

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. The mountains glitter with streaks of black in a warm afternoon-turning-to-evening sun, casting long shadows. The effect is stark, difficult, and yet strangely beautiful. We are on post-war Cardassia.

Sat within the valley is a small VILLAGE of buildings. They have a temporary, makeshift feel, although they will be serving their purpose for some time. In the square they create is a public area, with rare spots of precious green.

Moving closer, we see that a Cardassian civilian man, FERIC, is walking through the square. He chats briefly to another man, and a woman, and more, bringing them together into a small group of about a dozen near to one of the green areas. They gather peacefully and warmly.

Moving past them, we see that two children sit in the grass working on the earth together. One is MOLLY O'BRIEN (approx 9); the other is a young Cardassian girl, NYRA (approx 14). Nyra is supposed to be babysitting Molly, but it looks like Molly is the one in charge, showing Nyra how to garden.

Sweep up to one of the buildings, a residential block for those who live and work at the Andak Settlement. KEIKO O'BRIEN stands leaning on the sill of an open upper level window, watching all of this with a gentle, proud smile. She watches the Cardassian civilians gather in the square.

Feric and a woman, NERET, move a step away from the group, which comes to quiet, calm order. There is a sense of anticipation among the group, which Keiko can feel as she watches with fascination from the window. Feric and Neret raise Oralian masks (as seen in 8x09 "A Stitch in Time") to their faces, and begin to recite the traditional words.

NERET

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

Keiko sees that a few more children, some human and some Cardassian, have joined Molly and Nyra in the grass. They have paused their play and are watching the Oraliens.

NERET

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

FERIC

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. KEIKO'S OFFICE

An earlier conversation Keiko is having via a computer screen with DRURY, a human male and her boss.

DRURY (screen)

(unhappy but
resigned)

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 that 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 in exasperation, but continues to watch the developing ceremony below. She bites her lip as she remembers another earlier conversation...

4 INT. KEIKO'S OFFICE

Now KIRA NERYS is on the screen, and Keiko is giving her uncomfortable news.

KEIKO

Nerys... you're going to see images of me shaking hands with Vedek Yevir. He's visiting Andak in a couple of days 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.

They share a small chuckle of amusement.

KIRA (screen)

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 ponders again, considering that. She still does not like Yevir for what he did to Kira, though.

Below, the Oralian group has begun to hum a low, pleasant hymn. Keiko looks on, soothed by it. As she gazes up to the surrounding mountains and the lengthening shadows...

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

Keiko sighs in amused exasperation at the broken mood. She turns to see MILES O'BRIEN with his head inside a panel in the wall of their quarters. Passing through the window...

6 **INT. O'BRIENS' APARTMENT (CONTINUOUS)**

A nice enough if small set of quarters in the residential block. Keiko has tried to keep it nice, with plants to offset the austerity. But O'Brien has colonised almost all the spare space with open toolboxes and strewn gadgetry.

KEIKO
What are you doing, Miles?

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

KEIKO
(realising)
Are you talking about the temperature modulators?

He grunts his agreement.

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

O'BRIEN
You were complaining about the heat again last night, and we had

it right down. Turns out the levels have been fixed for Cardassian physiology. I wanted to see if I could get it to go down a notch or two. Should have thought of it sooner.

KEIKO

But now it's even hotter!

She looks at the mess he has made of their room. YOSHI sits on their couch, surrounded by pads and gadgets. She sighs. This is simply what it is like to live with Miles O'Brien.

KEIKO

Miles... look what you've done to my home.

He pulls his head out of the panel and looks around.

O'BRIEN

Eh? Oh, don't worry about this. I'll have it all back inside and the panel on again before you know.

KEIKO

Aren't you 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 you were going to open up the wall, pull out a few cables and destroy my living room?

He pulls his head out fully, genuinely baffled and as if gently explaining something very simple and obvious.

O'BRIEN

To fix the temperature modulators. Don't you know by now that everything I do is done to make you happy, sweetheart?

Before she can reply, he shoves his head back inside the panel, where he promptly BUMPS it and swears under his breath.

Keiko sighs again and moves to the couch, clearing a space to sit. Yoshi reaches out for her, and she picks him up and places him in her lap.

