

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x06 - "The Dream Box."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels
by Pocket Books

incorporating elements from

Star Trek: The Lost Era: Well of Souls
by Ilsa J Bick

"Glories of the Hebitians"
by Michael Jan Friedman, appearing in
Star Trek: New Worlds, New Civilisations

and "The Calling"
by Andrew J Robinson, appearing in
Star Trek: Deep Space Nine: Prophecy and Change

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING

The station is at rest, with the *Defiant* berthed on the docking ring next to a Bajoran shuttle. A Cardassian *Galor*-class ship is docked at an upper pylon, and two more holding position in the background.

2 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

On KIRA, standing at the head of the room, wearing the new Starfleet white dress uniform...

KIRA

This is an important day... one that some of us worried might never come, but that we're all thrilled to say has come. Gul Macet...

Widen to reveal that Kira is standing with MACET, the Cardassian military liaison. She hands him a padd.

KIRA (cont)

Starfleet hereby officially returns responsibility for patrol and administration of the Dorvan sector to the Cardassian Union.

Macet takes the padd with solemnity.

MACET

Captain Kira, honoured guests. On behalf of Castellan Ghemor, the Central Command, and all Cardassians, I accept. After two long years, Cardassia is finally back on its own feet.

Macet firmly presses his thumb to the padd's screen, there's a small electronic bleep, and the deal is done. The gathered crowd bursts into polite applause.

Mostly unnoticed by the crowd, a couple of small automated camera drones hover around the room, of the type seen in 8x20 "Twist of Faith."

The station's senior staff - VAUGHN, RO, BASHIR, NOG and SHAR - are also in dress uniform, plus TARAN'ATAR, Major CENN, Kai SOLIS, and Oralian Cleric EKOSHA (also last seen 8x20). Respective security details - Starfleet, Bajoran and Cardassian - hover discreetly around the edges of the room.

This is a big diplomatic event, where everyone is on their best behaviour. A buffet table of food fills one side of the room. QUARK, TREIR and HETIK move back and forth with trays of food and drink for the partiers.

Having finished the ceremonial parts of the event, Kira and Macet move back into the crowd and begin mingling. Vaughn approaches Ro, who is keeping a wary eye on all the goings on. She continues to scan the room while they talk.

VAUGHN

Nice work on the arrangements, as always, Lieutenant.

RO

Thank you, Commander.

VAUGHN

How are you settling into your new responsibilities?

RO

They're great. You and Kira aren't planning going anywhere, are you?

VAUGHN

No...

RO

Then they're great.

Vaughn smirks. Then he notices Ro tense a little...

Taran'atar moves from his place standing on one side of the room, to standing on the other side of the room.

VAUGHN

You alright?

RO

Just hoping there won't be a repeat of the last time I threw a party like this.

Ro continues to keep her eye on Taran'atar...

Across the room, Quark approaches Taran'atar, carrying a tray of drinks. Quark comes to a stop and looks up at him. Taran'atar looks down at the tray, then back up at Quark. Quark is like, "Well, go on then." Taran'atar takes a drink, baffled as to why it matters.

QUARK

What are you doing here anyway?

TARAN'ATAR

This is a diplomatic event. I was told my attendance would be expected. Captain Kira said it would be an opportunity for people to see Bajor, Cardassia, the Federation and the Dominion all working together in peace.

QUARK

As in, not killing each other.

TARAN'ATAR

Of course.

QUARK

Remember that. Peace is good for business, after all.

TARAN'ATAR

Rule of Acquisition number thirty-five.

Quark blinks in surprise. Taran'atar gives him a sly smile.

Elsewhere, Kira and Macet are mid-conversation:

MACET

It is rather embarrassing that the entire Union now consists of only four sectors, and we can't even look after that much by ourselves.

KIRA

That's exactly why this is a big deal. A full quarter of the Union is back under your control.

MACET

(diplomatic)

...with the Federation's kind and gracious help, of course.

KIRA

(waves it away)

False modesty, Gul. You should be proud of what Cardassia's citizens have accomplished in such a short time, with or without our help.

Across the room, Macet catches sight of Quark moving away from Taran'atar. He takes a deep breath, steeling himself.

MACET

If you'll excuse me, Captain... there's something I should do.

Kira nods, and Macet moves away. Kira moves away herself, towards the buffet table. On the way, a camera drone buzzes uncomfortably near to her head. She bats it out of the way.

KIRA

Get out of the way.

Macet has reached Taran'atar.

MACET

Ambassador.

TARAN'ATAR

(acknowledging)

Gul Macet. Is there something I can do for you?

MACET

You can hear me out. You and I have our assumptions about each other, Mister Taran'atar. To you, I betrayed the Dominion. To me, you're one of a race who killed a billion of my people. So I doubt you and I will ever be... close.

Taran'atar would agree with that assessment.

MACET (cont)

But Captain Kira is an inspiring woman. She championed Bajor's peace treaty with Cardassia, despite our worlds' histories. She did the same for Bajor and the Dominion. If she can do that... then I can do this.

He reaches out his hand towards Taran'atar, hoping to shake his hand. Taran'atar looks down at it.

TARAN'ATAR

The Founder did send me here to foster peaceful relations with the Alpha Quadrant races...

Taran'atar reaches out tentatively and takes Macet's hand. He knows the theory, but has never put it into practise. But it's the effort that counts. Macet is relieved.

MACET

I don't imagine it will be easy for anyone, Ambassador. But I hope there's some chance that one day, Cardassia and the Dominion can be friends.

TARAN'ATAR

If the Founders wish it, it will be so.

That's the best Macet's going to get. But he'll take it.

By the buffet table, Kira has been watching the exchange from a distance. She smiles, encouraged.

She looks the other way, and sees Ro has been watching too. Ro meets Kira's eyes. They both realise what the other is up to. With awkward nods, they both turn back to the party.

Elsewhere, Kai Solis and Cleric Ekosha are chatting.

EKOSHA

My colleagues on Cardassia tell me it's quite a remarkable find. In fact, that's part of the reason I'm here - Gul Macet has offered to ferry me back to Cardassia so I can see it for myself.

SOLIS

What about the Oralian Temple in Janir? Can they continue without you?

EKOSHA

The other acolytes will be safe without me for a short while, I'm sure. Bajorans seem to be much more open to new thoughts than Cardassians will ever be.

SOLIS

I wish I could say the same. The Vedek Assembly has become no more than a collection of squabbling children since my election. The sheer disrespect...

(shakes head)

They interrupt me when I'm speaking. Shout out from the floor. There's a motion to investigate my entire career and "prove" that I have no legal basis to even be kai. Sometimes I'm almost ashamed to be one of them.

EKOSHA

That's the government, and
government rarely works for the
betterment of its people, in my
experience. Have faith in the
people themselves, Kai Solis.

SOLIS
(warmly)
Please, call me Tendren.

Ekosha smiles back.

3 CAMERA'S POV

For a moment, we are the camera. We drift slowly across the
room, taking in all the minglers. Taran'atar, Macet, Kira,
Vaughn, Ro, Quark... eventually landing upon Nog and Shar.

We move closer, to eavesdropping distance. We watch them
from a high angle, wavering as the camera bobs around.

