass.

EVIK

Mrs Ethrakoi, please. I also can't help notice the timing of these warrants - only weeks before your arrival on this station.

MRS ETHRAKOI

He runnin' from the law, ain't he?

EVIK

With, if I may say, Mrs Ethrakoi, your apparent complicity.

MRS ETHRAKOI

We was young and in love. I guess I liked the bad boys back then. Thought we could start over somewhere new.

EVIK

And somewhere with no extradition  
treaty with Barolia.

Mrs Ethrakoi shrugs, admitting it. Matthias speaks up...

MATTHIAS

Mister and Mrs Ethrakoi, if you  
were so in love then, so much so  
that you would leave your  
homeworld and travel across the  
Alpha Quadrant for a new start  
together... what went wrong?

MR ETHRAKOI

You heard how she talks to me.  
Woman always callin' me fat and  
lazy and jackass.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Just sayin' how it is.

MATTHIAS

Words, however hurtful, are one  
thing, Mister Ethrakoi. Fists are  
quite another. But my point is,  
you loved each other once.

A moment of quiet. The Barolians look at each other...

MRS ETHRAKOI

Nope. Ain't nothin' o' that left  
now. Not since the bastard beat me  
and killed my child.

EVIK

He... what?

MRS ETHRAKOI

I told him I was pregnant. We was  
gonna have a baby. He beat me so  
hard... the baby died inside me.

Evik has to pause to process that. He is genuinely shaken  
and has no idea how to react to such news. Matthias  
stretches a hand across the table to hold Mrs Ethrakoi's.

MR ETHRAKOI

I told you I didn't want no damn baby. But you went ahead anyway.

At this, Evik, looks up in astonishment.

EVIK

Mister Ethrakoi... are you trying to actually justify the murder of your own unborn child?

Mr Ethrakoi has the decency to blink a couple of times... but he cannot back down.

MR ETHRAKOI

Damn woman should'a shut her damn face and done as she was told.

Evik has to pause again. This is shaking his entire world view. Also shaken, Matthias tries to fill the void.

MATTHIAS

Mrs Ethrakoi... could you try to explain for us how you felt when that happened? If you could put your feelings into words, what would they be?

Mrs Ethrakoi gathers herself, looks across the table at her defiant ex-husband.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Betrayal. Man I loved, man I trusted... he hurt me so bad I couldn't barely breathe. Scared to even look at him.

EVIK

Mrs Ethrakoi... I'm so sorry. I had no idea.

MR ETHRAKOI

(scoff)

Ain't you the chief of security around here? Y'ought'a know.

EVIK

(tensing)

The first day I arrived on this station, Mister Ethrakoi, you were in a cell, arrested for breaking into your ex-wife's quarters. I read your station record then, including your wife's visit to the Infirmary. Or should I say, her first visit. But the extent of her injuries was not included in that report. I was always curious why you never chose to press charges then, Mrs Ethrakoi.

MRS ETHRAKOI

I told ya - I was scared.

(at her ex-husband)

I ain't scared no mo, jackass.

'Sides, I handled it mah own way.

MATTHIAS

That's when you filed for divorce?

MRS ETHRAKOI

Ain't you? If you woke up in the hospital with a dead baby inside you, and you realised the man you married, all the little things you let pass 'cause you love him, they ain't the exception, they the rule - ain't you do the same?

Matthias doesn't answer that - she can't imagine her own husband ever doing something so horrible. A new tack...

MATTHIAS

And Mister Ethrakoi... how do you respond to your ex-wife telling you how you made her feel?

MR ETHRAKOI

Don't matter! Woman embarrassed me. Divorcin' me like that - y'aint do that!

EVIK

So, just to be clear, your main concern at the fact that your wife saw fit to divorce you is not what you might have done to cause that, but that the divorce might cause you to lose face?

MATTHIAS

(devil's advocate)

To be fair, Commander, that is consistent with Barolian culture. Divorce is an extremely rare and very shameful thing to them.

Evik gets up from his seat - breaking his own instructions from earlier - and turns away. He needs to step away from this for a moment to catch his breath and keep his temper.

After a moment, he turns back and approaches the table.

EVIK

My wish in all of this has been to get to the root of the issues between you, and resolve them so that you might live together in peace. I must say, you are making that a rather challenging task.

(draws himself up)

But it is still a worthy goal. And I have to believe you think so too. Even after the divorce, you work together, you run that shop together. Surely that signifies a desire to remain close in some way, to resolve your differences.

MRS ETHRAKOI

You think I wanna walk into that shop and see his face every day, after what he did to me?

EVIK

Then why do you stay?

MRS ETHRAKOI

Cause I ain't the one who ought'a leave! It's mah shop, I put all mah savin's into it, I'm the one who does all the damn work, and I ain't done nothin' wrong!

MR ETHRAKOI

It's mah shop too, woman! I put just as much money into it as you did, and I ain't lettin' you take it all from me after you embarrass me like that!

MRS ETHRAKOI

Yeah, and if you leave you ain't got nowhere to go but back home and straight into a Barolian prison, ain't that right?

MR ETHRAKOI

(stands, angry)

I ain't goin' to no damn prison for you, bitch!

Like a shot, Evik's HAND is around Mr Ethrakoi's THROAT, and the Barolian is LIFTED an inch off the floor. Evik is in an almost mindless fury, acting on pure instinct.

Matthias shoots to her feet in alarm...

MATTHIAS

Lieutenant Commander!

Evik comes at least partly to his senses and lets go of Mr Ethrakoi's throat.

But the moment he steps back, the Barolian man swings a PUNCH into Evik's face in retaliation. Evik stumbles back. Matthias and Mrs Ethrakoi YELP in surprise.

Evik takes a moment to reorient, coming back at Mr Ethrakoi with a look of steely determination.

Mr Ethrakoi begins to realise he may have crossed a line here, but he is still incapable of backing down.

EVIK

(eyes on Mr E)

Counsellor Matthias... please take Mrs Ethrakoi back to the security office. I'm also going to need a couple of deputies.

Worried about what's about to happen, Matthias does as he asks. She takes Mrs Ethrakoi's arm and gently leads her to the door, exiting the room and leaving the two men alone.

EVIK

Mister Ethrakoi...

Before he can continue, the Barolian goes on the offensive. He comes at Evik with another PUNCH...

...and Evik avoids it effortlessly, stepping aside and SHOVING Ethrakoi until he collapses over the table.

Ethrakoi turns and attacks again with a wild, uncoordinated PUNCH towards Evik's head...

...Evik grabs the fist in mid-air, TWISTS Ethrakoi's arm behind his back and WRENCHES it right up, immobilising him.

Ethrakoi SCREAMS - Evik takes pity and lets go. Ethrakoi takes advantage and PUNCHes Evik again, successfully now.

Evik has had enough - this ends NOW. Gritting his teeth, he aims a series of lightning-speed PUNCHes right at the Barolian's face - BAM BAM BAM. Ethrakoi hits the deck.

Catching his breath, Evik reaches down, grabs the dazed and beaten Barolian, hauls him upright with his arm twisted behind him again, and presses him against the bulkhead.

...and this is where the entering SECURITY OFFICERS find them. Evik acknowledges their arrival with a nod, and they stay where they are - he clearly has this under control.

Evik keeps Ethrakoi pinned hard against the bulkhead. There is absolutely no sense that the Barolian will get free, no matter how much he struggles. Evik speaks calm and low...

EVIK

I must apologise, Mister Ethrakoi. I believe that if I have to use force, then I've already failed in my duty. As a peacekeeper, I should have been able to resolve this situation before it went so far. So I apologise for my failure to persuade you from this path.

(pause)

But this is what people seem to misunderstand about me. They think that a man who believes in peace is not capable of using force. I assure you that's not true. Now... do I continue to demonstrate that, or are you going to - as the humans say - "come quietly"?

Reluctantly, Ethrakoi nods his acquiescence. Evik turns to his officers and nods them over - they come and take hold of the Barolian man by both arms, marching him to the door.

Evik watches them go... then collapses back into his seat at the table, head in his hands, disgusted with himself.

FADE OUT

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE**

FADE IN

**19 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE**

Standard establishing shot...

**20 INT. DS9 - COMMANDER'S OFFICE**

Ro looks at the padd in her hand, then back up at Evik.

RO

What the hell is this?

Evik stands before her desk, at attention and eyes straight ahead, hands clasped behind his back.

EVIK

I submit myself for discipline,  
Commander. I used force against a  
prisoner under my own protection.  
That is utterly inexcusable.

RO

(sigh)

Nath... at ease.

(he doesn't)

That's an order. Take a seat.

Reluctantly, Evik does relax a little, and takes the seat across from Ro's.

RO

I read the counsellor's report.  
She said Ethrakoi attacked you.

EVIK

That's true, he did. But only  
after I attacked him first.

RO

...you did?

EVIK

I'm a fraud, Commander. That much is clear to me now. For all my high ideals and promises of peace, the moment they are tested I revert to the same base brutality that I rail against in others.

RO

So what you're saying is... you're a normal person.

EVIK

Violence is not normal. It cannot be allowed to become normal.

RO

Every living thing has a capacity for it, Nath. I'd congratulate you on having lasted this long without it, actually.

EVIK

No. For years I've studied police procedures and discipline. I read about so-called police brutality, and I could hardly believe such a thing was possible. And as for domestic violence.... So now, I've betrayed everything I believe in. There must be consequences.

(beat)

I therefore request that you discipline me, Commander. A formal reprimand. Demotion. Perhaps even a court-martial. I couldn't live with myself otherwise.

RO

I'm not going to do that, Nath.

EVIK

Commander -

RO

No. Look, Nath - you're right. You do have extremely high principles.

Just because you weren't able to fully live up to them one time, in some extreme circumstances where by the sound of it I would have done a lot worse, I won't let you throw your career away in shame. If it salves your conscience, then I'll place a reprimand on your record and order you to attend counselling. But I'm not going to demote you or court-martial you... I need you too much.

Evik wants to keep fighting... but maybe she's right.

EVIK

Thank you, Commander.

RO

Okay, good. Now, I've spoken with the Barolian Ambassador - he's on the station to let Minister Fandor persuade him to break their trade agreements with the Romulans and come over to us. And he was quite happy to hear that we could hand over an unapprehended criminal with outstanding arrest warrants.

EVIK

You mean he's going to take Mister Ethrakoi back to Barolia with him?

RO

We may not have an extradition treaty with them, but now that Ethrakoi's been arrested and charged with a full felony, not just a B-and-E misdemeanour, we have the grounds to deport him back to his homeworld.

Evik takes a deep breath, absorbing that.

EVIK

That's... that's good.

RO

Yes it is. Mister Ethrakoi gets the punishment he deserves, and Mrs Ethrakoi gets to take full control of the shop and move on with her life. And you... you need to do the same, Mister Evik.

Evik sits there - can he do that?

**21    INT. DS9 - PROMENADE**

Nog, Tenmei and Candlewood stroll along the Promenade, Nog sucking happily on a jumja stick.

NOG

Took me forever to get the little bits of green fur off my uniform. In the end I just put the whole thing in the replicator and let it make me a new one.

CANDLEWOOD

Oh come on, Nog. That's going a bit far, isn't it?

NOG

You didn't see how the little thing was shedding all over me.

TENMEI

Well I thought it was sweet. Your first instinct in a difficult situation was to look after the frightened child.

CANDLEWOOD

Aww... you couldn't help yourself, Nog. You're just too nice.

NOG

Speaking of can't help yourself, you never said how your first stint commanding Ops went.

TENMEI  
Oh, let me guess.

CUT TO:

**22**    **INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Ops is in utter chaos.

One ensign is busy THROTTLING a second. A third kneels on the deck, CRYING for no apparent reason.

A fourth is just a pair of legs DANGLING out of a high-up computer console and desperately calling for HELP.

The main Ops table is ON FIRE, and Candlewood is uselessly squirting a fire extinguisher at it, while more ensigns run back and forth behind him, chasing a flying CAMERA DRONE.

CUT TO:

**23**    **BACK TO SCENE**

CANDLEWOOD  
(pouting)  
No.  
(straightens uniform)  
In fact it was a perfectly calm  
and pleasant afternoon, thank you  
very much.

CUT TO:

**24**    **INT. DS9 - MAIN OPS CENTRE**

Candlewood sits at his science station, looking out over the junior crew staffing Ops...

...and it has the same calm, sunny and sweet, Disney-like sheen that the Promenade did in Scene 3. Full of peaceful, friendly people who are all perfectly happy.

CUT TO:

25 **BACK TO SCENE**

CANDLEWOOD

Actually I pretty much just kept my head down and kept working, and let everyone else do the same.

NOG

That's actually the right thing to do. They all know what their job is, so let them do it. You're just there to answer questions and stay out of their way.

CANDLEWOOD

Well in that case, I'm a natural.

By now they have reached the Ethrakois' shop again. Little puppy Bif is back sitting in the open doorway, spines erect and tail thumping away.

BIF

Hi!

Nog cringes back again, but Tenmei grins while Candlewood leans down and scratches behind the puppy's ears.

TENMEI

Hi, Bif! How's things?

BIF

Things are very good, thank you, Lieutenant. Would you like to come into the shop? We have some exciting new deliveries!

TENMEI

I'd love to. Come on, guys!

NOG  
(mutter)  
Do we have to...?

Tenmei and Candlewood follow Bif into the shop, with Nog grudgingly following behind...

**26 INT. DS9 - ETHRAKOIS' SHOP**

They enter the shop to find it PACKED with customers, a mix of officers and civilians, all freely browsing the shelves.

Mrs Ethrakoi herself is at the register, busily ringing up one purchase after another. She has never looked happier, and cheerily waves as she recognises the new customers.

MRS ETHRAKOI  
Well hello, darlins! How y'all doin' this faaahn afternoon?

TENMEI  
(wide grin)  
We're doing just fine, thank you Mrs Ethrakoi.

MRS ETHRAKOI  
(playful finger-wag)  
Awww honey - we ain't sayin' that name round these parts no mo. You call me Bissenna, ya hear?

TENMEI  
Loud and clear, ma'am.

Meanwhile Candlewood has been browsing the shelves. He has picked up a candlestick and is checking it over...

CANDLEWOOD  
Hey Prynn! What do you think of this for my windowsill?

TENMEI  
I thought you already had a candlestick on your windowsill?

CANDLEWOOD

I did. It kind of... got broken.

A moment... then Prynn rolls her eyes and Candlewood grins.

TENMEI

Fine. Go ahead.

Meanwhile Bif has clambered up onto the register counter. Mrs Ethrakoi picks him up and holds him to her chest. Tenmei sees this, smiles sadly. Nog cringes.

TENMEI

How are you doing, really? Is everything okay?

Mrs Ethrakoi looks down at the tiny puppy cradled on her chest. She strokes his furry little head, gazing wistfully.

MRS ETHRAKOI

Not everything. But enough to be goin' on.

Candlewood arrives with his purchase.

CANDLEWOOD

Hi! I'd like to buy this, please.

BIF

Can I work the register? Can I, can I?

MRS ETHRAKOI

(indulgent)

Oh okay. Just be careful.

BIF

Yes!

Mrs Ethrakoi places the puppy gently down on the chair in front of the register, and steps back out of the way.

Bif balances precariously on his hind legs while his front paws reach towards the controls. He taps one button...

...and the cash tray SHOOTs out at top speed, throwing the poor hapless puppy across the room where he CRASHES into a shelf of things and to the floor.

Tenmei and Candlewood gasp in worry...

BIF (o.s.)  
(from behind  
register)  
I'm okay! I'm good!

BLACK OUT

**END OF SHOW**