KEIKO

(to Yoshi)

Don't come the innocent with me. I know you two. You're in this together.

With another last look at her chaotic living room...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

7 EXT. CARDASSIA - NIGHT

A rickety combustion-engine bus rattles along a pitted and broken road, between the rubble of destroyed buildings and blasted landscape. Black smoke belches from the vehicle's exhaust pipe as it lurches along the road.

8 INT. CARDASSIAN BUS

Among the many bedraggled Cardassian passengers is Miles O'Brien, crammed into a seat and trying to balance a padd featuring his presentation and a cup of coffee. The Cardassian next to him is slumped on his shoulder, fast asleep like most of the other passengers.

The bus rides over a pothole in the road, JOLTing O'Brien and sloshing coffee all over his arm and uniform shirt. He swears again, shaking the coffee off his hand. The sleeping Cardassian grunts and mutters, but does not wake up.

9 EXT. CARDASSIA - NIGHT

Watching the bus progress from behind, we can see that it is approaching what remains of Cardassia City in the distance, looming in the dark and soot-clogged night.

10 EXT. CARDASSIA - NIGHT

An unidentified pair of LEGS walks with cautious, precise steps, picking their way through the rubble of the fallen city. The legs walk carefully but with purpose.

As the figure progresses, we see the distinctive clothes and grey hands of a Cardassian, but not who the person is.

11 EXT. CARDASSIA - NIGHT

The bus reaches the edge of Cardassia City. As it trundles and splutters up the road, refugees watch it go by with disinterest from their makeshift, barely serviceable shelters. It has also begun to rain black, dirty rain.

12 **EXT. CARDASSIA - NIGHT**

The unidentified figure has reached a building, which remains mostly intact. He shelters under the overhang, looking up with disappointment at the sky and the rain.

We see this from a distance and from behind, so that we still do not see who the man is. After a moment, he turns, opens a door, and disappears into the building.

13 **INT. CARDASSIAN BUS**

O'Brien looks out of the window at the pathetic, huddled survivors in their shacks. Up to now he has been a little annoyed at being cramped on this decrepit bus, trying to write his presentation, at night. Seeing them, his emotions change to pity, then guilt, then determination to help.

14 **INT. BASEMENT ROOM**

The unidentified man enters a basement room like those in 8x09 "A Stitch in Time." 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 his place at the table, and another man at the head calls the meeting to order.

MAN 1

Well, gentlemen. Let's begin.

15 **EXT. CARDASSIA CITY - MORNING**

ELIM GARAK is now the one picking his way over rubble as he makes his way towards a large public square. He is bundled up against the rain and the chill.

In the square, where a line of refugees wait to enter a shambling building and be given food, clothing, medicine. Cardassian military officers and Starfleet security work together to keep an eye on things, keeping a low profile.

Across the square, Garak spots O'Brien, standing and waiting in the rain. O'Brien's back is turned, and he hasn't seen Garak approach. Garak smirks to himself at the thought of some small amusement at O'Brien's expense.

16 ON O'BRIEN

O'Brien stands waiting, minding his own business, watching the line of refugees. Garak's hand reaches in and TAPS him on the shoulder, and O'Brien nearly goes into orbit. He spins on Garak, glaring in shock and surprise.

O'BRIEN

Crissakes, 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, do you know that?

GARAK

You wouldn't deny me a little joy, now 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, thanks. ...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...

(pulls himself together)

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.

17 **INT. CANTEEN**

Garak leads O'Brien into a sort of café. It 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, and the more well-heeled Cardassians.

Garak leads O'Brien to a table, and sits with back against the wall, so he can observe everyone else, which he does throughout their conversation. O'Brien sits, too distracted by the thought of hot food to notice Garak's wariness.

GARAK

A lot of the Federation staff from the embassy come here. So you won't have to suffer Cardassian cuisine.

A waiter brings menus, which O'Brien and Garak accept. But Garak is well-known here, and orders straight away.

GARAK

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

O'Brien smiles, impressed and grateful. The waiter leaves.

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 leader would like 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 is in a bit of a broody mood. He tries to lighten it
with a lurid, half-true tale, buried in plain conversation.

GARAK

This place 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, looks at his companion more closely.