SHAR
The readings seemed to indicate a
manufacturing fault in the casing.
Troubling, but not urgent.

NOG
I'll get Leishman to look at it in
the morning.

Shar reaches up and itches at one of his antennae.

SHAR
How are your studies coming?

NOG
(smirk)
Fine. How is your small talk
coming?

SHAR
You tell me.

Shar itches his antenna again, and glances behind him with
an irritated look, directly at the camera.

NOG
You okay?

SHAR
The cameras. They... itch.

Nog moves quickly, reaching up to our POV, and snatches the camera out of the air. We're caught in Nog's hand now, and he brings us up close to his face, peering directly at us.

4 **BACK TO SCENE**

NOG
Probably the transmitter signal.
Maybe there's a way to -

There's a ZAP and a small FLASH as the camera gives Nog a small electric shock, forcing him to let it go.

NOG (cont)
Aah! You little...

But the camera has already buzzed up and out of the way, quick enough to miss a vengeful swipe by Nog.

Elsewhere, Bashir has casually joined Macet at the buffet.

BASHIR
Gul Macet. Nice to see you again.

MACET
Doctor.

BASHIR
I was wondering... Garak didn't come with you?

MACET
Should he have?

BASHIR
I was under the impression he was working quite closely with the Ghemor administration. I'd hoped he'd take the opportunity...

MACET

As little as I know about Mister Garak, Doctor - and as little as I want to know - I do know that he prefers to work in the shadows. A gaudy show like this isn't his style.

BASHIR

I suppose.

MACET

Doctor... if you want to speak to Garak, why not just give him a call? I'm sure he'd be pleased to hear from you.

BASHIR

No, that's okay. I don't want to bother him if he's busy. Do pass on my best wishes to him, though, if you don't mind. And to Chief O'Brien, of course.

MACET

I will.

BASHIR

Just make sure they both know that I'm here for them if they need anything.

5 EXT. CARDASSIA SURFACE - DAY

Broken, stony ground, burned and damaged and crumbling. GARAK, O'BRIEN and Doctor FERIC (9x05 "The Lotus Flower") pick their way carefully across the ground, working a gradual downward slope. As they walk...

O'BRIEN

I thought all the Hebitian ruins were stripped bare years ago.

GARAK

To finance our glorious empire's rightful conquest of lesser worlds

like Bajor, you mean? Yes, that was the popular theory.

O'BRIEN

So how did you miss this?

FERIC

Because we didn't know it was here. It was only recently uncovered. They called me in to try to confirm the dating.

GARAK

Ironically, we can thank the Dominion for finding it for us. They succeeded in vaporising a fair proportion of the planet's surface, along with the people living on it. And they revealed...

(with drama)

...this.

Garak stops and gestures towards the bottom of the small incline they've been descending.

6 EXT. HEBITIAN RUINS - HIGH ANGLE

Now we can see, stretching away from the three men, a huge chasm in the ground. With jagged crumbling edges, it reveals what looks like an entire buried city hidden under the ground. It's as if they have discovered the Cardassian version of Pompeii.

7 ON O'BRIEN

Looking suitably impressed...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

8 EXT. SPACE - CARDASSIA

The dirty and turbulent grey-yellow world from orbit.

9 INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE

The centre of Cardassian government, such as it is, as seen in 9x05. A small and utilitarian office, with view-screens filling one wall, one fairly simple desk, and a few chairs.

MACET enters in uniform, followed closely by EKOSHA in a heavy grey travelling cloak. As they step into the room and Ekosha pulls back her hood, ALON GHEMOR stands from behind the desk and moves to greet them, warm and friendly.

MACET

I hope I'm not interrupting.

GHEMOR

Not at all, Macet, please come in,
both of you.

MACET

Castellan Ghemor, allow me to
introduce Cleric Ekosha of the
Oralian Way.

Ghemor reaches out and grasps Ekosha's forearms in his hands. She does the same to him - a gesture of friendship.

GHEMOR

Welcome, Cleric. I have great
admiration for the work the
Oralian Way is doing to help heal
Cardassia's wounds.

EKOSHA

I've been looking forward to
meeting you myself, Castellan.
It's a brave thing to openly
support the Way in the current
political climate. I'm grateful.

GHEMOR
Speaking of which, I would also
like you to meet my political
advisor, Mev Jartek.

Ghemor gestures across the room, where it turns out that
JARTEK has been working quietly and unobtrusively with a
set of padds all along.

GHEMOR (cont)
He's been invaluable to me.

Ekosha nods polite acknowledgements.

MACET
Mister Garak isn't joining us?

JARTEK
(spiky)
Is he needed?

Macet gives a silky smooth smile. He doesn't like Jartek.

MACET
That's really the Castellan's
decision, isn't it? I simply
wanted to pass on a message.

GHEMOR
Elim escorted Chief O'Brien back
to Andak. He wanted to make sure
the humans were safe, what with
anti-alien sentiment on the rise
out there.

EKOSHA
Why would any Cardassian wish the
Federation harm at a time like
this? Surely everyone can see
they're only trying to help.

JARTEK
Not everyone. People like having
someone to blame for their
problems. And Alon's opponents in

the Directorate are happy to cast
the Federation in the role.

EKOSHA

Why?

JARTEK

I honestly couldn't say.

MACET

For people who claim they want to
see Cardassia returned to a
powerful nation, I see little in
their actions that is more than
pure spite.

Ekosha shakes her head, with a sad chuckle.

GHEMOR

Something amuses you, Cleric?

EKOSHA

Far from it. I was merely
remembering a conversation I had
shortly before leaving Deep Space
Nine.

GHEMOR

Anything you'd like to share with
the rest of us?

EKOSHA

(smile)

Perhaps later. For now, I'd like
to get out to Gardat and see these
ruins.

10 **EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT**

As seen in 9x05 / 9x06, but subtly different. What were dry
plains of sand and rock are now starting to show patches of
green forcing their way through.

The settlement itself looks more permanent, entrenched in
the valley. It's late afternoon.

11 **INT. O'BRIEN FAMILY QUARTERS**

O'Brien enters the living room, walking with KEIKO. Garak follows up from the rear. They are mid-conversation...

O'BRIEN

Oh, Keiko, you should have seen it. An entire town buried under the ground for thousands of years. It'll keep the archaeologists busy for decades yet.

KEIKO

(grin)

I haven't seen Feric so excited about anything since we started working together.

GARAK

I suspect it would take a transporter to get him out of there now. But I can't fault his enthusiasm - this discovery will undoubtedly extend our understanding of the Hebitian culture enormously. Not to mention the Oralian Way.

The three of them now having entered, MOLLY (approx 10 yrs) and KIRAYOSHI (approx 5 yrs) enter from another room. Kirayoshi holds a Space Shuttle toy and is going "Zoom! Zoom!" around the room with it. Molly is more dignified.

MOLLY

Hi, Dad.

O'BRIEN

Don't I get a hug anymore?

Molly acts like it's the biggest imposition ever... but then she smiles and gives him his hug. That done, O'Brien reaches for Kirayoshi...

KIRAYOSHI

Unkee Ga'ak!

...And the boy launches himself onto Garak for a hug. Garak catches him, completely bewildered.

GARAK

I'm sorry... what did he say?

