

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

10x18 - "The Calling."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on the short story

"The Calling"

by Andrew J Robinson

appearing in

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine:

Prophecy and Change

and on characters from the series

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

and from the post-finale novels

by Pocket Books

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY

Open on the station's infirmary, dim and quiet. It's night shift, and the only person around is a CLEANER polishing the floor with a beam of light from a large and clumsy device. We don't even need to see the Cleaner's face - that's not the point. As he or she goes about their work...

GARAK (v.o.)

My dear Doctor... I have had to send this communication through a rather circuitous route to prevent it from being exposed to anyone but you. If some unfortunate soul does manage to get his hands on this, it'll be the last thing he'll ever hold.

We move gradually around the room, observing the bio-beds, the instruments, the surgical suite, the pharmacy.

GARAK (v.o.)

All this sounds extreme, I know. But I assure you, I'm not simply sending a poison pen letter because I got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning. I count myself fortunate to have gotten out of bed at all. But more about that later.

The Cleaner moves on to casting the light over the walls, removing grime from simple wear and tear.

GARAK (v.o.)

Despite the fact that you have disappeared without a word, I'm hopeful you're still alive. And though I know you wouldn't abandon me without good reason, I have to admit I'm a little piqued. The last time we met, you promised you

would be there to help me. And yet
you are nowhere to be found.

The cleaner moves to the CMO's desk, upon which a padd
sits. He or she begins polishing the surfaces with a cloth.

GARAK (v.o.)

It's not a question of blame,
Doctor. Such a childish word. No,
it's about responsibility. If one
is encouraged by a dear friend to
take on a dangerous, indeed life-
changing course of action, and is
promised support for this action,
how is one to react when that dear
friend and his promised support
vanish?

2 FLASHBACK - 10x06 "THE DREAM BOX"

Garak's vision of the cocktail party in the Ward Room, hazy
and strange. Everyone is happy, smiling, mingling in peace
and companionship. Bashir pushes forward out of the crowd
and embraces Garak like a long-lost friend.

GARAK (v.o.)

There are those who have tried to
convince me our encounter in the
Vinculum was nothing more than a
dream I had.

3 FLASHBACK - 10x11 "HARMONY"

Garak sits inside his shack, looking out at the devastation
outside with depression and doubt. The Cardassian doctor
Parmak is in the doorway, trying to buck him up.

GARAK (v.o.)

Doctor Parmak among them.

4 FLASHBACK - 10x06 "THE DREAM BOX"

At the cocktail party, Garak watches the mingling figures,
curious, intrigued.

GARAK (v.o.)

I can't fault him for it. If one has never been in the Vinculum, one can never understand a place where past, present and future combine. Where the neat lines we draw between dream and reality, between the living and the dead, have no more meaning than spices in a karalian stew. I don't claim to know the how and why. But I believe it was you I encountered in that place. And that's why I'm writing to you now.

5 FLASHBACK - 10x06 "THE DREAM BOX"

Doctor Parmak's isolation room. Ferric lies dying on the bed. Ekosha sits by the side, praying over him.

GARAK (v.o.)

When I came to the Vinculum, I was a man on an errand. To find a cure or vaccine to the virus we had unwittingly unleashed upon ourselves by opening the Hebitian ruins at Gardat. You gave me that cure, Doctor... and something more.

6 FLASHBACK - 10x06 "THE DREAM BOX"

After the vision, Garak walks back up the hill into the light, with the answer to his questions.

GARAK (v.o.)

So when I left the Vinculum, I was a man on a mission. I was determined to step out of the shadows as you advised me, and guide Cardassia back to the light of civilisation.

7 FLASHBACK - 10x11 "HARMONY"

Garak gazes out of his shed to the destroyed memorial in which it sits...

GARAK (v.o.)

But that light faded. The harsh reality of trying to bring order out of Cardassian chaos brought me back to the Vinculum on two further occasions. But I found no healing or relief. No Federation support... and no Doctor Bashir.

8 **INT. DS9 - INFIRMARY**

Back to the Infirmary. The cleaner polishes the surfaces... and knocks the padd off the top. They lean down to pick it up, and as they place it back on the surface, we focus on its screen... which shows a headshot of GARAK.