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

Do you ever regret leaving the station?

Garak looks up sharply, but O'Brien is back with his food.

GARAK

And spend the rest of my days sewing? Not quite my style, wouldn't you agree? And anyway, Cardassia doesn't let go that easily. It's better to be directing events on a ruined world than directing nothing at all.

(dramatic sigh)

What a fate! At my time of life, to be reduced to upholding democracy.

O'BRIEN

(chuckle)

How is the castellan?

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. A youngish man, name of
Mev Jartek. I'm not too sure of...
his background. Not yet, anyway.
He wasn't military.

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

O'BRIEN

He'll be at the committee meeting?

(Garak nods)

I'll keep an eye out for him then.

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? Anyone I need to watch out for?

GARAK

You'll be giving the Corps of Engineers' recommendation that 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 wrong side these days. But there are still some fairly 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 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 cope. And the S.C.E.'s recommendations are perfectly clear, after all.

GARAK

I'm serious, Chief. Don't be surprised at 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's staked a lot 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. You're not hurrying back to Andak, are you?

O'BRIEN

No particular rush. Keiko's got everything under control. Well, I hope she has. It's her job, after all.

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.

18 EXT. CARDASSIA CITY - MORNING

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

O'Brien watches the scene sadly as he and Garak hurry against the rain towards the opposite end of the square.

O'BRIEN

Has that line moved at all?

GARAK

I don't believe so, no.

O'BRIEN

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

GARAK

It's all the dust. 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 at the scene in the square...

GARAK

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

He turns to enter, shutting the door behind him.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

19 EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT - DAY

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

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 have worked together.

Out of the corner of his eye, Feric notices a small, portly Bolian man, NAITHE, making his way towards them across the square. Feric turns subtly to Keiko and mutters.

FERIC

Now, don't run away screaming,
Keiko, but I think Naithe has 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.
We're all very proud of Andak and
the work we're doing, led by your
good self, and each one of us
understands how important the
vedek's visit is to the future of
the project...

Keiko grinds her teeth a little at the mention of the
vedek. Feric notices, but Naithe just keeps on talking.

NAITHE (cont)

I myself am looking forward to
discovering the effects today
might have on our blossoming
little community, particularly
whether the presence 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 supposed to understand
people?

KEIKO

He's written books about them.

FERIC

Such a strange subject. What does
he call it? Xeno... sol...

KEIKO

Xeno-sociology. The study of alien
social systems.

FERIC

Here on Cardassia, that was called
military intelligence.

Keiko chuckles, and 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.

FERIC

I... see.

KEIKO

Tell me about the service you held
last night.

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 at the moment, 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. He leads Keiko to begin walking again, but he stops short when he sees another person walking to them.

This is TELA, a mature Cardassian woman. Tall and elegant, finely poised and very controlled. Feric tenses and folds his arms, as if preparing for a confrontation.

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 of acknowledgement 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.

(quick glance

at Feric)

In private.

FERIC

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 with a worried glare.

20 **INT. 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. Tela is clearly uncomfortable with the issue at hand, and Keiko is sad to see the personal distance between them.

Tela looks around, as if thinking this should have been her office. 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 and smoothes a crease from her dress.

TELA

Do you think so, Director O'Brien?

KEIKO

Well... I love 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 accord. 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.

Tela has begun worrying at a bracelet on her wrist - a nervous habit. Keiko notices it but does not comment. But she is wondering when they're going to get to the point.

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 even 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

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!

(pause to collect)

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 traditions, your own values, that you have no wish for them to be hers as well?

KEIKO

Molly has 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. One of many that Cardassia has never been able to afford. All that I have left to give to my own daughter is ruins, Director O'Brien. Perhaps if that was all you had, you would wish to protect it too. Many others feel as I do. It would be unwise for you to ignore this issue, if only for pragmatic reasons.

KEIKO

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

TELA

I must not leave you doubting my commitment to this project. You understand, don't you, that if our work here is successful, it will change Cardassia forever? And its people along with it. And I have dedicated myself, dedicated my work, to that change?

KEIKO

I know, Tela, I know.

TELA

But still, there is so little left.

