

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

9x05 - "The Lotus Flower."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the novella

"The Lotus Flower"
by Una McCormack

appearing in

Star Trek: Worlds of Deep Space Nine
Book 1 - Cardassia / Andor

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT - DAY

A long, sweeping shot of a wide VALLEY between looming mountains, blasted and scorched. Stark, difficult, yet strangely beautiful. We are on post-war Cardassia.

Within the valley is a small VILLAGE of buildings, make-shift and temporary. In the square they create is a public area, with rare spots of precious green. CLOSE IN...

...until we see a Cardassian civilian man, FERIC, walking through the square. He chats briefly to another man, and a woman, and more... brings them together into a small group.

Two children sit on the grass working on the earth together - MOLLY O'BRIEN (approx 9) and an older Cardassian girl, NYRA (approx 14). Nyra is supposed to be babysitting Molly, but it looks more like Molly is the one in charge.

SWEEP UP to one of the buildings, a residential block...

...until we see KEIKO leaning on the sill of an open upper level window, observing this with a gentle, proud smile. She looks away from her daughter, knowing she's safe...

...to where FERIC has gathered his small group together in the square. He turns to them, raises an ORALIAN MASK (as in 8x09 "A Stitch in Time") to his face, and recites...

FERIC

The power that moves through me,
animates my life, animates the
mask of Oralius...

Keiko looks back to Molly, sees that she and Nyra have paused what they were doing to watch the Oraliens...

FERIC (cont)

It is the song of the morning,
opening up to life, bringing the
truth of his wisdom, to those who
live in the shadow of the night...

As the Oralian listen rapt, Keiko looks up again, spots another open window across the square...

...where another figure stands watching - NAITHE. This small, portly Bolian man catches Keiko's eye back, *cheers!* to her with the PADD in his hand, returns his attention to the gathering in the square below, making notes...

FERIC (cont)

It is this self-same power, turned
against creation, turned against
my friend, that can destroy his
body with my hand, reduce his
spirit with my hate...

Keiko watches Feric recite, and remembers...

2 INT. ANDAK - KEIKO'S OFFICE

Keiko speaks via a computer screen with DRURY, a human male and her boss. He is unhappy but resigned...

DRURY (screen)

You've got your geologist, Keiko.
Despite his... ah... fascinating
beliefs...

KEIKO

Feric is a member of the Oralian
Way, Charlie. And don't raise your
eyebrow at me like that. The only
reason there's been this much fuss
is he's had the nerve to discuss
his beliefs openly. And since when
did the IAAC hire people based on
their religion, or lack of it?

DRURY (screen)

You make, as ever, a convincing
case. But no more controversy if
you please, Keiko. The budget
won't stand for many more
emergency meetings. The funding
for the Andak Project isn't that
secure. Yet.

3 **BACK TO SCENE**

Keiko shakes her head, continues to watch the ceremony below. She remembers another earlier conversation...

4 **INT. ANDAK - KEIKO'S OFFICE**

Now KIRA is on the screen, as Keiko gives her bad news...

KEIKO

Nerys... you're going to see me
shaking hands with Vedek Yevir.
He's visiting Andak as part of his
tour of Cardassia. I'm not happy
about it, but his visit is a major
publicity event for the project...
and we can use all the help we can
get, especially with the funding
still in doubt... I'm sorry.

KIRA (screen)

Don't be, Keiko. The Prophets know
I've had to extend the hand of
friendship often enough to people
who I'd rather be strangling.

(share a chuckle)

Yevir might not be what you expect.
I don't know if the Prophets have
touched him, but I know that's what
he believes. And it comes through,
Keiko. Whatever else I might think
of the man... I can't deny that.

5 **BACK TO SCENE**

Keiko tenses, grinding at the thought of it. Speaking of...

Below Naithe's window, another figure stands in a doorway,
and this one is not so cheerful. TELA, a mature Cardassian
woman. Tall and elegant, finely poised and very controlled.
But Keiko can see the tension in her stance even from here.

Tela catches the Cardassian girl Nyra's attention, beckons
her over sharply. Nyra stands, shares an apologetic glance
with Molly, and goes as ordered. The older woman grabs her
by the arm, drags her through the door, SLAMS it closed.

As the echo of the slam bounces off the mountains, Keiko sighs sadly to have seen this...

O'BRIEN (o.s.)
Bloody hell!

Keiko sighs, amused at the broken mood. She turns to see --

6 INT. ANDAK - O'BRIEN'S APARTMENT (CONTINUOUS)

-- O'BRIEN with his head inside a wall panel of the family quarters, open toolboxes and strewn gadgetry all around...

KEIKO
What are you doing, Miles?

O'BRIEN
I can't get this thing to work.
Damned Cardassian settings!

KEIKO
Is that why it's so hot in here?
Miles! Why didn't you just leave
it alone?

He pulls his head out of the wall, looks at her confused...

O'BRIEN
You were complaining about the
heat again last night. I was only
trying to make things more
comfortable for you.

KEIKO
But aren't you meant to be leaving
for Cardassia City in a few hours?
And are you packed yet?
(a thought)
Is your presentation even ready?

He sticks his head back inside the panel and mumbles something half-heard and non-committal. Keiko is not fooled...

KEIKO
I can't hear you with your head in
there, Miles.

O'BRIEN
(reappearing, a
little glare)
I said, I'll finish it on the way
up there.

KEIKO
So, let me see if I've got this
straight. Instead of finishing a
presentation on which the entire
future of the Andak Project may
hang, you decided to open up the
wall, pull out all the cables and
destroy my living room?

He pulls his head out fully, slumps to the floor, sighs...

O'BRIEN
(quiet)
I'm just... trying to fix the
temperature modulators, Keiko.

KEIKO
(gently)
Miles... I know this isn't easy
for you. And I'm sorry for that.
(beat, firmer)
But you are Miles Edward O'Brien,
the most important man in all of
Starfleet. You can do this.

Miles looks up at Keiko... and nods, resolving himself. He
stands, gives her a kiss, then heads off to get ready.

Keiko watches him go, worried for her husband...

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

7 EXT. CARDASSIA - NIGHT

A rickety old bus rattles along a pitted and broken road, between the destroyed buildings and blasted landscape. We TURN to watch it pass, watching it progress towards...

...what remains of CARDASSIA CITY, looming ahead of them in the dark and soot-clogged night...

8 INT. CARDASSIAN BUS - NIGHT

O'BRIEN huddles into a seat against the grimy window. He shifts uncomfortably, trying to balance the Cardassian drooling asleep on his shoulder, a padd containing his presentation, and a cup of cold coffee at the same time.