GARAK (v.o.)

Whatever has happened to you, my friend, my fervent hope is that this communication will find its way to you one way or another.

The cleaner moves off to carry on their work, giving the padd no more thought. But we continue to slowly close in on the padd and its image of Garak.

GARAK (v.o.)

But I still wonder... where are you, Doctor?

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

9 ON GARAK

As he stands, gazing out across his view. His face hangs slack, energy-less. He seems empty, emotionally hopeless. As grey and colourless as the clouded sky behind him.

WIDEN to reveal...

10 EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS

The large public square where we have seen meetings and rallies held before. Garak stands on a small stage at the front, a microphone stand before him. He stares out at the gathering crowd of Cardassians that is slowly filling the broken, rubble-strewn space. As he watches...

GARAK (v.o.)

They came from all over Cardassia.

Focusing on one group, wearing worn and scuffed leather working clothes...

GARAK (v.o.)

The Sabutahim, callused and sturdy farmers from across the southern provinces.

Garak's emotionless gaze shifts to another group, thin and wiry, malnourished but maintaining their pride.

GARAK (v.o.)

The gaunt and ghostly Kasmoc, herders and breeders from the north.

Moving to a third group...

GARAK (v.o.)

Ragged, half-mad fundamentalists from Lakarian City, rebuilding among the Hebitian ruins in a

desperate attempt to return to
simpler times.

And a final group, standing tall and proud in the nearest
things they can find to a uniform. They are determined to
act like they're in charge, whatever the reality.

GARAK (v.o.)

And of course, those die-hard
Imperialists, the base support of
the Directorate, from their
protected enclaves in Rogarin.

As Garak stares out from his podium...

GARAK (v.o.)

All survivors. Exhausted from the
death and destruction. Or demented
by loss and grief, looking for a
scapegoat for their rage. Since
the failure of the Reunion Project
to build a Cardassian democracy,
our world has divided itself into
countless tribes, each one
ferociously defending the tiny
borders of its pathetic realm.

Suddenly a voice raises in panic and fear.

WOMAN

No! No! Stop! He's blind!

Garak turns to his right, and sees a WOMAN trying to defend
an older man as two younger men beat him with fists.

YOUNG MAN

He fought against us at Begata!

OLD MAN

(between punches)

And I'd do it again!

Doctor PARMAK stands off to the side of the stage. He
directs two of the dozen or so military OFFICERS, who had
been guarding the stage, to move into the crowd and try to

stop the fight. Meanwhile, Garak watches blankly. He can't seem to muster the energy to care.

Garak finally speaks. Not any great speech, more as if he's thinking out loud and the mic just happens to be there.

GARAK

I wonder... what would happen if we all went blind.

The crowd stops a little, realising he's spoken.

CROWD WALLA

What? ... What did he say? ...
Quiet! ... Listen...

GARAK

How do they exact revenge in the land of the blind? What do they take next?

YOUNG MAN

You take until there's nothing left!

GARAK

"Until there's nothing left." Then let me ask you this. Let me ask you all - how do they exact revenge in the land of the dead?

For the first time, the crowd has no response. In the quiet, the mournful call of a bird echoes across the sky.

GARAK

If there's nothing left, how do we go on?

As Garak continues to gaze out, and the gathered crowd considers his question...

GARAK (v.o.)

It has been six months since Alon Ghemor was assassinated, and since then, nearly as many have died from the fighting and the plague

as did during the Dominion occupation.

11 **INT. CLINIC**

A run-down room, tent or warehouse. It's being used as a makeshift medical centre. Nothing too technologically advanced - just a case of downtrodden Cardassians standing in line to receive cursory medical checks and injections.

GARAK (v.o.)

Parmak has done excellent work taking the data you gave me and turning it into a vaccine to stem the tide of the disease. Now it's only a matter of us getting to the people before the disease does.

One line of patients moves on, rubbing the skin of their arms, injections given. The next line moves up to take their turn with the exhausted clinic workers.

GARAK (v.o.)