KEIKO

He said, "Uncle Garak."

Garak looks absolutely horrified. O'Brien chuckles.

O'BRIEN

I guess that means you're one of the family now, Garak.

Appalled at the very idea, Garak disentangles himself and takes a seat. Kirayoshi plants himself right next to Garak, instant best friends. The boy goes back to playing with his Space Shuttle toy, zooming it worryingly close to Garak.

KEIKO

Thanks again for bringing Miles back, Garak. Seems like anyone in a Starfleet uniform is a target these days.

GARAK

Mrs O'Brien, I have no doubt your husband could defend himself quite handily should the need arise. Really, it was just an excuse for me to come to Andak. It seems you're making good progress.

KEIKO

Yes, we are. There's still a way to go yet, but it's a good start. I'll show you around later, if you want. Are you staying for dinner?

GARAK

(mock warning)

Chief, what have I told you about people inviting me for dinner? It's very unnerving.

Kirayoshi suddenly thrusts his Space Shuttle at Garak, a hopeful look on his little face.

KIRAYOSHI

Do you want to play Space Shuttle
with me?

Garak looks to O'Brien for rescue. O'Brien smiles back.

O'BRIEN

Sorry, Garak. It's out of my
hands. I'll set another place at
the table... Unkee.

GARAK

(glower)

You know it's not wise to tease a
man of my background, Chief.

But he's just teasing himself. It's friendly banter, and they all know it. Reluctantly, Garak accepts the toy from Kirayoshi and begins to play Space Shuttle.

12 **INT. HEBITIAN RUINS**

Standard cave set. Half-buried objects and broken bits of pottery stick out here and there. Feric crouches among the rocks and dust, running a tricorder over the walls, digging things out with his fingers. He is completely enthralled.

EKOSHA (o.s.)

Doctor Lakhat?

Feric turns in surprise and sees Ekosha having just entered the cave, still in her travelling cloak. He catches his breath at seeing her, bashfully lowering his eyes.

FERIC

Cleric Ekosha - this is an honour.

EKOSHA

Oh, nonsense. Coming here is the
honour... You are a lucky, lucky
man, Doctor. To be the one to work
among the Hebitians, to see how
they lived... and loved...

Feric gets up from his crouch, COUGHS and wipes his nose on his sleeve as he does so.

FERIC

Please excuse me... must be the dust.

He reaches to grasp Ekosha's arms, but realises his hands are filthy with dust. He wipes them on his trousers, and they come back even dirtier. He LAUGHS in embarrassment. She laughs with him and grasps his arms in return.

EKOSHA

Don't worry about it, Doctor.

Feric glances back down the cave tunnel behind her...

FERIC

You came alone?

EKOSHA

The Castellan sent guards, but I asked them to remain at the shuttle. I wanted to experience all of this without the military looking over my shoulder.

FERIC

The military doesn't automatically arrest followers of the Oralian Way anymore.

EKOSHA

I know, but it's a hard habit to break.

(glances around)

You are also alone?

FERIC

Brennet was helping me, but he started feeling ill. Not surprising, given the state of the water supply, I suppose. I sent him home to get some rest.

EKOSHA

So... have you found anything related to the Way yet?

FERIC

Oh my goodness yes. Signs of the Way are everywhere.

He COUGHS again a couple of times while leading her around.

FERIC (cont)

I'm no historian, but from what I can see here, the Way was as much a part of their lives as eating and sleeping. Remarkable to think that what could have gotten us beaten or killed was as normal to them as sunlight.

EKOSHA

It truly was a better time. Perhaps, with luck, we will be like that again someday.

FERIC

These carvings over here were especially intriguing...

He leads her to a particular area where a set of STATUES have been carved out of the rock. A large central figure rises above the others, to a height of several metres, with wing-like projections to either side. Smaller figures surround it, gazing up worshipfully at the central figure.

Ekosha peers closely at the statues. Feric COUGHS again.

EKOSHA

These are in remarkable condition, considering their age.

FERIC

Jevonite is a durable material. Most of their statuary was made from it. But that's not the most interesting part. Look closer, at the Hebitians themselves.

Ekosha peers even closer, looking at the smaller figures which surround the larger one. They are delicately carved Cardassian people, about six inches high. She wipes some of the dust off them to see them more clearly.

ECU on the face of one of the figures... and it shows Cardassian ridges along the neck and face, and some small lines around the nose area. Ekosha catches her breath...

FERIC

Yes. Now tell me... do they, or do they not, look distinctly like Bajoran nose ridges?

Ekosha gazes at Feric in wonder. Then he starts coughing again. And coughing. And coughing. It doesn't stop. His hands cover his mouth as his eyes flare in alarm.

He pulls his hands away, looks at them - and there is black BLOOD in them. He looks up at Ekosha, scared.

EKOSHA

Doctor...?

He coughs and racks his throat out harder and harder, his mouth filling with blood. The strength goes out of his legs and he starts to CRUMPLE to the rocky ground, coughing all the way. Alarmed, Ekosha rushes to help him.

EKOSHA

Doctor!

On Feric's bloody face...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

13 INT. CARDASSIAN INFIRMARY - ISOLATION

Begin on Feric's face, struggling to breath, covered in primitive medical supports - tubes, plasters, monitors.

Hitching one breath at a time, he looks up from his prone position on a biobed to see a figure hovering over him. Wearing a cloth mask and rubber gloves, the figure adjusts the medical instruments around him.

PARMAK (muffled)
I'll make it as painless as I can.

Feric nods his understanding. What else can he do? The masked figure moves away, opens a hole in a rubber sheet that's acting as a wall around the bed area...

14 INT. CARDASSIAN INFIRMARY - MAIN ROOM

...and emerges into a larger room, the government's medical facility. A makeshift feel - more MASH than ER - featuring the same machines as DS9's infirmary but old, in disrepair.

The figure closes the hole in the rubber walls, strips off his mask, revealing himself to be PARMAK, the Cardassian doctor from 8x09 "A Stitch in Time." Waiting for him in the room are Ghemor, Garak, Ekosha, Macet, O'Brien and Keiko.

GHEMOR
How is he, Doctor Parmak?

PARMAK
(sad sigh)
He's dying, is how he is. I've tried to make him comfortable, but beyond that there's nothing I can do for him. It's already gone too far.

He glances back over his shoulder regretfully. We can see Feric through the clear rubber walls of the isolation room.

O'BRIEN

What has?

PARMAK

An aggressive infection. I've never seen this kind of rapid progression before. Not even Fostassa is this fast. It's something new.

GARAK

Or something old.

GHEMOR

You think this came from the ruins at Gardat?

GARAK

You don't?

KEIKO

(anxious)

But Miles was there too.

GARAK

(gently pointed)

As was I. And the Cleric.

PARMAK

I'll take blood samples from everyone. And I suggest the ruins be off limits until we know what we're dealing with.

Ghemor nods his assent.

GHEMOR

Cleric Ekosha, can you think of anything else that might help us?

EKOSHA

I'm no doctor, Castellan. But he did say a man named Brennet had been working with him, and that he had also fallen ill.

GHEMOR

Macet - find out who this Brennet is, and send an officer to his house to check on him.

(beat; reluctant)

Have him wear an infection mask, just in case.