The bus bounces over a pothole - O'Brien JOLTS, sloshes coffee all over his arm, swears under his breath.

The Cardassian grunts and mutters, but does not wake up. O'Brien sneers at him - he's been on this godforsaken bus for hours, and he's tired, achy and thoroughly fed up.

9 EXT. CARDASSIA - NIGHT

An unidentified pair of LEGS walks with cautious, precise steps, picking their way over the rubble.

The figure reaches a building that remains mostly intact, shelters under the overhang, melts back into the shadows...

...and watches silently as the bus trundles and splutters past the building, O'BRIEN visible against the window.

The hidden figure lets the bus go unhindered. He looks up, sees that it has begun to spit black, dirty RAIN... then he turns, opens a door, and disappears into the building.

10 INT. CARDASSIAN BUS - NIGHT

O'Brien stares out the window, willing this to be over... then reacts as something catches his attention...

11 EXT. CARDASSIA - NIGHT

...bedraggled SURVIVORS gathered in SHANTY TOWNS along the road, sheltering from the rain in their barely serviceable shacks. They watch the bus go by, choke on the fumes...

One decides to SHOUT at the bus and its passengers, JOSTLES it, BANGS on the window right by O'Brien's head...

12 INT. CARDASSIAN BUS - NIGHT

...and he JOLTS back, alarmed. He looks back down at the Cardassian passed out on his shoulder...

...then up at the rest of the passengers, crammed into this decrepit old bus, all as tired and worn out as him. They've been living like this not just for hours, but for *months*.

O'Brien curses himself in shame. Looks down at the padd in his hand - his way to help them - and gets back to work.

13 INT. BASEMENT ROOM

The unidentified man emerges down the steps from street level into the basement. Other figures are already there, sat around a table. They are hidden in shadow or otherwise unidentified, although we can tell they are Cardassian.

The first figure takes a place at the head of the table...

MAN 1

Well, gentlemen. May I assume
everything is in place?

14 EXT. CARDASSIA CITY - PUBLIC SQUARE - MORNING

Morning now, and we are in another public square. O'Brien stands bundled up against the rain and chill, watching...

...a line of REFUGEES waiting to enter a shambling building and be given a morning ration of food, clothing, medicine. One SHOVES another, arguing over who was first in line...

...until a Cardassian SOLDIER and a Starfleet SECURITY both step in, working together to calm the situation. O'Brien is glad of that, sad that it's necessary...

...then a HAND reaches in, TAPS him on the shoulder, and O'Brien nearly goes into orbit. He SPINS --

-- and finds GARAK standing behind him with a small smirk.

O'BRIEN

Bloody hell, Garak, are you trying to give me a heart attack?

GARAK

(cheerful)

My apologies, Chief. I didn't mean to startle you, I'm sure.

O'BRIEN

You've got a bloody strange sense of humour, you know that?

GARAK

You wouldn't deny me a little joy in these troubled times, would you?

Garak holds his hand out to shake. O'Brien hesitates - he has his past with Garak, but eventually accepts and shakes. Garak is not offended - he understands O'Brien's concerns.

GARAK

Welcome back to the capital. How was your journey?

O'BRIEN

...Fine. You're looking tired...

GARAK

No doubt because it's far too early in the morning. And I confess, the thought of the day ahead does weary me a little...

(rallies himself)

Shall we have breakfast? There's time before the session starts.

O'Brien grunts his agreement, and Garak leads him towards another patchwork building in the square. O'Brien sadly eyes the queue of shuffling Cardassians on his way...

15 **INT. CARDASSIA CITY - CANTEEN**

Garak sits at a table, back to the wall so he can safely observe everyone else. The room is basic and industrial, but warm and dry and filled with the smells of food, all of which O'Brien appreciates. Starfleet and other humans are here, as well as the more well-heeled Cardassians.

O'Brien sits opposite, perusing the menu. A waiter arrives - Garak orders straight away...

GARAK

I will have my usual, please. And
I believe my friend would enjoy
the beef stew with dumplings.

(off O'Brien's
happy surprise)

A lot of staff from the Federation
embassy come here. So you need not
suffer Cardassian cuisine.

O'Brien relaxes a bit, impressed and grateful...

O'BRIEN

Big day for Keiko today. Vedek
Yevir is paying the base a visit.

GARAK

Ah yes, the turbulent priest. Try
not to mention him when you see
Ghemor later. He does tend to
start grinding his teeth whenever
the vedek's name comes up. Our
beloved but harried Castellan
would appreciate even a little of
his favourable press coverage.

O'BRIEN

Yevir certainly knows how to make
a splash...

GARAK

All for the glory of the Prophets,
no doubt. And in selfless pursuit
of peace between our peoples.

The food arrives - fast and obviously pre-prepared, but acceptable, especially after the night O'Brien's had. He tucks in with enthusiasm; Garak rather more daintily...

GARAK

We're all on the same side these days, it seems. Although I wonder if I preferred it when I knew precisely who my enemies were.

Garak tries to lighten the mood with a lurid, half-true tale, buried in plain conversation...

GARAK

This entire complex is on the site of what was once an Obsidian Order facility. Well, the cellars were, at any rate. I think the offices on top dealt in... transportation logistics. I often wondered, after the Order collapsed, whether there was anyone still... down below...

(playing to an audience now)

...whether they languished in the darkness, waiting for someone who would never come...

O'BRIEN

(looking up)

Remind me never to take you up on that offer of a tour of the city. I'm not sure I want your... unique perspective.

O'Brien pauses, peers at his companion more closely. Garak is in a bit of a broody mood...

O'BRIEN

I think you should get away from the city for a bit, Garak. Go off-world. You're getting morbid.

GARAK

My apologies.

O'BRIEN
(back to food)
How is the Castellán, anyway?

GARAK
Alon?

O'BRIEN
Oh, first-name terms, I see.

GARAK
Old friend. Same as ever. Shrewd.
Dedicated. Perhaps a little too
sincere for his own good.

O'BRIEN
I would have thought a little
sincerity would go down well.

GARAK
I think a decent water supply
would go down better.

O'BRIEN
(gently)
Early days yet, Garak.

GARAK
Ghemor's appointed a new political
advisor. Young, ambitious. Name of
Mev Jartek. I'm not too sure of...
his background.
(beat)
Not yet, anyway.

O'BRIEN
What do you think of him?

Garak puts down his fork, ponders the question a moment...

GARAK
He wears bad suits.

O'BRIEN
Surely you can't hold that against
him.

GARAK

What else do you need to know
about a man?

O'BRIEN

Well, friend or foe?

GARAK

(smirk)

Didn't I say, we're all friends
now? Regardless, you'll see him
for yourself later. I wouldn't
mind hearing your opinion.

O'Brien puts down his fork too, lowering his voice and
getting down to business...

O'BRIEN

How do you see this session
playing out, Garak? Anything I
need to know before I go in?

GARAK

You'll be recommending the funding
goes to Andak, yes?

(O'Brien nods)

Well, I should hope so. You're in
a strong position as the Starfleet
representative. Few of us are keen
to get on your bad side these days.
But there are still some strong
opponents of the Andak Project on
the committee. Entor, for one.

O'BRIEN

Entor?

GARAK

Former gul, and the Directorate's
main representative on the science
committee. I'm sure it's not the
case that the Directorate goes out
of its way to oppose every one of
Ghemor's policy initiatives, but
it certainly seems that way. Entor
will be tough.

O'BRIEN

I can manage. The recommendations are perfectly clear, after all.

GARAK

I'm serious, Chief. Don't be surprised if he gets in a few shots about the fact that your wife is the director of Andak.

O'BRIEN

What?! He wouldn't dare --

GARAK

Oh yes he would. Ghemor has staked a great deal of political capital on getting Andak funded, and Entor will stop at nothing to undermine him. He'll count blackening your name, and that of your lady wife, as a good day's work. So have your answer to that one ready.

O'BRIEN

You're the expert, Garak.

GARAK

Indeed I am.

But that's a lie. Garak is actually just as nervous and uncertain here, and he hates that...

GARAK

Ghemor wants to talk to you after your presentation too. You're not hurrying back to Andak, are you?

O'BRIEN

There's no particular rush. Keiko has everything under control. Well... I hope she has...

Garak nods and stands, abandoning his unfinished meal. O'Brien scarfs down the last few morsels of his, then stands too. They go to the waiter post, pay and leave...

16 **EXT. CARDASSIA CITY - PUBLIC SQUARE - MORNING**

Garak and O'Brien emerge from the building into the square, where nothing has changed. Four Starfleet officers patrol, eyeing the line of waiting Cardassians warily....

O'BRIEN

Has that line moved at all?

GARAK

I don't believe so, no.

O'BRIEN

I thought Cardassia was meant to be hot. Like up at Andak. It's been raining ever since I got here.

GARAK

Our Cardassian heritage. This rain contains much of what was once our art... our architecture... our books... much of what was once our population, come to that.

O'BRIEN

That's a bit ghoulish. You are getting morbid, Garak.

They reach another building. Garak opens the door for O'Brien to pass through, and with a last glance back...

GARAK

Like many of us, I'm just a product of my environment.

...he turns to enter, shutting the door behind him.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

17 EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT - DAY

The weather is warm and clear at Andak, and the square is buzzing with staff and residents - Cardassians, Bolians, humans, other Federation races - all working busily to get everything set up for Yevir's arrival later today.

KEIKO and FERIC walk together around the square, inspecting the work and smiling encouragement to the others. They have become friends in the short time they've worked together. Suddenly Feric pauses, turns subtly to Keiko and mutters...

FERIC

Now, don't run away screaming, but
I think Naithe just spotted you.

KEIKO

(small groan)

That's all I need this morning.

She makes an effort to put on a warm welcoming smile and turns to NAITHE, who huffs over, bombastic and cheerful...

NAITHE

Good morning, Director, good morning! A fine morning, is it not? And I am assuming, based on the evidence presented to us each day, that it will continue to be a fine afternoon, which surely must alleviate some of your concerns...

KEIKO

Thank you, Naithe, yes it does.
It's always good to know that the weather at least will be supportive --

NAITHE

Rest assured that we are all of us one hundred percent behind you, Director, one hundred percent.

NAITHE (cont)

We're all very proud of Andak and the work we're doing, and each one of us understands how important the vedek's visit is to the future of the project...

Keiko tenses - but at the confused frown on Feric's face, she forces herself to relax. Naithe is still talking...

NAITHE (cont)

...I myself am looking forward to observing the effects today might have on our blossoming community, particularly whether the arrival of such a controversial figure - and a Bajoran at that - might even put stresses on the relationships between the Cardassian and Federation staff members here --

FERIC

(jumping in)

I'm sure, Doctor Naithe, as you say, that we're all one hundred percent behind Keiko today.

NAITHE

Undoubtedly, undoubtedly! Well, I'm sure you've got plenty to do this morning, Director, plenty to do. Carry on, carry on!

Naithe turns and trots off back across the square, leaving Keiko and Feric distinctly nonplussed...

FERIC

So did he actually say anything helpful at all then?

KEIKO

No. He did make me more nervous, though. I'm sure he meant well.

FERIC

Isn't he meant to understand people?

KEIKO

He's written books about them.
Xeno-sociology, he calls it. The
study of alien social systems.

FERIC

Strange. Here on Cardassia, that
was called military intelligence.

Keiko chuckles - they go back to walking companionably...

FERIC

I noticed you tensed when Naithe
mentioned Yevir. Is something
wrong? Do you expect a problem?

KEIKO

Not with the event, no. It's... a
personal thing. Not something I'm
proud of. And I'm trying not to
let it affect me. But Yevir hurt
a friend of mine. Hurt her badly.

(change subject)

So - tell me about the service you
held yesterday.

FERIC

I was wondering when we'd come to
that. Did you mind that we met?

KEIKO

Mind? Why would I mind?

FERIC

The Oralian Way is hardly the most
popular group on Cardassia, Keiko.
And when you're brought up to
think carefully before you dare to
utter even a single word, suddenly
being free to say what you like
is... well, it's terrifying!

KEIKO

Tell me about the Way. About what
it means. What it means to you.

FERIC

Start with the small questions,
why don't you!

Thinking about how to answer, he stops and gazes at the
looming mountains. Keiko stops with him, waits for him...

FERIC

Botany, Keiko, is in quick time.
Two seasons and you're done. But
geology... geology is in slow time.
My mother was a geologist. She used
to bring me here when I was young.
I remember once, she told me that
those mountains had been here long
enough to see one civilisation fall
and another rise. I thought that
was the most exciting thing I'd
ever heard. Because it meant we're
not at the centre. We're just part
of something older, something much
bigger. That's what the Way is
about, Keiko. About how everything
connects, across time and place.
How we change... when we no longer
put ourselves at the centre.

He smiles shyly, a little embarrassed to have gone on at
such length. But Keiko is enchanted.