With a sigh, she gets up with a sweep of her dress and steps towards the door. But she pauses and turns back.

TELA

There is one other thing I have to say - that you will be making a mistake, Keiko, if you treat us as if we were Bajorans. We are not superstitious. We are rational creatures - too rational perhaps. But we are alike in one way, I will grant you. Alike because of what they learned from us - to be hard, to be obstinate.

KEIKO

I understand that, Tela. And I'm not dismissing this. This is something all of us will have to deal with, if we want to be a community here at Andak.

TELA

Ah, yes... the "community." It's a worthy vision you have... but I fear you may be building castles in the air.

KEIKO

I hope not.

Tela nods a polite farewell and leaves. Keiko watches her go, thinking that she can be obstinate too.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

21 INT. GOVERNMENT MEETING ROOM

Miles O'Brien sits next to Garak, in a room filled with other Cardassian politicians and functionaries. He rolls his shoulders, massages his neck, trying to ease the tension in them. He has been sat in this room with its flat, glaring light and dull, droning speeches for hours.

He is the only human here, and besides the stiffness, he is uncomfortable in a room with so many Cardassians.

GARAK

(*sotto*)

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

O'Brien grunts his agreement, then looks back to the front of the room, where the meeting continues.

Cardassian Castellan ALON GHEMOR (8x09) presides, sat at the centre of a long table, with other politicians either side. Ghemor looks as tired as O'Brien, aged beyond his years. Facing them is a smaller table where a Cardassian woman, REMAR, gives a presentation in background walla.

A side door opens and JARTEK enters - a 30s Cardassian male, Ghemor's advisor. He hands a padd to Ghemor and then retires to a corner of the room. Garak gets O'Brien's attention and subtly nods in Jartek's direction.

GARAK

(silent)

Jartek.

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

Meanwhile, 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'm sure I speak for all the committee when I thank you for the clarity of your conclusions.

(Remar acknowledges)

I'd now like to open the floor to my colleagues, who no doubt have some questions to put to you. I'll first call upon Merak Entor, the senior representative from the Directorate...

Sat a few seats to Ghemor's left, another man puffs himself up in anticipation. Despite the lack of uniform, ENTOR carries himself like a military officer, and speaks like he is training cadets. He deliberately makes everyone wait until he is ready to speak. O'Brien instantly dislikes him.

ENTOR

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

REMAR

I strongly 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. Entor scowls. Garak chuckles.

ENTOR

What I would like to know, Doctor Remar, is precisely how objective you have been in coming to these conclusions.

REMAR

Objective? I was asked - as a former member of the Science Academy - to provide a comparative report on the Andak and Setekh projects, on the basis of their scientific strengths, the quality of the teams employed, the potential benefits to Cardassia's ecosystem... Councillor Entor, 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. 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?

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

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 himself to confront Entor, weary of having to do so every time.

GHEMOR

Councillor Entor, I don't believe that this line of questioning is either helpful or relevant.

ENTOR

I believe it is of extreme relevance.

GHEMOR

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

ENTOR

I am indeed.

REMAR

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

GHEMOR

And I believe that Councillor Entor has seriously overstepped his bounds. I sincerely hope he intends to apologise to Doctor Remar and this committee. 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 that it is!

The meeting descends into chaos, as Entor and Remar, their rivals and supporters on the committee, SHOUT and point fingers at each other. Garak and O'Brien tense.

After a few moments of trying to calm everyone down, Ghemor stands and bellows over the din.

GHEMOR

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

The room gradually quiets, some of the participants having the sense to look ashamed. Entor, meanwhile, looks proud of the chaos he has 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 leaves by the side door. 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 from across the room - a look which Garak notices, and wonders what it means. Then Jartek turns and follows Ghemor.

The room dissolves back into shouting and accusations. Garak turns to O'Brien, seething with anger under his smooth veneer.

GARAK

You see what I mean about Entor?

O'BRIEN

I certainly do. He's hardly subtle about it, is he?

GARAK

And yet somehow he manages to create chaos all around him. 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. Exasperated, Garak turns and walks towards the side door. Not knowing what else to do, O'Brien follows.

22 INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE

O'Brien enters the room, tensing a little as Garak closes the door behind him, aware that he is in a small, enclosed room with three Cardassians. He controls his reaction.