And still, one in three die in agony. A pitiful few actually recover from the infection. I imagine they wish they hadn't.

12 **EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS**

The crowd gathering in the square. To one side, there's a group of Cardassians gathered on their own. No-one else wants to stand near them. They're wearing heavy cloaks that completely hide their features.

GARAK (v.o.)

How brave of these people to come here today. To risk the resentment and fear of the others, just to hear me speak.

CUT TO:

13 **INT. CLINIC**

GARAK

What!... do you think you're
doing, Ereket?

One of the Cardassian nurses, a young male named EREKET, jerks in fear at the knife-edge in Garak's voice. He was preparing to inject an older man, CRONAL, with the vaccine. But he stops as Garak stalks over to him. The lines of people waiting for their turn stretch off to the distance.

EREKET

Excuse me, Docent?

GARAK

These people need the vaccine.
They don't need to be impressed by
your wisdom and expertise.

EREKET

But Docent, I was just trying to
explain -

GARAK

Administer the drug as you've been
taught. We have to finish this
group before we lose the light. Do
you understand?

Garak is being harsher here than the situation really calls for. His nerves are obviously frayed. Ereket flushes with shame at being yelled at, and gets back to work.

EREKET

Yes, Docent.

The older patient, Cronal, has been watching Garak closely all this time, much more interested in him than Ereket's procedure. Garak moves on. Cronal's eyes follow him.

GARAK (v.o.)

To correct the behaviour of a
small man like Ereket was a
momentary distraction. But if my
peers and those in positions of
real, actual power should need
correction...

CRONAL

Excuse me - Elim Garak?

Distracted by his own thoughts, Garak hadn't noticed Cronal approaching him. Now Garak turns to him, and something in the old man's intense gaze puts Garak on his alert.

GARAK

Yes?

CRONAL

My name is Cronal Gys. I want to thank you for the good work you've been doing here... and elsewhere.

GARAK

Thank you. And I apologise for the behaviour of -

CRONAL

No no, not at all. He's young, he has to learn how to work. Unfortunately all the schools these days are real life.

GARAK

You're very kind.

Garak isn't sure what to make of this man, the clear eyes that never stop looking at him, measuring him.

CRONAL

Your work has a particular significance for some of us here in Lakarian City.

GARAK

My... work?

CRONAL

I think I can help you find the person you're looking for.

Garak stops, his eyes going wide in shock and amazement.

GARAK

Nel...

14 FLASHBACK - 10x11 "HARMONY"

Garak gazes out of his shed to the destroyed memorial in which it sits. He has the padd O'Brien gave him, that contains the instructions of how to access the Vinculum.

GARAK (v.o.)

You see, Doctor, on those other times I went to the Vinculum, searching for you, the times you were not present as promised... others did appear to me.

15 FLASHBACK - 8x09 "A STITCH IN TIME"

The Tarlak Grounds as they used to look many years ago. A rare park of green grass and colourful flowers among the grey of the city. Garak sits on a bench with his secret love, PALANDINE. On the grass before them, Palandine's young daughter NEL plays happily to herself.

GARAK (v.o.)

I was young again, enjoying my secret assignments with another man's wife. Palandine, the woman who had held my attention since childhood.

Then we blend into **NEW FOOTAGE...**

...as a shadow passes over the scene. The bright sun turns to darkness, only the light of the Blind Moon to see by. At first Garak cannot see Palandine in the dark. But then she leans slowly forward into the light...

...and reveals a disfigured face, a horror mask burned and warped by the disease. Garak recoils in fear...

GARAK (v.o.)

I tried to believe that her disfigured appearance in the Vinculum was a hallucination. Just as Parmak had tried to convince me you were. But I couldn't deny that

she was not the only dead soul I
had encountered in that place.

PALANDINE

Careful, Elim. Your enemies are
looking for a way to hurt you.

GARAK

How?

In answer, the disfigured Palandine turns to look at the
child playing at their feet. Garak looks at Nel too... and
as they watch, the young girl slowly fades from view.

GARAK

Nel? They'll kill Nel?

PALANDINE

You will kill her. In revenge
against Barkan. Or so it will
appear.