Then Feric tenses and folds his arms, as if preparing for a
confrontation. Confused, Keiko turns, sees another person
walking to them - it's the older Cardassian woman TELA....

KEIKO

Don't worry. I know Tela can be
difficult, but she doesn't mean
any harm...

FERIC

She may not mean harm, Keiko, but
I fear she does not mean well.

Tela reaches them, and gives a stiff, precise nod to Feric,
which he returns equally stiffly...

TELA
Doctor Lakhat.

FERIC
Professor Maleren.

TELA
Director O'Brien --

KEIKO
Please, it's been almost three
months now. Call me Keiko.

TELA
Very well...
(uncomfortably)
...Keiko. I appreciate that you
are particularly busy today. But I
would like, if I may, to speak to
you on a matter of some urgency.
(glance at Feric)
In private.

FERIC
(deep breath)
How about I carry on checking
everything's in order for this
afternoon, and you come and join
me when you're ready?

KEIKO
Thanks, Feric.
(back to Tela)
Let's go to my office.

Keiko walks off across the square, and Tela follows. Feric
watches them go with a worried glare...

18 INT. ANDAK - KEIKO'S OFFICE

Keiko leads Tela into her office, gesturing for her guest
to take the seat opposite her own. Tela hesitates for a
second, then takes the seat, remaining ramrod straight.

Hoping to delay the moment, Tela spots an old-style SCHOOL
BELL on Keiko's desk. She picks it up, inspects it...

TELA

What is this?

KEIKO

That's my old school bell. I used to teach on Deep Space Nine. The children had nothing to keep them occupied and... well, there was really no call for a botanist on a space station.

TELA

Ah. I think now I understand more about these classes you've asked us all to give.

KEIKO

The school was a good way of bringing very different cultures together. So yes, that's why I'd like us all to take a hand in educating the children here at Andak. There are some brilliant, gifted people here, and I think it would be a real opportunity for the children to learn from them.

TELA

I used to love teaching when I was younger. When I became principal of the Science Academy, I had less time for it. I regret that. Do you miss teaching, Director O'Brien?

KEIKO

I do miss it, a great deal. And I'm sure that we love teaching for the same reasons.

With a polite but dubious expression, Tela places the bell back on the desk, smoothes a crease from her dress...

TELA

Do you think so, Director O'Brien?

Keiko is a bit confused, wondering where this is going...

KEIKO

Well... I loved to teach because I love to give children and students new ideas, to see their minds opening. To see them take what I have and make something new from it, something their own.

TELA

Then as I suspected, we are not in accordance. When I taught, it was to pass on to my students their tradition, their heritage. Everything that was Cardassian, that had been given to me and that I wished to give to them in turn.

Keiko glances down - Tela is worrying at her bracelet, a nervous habit. What is she so worried about...?

KEIKO

Professor Maleren... Tela. We've worked together for months now, and you've never chosen to speak to me like this. I'm glad you're speaking to me now, but you must tell me what brought you here.

TELA

(quietly)

There is so little left... and yet there seems to be no will to protect it. Worse, a desire to destroy the little that remains.

KEIKO

You're talking about the service, aren't you? The Oralian Way.

TELA

(tightening)

It has no place in public at Andak. No other groups here at the base air their views as openly as the Oralian Way did yesterday. It is not acceptable --

KEIKO

(firmer)

Professor Maleren, I'm not going to use my authority to ban any person here from expressing their beliefs however they choose.

TELA

(appalled)

Where there are children watching, Director O'Brien!

Tela gets up, steps away, looks around the room - all to get herself back under control. Finally...

TELA

I have a daughter, you have a daughter. Can you care so little about what she learns? Do you see so little of worth in your own values, your own traditions, that you have no wish for them to be hers as well?

KEIKO

Molly lived most of her life among other cultures. Her own mother and father are from different cultures - of course I'm happy for her to learn all she can from everything around her. Those are my values.

TELA

"Infinite diversity" is a luxury Cardassia could never afford. All that I have left to give to my own daughter now is ruins, Director. Perhaps if that was all you had, you would wish to protect it too.

KEIKO

Tela, I'm not underestimating your concerns. But for today at least, while the project is not secure, while all of Cardassia is watching us, we have to pull together.

Tela pulls herself upright, resolves herself...

TELA

I must not leave you doubting my commitment to this project. Or believing this is some... childish tantrum, just because I was passed over for the position of director myself as I'm sure must be common knowledge by now. If our work here is successful, it will change Cardassia forever - and I have dedicated myself to that change.

KEIKO

I know, Tela, I know.

TELA

But still, there is so little left.

She sighs, sweeps her elegant dress, and steps towards the door. But she pauses and turns back...

TELA

There is one other thing I wish to say - that you will be making a mistake, Keiko, if you treat us as if we were Bajorans. We are rational creatures - too rational perhaps. But we are alike in one way, I grant you. Alike because of what they learned from us - to be obstinate. Good day, Director.

Tela nods a polite farewell and leaves. Keiko watches her go, and hardens, thinking... *I can be obstinate too.*

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

19 INT. CARDASSIA CITY - MEETING ROOM

O'BRIEN rolls his shoulders, rubs his neck, tries to ease the tension. He has been sitting here for hours in this dull room, with its dull, glaring electric lights and its dull, droning speeches. GARAK leans in, speaks *sotto*...

GARAK

The trouble with democracy is that
it takes up too many mornings.

O'Brien appreciates Garak's attempt to cheer him up, but it doesn't work. He looks around at the rest of the room - all Cardassians. He is the only human here, and he feels it.

The castellan, GHEMOR (seen in 8x09) presides at the centre of a long table, other politicians either side. He appears as tired as O'Brien, aged beyond his years. A Cardassian woman, REMAR, gives a presentation in b.g walla.

A side door opens and another man enters - Cardassian male, 30s. He hands a padd to Ghemor, then retires to a corner of the room. Garak nudges O'Brien, nods toward this new man...

GARAK

Jartek.

O'Brien watches the new man with interest. JARTEK is trying just a bit too hard to be inconspicuous, thus making him all the more obvious. And he is indeed wearing a bad suit.

Remar comes to the end of her presentation. Ghemor sits up straight, speaks with strength and gravity...

GHEMOR

Doctor Remar, thank you for your
contributions this morning. I now
open the floor to my colleagues,
who no doubt have some questions
for you. I first call upon Merak
Entor, senior representative from
the Directorate...

As O'Brien watches, another man puffs himself up to speak. Despite the lack of uniform, ENTOR carries himself like a military officer, and speaks like he is training cadets. O'Brien instantly dislikes him...

ENTOR

Doctor Remar... you have been a remarkable advocate for the Andak Project.

REMAR

I believe the research being conducted there has the potential to transform Cardassia's future --

ENTOR

Yes, we've heard this argument from you already this morning, in detail and at great length.

Entor's cronies on the committee smirk in superiority...

REMAR

(mildly)

When explaining difficult technical matters, it is important to take into account the... level of expertise of one's audience.

Remar smiles demurely. Garak chuckles. Entor scowls...

ENTOR

What I would like to know, Doctor, is just how objective you've been in coming to these conclusions.

REMAR

Objective...? I was requested - as a former member of the Science Academy - to provide a comparative report on the Andak and Setekh projects, their potential benefits to Cardassia and its ecosystem... Forgive me, Councillor Entor, but I'm not sure I understand the purpose of your question.

ENTOR

Then let me make an explanation
which takes into account your...
level of expertise in political
matters.

(pause for smugness)

Is it not true that the deputy
director of the project to which
you have given such eloquent and
unequivocal support... was once
your lover?

O'Brien almost laughs out loud. Garak groans, disappointed
in such an obvious move. Remar sputters...

REMAR

(outraged)

Almost twenty years ago! How could
you possibly suggest I would --

ENTOR

(to the room)

Doctor Feric Lakhat - we heard his
evidence last week. A follower of
the Oralian way, I understand...

Entor's cronies nod as if this explains everything. Ghemor
straightens, weary of having to do this every time...

GHEMOR

Councillor Entor, you're implying
a level of corruption on Doctor
Remar's part which would run
counter to all her principles as a
scientist --

ENTOR

(pompous)

I am indeed.

REMAR

Councillor, I believe that your
question says a great deal more
about the Directorate than it does
about the scientific community.

GHEMOR

And I believe the Councillor has seriously overstepped his bounds and owes us an apology. As ever, the Directorate seems intent on sabotaging the democratic process rather than participating in it.

ENTOR

And as ever, that process is shown up as the sham it truly is!

The meeting descends into chaos - Entor and Remar, their rivals and supporters on the committee, all SHOUT and point fingers. O'Brien winces at the cacophony. Garak sighs in exasperation. Ghemor stands and bellows over the din...

GHEMOR

This is unacceptable! I will not have these hearings reduced to the level of a bar-room brawl!

The room gradually quiets, some of the participants having the sense to look ashamed. Entor, though, looks proud of the chaos he's caused. Ghemor glowers at him...

GHEMOR

We'll continue this afternoon, when perhaps we might aspire to constructive debate rather than outright farce.

Ghemor turns his back on the room and stomps out. Jartek finally steps up, speaking for the first time...

JARTEK

I think we can take it that this meeting is adjourned. This time, Councillor Entor, I think you may have gone a little too far.

Jartek shares an intense look with Entor...

Garak notices the look, and it pricks his suspicion...

O'Brien notices Garak's reaction, worries what it means...

Then Jartek turns and follows Ghemor out of the room. Garak turns to O'Brien, seething under his smooth veneer...

GARAK

You see what I mean about Entor?

O'BRIEN

Hardly subtle about it, is he?

GARAK

It's idiots like that who will cripple Cardassia before she's had a chance to get up off her knees. And all in the name of her greater glory. Well, we tried that once, and where did it get us?

O'Brien is taken aback at such open, undisguised bitterness from Garak. With a harrumph, Garak stands and walks to the door. Not knowing what else to do, O'Brien follows...

20 INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE

O'Brien enters through the door held open for him by Garak. The door CLICKS closed behind him - O'Brien TENSES, aware he is in a small, enclosed room with three Cardassians.

Pulse quickens, fingers fidget, eyes scan nervously...

The grey scaly skin of their hands. The long bony ridges of their necks. The snake-like lick of their lips.

A hand lands on his shoulder, and again he JUMPS...

...and sees Garak offer him a warm, sympathetic smile. Of anyone, Garak knows how O'Brien feels about Cardassians.

O'Brien makes an effort to calm himself down, looks around the room. For a multi-planetary government centre, it is small and unimpressive. One wall is entirely taken up with six big VIEWSCREENS, recognisably Starfleet technology, mostly broadcasting news reports from across the planet.

Over the above, one news report has had the sound turned up - a Bajoran news crew led by TERIS (female, 30s)...

TERIS (screen)

And with the future of the project under discussion, Vedek Yevir's presence here can only be seen as a boost for Andak's political backers, including the Cardassian castellan Alon Ghemor and his struggling administration...

O'Brien brightens - *they're talking about Keiko!* But then Jartek silences the screen, turns to a grumbling Ghemor...

JARTEK

Don't worry about it, Alon. Federation news, remember? Yes, it's the best. But you can't be surprised if all the good in the world is attributed to the vedek.

GHEMOR

(an old grumble)

Who's running this administration, anyway?

GARAK

(pushing forward)

Before you launch into that again, allow me to introduce Chief Miles O'Brien, of the Starfleet Corps of Engineers. A trusted colleague of longstanding. At least try to give a good impression, hmm?

Ghemor gives Garak a half-hearted, affectionate smile. Then he turns warmly to O'Brien and offers his hand. O'Brien takes it, shakes it firmly, and manages not to cringe...

GHEMOR

Welcome to the capital, Chief. I appreciate your coming all this way - even if it ended up being a wasted journey. Is there anything you'd like?

O'BRIEN

Wouldn't say no to a coffee.

Jartek taps a comm, mutters unheard into it, then takes a quiet spot in the corner again. From his safe place, he glances towards Garak, almost nervous in his presence...

Garak sees, smothers a smirk. He wants Jartek on his toes.

O'BRIEN

Does Entor regularly break up sessions like that?

GHEMOR

Too often. Were I a different man, and this a different time, I might trump up treason charges and have him executed.

Garak tenses, worried about O'Brien's potential reaction...

Jartek's eyes are on Garak instantly, wary...

O'BRIEN

Different place now, Cardassia. This is a democracy now.

GHEMOR

(chuckling)

So they tell me!

The tense moment is gone. Garak relaxes, Jartek in turn...

GHEMOR

Let's get down to it, Miles. I'm hoping you came all this way to tell me the SCE's recommendation is that we fund Andak, rather than Setekh. My secret fear in those dark watches of the night is that Starfleet has changed its mind.

O'BRIEN

Then you can relax. There's no way we'd support any resources going to the work being done at Setekh. You do realise, I assume, that the technologies being developed there have military applications?

GHEMOR

That is, I think, perhaps the worst kept secret on Cardassia at the moment. It's supposed to be classified, so of course half the damned capital knows about it.

O'BRIEN

The perils of freedom of speech, I'm afraid. Do you know who leaked the information?

Ghemor glances at Jartek for an answer...

JARTEK

We've got a very good idea - an aide to one of the Directorate.

GHEMOR

So even if the committee votes in favour of Andak, you can see where the Directorate will go next, of course? Give them their due, they've played this one very well. It's a no-win situation for Ghemor and his government. Leaned on by the Federation, blocking a project which, as everyone knows, had certain... ancillary benefits...

O'BRIEN

Who wants to see Cardassia armed to the teeth again right now?

GARAK

(quiet)

That could be considered something of a Federation viewpoint.

O'BRIEN

Whole bloody quadrant, more like!

GARAK

(not upset)

Perhaps. But you have to look at it from the ground on Cardassia.

GARAK (cont)

The military is dispossessed, more than a little disgruntled. But more than that... democracy is slow, Chief. And sick and hungry people are not so patient.

GHEMOR

There's a great will for change, Miles. But there's also a great deal of fear. The word "security" has a lot of power.

GARAK

And what does a democrat do, when the popular will is not for democracy? Or when the people don't care enough about democracy to protect it?

O'BRIEN

When did you take up philosophy?

GARAK

Exile not only broadens your horizons, Chief... it gives you time to think.

The door opens and a Cardassian functionary brings in the drinks on a tray. They all feign friendly joviality while the server does his work and leaves. Once he's gone...

GHEMOR

(sigh)

Regardless, I cannot ride roughshod over the decision of the committee. Not if I want to look plausible as a democrat.

Ghemor takes a long pause, looks thoughtfully over to the still silent screens, which show...

...that Vedek YEVIR has arrived at Andak, and is touring the settlement square. No sign of Keiko yet though...

GHEMOR
(thoughtful)
You know... if the committee does
vote against Andak and the project
is killed, I think I'll resign.
Point of honour.

Garak is instantly on alert and pressing forward...

GARAK
This is the first I've heard of
this. Need I tell you just how bad
an idea that is?

GHEMOR
(quiet)
Sometimes it seems like a very
good idea. During those dark
watches of the night.

GARAK
Keep it there.

Garak relaxes slightly, sympathetic but determined. Ghemor
shakes off his moroseness with an effort...

GHEMOR
Very well, Garak! We'll strike
that from the plan, shall we? Turn
the sound up will you, Mev? Looks
like the vedek is about to speak
to his adoring masses. Let's hear
what pearls of wisdom he has to
dispense today.

As Jartek moves towards the screens...

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

21 EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT - DAY

YEVIR strolling through the courtyard, open and pleasant, listening seemingly rapt as Naithe rabbits on MOS.

Every step is followed by the PRESS, surrounding them almost completely - at least a dozen, including the Bajoran reporter TERIS and her accompanying cameraman LAMERAT.

KEIKO watching from under heavy brows, jaw tense, thinking of Kira... until at length she forces on her professional face and a press-perfect smile.

She walks over, intercepts Yevir and Naithe at one of the green patches, where FERIC is working. Interrupting...

KEIKO

Vedek, I'd like you to meet Doctor
Feric Lakhat, my deputy director
and head geologist.

YEVIR

Doctor Lakhat, it is a pleasure to
meet you. I am always glad to meet
more followers of the Oralian Way.

Yevir reaches to gently grasp Feric's ear - a murmur of anticipation as the press push in a little closer...

CAMERA POV

as Yevir feels... notices something interesting... smiles faintly... then lets Feric go.

BACK TO SCENE

FERIC

(blushing)

Welcome to Andak, Vedek Yevir.
It's an honour to meet the man who
has placed so much faith in... my
own faith.

YEVIR

I could not be here on Cardassia
were it not for the Oralian Way.
And Cleric Ekosha's willingness to
take up her own mission to Bajor
was the act of a brave woman.

FERIC

I went to a gathering led by
Ekosha once. She was remarkable, a
fine ambassador, not just for the
Way but for all our people. As you
are for yours, Vedek.

Keiko watches this exchange, battling between her dislike
of Yevir and his seeming respect for Feric...

Then Yevir turns back to her, catching her out, forcing her
to reorient...

YEVIR

I noticed how many children there
are here, Director.

KEIKO

That's right. Andak isn't just a
science project, Vedek. We're a
long way from anywhere out here,
so everyone on the team brought
their families with them.

YEVIR

Much as life once was on Deep
Space Nine.

KEIKO

Exactly. We're trying to build a
community here as well. There's a
school, for example --

FERIC

(playful)

And Keiko, having once experienced
life as a teacher, is very eager
for us all to be tortured in the
same way.

YEVIR

You are to be applauded, Director.
That kind of work is as difficult
and valuable as any scientific
project.

Keiko frowns - Yevir is confusing her... he's not the pious
megalomaniac she expected... She gives a silent signal to
Feric - he nods and goes to distract the press team.

Meanwhile Keiko leads Yevir out across the square...

22 EXT. ANDAK PLAINS - DAY

Keiko leads Yevir out to the large open plains outside the
settlement, in the shadow of the mountains. The soil is
poor and dusty here, clearly not suitable for planting...

KEIKO

What I want to show you first,
Vedek, is the very heart of the
work we're doing here.

She crouches down, runs the dry soil through her fingers...

KEIKO

This is what Andak is all about,
Vedek. Do you feel the breeze on
your back? These mountains, the
shape of the valley, they produce
some unusual atmospheric effects.
Ones that we're hoping to harness,
then replicate. If our work goes
to plan, you should come back here
in two years' time. Because then
that plain will be green.

Yevir gazes out across the plains in wonder...

YEVIR

I... believe I understand what
you're telling me, Director. And I
have to marvel at it. Here in the
desert, where there is only sun
and stone, no water... you're
going to make it rain.

KEIKO

(smile, nod)

That's right. And not just here.
If we could expand our work, then
this could be a solution to what
has always been Cardassia's
greatest lack - self-sufficiency.
The same problem that drove them
to invade and occupy other more
fertile worlds.

YEVIR

So you are hoping to address a
social problem, not just an agri-
cultural one. Only the Federation
would conceive of such a plan.
Cardassia lacked water, and became
an aggressor. So the Federation
will bring them water... and with
it peace.

Keiko smiles proudly. Yevir is thoughtful...

YEVIR

I do not know much about Earth and
its philosophies, Director. But
one word, one idea, comes to mind
now - hubris.

Keiko tenses - *oh here we go, here it comes...*

KEIKO

Excessive pride and ambition.

YEVIR

When mortals try to take on the
aspect of gods. Do you see your
self as a miracle worker, Director
O'Brien?

KEIKO

(laughing)

Hardly! I'm just a scientist. I
see the lines that tie the world
together, and I follow them until
I get the result I'm hoping for.

YEVIR

Interesting.

(beat, gazes out)

I understand that we once lived on Deep Space Nine at the same time. Perhaps you know I was a Militia officer on the station, before the Prophets called me to Their service through the Emissary.

KEIKO

I do know that, yes, Vedek. And I hope you'll accept my apologies, but I don't actually remember you from those days.

YEVIR

Quite alright, Director. I was not the most memorable of individuals. But I was just wondering... do you remember the point in time when you turned onto the path you now walk? The path of science?

KEIKO

Actually, I do. It was a school field trip...

(chuckles)

...and I was miserable. It was hot and I was so bad-tempered that one of the teachers assigned me an essay to write as punishment. The life cycle of the lotus. It's a plant we have on Earth. I got down to work... and discovered that I was fascinated by it. I looked at the mythological significance, I drew pictures of it, I... admired it. The lotus grows in swamps and muddy, awful places. But it has this incredible flower of pure white. Such delicacy and beauty, growing out of that murk, but untainted by it. By the time I finished writing my essay, I knew what my future was going to be.

Yevir smiles and nods, pleased with her story...

YEVIR

I've heard it said that science
and religion are just different
ways of understanding the same
things. Perhaps we are not so
different, you and I.

Keiko smiles, charmed - damn it she's starting to like him.

23 EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT - DAY

Keiko leads Yevir back into the square, happier and more
relaxed -- until her face drops at the sight of...

...TELA at the head of another small group of Cardassians
waiting outside the Lecture Hall. Keiko approaches, wary of
what's coming, and Tela steps forward...

KEIKO

Vedek Yevir, this is Professor
Tela Maleren. She was formerly
principal of the Cardassian
Science Academy and now heads our
team of physicists. She is one of
the most eminent scientists in the
quadrant, and we are very glad to
have her here at Andak.

YEVIR

Professor, it is an honour to meet
you. May I ask what that phrase on
your badge means?

Keiko takes a closer look, as do the press..

CAMERA POV

Tela is indeed wearing a BADGE pinned to her smart business
suit, with three words in Cardassian script

BACK TO SCENE

The others in her group also wear the same badges. Tela
holds herself tight and proper, readies to speak...

TELA

Thank you for asking, Vedek Yevir. These badges are a formal protest. They express the concerns of many at Andak that certain members of the community are permitted to worship in public, while others extend the courtesy of expressing their beliefs in private.

Keiko keeps a pleasant face for the sake of the media, but underneath she is steaming angry...

YEVIR

When you speak of worship, you refer to the Oralian Way?

TELA

That is correct, Vedek. I would like to see any public gatherings of the Way prevented in future.

YEVIR

(genuinely interested)

It was my understanding Cardassia is now governed according to democratic principles. Should the free expression of belief not be a part of that?

KEIKO

I don't think that this is either the time or the place for --

YEVIR

(interrupting)

On the contrary, Director. I would very much like to hear more of Professor Maleren's views. Professor, I believe I see the nature of your protest. But I do not understand these words.

(re badge)

"Protect what remains." Do you truly see the Oralian Way as such a threat?

TELA

I know that change is inevitable.
If I believed otherwise, I would
not be here. But not all change is
for the better. Vedek... there is
so little left of Cardassia, and I
fear that what there is might be
lost. I would ask you, please,
respect what we have left and
return to Bajor. Let us find our
own peace, among ourselves.

Keiko's had enough now - she steps forward to interrupt...

KEIKO

People will be waiting, Vedek.

Yevir nods, but looks again to Tela...

YEVIR

Perhaps we might continue this
discussion later, Professor?

Tela nods an acknowledgement. Feric leads Yevir and the
press corps into the Lecture Hall. But before she goes,
Keiko has quite the vicious glare for Tela...

24 INT. BASEMENT ROOM

The informal basement meeting area. Anonymous Cardassian
MAN 1 sits alone at the table, buried in the shadows and
half-light. He makes notes on a beaten-up old padd and
drinks tea from a delicate cup. We do not see his face.

Another, younger MAN 2 enters and takes a seat, bringing
with him a ratty old book which he places on the table.

MAN 1

Everything appears to be going
rather well.

MAN 2

Would you say so? Surely you've
read the report on what happened
at the committee meeting. Your
man is pushing Entor very hard.

MAN 2 (cont)

Perhaps too hard. I'm afraid he
may crack under the pressure. And
then where would we be?

MAN 1

(not really worried)

Indeed... that could be a problem.

MAN 2

He cannot become careless. There's
nothing to establish a direct
link, of course?

MAN 1

Of course not...

Man 1 reaches out picks up the book on the table...

MAN 1

Another one of your finds? This
one has certainly been through
the wars.

MAN 2

You like enigma tales?

Man 1 sets the book back down with a tired sigh...

MAN 1

Do you know, I always found them
rather tiresome.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

25 INT. ANDAK - LECTURE HALL

KEIKO takes a breath, steadies her nerves, looks out...

...on a LECTURE HALL filling up nicely with the staff and residents of Andak - humans, Cardassians and other aliens. Lots of CROWD WALLA echoing off the prefab plasteel walls.

Keiko stands in the wings, just off-stage at the head of the room. She looks to one side --

-- FERIC, engaged in quiet, friendly conversation with YEVR, the two getting along famously.

She smiles at Feric, her deputy and friend here, even though it caused her political trouble to hire him. She frowns at Yevir, who she should hate but has turned out to be nothing like she expected. She looks the other way --

-- TELA, standing alone, upright and prim as ever. Keiko bites her tongue - she can't slap the Cardassian professor down for speaking her mind, or she'd be just as bad.

Confused by all these conflicting emotions, she looks back out at the hall again --

-- and sees the MEDIA all focusing their cameras, readying their padds. NAITHE sits with them, chatting away endlessly MOS with Bajoran reporter TERIS. *Ohhh - that's all we need.*

But there in the front row is MOLLY, with her Cardassian friend NYRA sat beside her, dressed in a heavy coat despite the hot dry day at Andak, and other similarly aged children from their school class.

Molly catches her mother's eye, waves at her with a broad smile... and Keiko smiles back, relaxes. *Okay, here we go.*

She leads the other three out onto the stage -- to sudden APPLAUSE from the crowd. Keiko feels the cameras on her, the pressure of the moment... but no turning back now.

26 INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE (INTERCUT)

The SCREEN shows the four luminaries striding out on the stage - Keiko taking the central lectern while the other three take rickety deck chairs. This is all from Teris and Lamerat's perspective - we're getting their news feed.

O'BRIEN
There's Keiko again!

O'Brien bounces proudly in his seat. Leaning on the wall, Garak half-smiles at O'Brien's enthusiasm. It's cute!

GHEMOR
(mutter)
And that damned Yevir...

JARTEK
He's good news for us, Alon. He knows how to please a crowd. And all without sounding the least bit false. We need that.

GHEMOR
Yes, well... if I had the chance to make speeches like this, instead of ones about agricultural reclamation technology, I'd be able to please a crowd too.

O'BRIEN
(wry)
Some people get excited about technology, you know.

JARTEK
And any issue can be turned into a vote winner.

Garak silently looks over at Jartek, standing behind Ghemor - and just barely stops himself from *hissing*. There is just something about Jartek that he *loathes*.

Jartek glances at Garak - and quickly looks away again, unable to bear the eye contact. He checks a chronometer. Cardassians do appreciate punctuality...

27 **INT. ANDAK - LECTURE HALL (INTERCUT)**

Keiko looks out at all the settlement's people together - it feels like a validation of all her wishes and dreams.

Touched, determined, she puts aside her prepared notes, and speaks from the heart...

KEIKO

I don't need to tell all of you
how important today is for Andak.
I know I don't, because in the
past few days you've all shown me
just how proud you are of the work
we're doing here. How you want the
whole of Cardassia, and beyond, to
understand its significance. That
what we're doing, and how we're
working together to achieve it,
can stand for Cardassia's future
in the quadrant.

She pauses...

28 **INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE (INTERCUT)**

O'Brien, Garak *et al* continue to watch the screen...

KEIKO (screen)

When Vedek Yevir first approached
me to visit Andak, I knew that he,
of all people on Cardassia today,
would understand. Because he too
has the future of Cardassia at
heart. I'm very glad that so many
of us - Cardassian, Bajoran, human
and others - have come to Andak,
so that we can all learn from each
other how to build Cardassia's
future. Please, all of you, join
me in welcoming to Andak, Vedek
Yevir Linjaren of Bajor.

On screen, Keiko steps back from the lectern, leading the
APPLAUSE as Yevir stands and steps forward...

29 **INT. ANDAK - LECTURE HALL (INTERCUT)**

While the crowd loudly applauds Yevir, Feric leans over to Keiko and speaks *sotto* into her ear...

FERIC

I hope he appreciates you warming
up the crowd for him.

Keiko forces a tense smile, aware the cameras are catching everything. But her glance towards Tela shows what she's really worried about - the professor making another scene.

Tela sees her look, straightens her neck, turns to watch Yevir... but she's nervously playing with her bangle again. Keiko sees that, takes satisfaction in it. Meanwhile...

YEVIR

Thank you all for your warm
welcome. I cannot praise highly
enough the principles behind the
work being done here at Andak, in
particular the direction provided
by Professor Keiko O'Brien...

32 **INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE (INTERCUT)**

O'BRIEN

(wolf-whistle)

Whoo-whoo!

Garak rolls his eyes indulgently.

Under the following, in **B.G.**, Yevir continues...

YEVIR (screen)

(continuing)

It is heartening to witness the
willingness of all of you here,
from so many backgrounds and
persuasions, to work together for
the good of Cardassia, and the
vision that you all share for the
future of this planet...

While in **F.G.**, O'Brien leans forward, concerned...

CLOSE-UP ON SCREEN

...rough and pixellated from the news feed, it shows KEIKO
- and her tense smile...

BACK TO SCENE

O'BRIEN
Something's wrong...

Garak stops twiddling a pen in his fingers, pauses his
ruminating, looks to O'Brien...

GARAK
What do you mean, Chief?

O'BRIEN
I mean, I know my wife. And she's
worried about something.

Suddenly, the screen goes BLANK. The news feed is gone.

They all react, surprised and confused. Ghemor curses under
his breath...

GHEMOR
Oh for... How am I supposed to run
a government when the damned power
keeps cutting out!

O'Brien stands, and tries the time-honoured technique of
THUMPing the screen...

O'BRIEN
There was I thinking that govern-
ment was the source of power.

GHEMOR
The people may have something to
say on that score, Mister O'Brien.

GARAK
The lights are still on.

Everyone turns to Garak - he calmly points his pen at the
buzzing fluorescent lights overhead...

O'BRIEN

What?

GARAK

The lights are still on. And look
at the display...

They do - the power indicators are still lit.

GARAK (cont)

This is not a power cut. My guess
is... that someone has pulled the
broadcast. Or is blocking it.

O'BRIEN

(becoming alarmed)

But why would anyone...?

They all - even Jartek - wonder, *what the hell is going on?*

Ending on O'Brien - *and are Keiko and Molly safe?*

33 INT. ANDAK - LECTURE HALL (INTERCUT)

As we were, no problems so far. Yevir continues...

YEVIR

It has been a great inspiration to
find that you all share so much
with my own vision, my own mission
to Cardassia. When I came here, it
was with the hope that between us,
we Bajorans --

(hand on heart)

-- and you Cardassians --

(gestures around)

-- could finally find the path to
a mutual, lasting peace. I was
most glad that the Oralian Way was
willing to take the first steps on
that path with me.

Keiko glances over to Tela, whose face is a well-practised
mask of politeness. But then Keiko notices something out of
the corner of her eye, and turns to see --

-- someone standing up in the crowd, obviously not part of the plan. It's NYRA, Molly's friend and Tela's daughter.

Molly reaches for her friend's arm, trying to stop her - but Nyra shakes her off, determined, and begins to walk towards the stage.

Yevir pauses his speech, confused...

Keiko looks at Molly - who looks back, no idea...

Nyra is loosening the straps on her oddly heavy coat...

...and as the teen Cardassian girl climbs the few steps to the stage, the coat drops off her, revealing --

-- some kind of DEVICE strapped to her chest.

Keiko catches her breath in horror. Yevir steps back from the lectern. Shots of Naithe, Feric, Teris...

And finally Tela, jaw dropped in horror...

TELA

Nyra? What are you doing?

NYRA

I am here today... to speak out
for the future of Cardassia.
Because that future is in danger,
and because no-one will act to
preserve it... we must act.

Ending on Keiko, terrified...

BLACK OUT:

THE END