Macet acknowledges, and steps to the side to talk MOS into his comm-link. Keiko turns to O'Brien, trying to comfort...

KEIKO

Maybe it only affects Cardassians...

PARMAK

Excuse me for saying so, Mrs O'Brien, but it sounds as if you're suggesting that human lives are more important than Cardassian lives.

KEIKO

(piqued)

Of course I'm not. Feric was - is - a dear friend. We supported each other through a lot. But as far as my children are concerned, then you're damn right their father is more important.

GHEMOR

(breaking in)

Alright, everyone, let's not get emotional. I think we can all agree that we all want to solve the problem.

O'Brien reaches out to Keiko - it's okay, calm down. A door opens, and VEDEK YEVIR enters, looking worried.

YEVIR

Castellan, forgive me, I hope I'm not intruding. I heard about Doctor Lakhat...

O'Brien looks annoyed - he's still not Yevir's biggest fan.

GHEMOR

(harried, but
being diplomatic)
No, that's fine, you're always
welcome, Vedek Yevir.

YEVIR

(re Feric)
He's a good man. I wonder if I
might pray with him...?

EKOSHA

I will join you.

Yevir and Ekosha move together towards the isolation room.
Parmak grabs two face masks and hands them out to them...

PARMAK

Here, put these on.

EKOSHA

Doctor, if the Hebitian ruins are
the source of this, then I'm
already infected.

Parmak relents, reluctantly. He tries Yevir...

YEVIR

I will trust in the Prophets to
protect me.

And they both turn and enter the isolation room, without
masks. We see them go to Feric and stand by his bed.

O'BRIEN

(mutter)
Idiot.

GARAK

Perhaps. Or perhaps he simply
doesn't want to let Doctor Lakhat
see us treating him like some
untouchable horror.

The door bursts open again, and Jartek enters, looking for Ghemor on urgent business. Doesn't acknowledge the others.

JARTEK

Alon, I need you to come with me.
There's something you need to see.

GHEMOR

This is not a good time, Mev.

JARTEK

I realise that. But this is more important.

PARMAK

(angry)

Can people please stop saying that? A man is dying in there.

Garak places a comforting hand on Parmak's arm. But Jartek pushes his point, directly to Ghemor.

JARTEK

Mondrig's at it again.

That gets Ghemor's attention...

15 INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE

On the big screens covering one wall of the room, there is a video of a massive rally being held in a large public square. Hundreds of bedraggled Cardassians, the poor and hungry, are gathered. One man stands at the front, shouting his rhetoric out to the crowds. This is MONDRIG, last seen in 8x09 "A Stitch in Time."

MONDRIG (screen)

This government has failed to provide for its people. I see you standing here today, and I know you understand. You are tired, you are hungry... and Ghemor plays his political games with the Federation and their Bajoran lapdogs.

The crowd seem to be lapping it up, shouting encouragements at appropriate places and cheering Mondrig along.

MONDRIG (cont)

He tells us the Federation has withdrawn from the Dorvan sector... But are there not still Federation ships in orbit of our world right this moment? Are there not Starfleet officers parading around as if they own us? Ghemor says they bring us food and medical supplies. But they insist on us living by their rules before they will give us that food. Before the Federation and the Dominion brought us to this -
(gestures around)
- the Central Command always provided for the Cardassian people. That is why it was created - to protect us, and let us live as Cardassians, not humans or Bajorans.

In the office, Ghemor, Macet, Garak and O'Brien stand watching. Ghemor is gritting his teeth with frustration. Jartek lurks somewhere in the background.

GARAK

At least he knows his symbolism, I'll give him that. That's the Tarlak grounds. It used to be filled with statues to heroes of the Cardassian military.

O'BRIEN

Who is he?

GARAK

Korbath Mondrig. Ever since Councillor Entor's "retirement" from public service, he's taken over as the self-styled leader of the Directorate.

GHEMOR

And frankly, he's even more
hardline than his predecessor.
Everything is either my fault or
yours, Miles.

O'BRIEN

Mine?

GHEMOR

The Federation's, yes.

GARAK

Who would have ever thought Entor
was the lesser of two evils?

16 EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS

Where Mondrig's rally continues. The crowd are loving it.

MONDRIG

Can any of us really trust this
man? Look at his family history.
His uncle, Tekeny Ghemor - a
traitor to his people, who left us
to wither under the Dominion and
used his last breath to conduct
shri'tal with a Bajoran!

Roars of disapproval.

MONDRIG (cont)

His cousin - Iliana Ghemor. A mad
woman who led a vicious criminal
gang under our Castellan's nose,
and murdered hundreds of Bajorans
over a piece of jewellery!

17 INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE

Where they continue to watch on the screens...

O'BRIEN

Don't they even notice that he's
being inconsistent? First he says
Bajorans are the enemy, and then

he says it's a bad thing to kill Bajorans.

GHEMOR

Doesn't matter to him, as long as he can use it against me. I wouldn't be surprised if he was behind some of the more violent events of recent days.

O'Brien shakes his head in exasperation...

18 EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS

Back to Mondrig. We see more of the little automated cameras bobbing back and forth in the air - that is where Ghemor is getting his video feed from.

MONDRIG

And now... he allies us with the Dominion itself.

GASPS of amazement. Mondrig gestures to his side, where one of the cameras hovers. The camera projects a HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE out into the air, over the crowd's heads.

It shows the party on Deep Space Nine, and in it we can clearly see the moment where Macet reaches out and shakes Taran'atar's hand. The clip repeats every few seconds. As the crowd gapes at this, Mondrig intones solemnly.

MONDRIG

This recording clearly shows Gul Akellen Macet, who everyone knows is Ghemor's chosen lackey within the current excuse for a military, shaking hands with a Jem'Hadar.

(w/ disgust)

A human gesture of friendship, on a Starfleet station, to one of the creatures who slaughtered his own people and left us all living in filth and depravation.

19 INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE

As we hear the crowd react in suitably dramatic fashion, everyone in the office looks to Macet. He stares with hatred at Mondrig's image, growls under his breath.

JARTEK

Perhaps not the most expedient
move, politically speaking...

Garak turns and silently glares at Jartek. Macet tries to defend himself to Ghemor...

MACET

Castellan, I assure you -

GHEMOR

It's alright, Akellen. Your
intentions were good.

But none of them can deny this is a blow against them.

20 **EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS**

Back to the rally...

MONDRIG

So what does this tell us about
our great Castellan, my friends?
It tells us that he finds it
appropriate to make merry with
those who would kill you all. At
the same time, he promotes the
sickness of the so-called Oralian
Way, to turn those of us he can't
kill into weak and foolish sky
worshippers.

(pause for drama)

And when I speak of sickness, my
friends, I am not simply employing
a colourful metaphor. Oh no... I
am talking about a literal
disease. When Ghemor sent people
to dig around in the muck at the
Hebitian ruins in Gardat, he
released a very real plague onto
this world.

21 INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE

O'BRIEN

What?!

GHEMOR

How in the hell did he find out
about that already? It's been less
than an hour!

Hissing in fury, Garak again looks over to Jartek. Jartek looks back at him, rather offended at Garak's insinuation. All in the room are quite agitated, but Mondrig continues.

MONDRIG (screen)

Already, two are dead. Oraliens
themselves, both of them. If there
is a god, as they claim, then this
would seem a clear condemnation of
their actions. Meddle in what
ought not to be meddled with, and
you die. Seems clear to me. But
how much longer until they bring
this plague to the rest of us?
I'll tell you how long, my
friends... Days, at most!

He pauses to let the crowd build themselves into a frenzy.

MONDRIG (screen)

Unless! Unless, my friends... we
stamp out this infection once and
for all, before it is too late.

On Garak, Ghemor, Macet and O'Brien's horrified reactions,
over the sound of the crowd braying for blood...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

22 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

A basic room in the Cardassian government buildings, little more than a table and some chairs. Garak is sitting at the table, solemnly reading through a series of padds. The door opens; O'Brien enters and makes his way to a seat.

O'BRIEN

I've sent Keiko back off home.
Naithe's a great babysitter, but
I'm afraid he'll talk their ears
off if she doesn't get back soon.

GARAK

And you'd rather have her away
from the city and its troubles.

O'BRIEN

That too. What are you up to?

GARAK

Ekosha had the presence of mind to
collect the notes Feric had made
on what he learned from the
Hebitian ruins. I've been reading
through in the hopes that the
Hebitians had already found a
cure. I've read every record that
remains on the Hebitians, the
Oralian Way, infectious
diseases...

O'BRIEN

Any luck?

GARAK

I wouldn't call it luck, exactly.
How are things going out there?

O'BRIEN

No better. Macet says fights are
breaking out in the streets.

GARAK

Whatever his motivation, Mondrig is an effective speaker.

O'BRIEN

I just don't understand why he'd complain about Starfleet pulling out of the Dorvan sector. You'd think he'd want less Starfleet about.

GARAK

He's evoking powerful memories, Chief. The Dorvan sector contains a number of iconic sites in the history between our peoples. Chin'toka, which the Federation took from us in the Dominion War. The Dorvan system itself, where the Maquis first sprouted.

(faux casual)

And of course, Setlik Three.

O'Brien reacts with a start. Proving Garak's point. The door opens again and Yevir enters, gently and solemnly.

YEVIR

I thought you might want to know - Doctor Lakhat is gone.

O'Brien and Garak both look suitably saddened.

YEVIR

(takes a seat)

Cleric Ekosha remained with him. I believe there was an Oralian death ritual she wished to enact on his behalf.

GARAK

Perhaps she is telling him they will meet again in *thri'fon*.

O'BRIEN

What's that?

Garak shows him the padd he's currently looking at.

INSERT - THE PADD

A page of unintelligible Cardassian characters. O'Brien taps a few controls on the screen, and the text transforms into Federation standard, aka English.

BACK TO SCENE

O'Brien studies the screen.

O'BRIEN

The program translates it to
"Vinculum."

YEVIR

And what is that?

O'BRIEN

It's from an old Earth language,
Latin. It literally means, "a way
of binding things together."

GARAK

Appropriate. According to the
Oralian tradition, the Vinculum
was a place beyond our current
reality. A nexus that sliced
through creation and connected
past, present and future.

YEVIR

I have found that "everything is
connected" is a common theme
throughout Oralian teachings.

GARAK

Indeed. The Vinculum was also the
source of all wisdom, where the
living and the dead found common
ground. Prospective tribe leaders
were required to make a pilgrimage
there. If they would not, they
were not fit to lead.

YEVIR

And what did they find?

GARAK

As I said, wisdom. Knowledge. The secrets of the universe.

YEVIR

Then perhaps this "Vinculum" is exactly where we need to go to find the answers we seek.

O'BRIEN

Hold on a minute. Garak, you're not taking this seriously, are you? This thing is clearly a fairy tale. It's a metaphor, that's all. Maybe these people went into some kind of drug-induced trance or something. But there's no way for the living to talk to the dead.

GARAK

And on what exactly do you base that conclusion, Chief?

(taps padd)

There's a substantial amount of remarkably technical information in here about how to access the Vinculum.

O'BRIEN

(grabs padd)

Let me see that.

O'Brien buries his head in the material and begins to read. Unperturbed, Garak picks up another of his padds.

GARAK

There's more. You know, of course, that the principal deity of the Hebitian culture was Oralius, usually symbolised as the sun, providing warmth and nourishment to his people. But it turns out he

was only one of many. The leader, in fact, of a pantheon of gods they called The Fates.

YEVIR

A frequent enough feature of many religions.

GARAK

Further, one of those Fates acted as an opposite number to Oralius. A figure of darkness who even had the power to possess corporeal bodies and make them suffer horribly. She was known as Uramtali.

YEVIR

Again, common to many worlds. Basic "good versus evil" has a comforting simplicity to it.

GARAK

The humans have their fallen angel, Lucifer. The Klingons have *Fekh'lar*, fearsome jail keeper of the dishonoured dead...

YEVIR

Even Bajor has the *Pagh*-wraiths.

GARAK

It's just strange to think of Cardassians falling into the same trap. We've always taken fact over fantasy. Mythological monsters onto which to project our fears aren't our style.

YEVIR

Really? Are a large number of your people not currently demonising the Federation in exactly that way?

GARAK

You have, as always, a point, Vedek. But my point, if you will allow me to make it, is that if the Chief is correct and all these tales are simply metaphor, then perhaps this Uramtali figure represents the very disease we have just unleashed. It possesses a body, makes it suffer...

YEVIR

Then we are back at the beginning. Whether these texts are literal or allegorical, we have to study them for anything that may help us identify a cure. Before this disease spreads any further.

GARAK

Exactly what I've been doing for the last few hours.

O'BRIEN

Three heads are better than one, Garak. An engineer, a priest, and... you.

Garak smiles, amused but bolstered by O'Brien's support.

23 INT. CARDASSIAN INFIRMARY - ISOLATION

Feric's dead body lies on the biobed, cold and pale, with discoloured patches all over his skin. Ekosha sits by his side, head bowed and eyes closed, whispering quiet prayers.

She finishes her prayers, and looks up, opening her eyes. Her own breath is sounding laboured, and she shakes her head to clear the fog. The action makes her dizzy.

EKOSHA

Oh, my dear Feric... I am so sorry. I never meant for this to happen.

A cough hits her... and her eyes widen in alarm. She coughs again, harder, and bloody phlegm bubbles up, dripping onto

the hospital sheet beneath her. She looks at it. She knows what it means. She begins to cry softly to herself.

EKOSHA

I will see you again, my friend.
We will be happy, and warm, and
loved. I know it. But still... I
am so very afraid...

The racking coughs come again. Her mouth is filling with blood. She leans over the bed, the blood splattering on the sheet. She's going, and she knows it.

Parmak bursts through the hole in the rubber isolation walls, alerted by the noise. He's wearing his medical mask and gloves again, but he goes straight to Ekosha.

PARMAK

Oh no, not another one... Someone
help me! I need help in here right
now!

He struggles to help Ekosha, but it's clearly too late...

GHEMOR (v.o.)

My fellow Cardassians...

24 EXT. CARDASSIA CITY - PUBLIC SQUARE

Close on Ghemor's face, standing firm, but eyes downcast, gazing into the middle distance. It's been a bad few days. But he takes a deep breath, and prepares his nerves.

He stands at the front of an improvised stage in the public square near the government buildings (9x05/9x06). He speaks out loud, his voice amplified (we don't need to see how).

GHEMOR

First, let me thank you for
standing here together in peace to
hear me. But I regret... that I
have only sad news to tell you.

ON JARTEK

Ghemor's assistant stands to one side of the makeshift stage, out of the way, watching Ghemor as he talks.

Now we can see the crowd filling the square, gathered to hear him speak. Some are willing to hear him out, but others, as we will see, are only here to heckle.

GHEMOR

Reports of a newly discovered disease affecting Cardassians... are true. As of an hour ago, the death toll stands at eight, of what we have come to refer to as the Uramtali Virus.

On the opposite side of the stage is Macet, keeping a close eye on the crowd, nervous about possible violence. There are more military officers around the edges of the square.

ON GARAK AND YEVIR

who stand right at the back of the crowd, watching Ghemor from a distance. They chat quietly, mostly small talk.

GARAK

I must admit I'm surprised, Vedek Yevir, that you didn't take the stage yourself.

YEVIR

Perhaps I have inadvertently acquired a reputation as a media hound. But not today. The Castellan has enough problems. And you, Mister Garak? Are you not one of the inner circle?

GARAK

Unofficially, perhaps. But Alon has made it clear that I am to remain in the shadows. "Mev holds an actual position in my government, Elim. You do not."

YEVIR

And what of Mister O'Brien?

GARAK

I felt he should be with his family.

Yevir nods, understanding. Garak is thoughtful...

GARAK

Do you have family on Bajor, Vedek?

YEVIR

No, no family. No wife. Barely the occasional lover, even. I just never seemed to be the type.

Garak seems to relate.

ON GHEMOR

...continuing his speech...

GHEMOR

I am not myself a follower of the Oralian Way -

CROWD VOICE (o.s.)

(interrupting)

Liar!

GHEMOR

(keep going)

...But that does not mean that I seek their destruction. They are not disease spreaders - they have done nothing to harm you or anyone.

A WOMAN in the crowd shouts out, interrupting again.

WOMAN

How do we know we're not next?

Mutters and shouts from the crowd agree with the question. Ghemor takes a deep breath, grits teeth, keeps pushing on.

GHEMOR

Right now, the finest minds on Cardassia are working to find a cure to this disease. But all the finger pointing and blind violence that Mister Mondrig prefers will solve nothing.

The crowd don't seem to agree. Somebody throws an object at the stage - it just misses hitting Ghemor.

Macet tenses, ready to move. Ghemor gestures him to stand down for now. There's a moment of quiet on stage, as Ghemor tries to gather his nerves and work out his next move.

ON GARAK

...who is getting uncomfortable.

GARAK

I don't like this crowd. It's dangerous.

YEVIR

Still, Mister Jartek's idea for a counter rally was sound.

ON CROWD

A COUGH echoes in the quiet. A MAN near the front of the stage has his hand to his mouth. Didn't mean to, just came out. He's scared, people looking at him. Crowd mutters...

CROWD WALLA

He's got it... that's how it starts... we're all as good as dead... it was a trap...

Someone lashes out and punches the coughing man hard. He goes down, bloodied, terror and panic in his eyes.

MAN

No... wait... it's not...

Another fist comes for the man. He collapses under a pile of bodies, all beating the crap out of him. Fights break out all through the crowd. Macet steps forward, shouting.

MACET

Stop this at once!

They ignore him. Macet signals his men around the edge of the square to move in and try to calm everyone.

INSERT

A hand holds an improvised device - little more than a Molotov cocktail. The hand throws it...

BACK TO SCENE

...and the device hits one of the buildings to the side, near to where Macet stands. It EXPLODES in a fireball. Macet dodges out of the way. This is getting out of hand.

Another bomb flies, hitting the government buildings behind the stage. More EXPLOSIONS, debris flying. The roar of the fighting crowd is getting louder.

A man storms the stage, heading for Ghemor. Macet gets there first and knocks the guy away, protecting Ghemor.

MACET

Jartek!

Jartek runs over, dodging flying projectiles to get to Ghemor. Macet passes the worried Castellan over to him.

MACET (cont)

Take him, get him to safety.

JARTEK

Of course...

Not leaving any room for protest, Jartek pushes Ghemor ahead of him, to the back of the stage and down some steps. There's a backstage area, then the door to the government buildings. There's no-one else there. Jartek opens the door and shoves Ghemor through it, closing it behind them.

25 **INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

The sounds of the rioting crowd can be heard, and there's a hint of flames from the window. The door SLAMS open and Ghemor and Jartek rush through, panting.

Ghemor slams the door shut behind them. He takes a moment to catch his breath and recover, rests his forehead against the closed door.

GHEMOR

Mev, thank you...

(turns to
Jartek)

You may well have saved -

GASP of pain and shock. Caught by surprise, Ghemor looks up into Jartek's eyes, which are right in front of his face. Open and staring, not missing a thing.

Ghemor gapes, grabbing onto Jartek's shoulder. Jartek wraps his spare arm around Ghemor, holding him close. Then with his main hand, he TWISTS the knife and drives it in deeper to Ghemor's chest. Ghemor splutters and shudders.

On Jartek's open, clear, deadly eyes...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

26 INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE

Where we left it, as Jartek holds Ghemor close, the knife buried deep in his chest...

JARTEK

I'm sorry, Alon... but it's
necessary. I wish you could see
that it's all for the best...

The roar of riots from outside is getting louder. It brings Jartek back to his senses. He pulls the knife out of Ghemor, then lowers the dying man gently to the ground.

That done, he quickly rushes over to a replicator set into the wall, places the knife into it. He hits a few keys, and the knife is dematerialised. Then he moves to a sink nearby and runs his hands under the water, washing off the blood.

He can hear hurried footsteps and raised voices approaching from the corridor. He quickly rushes back to Ghemor, and crouches down by him. He's not quite dead yet, shuddering in the last moments of his death throes. Ghemor looks up at Jartek, simple confusion in his eyes.

The door bursts open, and Garak, Parmak and Yevir rush in. But they screech to a halt when they see Ghemor.

GARAK

Alon...
(to Jartek; growl)
What happened?

Jartek affects a scared, tearful, almost hysterical voice. There's tears in his eyes as he fidgets, looks desperately back and forth between Garak and Ghemor.

JARTEK

They were waiting for us... behind
the stage... he had a knife... I
did everything I could...

With the last of his dying strength, Ghemor grabs for Garak and pulls him closer. He's mouthing something...

GHEMOR
(croak)
M-.... m-....

And then he expires. Garak hardens immediately. Parmak rushes forward and pushes Jartek aside, trying to get to Ghemor's wound. Yevir stays in the background, politely keeping to himself. He feels like a trespasser here.

JARTEK
(sniffle)
People have to know... that he
died for Cardassia. I have to tell
them...

YEVIR
I will help you.

Yevir moves to comfort Jartek, gently helping him to stand and guiding him over to the desk.

GARAK
What does "m" mean?

PARMAK
"M"... for Mondrig, perhaps?

Unsure, Garak stares down at Ghemor's dead body. As the noise from outside grows, Garak becomes colder and harder.

27 INT. O'BRIEN FAMILY QUARTERS

Keiko stands watching their TV set, horrified...

KEIKO
Miles!

O'Brien comes in from the other room, drying his hands on a dishcloth. He knows that tone in Keiko's voice.

O'BRIEN
Sweetheart, what's wrong?

She points to the TV set, showing a video of the riot. Fights, fires, soldiers with disruptors versus civilians with clubs and knives and bombs. Keiko is in tears.

KEIKO

They're saying Ghemor's been killed! There was a riot at his speech in Cardassia City, and one of the protesters stabbed him to death! They're blaming it on Mondrig and his people...

O'BRIEN

Oh hell...

KEIKO

First Feric, and now this...

He holds Keiko to comfort her, while they both watch...

28 INT. CARDASSIAN INFIRMARY - MAIN ROOM

Ghemor lies dead on a biobed, not in the isolation room. Parmak moves around the room, blank and emotionless. It's been a bad few days all around, and he's just worn out.

PARMAK

I'm in no mood for an interrogation, Elim.

Revealing Garak lurking in the room...

GARAK

Forgive me, my friend. It's not my intention to interrogate you. But something isn't right...

PARMAK

(snaps)

Nothing is right! Nothing has been right for a long time and it will never be right again!

He collapses into tears. Garak goes to comfort him.

GARAK

(gently)
Can you at least confirm what
killed him?

PARMAK
The knife wound, of course!

Garak nods, disappointed. Nothing he didn't already know.

PARMAK (cont)
Vicious thing it was, too. No
quick stab... bastard drove it in
deep and held it there.

Something about that strikes Garak as odd...

29 **INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

Jartek moves around the office, putting things in order. Still the noise of rioting outside, flames out the window. As he moves behind Ghemor's desk, straightening papers, the door opens and Garak enters. He sees Jartek behind the desk, but doesn't react. Keeps it open and friendly.

GARAK
Settling in already?

JARTEK
Me? No, Garak. I prefer to work
behind the scenes. Far less
dangerous that way. You and I are
very much alike in that regard, I
think.

GARAK
Really. You think so.
(beat)
The riot isn't slowing down.

JARTEK
It will. These things always blow
over.

GARAK
You sound very confident of that.

JARTEK

I'm confident of many things. As delightful as this small talk is, Mister Garak, recent events have left me with a rather full schedule...

GARAK

I understand. I've been busy myself. Checking the alleys outside for signs of Alon's assailant, the weapon... that sort of thing.

JARTEK

What needs checking? Alon is dead. Let him rest in peace.

Under all this, Jartek continues tidying the desk, acting like nothing's wrong. Garak follows his lead, pottering around, completely innocent and guileless.

GARAK

I've been thinking, Jartek... about the letter M. It isn't just for "Mondrig," is it? It also stands for "Mev." That's what Alon always called you.

JARTEK

M stands for many things, Garak. Do you have a point to make?

GARAK

You know, my good friend Doctor Bashir liked to educate me on human culture from time to time. Classic Earth literature, famous entertainments... One in particular I remember well. M, it seems, is also for "murder."

(beat)

Did you really think you could fool me, Jartek?

Jartek stops, looks at Garak. No point denying it anymore.

JARTEK
(quiet, plain)
I think I've been fooling you for
two years, Garak.

Tense now, as the two predators stare, quiet and dangerous
from across the room. Prowling, weighing each other up.

GARAK
Did you release the virus?

JARTEK
No. I can't claim credit for that.
It was a remarkably convenient
cover, though.

GARAK
But you told Mondrig about it.

JARTEK
No. That was one of Macet's own
guards. Who ironically then
succumbed to the disease himself.
It all just fell into place.

GARAK
But you are working for Mondrig.

JARTEK
Please. The man's a brainless
bigot. He couldn't plan this in a
million years.

GARAK
Then what? You wanted Ghemor's
position for yourself?

JARTEK
You really think I'm that petty?
I'm almost insulted. This isn't
about me. This is about the
movement. The Reunion Project.

GARAK

You've destroyed the Reunion
Project!

JARTEK

No! You don't see it, do you? You think you're so smart, but you just don't get it. I've given us a martyr! When the news spreads that Mondrig was behind the assassination, the Project will benefit from the sympathy of the people, and no-one will ever listen to Mondrig and his Directorate fools again.

GARAK

That's how you justify murder?

JARTEK

(passionate)

Yes! Ghemor was a good man, but he'll be a better man in death than he ever was in life. Democracy will survive without Alon Ghemor. In fact it will flourish. Have faith in the people, Mister Garak.

GARAK

(upset)

He had faith. He had a dream...

JARTEK

And we will achieve it for him in his absence. My job was always to advance the cause of the Reunion Project by any political means I could. But for there to be any kind of progress, someone must always be sacrificed.

Garak snaps. In a split second he's in front of Jartek with his hands wrapped around his throat and hissing with fury.

GARAK

I warned you. I warned you not to do anything without me. And now you've ruined everything!

JARTEK
(gasping)
I've saved everything!

GARAK
(re: the noise)
Does that sound saved to you?
Ghemor was the only one who could hold it all together. And now you've sent us all to hell.

Garak squeezes. He holds Jartek's face close, watches as the eyes bulge and the breaths get shorter and tighter. He squeezes. Cartilage in Jartek's neck breaks. Blood vessels burst. Limbs spasm and flail around. Garak squeezes.

Finally, after an agonisingly long death rattle and after Garak is certain he has wrung every last drop of life out of Jartek and watched it go, he drops him to the ground.

Garak stands and looks at the results of his actions...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

30 EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT

The formerly placid site is in chaos. People run across the square, in a panic. There is at least one FIRE, and a SIREN going off. A small SHUTTLE zooms into the area in something of a hurry, and settles quickly to the ground...

31 INT. O'BRIEN FAMILY QUARTERS

The outer door BURSTS open and Garak rushes in, catching Keiko and O'Brien by surprise. They were already worried enough as it is, but the sight of Garak, Macet and half a dozen Cardassian soldiers only makes it worse.

Garak gestures the soldiers to get on with it, and they immediately move to begin tagging everything in sight with transporter tags, Macet leading the way. While they do...

GARAK

You have to get out of here now.
These officers will pack your
possessions for you.

O'BRIEN

What are you talking about?

GARAK

I'm talking about you leaving.
Other officers are packing up
every other non-Cardassian at
Andak as we speak.

(calls out)

Children! Get ready - you're going
on a trip!

(back to O'Brien)

The *Xhosa* is in orbit. I've been
in contact with Captain Yates -
she's waiting to beam you aboard.

KEIKO

(flustered)

What? Kasidy...? But...

GARAK

I'm sorry, Mrs O'Brien, but you'll have to leave your project unfinished. It's not safe for you here anymore.

O'BRIEN

I thought you said we could handle ourselves.

GARAK

This is different!

O'BRIEN

(get his attention)

Garak. Stop.

Garak does, although impatiently. The children have come into the room now, scared by all the noise and strangers.

O'BRIEN (cont)

What is so bad? The riots? We've been through worse. You never worried about us before.

GARAK

This is worse! Exponentially worse!