16 FLASHBACK - 8x09 "A STITCH IN TIME"

The moment where Garak and Barkan struggle to the death in
a military interrogation room.

GARAK (v.o.)

Barkan. He and Palandine used me,
then betrayed me. I killed him.
And now they were going to
discredit me by claiming I had
killed his daughter too.

17 EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS

Present. From his position on the stage, Garak glances over
to the gathered Imperialists, standing smug and superior.

GARAK (v.o.)

Idiots. Didn't they know by now
that if I had wanted anyone
killed, no-one would have ever
found the evidence to prove it?
(beat)

But no-one ever needed proof of a thing to believe it was true. I promised Palandine I would search for Nel. Protect her.

18 **INT. CLINIC**

All of the above goes through Garak's mind as he processes what Cronal has said to him.

CRONAL

When it's convenient for you, you can meet me in the grounds adjacent to the Citadel. I'm sure I don't have to tell you how delicate the situation is.

With that, Cronal turns and walks away. Confused and thrown off guard, Garak calls after him.

GARAK

It won't take me long to finish up here.

CRONAL

(walking away)

I'll be there.

And then the old man is gone. Garak watches the lines of waiting patients shuffle forward a step at a time for their treatments. He has other things on his mind.

GARAK (v.o.)

Only when he was gone did I think to wonder how he knew I was looking for Nel at all. I hadn't yet had the chance to enquire about her in Lakarian.

Still thinking, worried, Garak turns away and goes back to his work. As he potters around, guiding and instructing the nurses, comforting the patients...

GARAK (v.o.)

When I returned from the Vinculum that third time, I took what

opportunities I could to look for her, as I had promised Palandine I would. Always making sure to do so discreetly, of course, so as not to raise the alarms of these hidden enemies.

19 FLASHBACK - 8x09 "A STITCH IN TIME"

The secret Oralian Way room, hidden away in a basement. The walls are painted in a frieze depicting the lives of the Hebitians, and Nel herself stands on the dais at the front.

GARAK (v.o.)

The Oralian Temple in Cardassia City where she had performed her duties as guide had disappeared without a trace. And there was really no-one else I could ask.

20 INT. CLINIC

The rows of dishevelled, downtrodden Cardassians continue to plod forward a step at a time. Garak continues to guide the nurses and comfort the patients.

GARAK (v.o.)

I knew Lakarian was a stronghold of what was left of the Oralian Way, so I purposely volunteered for the mission so that I could make enquiries as time allowed. Somehow this man Cronal had anticipated my intentions.

Garak looks back over his shoulder, in the direction Cronal had left...

GARAK (v.o.)

But how? How did he know?

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

21 EXT. CITADEL - NIGHT

Very dark, since there is little in the way of artificial light. A large and imposing building, like a mansion or castle, looms in the darkness, crumbling from damage and disuse. Surrounding it are sparse and crabby attempts at grass, again blasted and ruined by fire and destruction.

Garak stands in the even darker shadow of one of the few remaining trees. He looks up at one of the towers of the Citadel, pondering whether to emerge from hiding.

GARAK (v.o.)

Before Cardassia City was built to be a more appropriate seat of power for the empire, Lakarian served the role of centralising planetary government in a more subtle and aesthetic manner. Many of the buildings dated back to the early Republic, and there were even Hebitian ruins that had somehow survived the almost total eradication of that culture. The old Republican Citadel was one such, itself partly constructed from the ancient volcanic rock the Hebitians used to build with. I couldn't think of a more suitable place to conceal the remnants of the Oralian Way.

Finally, Garak steps forward out of the deepest shadow of the tree, and towards the stone walls of the Citadel.

GARAK (v.o.)

But was that really what was going on here? Or had I just walked, willingly and innocent as a child, into an elaborate trap? Damn it, Elim - has your caution and common

sense died along with everything
else?

Garak gently, reverently lays a hand on the stone of the
Citadel's walls.

CRONAL (o.s.)
The first people also touched
that.

Garak looks to the side - Cronal stands in the shadow of
another tree, just as he himself had. He's been there all
along. Garak isn't surprised - it fits the situation.

GARAK
It has an almost plasmic quality.

CRONAL
We'll never find a better building
material.

GARAK
Why wasn't it used for everything?

CRONAL
It's not as imperial looking as
obsidian stone from the Toran
mountains.

GARAK
But that's on the other side of
the planet.

CRONAL
Yes, but they had plenty of...
expendable labour.
(beat)
Please, Elim Garak, come with me.

Cronal emerges from the shadows and begins to lead Garak
through the grounds, around the building.

GARAK (v.o.)
The gardener in me wanted to stop
and study what was left of the
plantings. It would take time to

restore the soil, but it could be done, and well worth the effort.

22 EXT. LAKARIAN CITY - NIGHT

Cronal leads Garak through dark, beaten down city streets. Buildings jammed together in cramped, hive-like fashion. Despite the many buildings, the streets are deserted.

GARAK (v.o.)

Of course. They wouldn't hide in the Citadel itself. If I knew that was the obvious place, others could figure it out just as easily. Honestly, Elim, you really are losing your touch.

Cronal notices Garak's glances around at the dead streets.

CRONAL

The plague was especially cruel here. Almost no-one remains... except, of course, for those who have no choice.

GARAK

The dead.

CRONAL

Not just the dead.

Cronal stops at a door that looks just like all the others. They cross the threshold, there's a HUM and Garak shivers - he's just passed through a forcefield of some kind.

Cronal goes to another door among many - the door opens as they approach, despite there having been no signal. Garak gasps slightly as he sees who is there - NEL. She smiles at him openly, no artifice or judgement.

GARAK

Nel...

NEL

Elim Garak. Please. Come in. We've been waiting for you.

Garak and Cronal both enter the room, and Nel closes the door behind them.

23 **INT. STONE ROOM**

The room is small and dark, empty and bare except for half a dozen low stools. The walls and floor are built of the same volcanic rock as the Citadel, which almost seems to flow and move in a visual illusion, forming shapes which dissolve again before they can be identified. Garak, Cronal and Nel all take seats.

GARAK

You've become an Oralian Guide.

NEL

When it's not a danger to others.
It's difficult for people to
gather and celebrate the Fates.

GARAK

That's my fault, isn't it? You're
being caught up in a stratagem
that's directed against me.

NEL

What a strange man you are, Elim
Garak. I assure you, you don't
have to take responsibility for
our problems. You have plenty of
your own.

GARAK

But I was under the impression -

NEL

I know. But even if you never
existed, those people who hunt us
now would still be doing so. Of
course Cardassian efficiency would
dearly love to eliminate us both
at the same time.

Nel chuckles, wryly amused at the very idea. Garak gazes at her in wonder.

GARAK

You have so much of both your mother and father in you... I feel so...

NEL

You loved my father, didn't you? Obviously I know you loved my mother... but him too.

GARAK

...Yes.

Nel turns to Cronal, as if pondering a hypothetical.

NEL

Has it ever occurred to you, Cronal, that we seek out that person who... how shall I say this... gives us our death?

CRONAL

There are precedents in nature. The *balteen*, at the end of its cycle, offers itself at the lair of its greatest predator. Even Garak's pet *regnar* chooses its time.

Nel turns back to Garak, smiling and clapping with glee.

NEL

Mila! Your tiny lizard friend at Bamarren Institute, named after your mother.

GARAK

What don't you know about me?

CRONAL

It's only information.

GARAK

My father would have disagreed.

NEL

But he waited for you, before he died. Just like the regnar.

Garak cannot breathe - Nel is saying all the things he has never dared to admit to himself. Nel seems to understand.

NEL

My father had been looking for the person who would give him his death. He also chose you for that moment.

CRONAL

Men who want to lead are often conflicted. Does one have a calling? Or merely a lust for power? And if it is a calling, how does one answer?

FLASHBACK - 10x06 "THE DREAM BOX"

At the cocktail party, Bashir hands Garak the padd with the vaccine information it, urging Garak onwards...

BACK TO SCENE

Garak looks at Nel in wonder...

GARAK

You know about the Vinculum.

NEL

Of course we know. It's a great gift, