

**Disclaimer: I own nothing related to or part of Star Trek.**

## **The Adventures of Augment Gothic**

### **Chapter 31**

#### **Holosuite. Deep Space Nine**

Jadzia Dax moved slowly and carefully through the holosuite's simulated cave, trying to keep her steps as quiet as possible. Her long dark brown hair, normally arranged in an exceedingly neat ponytail, was loose and tousled, wet with sweat, from the strenuous workout she was getting today. Her dark blue leotard clung flatteringly to her slender toned body. Beads of perspiration, which had formed on her brow, were now running down the side of her face, and she was forced to wipe her face on the back of her sleeve just to keep her vision clear.

It was then that she thought she heard a small sound coming from just around the next corner. She lifted her Klingon blade with both hands, just as a large form leapt from behind the corner, abandoning all pretense of stealth. Just as she'd expected, it was Gothic, the Bajoran militia general and her current *enemy*.

He swung his sword to attack and Dax blocked it expertly with her bat'leth, a blade that she was intimately familiar with from her previous life as Curzon Dax. If any veteran Klingon warriors, with virtually any experience wielding blades, had been watching at that moment, they would have quickly spotted that the general lacked the practical experience that the Trill had fighting against another blade user. What the general lacked in experience, however, he more than made up for in superior strength, speed, and stamina, three advantages that could bridge most gaps in skill, mastery, and experience. It would also be clear to them that his improvement curve was steep, seemingly learning instantly from every clash and engagement, soaking up her every dirty trick and tactic that Jadzia used like a dry sponge. From a technical perspective, the man's form was flawless—he'd obviously spent a great deal of time learning from holographic trainers—but it was also obvious that he had had very little experience fighting blade-to-blade with another skilled (live) swordsman.

This deathmatch didn't last all that long, but while it did, there was a furious exchange of blows, their blades ringing out shrilly each time they met, both of them treating the fight as if it were real, not holding back at all when it came to delivering so called 'killing blows.' Of course, both of the combatants knew that they couldn't *really* kill each other with these holographic weapons, the holosuite's active safety protocols would prevent it, but they still blocked and exchanged blows and attempted to strike each other down with the same fervor and intensity that they would as if their lives *really were* in jeopardy.

With little warning, Dax felt the General hook his foot behind her ankle coupled with a simultaneous push and twist in the opposing direction with his sword. Before she could regain her footing, she found herself falling hard to the unforgiving rock floor of the simulated cave. With the speed of a snake striking its prey, Gothic had somehow managed to stick his leg in between hers during the last exchange of blows and then he'd pulled her foot forward with his, disrupting her balance and causing her to fall hard to the ground.

Somewhat dazed at the hard landing, Dax looked up at the holographic simulation of Gothic's unique sword as it gently touched her neck, *thankfully*, with the antiproton edge absent. Even a small touch with the antiproton edge activated would have likely partially decapitated her and led to her bleeding out shortly thereafter. Gothic was an extremely skilled inventor and he'd made his sword just as deadly as he was. This round, like her life would have been if this fight had been real, was over, so she surrendered in good sport.

"Computer, towel," commanded Dax aloud, as she accepted Gothic's helping hand to get to her feet.

A small, white, fluffy towel appeared on a nearby rock which she picked up and used to mop the sweat off her face and neck.

"Good workout," she praised her sparring partner with a smile. "That move, what was that?"

"It was a foot sweep, of a sort, though the technique was a bit of fusion of several moves from a few martial arts on Earth, adapted for use with a sword in one hand." Gothic looked pleased with himself. "Your footwork needs to be adapted," Gothic advised/warned, looking serious now.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I'm assuming that much of your experience wielding a blade, especially a bat'leth, came from a previous host, Curzon, most likely, right?" Gothic asked.

"That's right," she slowly responded, getting an inkling as to where this was going.

"In the heat of prolonged battle, I think you're falling back unconsciously on old habits, old memories, old muscle memory, maybe, if that seemingly translates from one host to another. Not sure how that works for you guys. Regardless, the bottom line is that you're no longer a much larger man named Curzon anymore, you're Jadzia, a woman now, with a much different center of gravity and your footwork and form needs to reflect that at all times," the former freedom fighter turned General in the Bajoran Militia explained.

"Damn, I will have to work on that," she thought, looking thoughtful. "I didn't realize."

"I figured. Once I spotted the anomaly in your otherwise perfect footwork and form, it was easy to direct the fight where I needed it to knock you off balance, even while holding back overall."

Jadzia wasn't really offended upon hearing that, not with him. As an Augment, with his extreme level of genetic enhancements, she knew very well that if the General wanted to end the match more quickly than he could have. And that was ignoring how his actual blade, rather than the watered-down holographic facsimile today, was capable of activating an antiproton edge, and would have cut right through her bat'leth (and her) had this been a real battle. No, using his enhanced physiology or superior sword to end the battle quickly would have ultimately defeated the entire point of this. This spar was more about exercise and honing their individual skills with a blade than anything else. Even while holding back significantly, his superior physiology bridged the gap in their skill levels all too easily, though each fight she could tell that he was

learning from her, benefitting from her past experience, getting better and better each clash, relying less and less on his overwhelming physical power to defeat her lifetimes of experience.

“Or maybe my big, *long*, hard sword was distracting you,” Gothic joked, looking around playfully, even subtly thrusting his hips a bit to emphasize how outlined his package was in those tight pants he was wearing. Oh, she’d noticed that, but it hadn’t distracted her.

"Oh, really??" she responded playfully, her tongue darting out to lick her lips. "You seemed a little distracted yourself. I think it was your, *sword*, that was distracted, looking for a *sheathe* in the middle of our fight."

She knew the sight of her in this outfit would distract any man, and many women. It hugged her curves beautifully and had become somewhat transparent due to the layer of perspiration that had formed on Jadzia's overheated body. It was a Risian design and had been purposely designed to become virtually transparent when wet.

"You wore that purposefully to get my attention," the human said with a devious smile. "Well, guess what, you got it, my dear."

He approached her slowly, like a great cat stalking its prey, and began to undo the fastener in the front of his trousers. Dax was surprised, normally she had to make her intentions very clear before Gothic responded so aggressively, so dominantly, like she wanted and loved. It was a very rare sexual partner that could successfully dominate her like Gothic could, rather than the other way around given her memories, but Gothic was one of those rare gems whose personality and power could overcome even her centuries of experience in the bedroom. This time he was taking the lead right from the start, demanding her submission. She hadn't actually intended to let things progress this far so soon, but she certainly wasn't saying no now.

She got on her knees at his unspoken command, while giving the militia officer another cheeky smile. Her eyes met his. When his large fleshy sword was out and in front her she wrapped her right hand around the base of his shaft and started pumping slowly, with a firm grip.

The Augment moaned as he felt the soft skin of Dax's hand pumping up and down on his hot, hard shaft. Soon he felt his knees weaken, one hand going to the cave wall for support the other threading through her hair to the back of her head, his hand pulling her head gently forward.

Dax's wonderful hand pumping suddenly stopped, and Gothic looked down at Jadzia's pretty face. She looked him right in the eye and opened her mouth wide, giving in to the relentless pressure of his hand on the back of her head urging her forward to engulf the head of his cock, and began sucking on it ravenously, her tongue swirling around the tip in fast loops. Dax had been both a man and a woman several times in her life, so she knew exactly how to expertly work a cock over.

Dax closed her eyes in bliss, delighting in her submission, and sucked harder, occasionally letting a muffled moan reach Gothic's ear. She did this on purpose knowing that it would arouse him even further.

While using one hand to keep the cock in her mouth steady, she used the other to touch herself. She started at her large breasts, kneading and rubbing each of them through the thin and wet leotard, then squeezing and pinching her nipples, hard, almost painfully. After that her hand slipped down her stomach, to the growing fire between her legs.

Once there her fingers got to work, pushing the clinging material to the side, as she once again called upon her several lifetimes of sexual experience to expertly pleasure herself. At the same time Dax continued to suck with unbridled enthusiasm, moving her head up and down, faster and faster, before she suddenly stopped, as Gothic shot his large load deep into Dax's mouth. Jadzia had correctly guessed that it was about to happen and she let the delicious cum fill her mouth before pulling away. Some of the man's seed spilled out of her mouth despite her best efforts to swallow it all.

Was Gothic's cum naturally this good tasting or was it another aspect of his genetic enhancements? She had no idea, but from past experience she knew that she'd be feeling *amazing* all day, that her physical recovery from such a strenuous workout would be much faster than was normal, and that her work would be noticeably better, making intuitive leaps with a frequency and predictability that was unnatural, yet traceable to the cause.

She had once excitedly mentioned this phenomenon to Gothic, but his visible discomfort, denials, and claims of ignorance had kept her from ever asking again. It was only her lifetimes of experience that allowed her to catch and understand the look in his eyes which suggested he knew more than he let on about the phenomenon, that let her see the intense fear lurking there. It was understandable, she supposed. Her multiple lifetimes of memories told her how dangerous the information could truly be given his unique situation, but the scientist in her couldn't help but want to know more about how it all worked and what the full effects of it were.

She'd taken scans of herself both before and after. In some ways, his cum was like a drug, a potent narcotic, but with no true addiction, or withdrawal symptoms, nor any other noticeable negative side effects. It was all positive effects, like it had given her body a temporary supercharge or boost. Or in genetic terms, had given her body a temporary glimpse of what the Trill body could be like in the distant future. If his semen had such a noticeable effect even when just ingested and broken down by the body, what about his blood? What could a direct injection of his blood into the bloodstream do? His blood's antibodies *had* been the key to easily defeating that engineered virus that had been unleashed on the station.

She had her suspicions and if even half of what she suspected was true, then Gothic's blood could be gram for gram thousands of times more valuable than liquid latinum. And since his blood was constantly replenished, it would be an endless source of wealth. People would kill, *had killed*, for far, far less. Gothic's other lovers had noticed the effects too, of course, how couldn't they? But they weren't scientists like her and didn't realize the full implications.

"Computer, a wet, warm towel," Jadzia ordered, once her mouth was empty and she had collected every stray bit of cum on her face to swallow.

A wet towel appeared in Dax's hand which she used to clean her face and neck. Then she began to sensuously strip out of her leotard so that she could apply the towel to other parts of her body. Gothic's eyes never left her, watching her like a hawk would its prey. The intensity of his gaze made her feel beautiful, desirable, and oh so wet.

"I've always noticed how men look at me," Dax said matter-of-factly, another of those small knowing smiles she was known for on her face, staring directly and intensely into his eyes. "It's a compliment, and I've never minded, especially when it's you."

Practically immediately, she was naked, and like always Gothic became rock hard again, which was exactly what Jadzia had wanted. As she'd found out first on Risa, an Augment like Gothic could be a demon in the bedroom and she had every intention of trying and *failing* to wear him out.

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As I got up off the soft, springy, and warm floor of the simulated cave—which Jadzia had vocally approved of after I had changed the simulation's environmental parameters mid thrust, balls deep, while I was banging her doggy style--I looked fondly over at Jadzia who was still on the ground. She was naked and panting in a way that could only be described as 'satisfied', slowly and sensually stretching like a contented cat, which was an incredibly erotic sight for me. Who knew that I, a former Star Trek nerd and soldier of no particular importance, would *ever* get the chance to fuck the beautiful and sensuous Jadzia Dax in real life, into a pleased stupor? To dominate her and use her pussy like my personal cock sleeve.

Unfortunately, I didn't have time to properly enjoy the afterglow of our fucking or otherwise try to turn Jadzia's pussy inside out by going for a vigorous round four. No, I had to go and get changed into my dress uniform before some visiting ambassadors arrived on the station. As the highest-ranking Bajoran Militia officer on the station and head of all off-world forces, it was part of my job to meet and greet with visiting dignitaries, especially at these early junctures. Mostly so that no one from the provisional government would have to. Sometimes it could even be fun and profitable to develop relationships with people like that, people with a bit of influence and power that could be called upon in the future for a small favor. That was the best-case scenario, of course, more often than not it was one of the less enjoyable aspects of my position. If they were sufficiently important or there was a sufficiently worthwhile upside to schmoozing them, the First Minister *might* make the trip to the station to greet them personally, but that was a substantial time commitment and Li Nalas was far more concerned with the practical concerns of rebuilding Bajor than politicking, politicking that may or may not have some practical value to Bajor in some undefined future. Luckily, or thankfully, his Resistance legend gave him the power to be successful despite not being as skilled a politician as would normally be required to reach such a high position.

"Well," said Dax quietly, while smiling up at me, obviously rather worn out. Her arm was resting behind her head and she was looking very happy with herself. I'd even call the look, content. I felt the same. "That was one hell of a good workout!"

I genuinely smiled at her. It had been a good work out, with a great blowjob just being the start. Life was very kind to me and my girls had worked their way into my heart. Jadzia wasn't one of my girls yet, not truly. I wasn't sure if she had considered or was even ready to make a commitment to me or anyone really, but we definitely enjoyed spending time with each other.

"The visiting ambassadors will be here in less than an hour," I reminded the Trill. "You need to get up, shower and go put on a dress uniform just like I do."

She didn't get up.

"I'm not sure I can move yet. *Somebody* did a number on my insides," she complained in a silly, whiny voice, her hand slowly sliding down to play with the folds of her pussy, knowing I was watching her. Her mischievous little smile told me all I needed to know.

This I gave some thought.

"I could go get Doctor Bashir," I mock threatened. "He'd certainly appreciate the view."

Jadzia didn't panic, but it was clear that she wasn't exactly keen on this idea.

"Don't you dare," she warned, giving me a gimlet eye.

I smiled my best devilish smile again.

"I wonder how he'd react to seeing you lying naked on the ground like that, covered in sweat, with my cum still leaking out of your *delicious*, well used *cunt*," I offered as if really curious. "Would he flip out and lose his mind, or would he try and play it cool? He's a bit of a man whore, so who knows; he might surprise us! Shall we find out?"

With great effort the beautiful Trill woman managed to grudgingly get to her feet, complaining all the while, and after getting dressed, as best she could, she began limping towards the door, sharing a gentle kiss with me along the way. I'd really done a number on her, and despite the minor discomfort that she was no doubt feeling at the moment, I knew that sooner or later she'd be back for more.

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### **Airlock. Deep Space Nine.**

I was so glad that I'd gotten to design my own uniform because the dress uniform for Starfleet officers and rank and file members of the Bajoran militia just looked so stupid. Mine made me look like an officer in a proper military. I even had a single medal pinned to my chest, the Bajoran Commendation medal, the first ever given by the Militia, given for my role in saving the lives of everyone onboard the station during that virus outbreak.

As the Militia had never given out any medals in its short existence, we were essentially creating everything from scratch, and I had put forth a design based on the Army Commendation Medal from my old world and time, which had a ribbon in the colors of Bajor, on which a hexagonal metal plate hung, with an ancient Bajoran ideograph for service/commendation depicted. As no

one had had a better idea, they simply accepted it and here I was, a General in an alien military wearing a formal dress uniform and a medal that I had personally designed...to honor myself.

Life was simply absurd sometimes.

Those thoughts were quickly pushed aside as I saw Commander Sisko, Doctor Bashir, and Major Kira approach the airlock with various looks of stoicism (Sisko), reluctant acceptance (Kira) and dread (Bashir) on their faces. Bahir had been assigned to the Ambassadors for their stay so his look made perfect sense. They took their sweet time getting here, seemingly waiting to the last possible moment, not that I blamed them their reluctance. A visit by a group of random Federation ambassadors to the station wasn't going to be a cause for celebration given how notoriously unpleasant such missions typically were. Especially not when they were coming due to the recent Hur'q attacks the quadrant had suffered. I could worry about *those* meetings later, for now I had to deal with the ambassadors' arrival on the station.

"You're cutting it close," I chided the officers with a mocking grin, Kira giving me the stink eye in response. She really was not a fan of these more ceremonial and diplomatic duties that came with rank.

The rest grimaced, but said nothing in response as the thick, circular airlock door was now rolling to the side, opening in that peculiar Cardassian manner, and guess who should step onto the station, but the sex cougar on two legs and force of nature that was Lwaxana Troi, who I'd last seen back on the *Enterprise* after we'd both been abducted by one of Quark's people. Like a fine wine she'd only gotten better with age.

Instead of greeting Commander Sisko, she turned immediately to me with a wide smile, probably instantly sensing that she couldn't read my thoughts.

"Oh, Gothic!" she greeted me happily, coming close to give me a kiss on each cheek. "It's so good to see you again, though being unable to hear your thoughts is just as jarring and exciting as before! I asked Deanna what you were up to the last time I was on the *Enterprise* and she told me that you were all the way out here in the middle of nowhere. What brought you to Bajor of all places?"

They talked about me? Well, that was kind of flattering. I suppose the single night of passion Deanna and I had shared, brought about by trauma, had likely weathered the test of time well.

"The vagaries of fate brought me to the Bajoran people. I felt called to help liberate them from their oppressors," I answered, glancing back at Kira. "After we succeeded in driving the Cardassians off the planet, they offered me a home and a purpose here."

"Well, then I'm glad that *fate* allowed our paths to cross again," she replied, looking happy.

"It's lovely to see you again, Ambassador. On behalf of the First Minister and the people of Bajor, I welcome you to the Bajoran sector and Deep Space 9. May the Prophets offer their wisdom and guidance to you as you do your important work," I formally greeted with a fond smile and a slight bow of my head, before my tone turned to a far more friendly and familiar one.

“Like a fine wine, you have only gotten more beautiful, and *sexy*, since the last time we saw each other.”

Sisko and Bashir looked shocked and scandalized at my words. Kira looked exasperated, like she often did when encountering my shenanigans. The Starfleet officers, who had looked prepared for an explosion, were shocked at Lwaxana laughing hard in response to my abrupt change from formal to familiar (with flirting.)

“Thank you for your greeting and welcome, Gothic, but it’s always Lwaxana for you,” she responded happily, between giggles. “I hope we’ll get a chance to see other before we’re forced to part once again.”

Sisko and the rest of the senior staff, seeing no harm was ultimately done, then extended their own formal greetings with the (in)famous Betazoid Ambassador.

While Sisko did his part, I turned my attention to the airlock where the other ambassadors in her party came into view, and a Vulcan ambassador started complaining about something or other. Where the logic in that was, who knew, but whatever.

Before I knew it, poor Julian was taking them all to their assigned quarters and I was left alone by the airlock wondering what to do next.

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### **Quark's Bar. Deep Space Nine.**

I often came to Quark's at the end of a long day. It was a great place to just sit back and watch people going about their lives on the station, civilian or otherwise. Many of the station’s personnel, both Starfleet and Militia, would often find their way to Quark’s after their shift ended for drinks, food, and/or companionship. Since I was an overachiever and a very social person at heart, I could do that while also working on something, like my latest holonovel or the design for some cool new tech I was designing or building. The end of the bar provided a great view of most of the bar and with a back to a wall I felt a little safer.

At the moment, I was working on the design for the next generation of omni-tools to be released in the next 2-5 years, long enough for the basic omni-tool design to hopefully catch on. Unlike the basic design, these were highly specialized designs meant for specific occupations. For example, I had an omni-tool design I was working on that was meant specifically for those providing medical services. Unlike the basic omni-tool, it had very sophisticated built-in scanners meant specifically for medical purposes, which could be used for advanced scans and diagnostics of a person's body. It could also work in tandem with a sensor glove I was designing to be worn on a humanoid hand, in which the palm and each finger had a different scanner technology built into it that wouldn’t otherwise fit in the omni-tool housing.

This was a huge advancement in technology and practical utility as this sensor glove could accomplish the same deep scans as many other larger pieces of technology, unmovable machines built into sickbays with dedicated power sources and finite space. My medical omni-tool, on the other hand, was all in one device, was portable and could be worn, and would feed its sensor



readings back into the omni-tool (and/or local computer) for analysis and holographic display. It would be ideal for medical triage in disasters or emergency situations where bed space in a traditional hospital or infirmary was limited. It would also be useful on colony worlds with limited resources or for anyone out in the field away from traditional medical services. At least, that was how I planned to market it in the future. Sometimes your customer could surprise you and find uses for and situations to use your product in that you never considered.

The sensor glove wasn't strictly necessary, but if you wanted more advanced or more exotic scans in the field, it was a Godsend. The tool's onboard database was filled with medical information the user could review as needed and its built-in micro-replicator contained the patterns for the most commonly used medical tools small enough to be replicated by the omni-tool, like a small crystal ampoule with pre-filled drugs and the injection technology found in hyposprays. An autoinjector with painkillers or other medications had been incredibly useful while out in the field in Afghanistan and I suspected the same would be true for this time, at least in emergencies or when traditional medical care was unavailable or impossible.

The medical omni-tool settings could be changed based on the user, from complete novice to world class doctor, which would change the way it presented information. For the novice or limited knowledge user, I'd shamelessly stolen procedures and instructions from the Federation's EMH programming to provide idiot-proof instructions on what to do in various situations to at least keep the patient alive.

This wasn't all just on paper either. A prototype medical omni-tool was already in the field in the hands of Julian Bashir, who happily agreed to be my field tester once I'd shown him what my device could do. So far, he was incredibly happy with it, and was keeping extensive notes on how I could improve the design based on his experience with it. Powering the micro-replicator reliably was still an ongoing issue using current Federation technology, unfortunately, and I had no desire to use my finite number of Collector power cells. Modern medical tools often had very high-power requirements to replicate. As a workaround, at least until I came up with a solution or solved the power issue, I used a lot of 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> century medical device designs which were much easier to produce, but were nearly as effective as the modern tools. Something was better than nothing, after all.

The specialized model for engineers was pretty similar, including the sensor glove, though obviously with more engineering-oriented scanning technologies, only a bit bigger as the replicator was designed to create commonly used tools and spare parts. Neela was my beta tester for the engineering omni-tool prototype. Ideally, Chief O'Brien would have been testing it as well, but I think he found out about his wife's past sexual relationship with me and he was not quite as friendly with me as Bashir was. Neela reported some longing looks sent her way when she'd used the prototype in front of him, so perhaps that would work itself out in time and he got over whatever butthurt he was feeling.

While further refining these designs, based on feedback from Bashir and Neela, I sipped my ice cold Romulan ale, ale which came from my private stock. I actually had a whole case of the really good stuff, a case that Quark kept for me alone in his store room. Wealth and influence

had its privileges and Quark was overeager these days to keep me happy given the money he stood to make from being my agent and the frequent holosuite bookings I made on behalf of the Militia. Not enough to give me free drinks, of course, that was the Ferengi version of *crazy talk*, but enough to keep a very good case of Romulan Ale on hand exclusively for me.

"Working on more omni-tool designs?" the bartender asked me nonchalantly, having come by and taken a seat. He was obviously curious about what I had in the design pipeline, given his stake in my success, but was likely fishing for information that he could sell if the opportunity presented itself. The Grand Nagus or someone in his entourage was a likely choice. In this case, I didn't really mind. Creating a buzz for the product was always a good idea, so was controlling the flow of information. His information gathering abilities and tendencies was something I was well acquainted with, as I was a frequent buyer of the latest whispers that made its way into his overly large ears.

Of course, it wasn't all impersonal intelligence gathering. He had a vested interest in the tools as he got a small percentage of the profits from sales, which were slowly ratcheting up as more and more people learned about the device. On the more prosperous planets, they could already replicate the basic model. The truly widespread distribution, however, had yet to begin. While Grand Nagus Zek had authorized the mass production and sale of the devices after our deal with each other was struck, the process had only just started. Tens of millions of the things still needed to be manufactured before distribution could begin in earnest.

"Yes," I answered. "I'm creating new specialized versions of the device meant for different professions, though I don't think they'll be released for another 2-5 years at least."

Quark nodded at that, not needing any further explanation. It would take time for people to learn about, accept, use, and come to rely on just the *basic* omni-tool in their daily life, the release of a specialized version of the device meant for specific professions was premature at best at this point. Of course, there were always early adopters, but that group was too small to truly pay the bills.

I let the bartender have a quick look at the padd.

"You know, there are plenty of businessmen like myself who could do with an omni-tool that lets them keep a close eye on the markets, both galactic, sector, and local, and their own individual accounts and investments," Quark said. "Perhaps you can make an omni-tool for people like me."

That wasn't such a bad idea and I had long ago written the software to monitor and maintain my own investments, I suppose it had never occurred to me to make some kind of omni-tool specifically for businesspeople/investors. The hardware would need to be customized in a way that I hadn't had to do on my personal omni-tool. My personal omni-tool was already overpowered in the extreme, both literally, via the Collector power cell, and with components, as I used several advanced alien technologies in its construction. I'd written the software to aggregate and synthesize all that incoming data to make it usable for the user. That meant a faster processor and larger data storage. I already had those hardware capabilities on my personal omni-tool so I had never designed something for this specific purpose with commonly available

components. Making real time trades and other account changes, like purchasing stocks, meant advanced encryption was required for the transmission.

"A business oriented omni-tool that keeps you linked to the various galactic markets in real time and that gives you real time access to your accounts and ledgers for information, advanced forecasting, to make trades, etc.," I mused aloud, now watching Quark intently to gauge his interest in such a specialized device. "Is there a market for that kind of specialized omni-tool? I guess I'm asking if even *you*, Quark, would pay a premium for that kind of capability?"

Quark looked shocked that I even asked the question, and was now looking at me like I had asked if the Ferengi liked profit.

"Gothic, I would sell my lobes for such a thing," Quark answered seriously, before glancing down at the omni-tool he was wearing. "I love my omni-tool. I sleep with it on! It's transformed my business! But it could do so much more! To have access to my bar's current financials at my fingertips, all day, every day. To be able to make changes in prices and menu items, to monitor my current inventory and purchase product only as needed. To be able to monitor my account and other investments. I assure you, there is a market for an omni-tool for businessmen. Every Ferengi on Ferenginar would buy one!"

Well, it seems like there was a market that I had entirely overlooked. Being the smartest guy in the room didn't mean I spotted every opportunity, it seems.

"It's very doable. I've written the software already to deal with my own investments and accounts. I would need to figure something out for the needs of a business owner like yourself," I explained. Quark was eagerly listening. "That omni-tool would probably need a faster processor, more storage capabilities, probably a stronger subspace transmitter to allow greater throughput of all that financial data and more robust encryption for the linkup to the local communications network, given financial information is going to be in the data stream."

A long-range subspace radio with a sufficiently long range was too big to fit in an omni-tool, which was why they were programmed to link to and use the traditional communication network of whatever city, colony, planet, ship, or station the user was on.

"The processing power and all that is probably easy for you to come up with. It'll be in convincing the customer that their financial data is secure, even wirelessly, that will be the real hurdle to getting people to buy," explained Quark. "The more valuable the data, the more it will attract thieves looking to intercept it to-"

He ended that sentence abruptly and started another when someone took a seat next to me.

"Just give it some thought," he advised earnestly.

"Thanks, Quark, you've given me food for thought, and nothing good is free," I said, setting a bar of latinum on the bar top. It was quickly snatched away with a smile and tucked inside the inner pocket of his customary vest. "Let's talk more about this soon to iron out the details."

I turned on my bar stool to regard Kira who had taken a seat next to me.

"Ah, Major Kira," Quark said with a smile. "What can I get for you?"

"Spring wine," she ordered tersely, never really coming to like Quark, which had always amused me as Quark always acted like he liked her.

Kira then turned to me and grinned, like something had amused her greatly.

"Poor Julian. Stuck babysitting a bunch of Ambassadors," Kira said, throwing a quick glance over her shoulder.

Doctor Bashir was looking distinctly uncomfortable as he tried to placate the Bolian, Vulcan, Andorian, and Betazoid Federation Ambassadors. These were heavy hitters too, the Ambassadors from the most powerful member planets of the Federation, each one of which had been around since its founding. The Betazoid Ambassador, Lwaxana Troi, was infamous among Trek fans, her episodes being the most memorable, hilarious, and mostly lighthearted in the TNG and DS9 era. She was an acquired taste, though, especially when she was in the mood to throw her weight around, acting extremely flamboyantly, to make people slightly uncomfortable or to try their patience. I had come to suspect, though, given her powerful telepathy, that it was all on purpose, an act she put on to gain an edge on those around her and assist in her duties. By acting like that she solicited thoughts that would tell her far more about the people she interacted with than if she acted like a serious, conservative, and dour Ambassador. Take someone out of their comfort zone and their thoughts likely provided a plethora of information she could use to gain a measure of those she interacted and negotiated with.

Thank Q and my patron that she couldn't read my thoughts.

This wasn't some random visit by some privileged VIPs playing tourist to see the wormhole open and assuage their curiosity like in the show, though. The purpose of their visit was both serious and important. Because of the recent Hur'q attacks the alpha quadrant powers were trying to put together a more formal and fleshed out mutual defense pact/treaty between the various powers. The existential threat that the Collectors represented had already demanded and seen some informal cooperation and information sharing, but this defense pact/agreement would officially allow and lay out the terms for, for instance, the military forces of one power to cross recognized borders in order to render aid and defend their neighbors from Hur'q attacks.

Ambassadors from the other major powers were already en route to Deep Space Nine, and rumor had it that even a couple of Gamma Quadrant races would be joining the talks, but given how limited contact was with the Gamma Quadrant races, well, that might just be rumor and nothing more. Although, that would explain why *this* station had been chosen for the site of the meeting. Even though I would be attending this meeting, since Bajor's defense from external threats was officially my responsibility, I didn't even know everyone that was coming. It was really hush hush and Bajor's military might, or lack thereof, didn't really merit being informed of every detail.

There was a sudden scream that resounded from the nearby Dabo table and it had startled even me as my attention had been fully on Kira. Doctor Bashir was now rushing towards the Betazoid Ambassador to see what the fuss was all about.

“Ambassador, what’s wrong?”

"Oh! Where is it? It's gone! It's gone!" Lwaxana exclaimed, while looking frantically around.

Bashir was almost equally as frantic at this turn of events and who could blame him? If he screwed up taking care of these Ambassadors, the alliance against the Hur'q could be put in jeopardy! Billions could die! Worlds could burn! Of course, that was complete bullshit, hyperbole meant to amuse me in the privacy of my thoughts, but Bashir’s career advancement would likely suffer a bit if he screwed up.

"What's gone, Madam Ambassador?" he asked, sounding concerned.

"My latinum hair brooch!" she shouted.

Bashir whirled towards the bar, anger in his voice.

"Quark!"

Even without super human hearing I wouldn't have missed a word of this because Lwaxana could *really* project her voice. Now I remembered this scene from the show.

Yet again I was in the middle of a canon scene and wondering what I should do, if *anything*. I could jump in and solve the problem, maybe earning myself some goodwill from Lwaxana, who I was already on good terms with, or I could let canon play out and have Odo jump in and find the criminal. Was it my duty to flip the script, as it were, in every situation?

That actually had me quite worried for a moment, as it reminded me of how my presence was likely disrupting canon events, even with the Prophets likely nudging things back on track in the background to protect Bajor. In canon, in the future, Odo was supposed to fall desperately in love with Kira and she in love with him. That was the sole reason he truly stayed on the station and refused to join the Founders and the Great Link during the Dominion War. His help, his very presence on the station, was instrumental in winning that war. Similar to my improving relationship with Dax, potentially making it unlikely that Worf and her will marry like they did in canon, my strong relationship with Kira might similarly make Odo and her unlikely to fall in love. What that might mean for the future, during the Dominion War, with Odo potentially returning to the Founders? Prophets only knew. Could we win without his help and presence? Could Section 31 still use him to infect the Founders and the Great Link with that deadly disease?

Fuck me, but this was getting overly complicated. Well, Odo and Lwaxana had a good thing briefly in the show, maybe I could do my best to fan those flames so that Troi could step in and fill the shoes of Kira, which meant that I should stay the fuck out of this little situation taking place in front of me and let Odo save the day.

"I was leaning across the table to pick up the dice again, something brushed against me and my goodness, I've been robbed!" she exclaimed.

Quark arrived at the dabo table at this point.

"What's the problem here?" he asked.

"Someone has stolen Ambassador Troi's latinum hair brooch," Bashir explained.

Quark looked annoyed.

"I'm sorry, but as the sign says, the establishment is not responsible for the loss of any personal items," he said.

"Sign? What sign?" the Ambassador asked in confusion.

Lwaxana looked around in vain for the sign.

"The one above the door," the bartender explained while vaguely pointing in the direction of the entrance and a very small sign written in his native language. Everyone comically turned to look at it and had to squint. I could read it just fine, but I was genetically enhanced to have superior visual acuity. Bashir likely could too, considering his own genetic status.

"You'd have to stand on a chair to read that!" Bashir complained.

"House rules. I'm very sorry. Have a nice day," Quark said, as he tried to quickly walk away.

The Ambassador's eyes flashed in righteous feminine fury as she grabbed the Ferengi by the lobe, and not in the way that his people preferred.

"Aaah!" Quark yelled out in serious pain.

Given that the bartender often served me well as an agent in my business endeavors I should really save him from harm, but this was just amusing, and again, the future was in jeopardy here and didn't need me meddling any more than I already had.

"You are dealing with a daughter of the fifth house, holder of the sacred chalice of Rixx, heir to the holy rings of Betazed," Lwaxana said in an impressive tone of authority.

"And the most beautiful Ambassador of Betazed to the Federation!" I shouted. I couldn't resist!

Everyone turned to look at me.

"Yes, that too. Thank you, Gothic," Lwaxana responded, sending me a mischievous smile and a wink. She knew it was funny too.

I'd not heard her speak like that since she, her daughter and I had been captured by a Ferengi captain who had wanted to make use of her advanced powers of telepathy in his business dealings. That motherfucker had been butt hurt and had tried to kill me, so he was now molecules floating in the fucking atmosphere of Earth. At the time of her kidnapping, her title recitation hadn't worked, but combined with the rough handling of Quark's ear it certainly seemed effective now. Perhaps Lwaxana had studied the Ferengi race after being captured.

That whole incident still baffled me to this day. Those events had always felt like an episode of television, melodrama and all, rather than something that could happen in real life, even in this AU Star Trek dimension. How did it make any sense?? Surely there had been someone else less

important and high profile that he could have gone after with telepathic powers, or some other telepathic race not part of the Federation, someone who might welcome a job like that. I suppose the benefit of a Betazoid was that they looked virtually identical to a human at a casual glance and there were a fuck ton of humans spread throughout the galaxy. In fact, humanity had colonized more planets in the alpha quadrant than any other race. Xeno-sociologists of other races had often speculated that humanity must have some deep-seated instinct to preserve itself by spreading out amongst the stars.

"Not my ear, please!" Quark begged.

"Yes, and I know where it hurts the most, you little troll. Now I want this room sealed and I want everyone in it strip-searched until you find my brooch," she commanded.

"I'd be happy to take off all my clothes, if you ask it of me, Ambassador," I offered aloud. To my delight, many of the women in the bar and all of the dabo girls looked happy with the idea.

At this point Odo entered the bar, no doubt having been alerted by either a deputy, or by other means. I wouldn't be surprised if the Constable had some sort of sensors permanently trained on Quark that let him listen in at all times. That would be illegal in the extreme, even under Bajoran law which was still being fleshed out, but he was a Founder and while Odo might act like a champion of justice, it was in fact *order* that he truly wished to impose on this station.

"May I be of service?" he asked mildly.

Lwaxana let Quark go. Once free, he massaged his abused lobe.

"Oh, thank goodness," Bashir said in relief, happy to let someone else handle this burden of responsibility. "Ambassador Troi, this is the station's Chief of Security, Odo."

"What seems to be the problem here?" he asked.

"Well, my brooch has been stolen. It's been in my family for thirty-six generations. It's absolutely priceless, and I want it back," the Betazoid Ambassador said.

"You're certain that you were wearing it today?" Odo reasonably asked.

"Yes, of course, I'm certain. I never wear this hair without it," she answered.

"I see. Betazoid? Telepathic?" he asked

"Of course," she replied.

"And you sense no guilt anywhere in this room?" he asked.

Lwaxana sighed and with a put-upon expression she closed her eyes to focus her substantial telepathic abilities. No doubt she was reading the minds of everyone nearby, though I wasn't worried about her reading my mind as that had proven impossible in the past, but my emotions were another matter. The shows were unclear about that, so I'm wasn't sure if she could detect those like her daughter could, so I focused on remembering Jadzia in the holodeck so that she could only detect lust from me.

"No," the ambassador said once she finished. "But Betazoids cannot read Ferengis, their minds are too dense, which I'm thankful for, as they're probably full of things I can't mention in polite company."

Quark just smirked at her in response. Then Odo glared at the Ferengi.

"Quark has plenty of reason to feel guilty, Ambassador. However, he doesn't have to resort to petty theft to fleece his customers," the shape shifter said, glancing around the room before his gaze landed and stayed on me. "Are you able to read an Augment's thoughts, Ambassador; I believe I read a security report from the *Enterprise* that indicated an issue with that."

Well, *fuck you*, Odo. This had certainly taken a turn from canon. Was this him just being thorough or something more? I had gotten the impression on several occasions that the guy didn't like me for some reason, but this was an escalation, or perhaps a *provocation*.

Lwaxana turned to look at me with trepidation, "No. I can't read General Gothic's thoughts, but I'm sure he had nothing to do with this. In fact, to my chagrin, he came nowhere close to me this evening."

I fully turned in my barstool to face the room, placing a comforting hand on Kira's upper thigh as she looked to be about to vocally protest and assure the man of my innocence and how ridiculous it was that the idea was even being entertained. I similarly waved off and gave a comforting smile to several Militia officers in the room who I had worked with during the Resistance, men and women whose lives I had saved at one point or another.

"I'd be happy to disarm and turn out my pockets for you Constable, if you *request* it," I emphasized. "Your security authority does not extend to a flag officer of the Militia, but I would voluntarily consent to a search, as I have nothing to hide."

For a moment, Odo looked rather put out at my words, true or not, before quick as a striking snake he sent an elongated arm out to catch an alien that had been trying to leave the bar. He reeled in the alien like it was a fish, and it did look a bit fish-like, funny enough. Some aliens were really ugly that way.

"Empty your pockets, now," Odo commanded.

The alien turned to be quite a busy little pickpocket, as his loot was substantial. In addition to a latinum brooch, it included a Starfleet issue comm badge and multiple omni-tools. Guy must have skills to have accomplished that, but he was probably new to the station as he must not know that there were numerous security and identification lockouts on the device to prevent anyone but the registered owner from activating it. He probably just saw a fancy piece of technology and thought it looked valuable, so he took it.

"Well then, since when did you join Starfleet?" Odo asked the thief.

The alien could only cower meekly in Odo's tight grip and then comply.

"That's it," Lwaxana said with delight and picked up her brooch, "but how did you know?"



"Dopterians are distant relatives of the Ferengi. It made sense that if you couldn't read Quark, you might not be able to read this charming fellow either," Odo explained.

"How perfectly brilliant of you," she replied with interest.

Lwaxana smiled, and I knew that she was already smitten with him, and while it would be amusing to observe more of this I had things to do. Meetings to attend to and all that and I certainly wasn't going to wait around for an apology that was unlikely to come. Hopefully the future could be preserved even if Kira and Odo never happened.

"Back to work for me, Kira," I explained to Kira, after getting up from my seat, the costs for my drinks no doubt being put on my tab the very instant I had ordered them.

The Bajoran woman gave me a surprised look.

"What could you be working on at this time of night?" she asked.

Nothing fun that was for sure.

"I have days' worth of meetings ahead with Ambassadors from all over the Alpha Quadrant," I told Nerys. "It's going to be hell."

With that I left the bar.

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### **Office of General Gothic. Deep Space Nine.**

Tapping a few commands on my omni-tool caused a half dozen new screens to be projected above the surface of my desk, arced around me in a half circle for better viewing and usage.

This glut of information was my entire financial picture, all my bank accounts were displayed, hidden or otherwise, every holding and investment I currently had, both in my name and through aliases, including the cash value and current market value, and every bit of incoming revenue from the sale of my holo-novels and omni-tools across the galaxy, every time one of my products was mentioned in any forum, the news or various financial reporting, it was collated for my attention. There was something hypnotic about watching my revenue figures going up in real time. There should be another huge uptick once I released Mass Effect to the masses and once the Ferengi began distributing my omni-tools.

If a professional investor (or any average Ferengi) saw my portfolio, they'd quickly recognize the overarching investment strategy that I was pursuing. As long as money existed, for some industries/businesses, conflict and war was good for business. Certain market sectors had always done well in wartime. Since I made my first bar of latinum or Federation credit upon coming to this universe, I had invested heavily in those sectors that would benefit from war. Of course, I had not known anything about the Collector threat. They simply never came to be in the prime universe Star Trek canon, but I knew the Dominion War would embroil this entire quadrant in war, which had prompted me to use this strategy.

As you might expect, defense stocks that directly provided weapons and armaments, offensive and defensive, typically saw a huge uptick in value during wartime. Every major power and planet across the quadrant would be in the market for weapons and dumping huge percentages of their budgets into defense contracts. There were companies, yes, even in the Federation, that built and sold large scale orbital defenses and shielding and there were companies that sold hand phasers and disrupter pistols. Both were needed.

The Klingons had a robust and sophisticated defense industry, typically centered around the so-called Great Houses, so did the Ferengi, both of which I had heavily invested in. Of course, advanced weaponry in the 24<sup>th</sup> century required similarly advanced electronics, which led me to invest in isolinear chip manufacturers. Those chips were made of raw materials that couldn't be replicated, so that led to the commodity markets for those raw materials.

Wartime in the future was galaxy-wide, so that meant starships. Meaning I bought stocks in shipyards and repair facilities across the galaxy. Warp cores required dilithium and antimatter, which meant commodity stocks and mining companies.

People needed to eat, which meant replicators. Soldiers got wounded, which meant medical supplies and equipment. Everything in the future required energy, which meant fusion reactors, matter/anti-matter reactors, power cells for defense satellites and hand weapons, etc.

Basically, it all tied together in an intricate web of dependency and I had invested a great deal of my wealth into all those companies and industries that would benefit from prolonged war. With the Collector threat on everyone's mind, the value of my portfolio had similarly ballooned and dividends were being paid. I had even purchased bonds issued by governments hit by the Collectors looking to rebuild.

Much of my portfolio was set to automatic. Certain conditions triggered certain preset actions, so thankfully my investing didn't require a great deal of my time or close attention. Emma, my VI based on the island, had recently been tasked with monitoring my financials and the various markets for anomalies, aka opportunities to exploit. The travel and leisure and the luxury goods market sector were typically losers during wartime. Emma had flagged a few companies in those market sectors that were overpriced at the moment and would benefit from being shorted prior to a market correction, so I authorized a hundred thousand bars to use at her discretion.

Emma had done well for me in the last few months since I'd tasked her with this. With my future knowledge and the ridiculous amount of data from across the quadrant feeding into my island from the galaxy map I'd licensed to the Federation, she had spotted several opportunities that I had taken advantage of, ones that others hadn't seen because they didn't have the information I did. Was this insider trading? Maybe by some definitions, but I didn't give a fuck. Bajoran law certainly didn't include anything like that at the moment, which was just fine with me, I thought, as I closed it all down.

Back to work.

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I leaned back in my chair behind my desk and let out a loud sigh.

"How did the meeting go?" Ro Laren asked as she brought me a steaming drink that I hadn't even asked for. It smelled divine!

Ro always knew how to make me feel better, whether that was with sex or a just a delicious hot beverage like this decadent and rich hot chocolate. I had always had a bit of a sweet tooth, which only got worse after I had been changed, for some reason.

"Well enough, I suppose," I told her, taking a careful sip of this chocolate heaven. Deanna would heartily approve this choice in drink, I thought with a chuckle. "The Provisional Government is fine letting Starfleet, Klingon, and even Romulan ships enter Bajoran space in order to fight the Hur'q, even dock and use the station for repair or resupply or shore leave, but they aren't happy about Cardassian ships being allowed to cross the borders."

"Did they say why?" she asked.

"Take your pick of reasons. They're concerned allowing Cardassian ships in system would give the Cardassians too many opportunities to monitor or harass ship traffic with some flimsy pretext, establish some kind of foothold, or reoccupy the planet entirely, etc., etc., etc.," I answered, rubbing my eyes. "Their fears aren't unfounded, in my opinion, but it's probably not something the Federation is going to give much credence to or have much patience with, in light of what is at stake."

A comprehensive mutual defense pact was important, especially against the Hur'q, so we may have no choice, especially with the Federation in support of it. Bajor itself simply couldn't fight off a Hur'q attack of any scale, not with the station no longer in orbit of the planet, and by the rules of the agreement any allied power had to defend an ally's world should it be attacked by the Hur'q. And, unfortunately, the nearest allied military ships to Bajor were Cardassian ones. While having their ships defend Bajor would certainly be ironic, many Bajorans would rather die than accept their help, and they likely would if the Hur'q attacked the system in even a small force and chose to focus on the planet instead of the station. My ship and the 12 fighters over Bajor would give them hell, likely dying in the process, but it very likely wouldn't be enough.

As head of all off world militia forces it was my primary responsibility to protect Bajor from attack by the Hur'q, but there really wasn't much I could do about it at the moment. My ship was a glorified runabout with extra tricks. Against even half a dozen Collector fighter craft, sure, it'd handle its own for a while, especially if I wore the neural control helmet, but anything larger than that would be beyond it and the fighter squadron. Even a well-established and prosperous Federation colony world would struggle.

I'd run out of time. Something more needed to be done.

"Once these talks are finished we'll be heading to the island," I told Ro, having made up my mind. She was keeping herself busy with some paperwork while I made yet another journey into my thoughts. "It's more important than ever that I get the redesign and upgrade of *The Flighty*

*Temptress* started. Bajor might desperately need the additional firepower to defend itself from the Collectors."

She nodded in agreement, fully understanding just how precarious Bajor's situation was if the Collectors targeted the planet versus the station itself.

"I'm ready to help in any way I can, Gothic, you know that. Until then there are few more immediate matters we need to discuss," she informed me, before making a throwing gesture towards me which activated my omni-tool's holographic display. "I have a few priority requests you need to look over and approve before they can proceed, including a request from Sisko asking that we provide the station's Starfleet personnel with any of our unassigned inventory of disrupter weaponry, as he's *finally* realized what you've been saying all along about disrupters being more effective against Hur'q armor."

Oh joy. *Paperwork*. The perils of command and rank in the military since time immemorial.

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### **Ops. Deep Space Nine.**

I got to what passed for a command center on this station mere moments after the wormhole opened and spat something out. I'd been expecting this to happen around about now. Lwaxana Troi's first visit to the station was in the same episode that had an alien probe come through the wormhole and cause all kinds of computer problems. I didn't recall anyone getting hurt or dying in the show, but I did recall that the Ambassadors were temporarily in danger and had nearly died.

This was again another important canon event, one I wasn't sure I should actually mess with. An AI would soon be brought into the station's computer systems, but it all worked out in the end, and the station's systems would run much better because of it for years to come. In fact, like so much in Star Trek, I couldn't recall a single episode following this one that ever indicated there was an issue that came out of all this. That said, while I wasn't going to interfere too much and potentially upset the good outcome from happening (again?), I still had a favor to ask of Sisko. There were a lot of poor decisions made during this encounter that I might need to point out that would ensure he'd be far more accommodating and agree to my request. It'd probably also serve as another reminder that I had a valuable perspective and should be kept in the loop. It could also, hopefully, lead to them making better decisions in the future as well when it came to the Dominion, computer security, and risk mitigation in general. A learning opportunity that everyone could benefit from. One could certainly fucking hope they'd learn from it.

"Please tell me that you haven't electronically linked up to that probe," I said aloud looking at the large oval viewscreen which showed the probe. O'Brien had been a little too quiet. "It could contain anything."

O'Brien had an 'oh shit' look on his face while looking guilty, obviously not having considered that.

"I've already set up an uplink," he reluctantly admitted.

First nail in the coffin.

*"Memory nodes located. Proceeding with data transfer,"* the Cardassian computer spoke aloud.

"You seem surprised, Chief," Jadzia commented.

He did actually. Pleasantly so.

"Well, knowing this computer, I thought I would have to reconfigure the whole emulator module to make it compatible with the probe, but it's cooperating for once," he said, sounding bewildered, but happy at this turn of events.

*"Transfer of data is complete."*

"Well done, computer," the human praised.

Time for the second nail.

"Please tell me, Chief, that you've downloaded all that information on a computer or storage area completely isolated from the rest of the station's systems by very good firewalls," I asked.

The look on his face confirmed yet again that he didn't do that either.

"Computer, run standard code translations on probe data. Isolate syntax results," Jadzia requested.

*"Processing. Stand by. Analysis of all sub processor modules is complete."*

"Already?" O'Brien asked.

I listened as Jadzia studied the probe and reported her findings to Ops.

"No science modules, no communications system, and enough computer capacity to run a Galaxy class starship. It's very odd."

"And you guys just linked up the integrated computer systems running all of DS9 to this alien machine of unknown origin, capabilities, and purpose," I deadpanned. All I received in response was silence, as Dax and O'Brien looked at each other guiltily, as if only just realizing how risky this all could be.

If I had no other option, I always downloaded potentially hostile data onto my omni-tool (hopefully a disposable one) or a tricorder with its ranged communications abilities completely disabled, just in case of a virus or other malware. Much better to lose a single device, than to have to search for and/or purge your entire computer system. A 21st century IT-Security department could have handled this situation better, with far more caution and common sense, than 24th century Starfleet had.

"That's an awful lot of computer hardware to simply navigate a probe," Dax commented.

I checked out the station's scans for myself from my omni-tool, various screens projected in midair that I tactilely manipulated. My ship's independent sensors scans were also displayed.

"If it's a probe, where are its advanced sensors? Where are its navigational systems? Where is its ability to communicate its findings back to whoever launched it?" I posed to everyone and no one. "Without those capabilities, it's not a probe at all, it's essentially a massive computer and a lot of memory storage with an engine attached. Its purpose doesn't appear to be scientific and it's not armed. In fact, given its lack of navigational sensors, I doubt it was even meant to come through the wormhole."

If I had to hazard a guess someone had stuck thrusters on to a hard drive and then had pointed it in the general vicinity of the wormhole. It was all very, very odd. Was someone trying to get rid of an AI that they had accidentally created? Had they been unable to delete it? Did they fear prosecution? Were they protecting it? While the systems were advanced, they weren't advanced enough for me to be interested in reverse engineering them. The Husnock computer technology was superior, I knew.

"Maybe someone wanted to move it?" Jazdia mused. "Perhaps they were transferring a massive computer for some reason, and it got lost."

I really had no idea and even my foreknowledge didn't provide an answer. It didn't make any sense to me when I first saw this episode and it didn't make any more sense to me now. If someone wanted to get rid of the AI onboard that probe then why had they not just blown it up with weapons or have it fly into a nearby star. Had they tried? Maybe the thing had fled somehow after it sensed its creator wanted to destroy it?

"So, we could expect a visit from the owner soon," mused Sisko.

If someone did come looking for it then I had a *lot* of questions for them, but that hadn't happened in canon and I doubt it would here.

"If this was data I wanted back at some point then I sure would have made it harder for anyone to interface with it, such as putting EM shields on it to prevent remote linkage, firewalls and boobytraps to prevent physical interface. But there's none of that," O'Brien let us know.

Still, I was worried.

"The General was right, Chief. I suggest you treat that data very carefully. Keep it isolated and only access it in a quarantined system, just in case," Sisko ordered.

"Aye sir," he replied.

"Somehow I doubt that will matter at this point. The proverbial horse has left the barn," I pointed out what everyone was probably thinking, but it needed to be said. The AI stuff would likely come out shortly.

Somehow I doubted it would help, especially since so many mistakes had already been made, which I'd pointed out. Sisko definitely saw that I was unhappy with the lack of overall caution and good sense on display, especially with systems that belonged to Bajor and not the Federation. Sisko wasn't a fool, he'd likely order an incident review of this event that suggested how to do things better in the future.

"I assume you wanted to see me, General," Sisko said after leading me into his office, looking slightly embarrassed at the way this probe situation had been handled. That it had been *poorly* handled, didn't need to be said.

I'd rushed up here because of the probe, but I had intended to come here anyway.

"Yes, I wanted to discuss your request for the Militia's extra disrupter weaponry. I have a request of my own," I explained to Sisko.

It was time for some good old' fashioned horse trading. He wanted my guns and I wanted to temporarily reassign some station personnel for a special project. Neela, Kira, and Ro Laren were Bajoran Militia, so I didn't strictly *need* his permission to temporarily reassign them to work on the *Temptress* build, this was a courtesy towards him and he knew it, though he could raise a stink about it with the First Minister and cause some trouble for me if he felt so inclined. He wouldn't win, of course, but he could delay me and force me to answer questions I really didn't want to. No, the trade was necessary to ensure that I received Dax's assistance, who was Starfleet and thus not under my command. He'd have every right to deny *that* request, but given the recent fuck up with the probe and his request for my guns, I figured he'd try to be accommodating. When the full extent of the fuck up with the probe later came out, he'd be even more accommodating, so I'd give him time to sit on my request.

My foreknowledge really came in handy a lot.

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### **Island Fortress. Bajor.**

As planned, I finally had Neela, Ro Laren, and Jadzia on my island so that we could work on the *Temptress'* rebuild, well not directly, we first needed to upgrade the island's technology first with what I'd learned from the Husnock database. Then the fortress should do most of the work for me.

I would have liked to have Kira here too, but Sisko hadn't wanted to give up his second in command and his science officer at the same time. That was reasonable given that the Hur'q could attack again at any time. Privately, Dax was the more valuable person for this project anyways, given her heavy science background and lifetimes of memory, but I wasn't going to tell Kira that.

The Collector threat was the reason I felt such an urgent need to refit my ship as quickly as possible. In canon, even during the Dominion War, there had *never* been an attack on Bajor itself, only the station. With the Collectors attacking the quadrant, there was no telling if Bajor itself would be safe this time around. And since the Collectors had never appeared in the shows, my foreknowledge of events to come was worthless in this instance. My feelings, though, said that I was going to need that extra firepower sooner rather than later.

"Okay ladies, let's get to work," I said.

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### **Conference Room. Gothic's Island Fortress. Bajor.**

This was one hell of a conference room I thought, feeling impressed while looking happily around the room. I had participated in most every aspect of the construction of my 'Palace Fortress' on this island, had even replicated most of the furniture after the industrial replicator had been installed and overseen their placement throughout the building according to Data's design plans, but this was the first time I'd had an opportunity to sit in this room and actually *use it*. Data had really outdone himself, I thought.

His designs were not just architectural in scope; they were interior décor and choices in furniture he had often personally designed for my use, which meant that they were structurally reinforced to handle my strength. A half dozen Terran elephants could jump up and down on my bed, for example, and the bed frame wouldn't even creak.

Of course, Data had provided multiple choices for each chair and table and carpet throughout the palace, so that I could ultimately make a final decision, but the level of thought and detail he'd put into the plans for my home had astounded me then and continued to astound me now. It was refined elegance, old world style mixed with functional cutting-edge technology and I couldn't be prouder to call this place mine. Who knew an android could design something so beautiful, yet functional? He really understood what I wanted.

This large conference room was rectangular in shape dominated by a very long, almost rectangular conference table, but with two gentle bowed out arcs on each side, like an oval, leaving a good amount of table space in the middle for refreshments or documents or anything else you could think of. The wood the table was made of was replicated, of course, but was native to Bajor and was polished to a mirror-like sheen. What wasn't immediately clear, though, was the copious amounts of holo-emitters and computer interfaces built seamlessly into what looked, at first glance, like a gorgeous antique. More emitters were even built into the ceiling above the table.

It was old world style mixed with artfully hidden and integrated high technology. If I wanted to I could project a fully 3-dimensional hologram above the surface of this table or at the end of the table and manipulate it both verbally or tactilely. Any of the room's participants could even broadcast and use any omni-tools in the room for presentation purposes or information exchange. Microphones hidden throughout would also ensure a person speaking would be heard by everyone else in the room. A subspace transmitter would even allow communications off-world or for a hologram of someone to be added to the space to make it appear like they were fully present. The holographic systems in here were comprehensive and could provide full solidity.

The room itself was on one of the higher above ground floors and had the far wall, on the exterior of the house, made of tall floor-to-ceiling windows providing a truly exquisite panoramic view of the surrounding ocean. A small door to the side lead to a long wrap around balcony for small breaks. The wall glass itself was also 'smart' and could be used as a display as well to put up images or documents or other information when the view of the ocean outside wasn't needed. It could also be blacked out and the room hardened from most known surveillance technologies if needed. And of course, as every good meeting place should have, a



drink and food replicator was available for refreshments or whatever else one desired. As I hadn't spared any expense on my home, the replicator was the best model available in the Federation.

This table could seat 30 people very comfortably in the many high-backed chairs that surrounded it. The room also had a number of extra seats and side tables on the periphery for personal aids or assistants or other needed folks, like security personnel. Right now, this rather large room only had four people in it, myself, Neela, Ro Laren, and Dax. I was sitting at the head of the table, of course, in the 'king' spot as I liked to think of it. My girls were also sitting at the table with me looking around the room in appreciation of its beauty.

"Have to say, Gothic, this is one hell of a conference room, and that's coming from someone who lived a life as an ambassador. Curzon sat in conference rooms across the quadrant," Dax offered while gazing around with a smile, taking in the room and likely noticing all of the hidden technology available. "It's comfortable, elegant, and functional, with one hell of a view. Bajor's First Minister would be begging to borrow your home for conferences if he knew how nice it was."

"Thanks, Dax. I made the final decisions on certain aspects of this room and the rest of the palace fortress, but Commander Data of the *Enterprise* designed practically everything here from scratch, from the foundation to the roof and everything in between," I said. "Who knew the guy was such an amazing interior decorator too!"

"Well, my compliments to him, he really outdid himself," she offered. "Maybe I should see if he can come up with a plan to decorate my quarters on the station!" Dax joked, though I'm not entirely sure she was joking.

I suppose it was time to get this show on the road; clearing my throat I brought everyone's attention back to me.

"I wanted to start by thanking you all for coming today and agreeing to help me with this project which I suspect will take about two weeks to complete, at least the first phase of it," I started off, looking into each of their eyes. "Before I go any further, though, I want it known that I've designated this a top-secret military special project of the Bajoran Militia. Everything you learn and everything you do here while working on this project is classified and you will be unable to speak of it to anyone not already in the know without my explicit permission. Any questions so far?"

No one appeared to have any yet. As the only Starfleet officer in the room, I turned my attention fully to Dax.

"Dax, per the agreement Bajor signed with the Federation to allow administration of the station, I am invoking the military special project clause. The nature of this special project and everything you learn here, *cannot* be disclosed to your superiors or reported on, nor can you lawfully be compelled to answer any questions about it by your superiors. Disclosing information regarding this project without my explicit permission will see you prosecuted and imprisoned. Do you understand and accept that this will be the nature of the project you're about to begin? You can

choose not to participate in this project and be returned to the station if you like, with no consequences," I asked and advised, hoping she'd choose to stay, despite knowing that she wouldn't be allowed to tell anyone about it, including Sisko.

Looking torn for a moment, she settled on resolved. "I understand and will not report on what I see or learn here during this special project," Dax answered with resolve.

"Good, I'm very glad you'll be able to help us. Your skill and experience will be a valuable addition to the team." I responded with a smile, happy that she'd be able to help on this project and wouldn't report what she'd see to Starfleet. I had no desire at all for Starfleet to realize just how much advanced technology I had access to or what my capabilities truly were. "I think you're really going to enjoy the work."

"Well, let's get to it! The end goal of this project is the redesign, upgrade, and rebuild of my personal ship, *The Flighty Temptress*. In pursuit of that goal, I've obtained certain advanced technologies which should make this possible to do on our own, with no other help. I've been planning this for a long time, but the increased threat to Bajor that the Collectors represent has advanced my timeline and made this a much higher priority," I explained.

"Emma, please load ship design designated 'Dauntless-class' and display holographically. Include preliminary design deck-by-deck blueprints next to exterior view and cross section of ship," I commanded.

With that command, Emma loaded and displayed the preliminary designs of the ship I'd recreated partially from memory and partially with tech I'd discovered in the stolen Husnock database. The image floated in midair above the surface of the conference table near where we all sat. Anyone who had seen the show *Star Trek: Voyager* would immediately recognize the design of the ship as the U.S.S. *Dauntless*, a ship that would never come to be in this universe as the Borg had long ago been wiped out, thus Arturis, would never design it to use in his elaborate deception and plan for revenge.

My girls were in awe of the ship's design. Dax had even stuck her hand up and grabbed the image, rotating the holographic model of the ship to better see the Nacelle configuration.

"How big is this ship?" Neela asked calmly, the discerning eyes of a gifted engineer still locked on the hologram spinning in mid-air.

"When complete it'll have 8 decks and be 250 meters long, 100 meters at the beam, with a height of 42 meters with a mass displacement of 750,000 metric tons," I answered.

They, understandably, reacted with shock at how ambitious my plans were.

"First off, wow, I had no idea your many talents included starship design and this design is very advanced and innovative, I can tell that just from a glance. It's interesting that you chose a Federation design aesthetic. Second, when you said you were redesigning and upgrading your ship, I thought *maybe* you'd be making it a bit bigger since it's only slightly larger than a runabout now, maybe upgrade the engine speed or weapons. This is way, way beyond what I thought you were talking about. It's an entirely new ship! These dimensions put it close to an

Intrepid-class ship!" Dax exclaimed, taken aback at how big this ship was. "How do you possibly plan to build something like this with just us? A starship like this would require a dedicated shipyard with hundreds of workers, a ton of raw materials, and probably 6 to 9 months to build."

"The Collector database we stole, that's what makes this possible, isn't it?" Ro Laren asked to Dax's confusion. Laren was always quick to connect the dots, which made her an invaluable aid to me.

"Partially. This is top secret," I reminded, glancing once again at everyone to convey my seriousness. "Kira, Laren and I encountered a Collector carrier ship months ago, one of those large asteroid ones. It had sustained serious damage and was temporarily disabled after engaging in battle with the USS *Tikuma*. We boarded it and stole both technology and information before they finished repairs and left the area. The Collector database and the tech we stole that day gave me the chance to examine and reverse engineer many of their advanced technologies, including technologies that will eventually power this ship, specifically a power core which harnesses an artificial singularity on a scale that's hard to believe and far beyond anything the Romulans can reproduce."

"I'm guessing you're planning on building this ship here on the island and not in a shipyard," Dax speculated. "Did you get some kind of construction technology from them too?"

"Again, that's only partially correct. The Collector database had designs for a more advanced form of replication based on 'particle synthesis,' which makes it possible to replicate many materials that current replication technology doesn't, the rest of the needed materials that still can't be replicated even with this more advanced form of replication I already have stockpiled from when I raided several Cardassian ore freighters during the Occupation," I explained, though I really wasn't interested in disclosing that that technology had come from a stolen Husnock database the Collectors had somehow acquired. They really didn't *need* to know that. "What will really make this construction possible here on the island is actually a piece of technology encountered in the 22nd century. I've already finished the designs to create my own version. Once it's built, simulations suggest the ship construction will take about a month a half and only require minimal input or if problems crop up," I said with a grin, knowing this would shock them all into a stupor.

"A month and a half?! To build a ship this size here, with just us? How would a piece of 22nd century technology allow you to build this very large and advanced ship here and that fast with this few people?" Dax scoffed.

"Once we finish phase 1, the actual ship construction won't require our input, it'll be entirely automated," I explained with a smile. "Emma, please display the auto repair and construction yard in its undeployed state, after 10 seconds please show gradual deployment to encompass project *Dauntless*-class design inside."

With that command the compacted cylinder from the show *Star Trek: Enterprise* was displayed in midair. 10 seconds later the cylinder slowly opened up, like a flower opening up, and the *Dauntless* was projected inside.

"Why does that structure seem so familiar to me?" Dax asked, her eyes fixed on the frame surrounding the ship.

"It should be. This was a piece of alien technology the original *Enterprise*, NX-01, captained by Jonathan Archer, encountered and used in 2152. This alien repair facility repaired a giant hole in the saucer section of that *Enterprise* in 34 hours, a repair that would have taken 3 months with all the resources of Earth space dock and it still wouldn't have been done as well as this automated technology did it. Each one of the station's 'arms' had replication and holo-tool technology built in so that large pieces of the ship could be replicated, assembled and precision installed in little time, entirely automated. Since we're not talking about discreet repairs here, I expanded the number of arms given the size of the overall construction. Multiple parts of the ship will be worked on simultaneously, and with advanced computer control the arms won't interfere with each other's work," I explained. "While the *Enterprise* was inside the repair facility's docking berth, T'Pol, the ship's Vulcan science officer, took incredibly detailed and exhaustive scans of the station itself. The technology involved was far, far beyond Earth at that point in time, even Vulcan, which was more advanced than Earth, but current technology, augmented by the advanced tech I've recently acquired from the Collectors, especially in replication and computer processing, means this same technology the *Enterprise* once encountered two centuries ago could be used to build the ship I envision."

"Wait a second. I remember this holonovel now! Kids across the Federation have played this program. I played it as a kid in a few different lifetimes. Didn't this alien repair station steal a crewman (and his brain) to enhance its processing power?" Dax asked, glancing at me incredulously.

"Well, yes, that's true, but we've come a long way since then," I joked. "Rest assured none of your *brains* will be needed to enhance its processing power. The more advanced computer architecture and Emma, a virtual intelligence of my own design that runs the systems on this island, will direct efforts for maximum efficiency once I input the finished ship design. I'm still finalizing the design, by the way."

"What do you need from us?" Ro Laren asked after everyone had a few moments of contemplative and thoughtful silence. This was an ambitious and exciting project for them. How many people could say that they participated in the construction of a new ship-class and built it in this innovative way that had never been done before?

"There are several upgrades to this Island's technology and production capacity that are needed before I can build the auto repair and construction yard, which is what I'm calling this technology, by the way. First, I have two Collector ship power cores that need to be disassembled and upgraded with better materials, and once finished, one of them needs to be plugged into the island's power systems. The other power core will power the new *Flighy Temptress*. Neela can explain why an upgrade for them is needed. Let's just say the Collectors really don't think like we do."

Neela nodded and shrugged at Dax and Laren when they turned to her.

Second, the island's industrial replicator needs to be upgraded to allow for particle synthesis-based replication. I have a detailed upgrade plan and the required software already ready to go. Once that's done everything else will be easier since we can then replicate the replacement tech as needed.

Third, we need to build one of the automated repair station berths that the *Enterprise* encountered, including an anti-gravity field to be projected to fill the construction space in the unoccupied lower hanger bay since we're obviously not building the ship in space.

Fourth, I need to finalize the design for *The Flighty Temptress* and start construction of the space frame.

Fifth, the transporters on the island need to be upgraded to a more advanced design, which I will again provide," I explained. "These are the priority projects in the order that they need to be completed. All of these are needed before I could finally start on the ship construction."

"Again, that's a very ambitious set of priority tasks. How are we going to upgrade your existing technology with this more advanced alien technology we've never even heard of before or had time to study?" Dax asked.

"That's a great question, Dax. I've already done a lot of the preliminary planning work needed so you won't need to fully understand the new technology as well as I do. Follow the steps on your omni-tools exactly and Emma will verify everything is correct with the diagnostics she will run. Each of your omni-tools will be sent the specific designs being used and exactly what parts will need to be swapped out and programming upgraded. It should be easy enough to follow and if you really get stuck, I'm only a call away if you need assistance," I answered.

"What do you want us to do first?" Neela asked, her engineer mind already eager to take on the next task.

"That depends. Neela, how far along are you on the power core upgrades?"

"I've already upgraded the loose power core and integrated it into the island's power grid. The second one I haven't even started on since it still needs to be removed from the salvaged Collector ship," she answered.

Dax gave me another look of confusion at that, but thankfully didn't ask. I was really throwing a lot at her today and unlike Neela and Laren, who trusted me completely and were used to following my orders, she didn't have that history with me.

"That's fine, the second power core won't be needed until after we've begun construction of the space frame of the ship," I answered. "I want you all to work together first on upgrading the industrial replicator. That might take a few days or more, but once that's done we can start building the auto repair and construction yard. With all the extra power provided, the industrial replicator should have no problem producing what we need. While you're doing that I'm going to finalize the design of the ship. Now do you have any other questions before we get started?" I asked. Looking around it seemed that they didn't have any questions yet, but that would likely

change after they had some time to closely review the materials that I had sent to their omni-tools. Now I just needed to finalize my ship's design.

That was easier said than done.

**XXXXX**

### **Holographic Design and Fabrication Lab. Gothic's Palace Fortress. Bajor.**

It had been a productive week and a half all told since I had given the girls their marching orders. The girls had worked extremely hard and had gotten through all of the major tasks I'd assigned them. There had been a few unexpected compatibility issues in upgrading the industrial replicator, but the girls had put their heads together and found a solution, one that would be used several times over in ensuring the more advanced Husnock technology worked in conjunction with the Federation technology.

Once the industrial replicator upgrade had been completed they'd started on the auto repair and construction yard. As 'The Yard,' as we were now calling it, was originally intended to work in space, we had needed to come up with a way to project an anti-gravity field which both lifted and locked in place the future construction inside the berth. Dax had come up with an ingenious solution by integrating an anti-gravity system into the 'ribs' of The Yard itself. The system would constantly monitor the placement of the construction in progress and attenuate the power of the anti-grav field to keep everything in place. It really was an ingenious solution and I was very glad that I had asked Sisko for her help. After that change to the design, with the detailed scans from the *Enterprise*, it hadn't been terribly hard to replicate large pieces of The Yard and assemble them all together in the hanger bay.

Ro Laren, always the practical long-term thinker, had suggested building a storage berth in the wall of the hanger bay for the Yard to rest in when not in use. In the future, she advised, we may have need to bring it out again to build smaller vessels and *The Flighty Temptress* would benefit from having several smaller shuttles onboard. The Yard could build a ship the size of a cruiser or a small shuttle, it made no difference when the Yard could expand as little or as much as needed for the specific construction or repair. Using the transporter, we'd beamed out a perfect cylinder of rock from the wall of the hanger for The Yard to rest in when not in use and replicated a frictionless metal sleeve and anti-grav lift to get it in and out. I don't know why I hadn't thought of that, but I was again patting myself on the back for not trying to do this all by myself.

Ro Laren's suggestion to use The Yard to build ancillary craft had sparked an idea to provide shipbuilding services to parties willing to pay. At first I had considered building ships specifically for Bajor, but questions would be asked as to where they came from and how Bajor could even afford them. A sudden influx of ships would be instantly noticed and could cause the Cardassians to act in unpredictable ways. In time, it would likely expose my new capabilities, which the Federation and the Klingons would *not* like. An Augment having his own advanced shipyard and thus the ability to build a fleet of ships capable of waging war, might prompt a very aggressive response from those afraid of what I might do, like sending a team of commandos to destroy my home. Starfleet Intelligence likely wouldn't go that far, but the Klingons might. The

Federation was more likely to put pressure on Bajor and otherwise sanction me, by restricting my ability to travel through Federation space, do business with Federation worlds or allies, and/or restrict my ability to sell my holograms and omni-tools to their citizens. There were many ways to hurt me if they had the desire to.

No, it would probably be better to offer my shipbuilding services to Section 31, who could then provide them to the Federation itself through some roundabout way. Much less questions that way. If the need became great enough, they could help smooth over any issues and maybe I could offer the same deal directly to Starfleet. In the face of the Collector threat and eventually the Dominion in the future, they would be far more likely to set aside any concerns about my capabilities to build a war machine if they were benefitting from it.

At the moment, Neela was finishing up her work on the second Collector power core, after we had all helped her carefully remove it from the Collector ship. Dax and Ro Laren had left her to that task and had moved onto upgrading the Island's computer core. Dax was in heaven working with such an advanced system and Ro Laren was doing her best to keep Dax on task so that they could then move onto the transporter system and eventually begin the process of upgrading the island's weapons and shields. When I had told them that this new transporter could easily transport people from Bajor to the station, they'd quickly realized that they'd be able to come relax in my island paradise whenever they wanted, with little planning and no need for a five-hour trip by ship.

Maybe not surprising given how much of a perfectionist they knew me to be, I was the one holding up the construction of the new *Flighty Temptress* now. When not helping them, I had been in my home away from home, the holographic design and fabrication lab working on the new ship design for 20 hours a day. It had come a long way from where it started, but it was still an incredibly complex endeavor, even with my shameless borrowing of ideas from both the Federation, Minos, and Husnock designs I had access to.

Leaning back in my chair I watched my new ship design turn languidly in midair; the more detailed deck-by-deck blueprints alongside it. Just as I'd shown the girls, it was based on the design and looks of the U.S.S. *Dauntless* as seen in *Voyager* and comprised 8 decks. If I had to describe it, it looked almost like a broadhead arrow with a sharp point and nacelles tucked under the main body of the ship somewhat.

In fleshing out the design I had decided on the theme of a luxurious warship, a home away from home for me that was capable of withstanding the conflict to come with both the Collectors and the Dominion and would use a combination of Federation, Minosian, Husnock, and Collector technology.

The ship would have both a warp drive and a quantum slipstream drive based on Husnock engine technology. When I'd first thought about what engines to include I originally planned on only including the slipstream drive, but given the incredible speeds the drive was capable of, at least according to the specs, from 50 lightyears per hour to a 500 ly/hr maximum cruising speed, it didn't really make sense for shorter trips. The slipstream drive was like trying to fill a shot glass with a firehouse, an exceedingly difficult proposition and would require computer control to stop

propulsion at the precise millisecond needed to not drastically overshoot the destination. In situations where I wanted to hide my more advanced FTL capabilities, it'd also be useful to have the option to go to a maximum warp of 9.95 instead, using traditional methods.

And even beyond these practical considerations, I was also rather concerned with keeping Q happy, since 'he' was the who had given me *The Flighty Temptress* in the first place. It was vital to ensure that I made every effort to keep intact the benefit of whatever notice-me-not magic field that had been placed on my ship that kept people from noticing and asking questions. To that end I was planning on reusing as much material from my old ship as possible to keep the metaphysical 'identity' intact, in other words reusing everything from the warp core to the decking to the ship's name plate. It'd be a bit of a pain to do it this way, but keeping my patron happy and that 'magic' intact was well worth the extra effort. I would make every effort practical to hide my more advanced FTL technology, but that kind of advancement would be something many races and groups would kill for. I couldn't even predict what measure Section 31 would take, a group I had a great working relationship with, if they realized I had access to that kind of technology and they decided they wanted it.

As this was meant to be a warship, the weapons were formidable and all Husnock in design. Since the Collector singularity power core produced a truly ridiculous amount of power, I went heavy on the number of energy weapons firing jacketed streams of positrons and anti-protons. There were 7 beam emitters, one main emitter in the very tip of the arrow head at the very front of the ship, two a quarter of the way down the edge of the ship on either side, two in the extreme wing tips, and two emitters on each side of the very rear of the ship near the main shuttle bay. This was in addition to the anti-fighter phaser weapon and the omnidirectional plasma wave emitter. The Husnock were bloodthirsty conquerors that would make the Klingons balk and they didn't fuck around.

There were also five quantum torpedo launchers, which could also fire spatial charges. Two on either side of the arrow tip, one on the top edge of the ship's spine, and two launchers side by side near the very top of the ship where the Federation normally stuck their bridge. While these were technically quantum torpedoes, the Husnock had long used and perfected these weapons and were far superior to the current Federation equivalent. The modern warp drive, for example, was fundamentally the same as the one Zefram Cochrane had once created, but their capabilities were vastly different after centuries of incremental improvements. Each launcher also utilized an innovative rotary cylinder loading and firing mechanism for quick firing of up to 6 pre-loaded torpedoes, something that Sisko invented in another dimension and had been inspired by an old Earth style revolver. Connected to the torpedo cylinder was a replicator with a small, independent Collector power core. In other words, when a torpedo was fired, within 10 seconds a new torpedo was replicated to refill the torpedo magazine stores.

While I had once been extremely focused on acquiring a large Collector ship power core, I realized having auxiliary power systems were also important. Thankfully the Collector ship I'd stolen had many mid-sized power cells that I had cannibalized from its corpse and would be installed on my new ship to form the basis of an auxiliary/emergency power source, should something happen to the main core.



As a force multiplier, I also added Minosian drone launchers, based on the Echo Papa system. In the event I was outnumbered, I could launch them to provide additional mobile firepower independent of my own ship.

During the last few days, I had also decided to reject Federation design philosophy with regard to the placement of the bridge. For a warship, a bridge at the very top of a vessel seemed like a supremely stupid idea. With the shields down or weakened one lucky shot meant the ship's entire main command crew could be killed as a group. In the middle of battle, the ship could be considered effectively destroyed. My bridge would be on deck 4, near the very center of the ship itself.

The ship would also possess Husnock style regenerative adaptive lattice shields and thick ablative hull armor for defense, should the shields be penetrated. The outer hull would be painted a black and red color scheme to visually distance itself from a Federation vessel, something which could prove difficult because the *Dauntless* had been meant to look like a futuristic Federation ship. That could be tweaked if my girls had a better idea.

The ship would also have cloaking capabilities. The Husnock had their own version of cloaking that I would be using. It followed the same scientific principles both the Klingons and Romulans used in their cloaking devices, but from what I could tell, was a bit more refined in execution. Finally, however, I had been able to make use of the phase cloaking technology that I'd long ago stolen from the *Pegasus*. It was gross overkill in most situations, but there may be times when it was needed. The original *Flighty Temptress* design was fundamentally incompatible with that technology, but I had made a real effort to design the new ship to accommodate it. I still struggled with some of the underlying scientific principles involved, which suggested again that the Federation had 'borrowed' some of this technology from some very old, dead, but extremely advanced alien civilization that they might have encountered some remnants of.

In addition to the Husnock cloak and the Federation phase cloak, I'd also be using the stealth technology from the original *Flighty Temptress*. There were going to be many instances where full on cloaking was undesirable or impractical, but being absent from long-range scans would still be useful.

The inside of the ship was where I let my creativity shine through as many of my design ideas were not from either Federation or Husnock ships. Because I had power to burn, I tripled the number of inertial dampers present. This would allow extremely fast turns and roll maneuvers like that unmanned Romulan ship in the show *Star Trek: Enterprise* (See Romulan Drone Ship). As the Collectors (and the Dominion) favored suicide ramming attacks when other tactics failed, the ability to roll the ship quickly could one day prevent my ship's demise. The better armor and stronger materials that made up the hull would further enhance structural integrity and allow for some crazy maneuvers to avoid both suicide ramming tactics and enemy weapons' fire. It would probably be one of the most maneuverable manned ships of its size in the quadrant.

Unlike the original *Dauntless* design, which I had expanded overall, I had expanded the trailing 'shaft' of the arrowhead shape to allow for a large main shuttle bay and several smaller cargo bays. This expanded shaft also wrapped slightly around the ultra-dense warp coils in the two

nacelles further protecting the ship's engines from being targeted, just like the old *Flighty Temptress* had been designed.

As I was sparing no expense here, the ship would also possess its own full sized holodeck utilizing particle synthesis-based replication and the rest of the ship would be equipped with holo-emitters. With all the emitters present, I had some crazy ideas with regard to utilizing holographic anti-boarding measures. If any intruders successfully boarded my ship they'd find multiple force fields to pin them in, the artificial gravity rising to 5x normal, and supremely deadly holograms of Space Marines, Predator aliens, and Xenomorphs sent to kill them, amongst other esoteric defenses. With the safety protocols off, a hologram could be just as deadly as the real thing after all.

The Husnock actually used holography quite a bit on their ships to both reduce the size of the crew needed to pilot their large warships and also to maintain and repair their ships from battle damage on long-range, long-term missions that could span decades away from their race's supply lines and overall support infrastructure. The Federation had invented a holographic doctor, the Husnock had taken it a step further and invented *holographic crew members*, especially engineers, to effect repairs and direct small robots meant to perform regular service and maintenance. This was ideal for me, as I had long gotten used to flying my ship by myself or with a *very* small crew. The holo-engineers would be ideal for most tasks and having a holo pilot ready to respond to my commands when I was off ship was similarly useful, though my VI Scarlet could step into that role too. These holo-crew members were useful, but they were also a necessity if I intended to fly a ship this size with a relatively tiny crew.

There were several other additions I made to the final ship design that I thought would be very useful:

1. Infirmary - Surprisingly, Federation medical knowledge and technology was far superior to Husnock medical technology, so I'd largely copied the infirmary design of *Voyager* and added multiple biobeds, a full surgical suite and tools, and requested a copy of the Emergency Medical Hologram, Mark 1, from Starfleet. The Federation had never really restricted its medical technology. In this case, as an allied general, they didn't even question it.

My plan was to make multiple copies of the EMH to run in my ship's infirmary, but only after tweaking the physical parameters and personality to something more attractive. While I wasn't knowledgeable enough or willing to mess with the core medical protocols, modifying the physical and personality side of things was something I was quite good at. I made a note to add a few EMH holograms to the Island's already existing infirmary as well, in case it was needed. A Federation starship like *Voyager* had lacked the processing and memory capacity to run that many EMH programs simultaneously, but I didn't have that problem. That inability wasn't even a technological hurdle that Starfleet couldn't overcome with a little effort, but an overall lack of faith in the EMH program itself as it had always been intended for short-term, supplementary use only. I had a distinct feeling that when *Voyager* returned from the delta quadrant in canon, having seen how successful the EMH could be, that they'd make the effort to upgrade those underlying systems.

2. Armory - A single main armory, and several distributed weapon caches, would be on the ship containing personal weapons and a spare set of my primary weapons and armor.
3. Shuttle bay - Unlike the original *Dauntless* design, I had added a large main shuttle/cargo bay, two ancillary cargo bays, and was toying with the idea of keeping 3 smaller, armed shuttles there at all times.
4. Transporters - There would be two, 6-pad transporters on the ship. One meant primarily for personnel transfers, the other in the cargo bay, but which could also be used to transport people.
5. Brig - A warship often needs to take prisoners, so my ship would have one to hold prisoners securely. I had used much of the 'brig cube' technology that I had once used to secure the Duras sisters in the design.
6. Landing apparatus - Since the new *Flighty Temptress* was going to be slightly smaller than *Voyager* anyway, I'd shamelessly ripped off their landing apparatus design so that the ship could be set down on a planet if needed or parked in my Island's hanger bay.
7. Industrial Replicator - Like most mid- to long-range Federation vessels, the ship had its own large industrial replicator for anything it needed to produce on long missions.
8. Multiple bedrooms - While I had quite a large ship design here, it really wasn't intended to transport a crew of a 150 plus people like *Voyager* did. The number of weapons and additional technology I'd stuffed into the design had eaten up a lot of space, but some had been left open to allow for upgrades in the future. It was meant to be a luxurious warship and a lot of space was required for all the weaponry, the two FTL drives, the shuttle bay and cargo bays. It did possess a dozen overly large suites on multiple decks, though, including one very large set of quarters meant for me, the captain. I figured if I needed to transport a large number of troops I could replicate bunk beds or something in every stateroom and cargo bay.

Overall, I was pretty proud of the ship I'd designed here. I'd stolen a ton of tech and ideas from multiple sources, including a lot of Husnock technology, but a lot of my own ideas were present too, especially those that were inspired by having watched all of the various Star Trek series. The overall design also did a nice job of hiding just how well armed it was and the shields and hull material would prevent scans of the interior.

If Starfleet knew that an Augment owned what was, essentially, a dreadnought-class warship, they'd flip their shit. The new *Flighty Temptress* could take on multiple galaxy-class ships and come out on top, but it wasn't invincible against fleets of ships and that's what I'd be facing with the Collectors now and the Dominion down the road.

With a sigh borne out of both mental and physical fatigue, I saved the design file and powered down the emitters. I'd run the final design by my girls tomorrow and see if they had any thoughts or last-minute ideas to add to the design. Once it got their approval, I'd feed the design into the Yard and begin the construction process. We had 3 days left before we'd be forced to return to the station by regular transport, since the current FT was going to be taken apart shortly, so we could at least monitor construction for that amount of time before having to leave. If there were

any problems or decisions to be made I'd instructed Emma to immediately notify me and I could clandestinely beam directly back to the Island if necessary to resolve any problems that couldn't be taken care of over subspace.

The future was mighty bleak at the moment, threats all around, but with my new warship to protect me, my girls, and Bajor, hopefully we had a slightly greater chance of coming out of this alive.

I had a feeling that very soon my design philosophy of 'There is no kill, like overkill' would be put to the test.