O'BRIEN

Why?

GARAK

Because...

He looks over to Molly and Kirayoshi.

GARAK (cont)

Because I wasn't Uncle Garak before. Please, Miles... please take them and go. While you can.

You don't hear Garak pleading every day. O'Brien fakes a cheery voice and gathers the children close.

O'BRIEN

Hey kids! We're gonna go and see Auntie Kasidy! You remember Auntie Kasidy, right? Well, she's gonna take us to visit Deep Space Nine for a little while. That'll be fun, right?

Garak is relieved. But then O'Brien remembers something... he dashes off and grabs a PADD, hands it to Garak.

O'BRIEN

You'll want this. Those tech details about the Vinculum... I was going over them. It's all on there. You'll like it.

Garak looks down at the padd, a little caught off guard. Such a nice gesture. Macet appears and clears his throat...

MACET

We're ready, Garak. Mister O'Brien... best of luck.

GARAK

Thank you, Macet.

Macet takes the hint, and ushers his soldiers out. This is all moving so fast, and the O'Briens are still flustered.

GARAK

(taps wrist-comm)

Garak to *Xhosa*. Ready at your convenience.

COMM VOICE

Acknowledged. Energising...

KEIKO

Thank you.

GARAK

You're welcome, Mrs O'Brien. And Chief, one last thing, in case I never see you again... About Setlik Three...

O'Brien looks at him, confused - what about it?

GARAK

I'm sorry.

O'Brien's brow furrows... But then the TRANSPORTER takes them all and there is no more time to ask.

Garak stands alone in the room. Looks around himself. The ruins of a life, all over again. He takes a moment. Then he takes a deep breath, steels himself, and leaves the room.

32 EXT. HEBITIAN RUINS - HIGH ANGLE

The underground city where this all started...

33 INT. HEBITIAN RUINS

The caves, with their statues and ruins and dust. Garak strides in, carrying the padd O'Brien gave him plus a large DEVICE, about the size of a suitcase. He does not seem especially surprised to see that Yevir is waiting for him.

GARAK

You shouldn't be here, Vedek.

YEVIR

Neither should you. Isn't this place the source of the disease?

Garak lays his suitcase down and opens it. He toggles various switches and dials, and it hums to life.

GARAK

I was here before. Apparently I am immune. How fortunate for me. But you should have left with the others. If they find you, they will kill you.

YEVIR

This is where the Prophets led me, Mister Garak. This is where I should be.

Garak disconnects a chip out of the padd, and slots it into a space on the larger device.

YEVIR

What is that?

GARAK

A portable transporter unit. Chief O'Brien has translated Feric's runes, and he believes that it is possible to reach a state of *thri'fon* by way of quantum dematerialisation.

Vedek is near the statues of Oralius and the Hebitians. He touches them reverently. He speaks with awed wonder...

YEVIR

Then you are going to meet your god. I envy you.

GARAK

Forgive my bluntness, Vedek. My nerves have taken something of a battering lately. But I am doing nothing of the sort. I do not expect to meet Oralius, Uramtali, or any of the rest of them when I press that button. The Chief was right - they are a parable, of the light and darkness within all Cardassians. Nothing more.

(beat)

But I have to do something. And if there is wisdom to be found in the Vinculum - or a cure - then that's where I'll go. It's the only hope I have.

Yevir understands. He and Garak have a moment.

GARAK

Leave now. This is completely experimental, and for all I know, I'm about to blow up the entire planet.

Yevir pauses... and then nods acknowledgement. He turns to leave. Garak calls after him...

GARAK
Where will you go?

YEVIR
Into hiding. I'm Bajoran. I know
how to hide from Cardassians.

And Yevir is gone. Garak stands alone again. He steels himself, steps up to his device, and presses the button.

He dematerialises in a Cardassian TRANSPORTER swirl...

FADE TO BLACK

A moment, as the distant sounds of people drift in the distance. Happy chatting, glasses clinking...

SLOWLY FADE IN to reveal:

34 INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM

The cocktail party from the top of the episode, but subtly different. All the same people are there - Kira, Vaughn, Shar, Nog, Bashir, Macet, Ro, Taran'atar, Quark, Ekosha - but the feel is different.

There is an indistinct sheen over the image, marking it as somehow other than real. Everyone is smiling, happy, mingling in friendship. Movements are smoother, more ethereal, almost ghostlike, although the people are solid.

ON GARAK

...as he observes this phenomenon, gazing at it all in puzzlement and awe.

Bashir pushes forward out of the crowd, heading directly for Garak, a huge beaming, welcoming smile on his face.

BASHIR
Elim! You made it!

Bashir embraces him like a long-lost friend. Garak is a little surprised, but relaxes gratefully into it.

He pulls back, and looks around the room, trying to get a handle on the wooziness, to process the unprocessable.

GARAK

Doctor... where are we? Is this
Deep Space Nine?

BASHIR

(smile)

Oh, no. No, this is somewhere else
altogether. I don't know what
you'd call it, exactly... But it's
a place where we can meet and talk
about things, if you like.

GARAK

(dare he hope?)
Are you real?

BASHIR

(amused)

Of course I am! What else would I
be?

GARAK

But how did you get here?

BASHIR

(shakes head)

Really, Elim. You come all this
way, and these are the questions
you ask me?

GARAK

You never called me Elim before...

BASHIR

What should I call you?

GARAK

You always called me Garak.

BASHIR

And you always called me Doctor.
That's a job, not a name. It
doesn't say who I am. So I ask
again... what should I call you?
Who are you?

Garak ponders... and can't escape the sad conclusion.

GARAK

I'm a survivor. Again.

BASHIR

Exactly. We need you, Elim. You
can't hide in the shadows any
longer. You have to step forward
into the light.

GARAK

What am I supposed to do? I'm no
politician or doctor...

BASHIR

(gestures to
the others)

We will help you. Here...

Bashir hands Garak a standard Starfleet padd.

INSERT - THE PADD

Garak holds it, looks at its screen. The words on it seem
to waver, lift off the screen, and dissolve up into the air
towards Garak's face...

ON GARAK

...as the mist of words absorbs into Garak's face... His
eyes widen slightly, new knowledge filling his mind...
Around, the other party guests are smiling, encouraging.

BASHIR

(smile)

Better? Good.

Garak is still having trouble processing it all...

BASHIR
Now listen to me, Elim.
(get his attention)
Elim. Listen. We will always be
here for you. I promise we will
help you however we can. But
you're the one we need out there.
(firmly)
Step forward, Elim. We're
depending on you.

Bashir smiles, encouraging...

And then a Cardassian transporter swirl forms over Garak
and he dematerialises, the room **FADING TO BLACK...**

35 **INT. HEBITIAN RUINS**

Garak rematerialises in a transporter swirl, appearing back
in the Hebitian caves where he started. He pants from the
physical impact and emotional power of the experience...

...But then he pulls himself under control. He makes a
commitment. He bends down, gathers up the transporter
equipment, picks up the suitcase and walks out of the cave.

36 **EXT. CARDASSIA SURFACE**

Garak walks up the slight incline of the rocky ground
outside the Hebitian ruins. His head is held high, his eyes
to the sky, and the light of day on his face.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW