

= Q @-@ Less =

" Q @-@ Less " is the sixth episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : Deep Space Nine ( DS9 ) . Set in the 24th century , the series follows the adventures on Deep Space Nine , a space station located near a stable wormhole between the Alpha and Gamma quadrants of the Milky Way Galaxy . In this episode , Vash ( Jennifer Hetrick ) , a former love interest of Captain Jean @-@ Luc Picard , arrives aboard the Deep Space Nine station trying to elude her companion , Q ( John de Lancie ) , and make a profit selling archaeological artefacts from the Gamma Quadrant , including a mysterious alien crystal . " Q @-@ Less " saw the return of Vash and Q , two recurring characters from Star Trek : The Next Generation ( TNG ) . It was Jennifer Hetrick 's final performance as Vash and John de Lancie 's only appearance as Q on Deep Space Nine .

Two former writers from TNG , Hannah Louise Shearer and Robert Hewitt Wolfe , wrote the episode . While it would be Shearer 's last Star Trek credit , Wolfe 's work on the script led to him joining the writing team on DS9 . The producers wanted to introduce Q to the show in a seamless manner ; when Shearer proposed a Vash @-@ centric story , Q was added to the script . " Q @-@ Less " highlights the differences between DS9 and TNG by comparing the reactions of Commander Benjamin Sisko ( Avery Brooks ) and Captain Picard to Q. On its first broadcast , " Q @-@ Less " received Nielsen ratings of 12 @. @ 8 percent , placing it as the fifth most watched episode of the season . Reception was mixed , with reviewers criticizing the imbalance of time spent with Vash and Q in contrast to the rest of the cast , as well as the unnecessary technobabble in the story and the MacGuffin @-@ like plot device represented by the alien crystal .

= = Plot = =

Lt. Jadzia Dax ( Terry Farrell ) returns from the Gamma Quadrant in her runabout with a woman that Chief Miles O 'Brien ( Colm Meaney ) recognizes as Vash ( Jennifer Hetrick ) from his time on board the Enterprise . Although the crew is unaware of his presence , Q ( John de Lancie ) ? a nearly omnipotent prankster ? has also stowed away on the runabout . Vash explains that she has spent the past two years in the Gamma Quadrant , but she describes her method of getting there as a " private matter " . During their trip back to Deep Space Nine , the vessel undergoes a series of unusual power drains .

Soon after Vash 's arrival , the station begins to experience similar power failures . In the meantime , Q appears to Vash , apparently infatuated with her . Q was the one who transported Vash to the Gamma Quadrant two years earlier , but now she wants nothing to do with him , much to Q 's annoyance . When Dr. Julian Bashir ( Alexander Siddig ) asks Vash out for dinner , a jealous Q uses his powers to send Bashir off to sleep . Meanwhile , Quark ( Armin Shimerman ) arranges to auction off various items Vash has found in the Gamma Quadrant , including an unusual crystal that might fetch a high price .

Remembering Q from the Enterprise , O 'Brien spots Q on the station and warns Commander Benjamin Sisko ( Avery Brooks ) , speculating that Q may be responsible for the power drains . When confronted , Q denies any wrongdoing , although he offers no alternative explanation . As the power drains become more severe , an unknown gravimetric field begins pulling the station toward the nearby wormhole . Q challenges Sisko to a boxing match on the Promenade , and suddenly , they are both wearing antique @-@ style boxing costumes . A few punches are thrown , and Q is shocked when Sisko knocks him down . " You hit me ! Picard never hit me ! " Q exclaims .

Vash and Quark auction the artifacts and the crystal receives bids in excess of one thousand bars of gold @-@ pressed latinum . Casually joining the bid process , Q ups the ante on Vash 's crystal to 2501 bars before bidding one million . Soon after , however , the source of the gravimetric field and power losses is traced to the crystal itself . The crystal is quickly beamed into space before it can destroy the station . Once outside , it transforms into an alien life form and travels into the wormhole . After the incident , Bashir finally awakens from his slumber . Unaware of what has just transpired , he yawns and tells Dax that he feels like he has been asleep for days . A bemused Dax

gives him a strange look to which Bashir replies " What--did I miss something ? "

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The writers and producers of " Q @-@ Less " developed the episode to show that DS9 was still connected to the Star Trek universe . To facilitate this idea , two TNG characters , Vash , played by Jennifer Hetrick , and Q , played by John de Lancie , returned to DS9 . Vash made her first appearance on TNG in the episode " Captain 's Holiday " , and then returned in " Qpid " ; Q had appeared in most seasons of TNG since the first season . TNG writer Hannah Louise Shearer , known for writing episodes such as " The Price " and " We 'll Always Have Paris " , also crossed over to DS9 . " Q @-@ Less " was the last Star Trek writing credit for Shearer .

Shearer 's pitch featured Vash , who had last been seen at the end of " QPid " leaving with Q , but the pitch did not include Q himself . Executive producer Michael Piller explained that they had already been looking for a way to introduce Q into DS9 , and felt that bringing Vash onto the show would be a good way to seamlessly introduce Q. There were concerns about shoving Q into an episode but the idea of " Q @-@ Less " alleviated them . " If you just have him come on and say ' Look , is this the new show ? ' it 's silly , but this seemed to be a justifiable way " , Piller recalled .

TNG writer Robert Hewitt Wolfe , who had writing credits on a number of episodes , including both the previous Vash stories , converted Shearer 's story into a script . His work on the first draft led to a full @-@ time position on the writing staff for DS9 ; Q was added to the story at this stage . Q 's motivations were drawn from his previous appearances on TNG , but Wolfe found it difficult to create the interactions between Q and the other characters on DS9 . At the time the script was under development , there was little footage of DS9 available . Wolfe could only characterize the motivations towards Q as annoyance rather than any real emotional engagement . However , he came upon the idea that he could demonstrate the difference between DS9 and TNG by showing the reactions of the characters to Q instead .

= = = Characters = = =

Wolfe believed that if he had written the episode later in the series he would have concentrated more on the established characters and less on Q and Vash . De Lancie felt that the episode never explained Q 's motivation for wanting to stay with Vash . " I think Q is best used when he deals with large philosophical issues , and skirt chasing just isn 't one of them " , he said . Because certain aspects of Q 's character are left unexplored , De Lancie found that " the style , the quips and the panache in which things are done become very important " .

The boxing scene was intended to differentiate the relationship between Q and Sisko from that of Q and Picard . " Picard is an explorer , and in some ways , very much an intellectual . Sisko is a builder , a different kind of guy . He wears his heart a little more on his sleeve , and he acts on emotion , on instinct , more than Picard " , Wolfe explained . John de Lancie offered a similar opinion : " Q 's relationship with Picard has always been a battle of wits , but I come into Deep Space Nine , and Sisko just bopped me on the nose ! From a character point of view , that 's a very big difference . "

Hetrick felt that the move away from TNG gave Vash more independence , and she enjoyed the new relationship between Vash and Quark , calling them " kindred spirits " . She was also pleased to be working with de Lancie again . " I love the way they write for John , and I loved the stuff we got to do together in ' Q @-@ Less ' " , she said . Hetrick underwent ten hours of make @-@ up for the sequence where Q shows Vash what could have happened if he did not save her life following an insect bite in the Gamma Quadrant . The experience left her with a newfound appreciation for not having to wear prosthetics like other members of the cast .

Hetrick thought that if she returned to DS9 as Vash , then something could be built around the Vash

@-@ Quark relationship : " That would be a really nice pairing , because you have these two different backgrounds but they 're both after the same thing . " Towards the end of the second season , the producers inquired about Hetrick 's availability . The actress was ready to appear on another DS9 episode , but the writers changed direction and there were no further plans for the Vash character . " Q @-@ Less " was the final Star Trek appearance for Hetrick , and the only appearance in DS9 for John de Lancie .

= = = Filming = = =

Director Paul Lynch compared the production on " Q @-@ Less " to a typical TNG episode . On DS9 , the shots were more complex and generally featured more special effects . Lynch said that the scene which showed Q seamlessly teleporting himself from one chair to another , changing his costume as he went , was particularly difficult . The producers , particularly Rick Berman , were determined for DS9 to be the best that it could be , notes Lynch . The comedic elements of the episode required precise timing , with Lynch comparing it to the television series Moonlighting .

= = Reception and home media release = =

" Q @-@ Less " was first shown on February 8 , 1993 , in broadcast syndication . It received a Nielsen rating of 12 @. @ 8 percent , placing fifth in its time slot . " Q @-@ Less " was the fifth highest rated episode of the season , behind " Emissary " , " Past Prologue " , " A Man Alone " and " Captive Pursuit " .

Zack Handlen reviewed the episode for The A.V. Club in 2012 , calling Q an " iconic figure " . Handlen said Q allowed the writers to compare the different reaction of the characters to his presence in DS9 and TNG . However , Handlen felt that Q was not a good fit for DS9 , as the character seemed like an afterthought . Also , the pairing of Vash and Q took up too much screen time compared to the main cast , Handlen noted , while the overall plot involving the " stealth alien " embryo " plays like an abandoned script from early in TNG 's run , and an example of a fascinating concept reduced to a perfunctory MacGuffin , " Handlen wrote .

Keith DeCandido , in a review of " Q @-@ Less " for Tor.com , praised the relationship between Vash and Quark and thought that it should have been explored further . Like Handlen , DeCandido also felt that Q did not quite fit in DS9 , but acknowledged that his performance in this episode was an improvement over his later appearances in Star Trek : Voyager . DeCandido described the boxing scene where Sisko punches Q as " wonderful " and " spectacular " . However , he thought that aspects of the plot had too much technobabble ; for example , the embryo plotline could have been resolved by a form of Customs procedure . " Ultimately " , DeCandido concludes , " none of this matters , because it comes down to one great moment of Sisko decking Q. Bliss . "

In Atara Stein 's The Byronic Hero in Film , Fiction , and Television ( 2009 ) , she compared the role of Q in both " Q @-@ Less " and " True Q " as one where he reprises his " satanic role " and " in each case [ tries ] to lure a woman to join him " . Stein also explains the Q / Vash relationship , saying " Q 's demeanor toward Vash is clearly coded as that of a potential rapist . He pushes her onto a bed and shows no compunction about threatening and brutalizing her . " She explained that despite this treatment and the feminist stance taken by Vash , Q is treated sympathetically by the writers of the episode . It is made clear that Q could have won Vash around if he chose to , and so the character seemed " sensitive and vulnerable , and Vash seems cold @-@ hearted by comparison . "

" Q @-@ Less " was first released for home media in the United States on VHS on November 19 , 1996 . It was released in the United Kingdom on DVD as part of the season one box set on March 24 , 2003 , and in the United States on June 3 . The episode is also included in the Star Trek : Q Fan Collective compilation DVD set , which was released in the United States on June 6 , 2006 , and later that year in the UK on September 4 .