

**THE DOMINION**  
DAVID R. GEORGE III

WORLDS OF  
**STAR TREK**  
DEEP SPACE NINE  
VOLUME THREE

**FERENGINAR**  
KEITH R.A. DECANDIDO

### **“How Like a Monoform You Are,” Laas Said.**

Odo did not rise to the taunt. “Why are you acting like this? I’m not your enemy.”

“At this moment, I consider the entire Great Link an enemy of the Hundred,” Laas vowed. He indicated the dead changeling. “This one adrift, alone for centuries, then found by humanoids, experimented on, and finally killed in a paranoid frenzy. Me—” He pointed a finger at himself. “—living among monoforms for two hundred years, tormented, miserable. The same story for the other two.” He motioned to either side of the islet, evidently to include the other two changelings he’d brought with him, though they’d already glided back into the Link. “For what?” Laas concluded, in a way that did not invite an answer, but Odo volunteered one anyway.

“For knowledge,” he said flatly, again reiterating the justification he’d been given for the Hundred. But as with Laas, he found that he could no longer countenance that explanation. Right now, he wondered why he had never questioned it.

“How can you say that?” Laas asked sharply.

“I don’t know,” Odo confessed now to Laas. “It’s what I was told. I had no reason to disbelieve it.”

“Don’t you see,” Laas said, “that we have *every* reason to disbelieve it?”

“That may be,” Odo allowed, “but *I* never lied to you. You don’t have to fight me.”

Laas stepped forward. “You’ve lied to yourself, Odo,” he said, “and that means you’ve lied to me as well.” He circled around and headed for the edge of the islet. “And the Founders have lied to us both.”

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**DEEP SPACE NINE®**  
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**SATISFACTION IS NOT  
GUARANTEED**

KEITH R.A. DeCANDIDO

**OLYMPUS DESCENDING**

DAVID R. GEORGE III

Based upon STAR TREK®,  
created by Gene Roddenberry,  
and STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE,  
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**Ferenginar  
Satisfaction  
Is Not Guaranteed**

**Keith R.A. DeCandido**

## About the Author

Keith R.A. DeCandido has been very handsomely paid for his prior forays into the world of *Star Trek* fiction. Those lucrative publications include novels (*Diplomatic Implausibility*, *Demons of Air and Darkness*, *The Art of the Impossible*, and *A Time for War, a Time for Peace*), duologies (*The Brave and the Bold* and the first two *I.K.S. Gorkon* books, *A Good Day to Die* and *Honor Bound*), comic books (the four-issue miniseries *Perchance to Dream*), eBooks (the *S.C.E.* novellas *Fatal Error*, *Cold Fusion*, *Invincible*, *Here There Be Monsters*, *War Stories*, and *Breakdowns*), and short fiction (stories in *What Lay Beyond*, *Prophecy and Change*, *No Limits*, and *Tales of the Dominion War*). Forthcoming work includes a third *Gorkon* novel entitled *Enemy Territory*; the stories “*loDnI’pu’vavpu’je*” in *Tales from the Captain’s Table* and “*Letting Go*” in *Distant Shores*, the tenth anniversary *Star Trek: Voyager* anthology; and *Articles of the Federation*, a novel about politics in the United Federation of Planets.

Not content to make a profit solely off *Star Trek*, Keith has also written in the media universes of *Gene Roddenberry’s Andromeda*, *Resident Evil*, *Farscape*, *Serenity*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Marvel Comics*, *Xena*, and more. Upon realizing that he retains more rights to original fiction, he also put out the high fantasy police procedural *Dragon Precinct* in 2004, and edited the acclaimed novelette anthology *Imaginings*.

Keith lives in New York City with his girlfriend, two adorable cats, and way too much stuff, some of which he was unwise enough to pay retail for. You can read his self-serving propaganda at [DeCandido.net](http://DeCandido.net), or just e-mail him at [keith@decandido.net](mailto:keith@decandido.net).

*Dedicated with fondness and sorrow to the memory of Cecily “Moogie” Adams, taken from us much too young.*

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## **Historian's Note**

This story is set in late November, 2376 (Old Calendar), approximately seven weeks after the conclusion of the *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* novel *Unity*.

*Satisfaction is not guaranteed.*

—RULE OF ACQUISITION #19

# 1

*Females and finances don't mix.*

—RULE OF ACQUISITION #94

“Dabo!”

Quark looked up at the baritone cry that indicated that someone had just won at Hetik's dabo table. Again.

*What was I thinking when I let Treir talk me into hiring him?* The honest answer, of course, was that he *wasn't* thinking, at least not with his brain, but rather the appendages on either side of it. It was difficult to be reasonable or to think things through when you were talking with a two-meter-tall Orion woman bred for sex appeal and wearing one of the skimpy outfits that Quark himself insisted his dabo girls wear.

Not to be confused with the sleeveless V-neck tunic and tight shorts that his dabo *boy* was clad in as he handed over a considerable pile of winnings to a Boslic woman. It was, in fact, the third time the woman had won, and if she kept up at this rate, Quark would be bankrupt.

With a brief hand signal to Frool to keep an eye on the bar, Quark navigated among the tables, which were fairly crowded. Three Starfleet ships were in dock at Deep Space 9—one about to head into the wormhole to the Gamma Quadrant, one on its way to deliver supplies to the ongoing Cardassian relief effort, and one simply stopping over for shore leave after a patrol of the sector—so the bar was full to bursting with gray-and-black-uniformed personnel, along with the usual collection of traders, cargo carriers, and travelers of all kinds that paraded through DS9 every day. Plus, of course, the regulars.

If Quark had his way, there'd be fewer Starfleet; they weren't the biggest spenders in the galaxy, and they didn't imbibe nearly enough to suit him. There wasn't a lot he missed about the days when the Cardassians ran the station, but one was that you could always count on members of the Cardassian military to be heavy drinkers.

Still, it was a decent day for business. *So I'm not about to let that Bajoran simian*

*ruin it by giving all my latinum to that Boslic!*

As he drew closer, he noticed that the Boslic woman wasn't looking at the winnings that were piling up next to her arms, which were folded neatly at the edge of the dabo table. She wasn't looking at the other players—a Lurian freighter captain, a human Starfleet officer, and a Tellarite civilian—who *were* looking at her winnings, and rather dolefully at that.

She was looking at Hetik. More to the point, she was *staring* at Hetik.

Quark knew that stare very well. It was one that was all too often etched on his own face whenever Ro Laren was in the room. Or Kira Nerys. Or Natima Lang. Or Treir. Or Ezri Dax. Or pretty much any other beautiful woman.

In a gentle voice that sounded like honey over *hasperat*, Hetik told the Boslic woman to put all her winnings on double down.

Without even hesitating, she did so, barely looking at the latinum strips she moved across the table.

Quark, who knew his dabo table, relaxed and stopped in his tracks.

The human and the Lurian both bet triple under, and the Tellarite, spitting and cursing to a degree that irritated Quark—not so much the cursing as the spitting on the table, which he made a mental note to tell Broik to polish later—put what little money he had remaining on double down as well.

To Quark's lack of surprise, triple under won, and both the Tellarite and the Boslic were cleaned out. The Tellarite immediately got up and stormed out, which suited Quark fine, as he had bought only one drink, finished it hours ago, and refused every offer of a fresh one.

However, the Boslic woman simply stood up, ran a hand over Hetik's cheek, said, "Thank you for a divine evening," and slowly exited, making sure to give Hetik several backward glances as she departed.

*Okay, so maybe a dabo boy wasn't such a bad idea.*

Quark worked his way back to the bar. On the way, he was intercepted by Treir. The Orion woman towered over him and favored him with a seductive smile. "You didn't trust Hetik, did you?"

"I just wanted to keep an ear on things." Quark spoke defensively, which caused him to wonder why he felt so defensive. "Rule of Acquisition Number One-Ninety: 'Hear all, trust nothing.'"

As they got to the bar, Quark took his place behind it. Treir draped herself over the bar so that she was at eye level with the much shorter Quark, and also gave him a very

good look at her very generous cleavage, most of which was visible in her very skimpy outfit. Quark knew she did it on purpose, since she was as aware of the Fifty-Third Rule as he was—“Never trust anybody taller than you”—and also knew the deleterious effect her cleavage had on his higher brain functions.

“You know,” she said in her sultriest voice, “you never gave me proper compensation.”

“For what?”

“Hiring Hetik. You didn’t think hiring a dabo boy would be a good idea, but he’s drawn in a huge number of customers. I think I deserve some kind of reward for that.”

Two Bajorans departed; Quark grabbed their empty glasses and put them on the shelf to be cleaned. “It’s true, he has added bodies to the dabo table.”

“And yet, you haven’t—”

“—given you compensation? No, I haven’t.” Quark leaned forward on the bar, his large nose close to Treir’s small green one. “You had that idea while in *my* employ to service *my* bar. ‘You pay for it, it’s your idea’—Rule of Acquisition Number Twenty-Five. Since I paid for it, it’s *my* brilliant idea, and I don’t owe you anything.”

Treir stood up straight and looked down that small nose at Quark. This put her torso at eye level, which didn’t bother Quark all that much. Treir had a magnificent torso, and the outfit she wore today left it entirely exposed, from the bottom of her breasts to the middle of her pelvis. She folded her arms over her chest. “You know, Quark, when you sold me on this job, it was as an *improvement* over being a slave.”

Quark spread his arms. “Isn’t it? You don’t have to have sex on demand with whomever your Orion master says you have to. You’re free to come and go as you please, and you actually earn a wage. Now, if that state of affairs is no longer to your liking, you can walk out that door and that will be that—aside from the breach-of-employment fine, of course.”

Treir smiled sweetly. “Of course.” The smile fell. “You do realize that if I leave, the dabo tables will empty out in an instant.”

“Nonsense. I’ll still have Hetik and M’Pella.”

“Oh, don’t be so sure of that.”

Quark felt a tingle in his lobes. He couldn’t help it; he *loved* it when Treir pretended she had some kind of authority over the bar. She didn’t, of course, but that didn’t even slow her down. And, it was true, she had made several good suggestions for improving business.

*She’s so invigorating.*

Brushing a hand across his lobe, he started to speak, when a customer in a Starfleet uniform called out for two synthales.

As he went over to the replicator, he said, “Anyhow, I can’t afford to trust Hetik or you or anyone else. These are dangerous times.” To the computer he said, “Two synthales.”

Treir scrunched her face up in confusion. “What’re you talking about? Profits are up, and have been since Bajor joined the Federation.”

He handed the synthales to the officer and his companion, also in uniform. They raised their glasses in salute and drank. Quark turned back to Treir. “No, *revenues* are up. Profits are barely holding steady.”

“That doesn’t make any sense. You’ve got people pouring in here, you gave us all a pay cut, and the dabo tables and holosuites are packed.”

“Which reminds me, shouldn’t you be at your table?”

“I’m on a break.”

Quark sighed. Instituting breaks was the biggest mistake he’d ever made.

Treir continued. “Look at those two.” She pointed at the officers to whom he’d just given the synthales. “They can get those same two synthales for free in the replimat or in their quarters, but they’re willing to come here to pay for it because they like the atmosphere. Let’s face it—Quark’s is the hot spot of the Bajoran sector, and everyone knows it.”

Bowing his head, Quark said, “Thank you for that lovely demonstration of the Thirty-Third Rule, but—”

“I’m not sucking up, Quark. I gave that up when you and Ro took me off Malic’s ship. I’m telling the truth.”

That brought Quark up short. Telling the truth went counter to every instinct he had. “You see, you’ve just perfectly demonstrated the source of my problems.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Of course not, you’re a female. And—”

Treir pointed at Quark, which was disappointing on two fronts. For one thing, it was a fairly menacing gesture from a two-meter-tall Orion; and it meant she unfolded her arms, thus reducing the drool value of her cleavage. “So help me, Quark, if you quote the Ninety-Fourth Rule at me, I’ll rip your ears off.”

Quark refused to be intimidated or aroused, though it was a close call. “Well, it’s