The room is small and unimpressive for the centre of a planetary government. One wall is entirely taken up with six big view screens, mostly broadcasting news reports from across the planet. The screens are Starfleet technology.

One screen shows a Bajoran news crew, led by reporter TERIS JUZE, touring the Andak settlement. O'Brien notices it, and brightens at the chance to see Keiko. This is also the only one with sound. Now all four are paying attention.

TERIS (screen)

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

Ghemor grumbles under his breath. Jartek reaches to silence the continuing news feed.

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

It's the laying on of hands next.

JARTEK

These things take time, Alon. And effort. Don't worry about it. It's all under control.

GHEMOR

(an old grumble)

Who's running this administration, anyway?

GARAK

(pushing forward)

Before you launch into that one again, allow me to introduce Chief Miles O'Brien, of the Starfleet Corps of Engineers. A trusted colleague of long standing. You might want to at least try to give a good impression...

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 O'Brien...

O'BRIEN

Miles, please.

GHEMOR

Miles, then.

Ghemor gestures to a chair for O'Brien, then takes his own.

GHEMOR (cont)

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 immediately taps a comm and mutters unheard into it. That done, Jartek takes a quiet spot in the corner again. He licks his lips, snake-like, and seems almost nervous in Garak's presence. Naturally, this amuses Garak.

O'BRIEN

Does Entor regularly break up sessions like that?

GHEMOR

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

Garak tenses slightly, 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're here to tell me that the SCE's recommendation is that we fund Andak, rather than Setekh. My secret fear in the dark watches of the night is that Starfleet has changed its mind.

O'BRIEN

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

GHEMOR

That is, I think, perhaps the worst kept secret on Cardassia at the moment. Half the damned capital knows about it, although it's supposed to be classified.

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. But no proof. An aide to one of the Directorate members.

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. 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, 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.

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. The news feed now shows that YEVIR has arrived, and is touring the settlement square.

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. Jartek
and O'Brien both look worried too.

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...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

23 EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT - DAY

Keiko and Yevir walk slowly together around the square. Every step is followed by the PRESS, surrounding them almost completely - at least a dozen, including the Bajoran reporter TERIS and her accompanying camera man LAMERAT.

Keiko is cordial and friendly, putting on a good show with a press-perfect smile, but covering a tension. Yevir seems genuinely interested in everything, listening intently to all Keiko's explanations. They approach the green patch on the corner of the square, where Feric is preparing.

KEIKO

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

YEVIR

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

Gently, Yevir reaches to grasp Feric's ear, the way vedeks do. There is a murmur of anticipation as the press push in a little closer. Feric bows his head slightly, allowing the contact happily. Once Yevir has released him...

FERIC

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 the 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 finds herself surprised at the vedek's pleasant manner. He is not the pious megalomaniac she expected.

YEVIR

I noticed how many children there are here.

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 gives a silent signal to Feric, who grasps her meaning and goes to distract the press team. While they follow Feric, Keiko leads Yevir out across the square.

24 EXT. ANDAK - THE 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 agricultural 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

(tensing)

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)

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, pure white flower. 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.

25 **EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT - DAY**

Keiko leads Yevir back into the square, towards another of the larger buildings - the LECTURE HALL. At the hall, another group waits politely to meet the vedek. Feric is there, as is Tela Maleren. Tela steps first towards Yevir.

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 at Tela, and sees that she is indeed wearing a badge, with three words in Cardassian script. Looking around, she sees that three others in Tela's group have the same badge.

One of the media crew FOCUSES IN on the badge.

Feric sighs, and Keiko tenses with annoyance at Tela for pulling this stunt. Tela is once again holding herself tight and proper, prepared 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 at Andak. 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, so 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 building. But before she goes, Keiko has quite the vicious glare for Tela.

26 **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. 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 be allowed to 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.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

27 INT. ANDAK LECTURE HALL

A decently sized lecture hall, with a stage at one end, and room for about a hundred spectators. The crowd is filling up nicely with the staff and residents of Andak - humans, Cardassians and other aliens.

The media contingent is near the front, including Teris Juze, the Bajoran correspondent, and her cameraman.

Naithe is sitting towards the back, chatting to a harried-looking Cardassian. Molly O'Brien and her young Cardassian friend Nyra are sitting in the front row with a group of other similarly aged children and their class teacher.

Keiko, Feric, Tela and Yevir take the stage. Keiko is still furious with Tela, beneath her professional front. Tela is fingering her wrist bangle - her nervous tic - which Keiko notices with some satisfaction.

As the others take seats on the stage, Keiko takes her position at a central lectern.

28 INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE

O'Brien, Garak, Ghemor and Jartek are where they were, watching the feed from the Bajoran news team. The other screens on the wall have now either been shut off or are showing other views of the Andak settlement. As they watch Keiko take the stage, O'Brien bounces proudly in his seat.

O'BRIEN

There's Keiko again!

Leaning casually against the wall, Garak half-smiles at O'Brien's enthusiasm, but then goes back to paying close attention. This is an important day. He keeps a close eye on both Jartek and Yevir. Both are unpredictable.

29 INT. ANDAK LECTURE HALL

On the stage, Keiko looks out at her crowd. She is pleased to see all the settlements' people together - it feels like a validation of her plans. She smiles at Molly in the front row, then gets ready to speak to the crowd. 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 need to tell you, because in the past few days you've all shown - with your help, your support - just how much today means to the project, to the community. You've all shown me 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...

30 **INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

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

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 - have been able to come here to Andak. I'm very glad too that the vedek has come to us today, so that we can all learn from each other how we can build Cardassia's future. Please, all of you, join me in welcoming to Andak, Vedek Yevir Linjaren of Bajor.

On the screen, we watch Keiko step back from the lectern and begin to clap, which the crowd soon follows. Yevir stands and steps towards the lectern. Seeing him, Ghemor mutters a little under his breath.

31 **INT. ANDAK LECTURE HALL**

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

FERIC

Nice speech, Keiko. I hope he appreciates you warming up the audience for him.

Once the crowd quiets, Yevir begins his speech, sticking to script, much to Keiko's relief.

YEVIR

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

The crowd applauds again, and Keiko is flattered by their appreciation.

32 **INT. GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

In Ghemor's office, O'Brien gives a little WHISTLE of celebration. Garak rolls his eyes indulgently. He is still twiddling a pen in his fingers, thinking something through. On screen, Yevir continues to speak with conviction.

YEVIR (screen)

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...

JARTEK

There's one thing you can say for him. He knows how to please a crowd. And all without sounding the least bit false.

GHEMOR

Yes, well... if I had the chance to make speeches like this, instead of ones about agricultural reclamation technology, I think my popularity would rise markedly.

O'BRIEN

(mutter)

Some people get excited about technology, you know.

JARTEK

And anything can be turned into a vote winner.

Standing quietly at the back, Garak looks over at Jartek, and just manages to stop himself from hissing. There is just something about Jartek that Garak *loathes*.

Suddenly, the screen goes BLANK. They all react with surprise and confusion. Ghemor curses under his breath.

GHEMOR

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

O'Brien stands up and tries the time-honoured technique of thumping the screen.

O'BRIEN

And there was I thinking that government was the source of power.

GHEMOR

I think you'll find that the people have something to say on that score.

GARAK

The lights are still on.

Everyone turns to look at Garak, who has been quiet till now. 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 isn't a power cut. My guess is that someone's pulled the broadcast. Or is blocking it.

O'BRIEN

(becoming alarmed)

Why would anyone...?

33 INT. ANDAK LECTURE HALL

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

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.

She turns to see that Nyra, Molly's young Cardassian friend, has stood up and is making her way up the steps to the stage. The girl is loosening the straps on her large and baggy coat as she goes.

TELA
(leaning forward)
Nyra?

This is Tela's daughter. And as Keiko, Tela, Yevir and Feric watch in confusion, Nyra steps onto the stage and opens her coat. There is some kind of device strapped to her chest. Keiko catches her breath in horror.

Yevir steps back quietly from the lectern.

YEVIR
(quietly)
Director... I believe that girl is
carrying a bomb.

As Nyra nervously steps closer, and Keiko and Tela's eyes widen in shock...

FADE OUT:

THE END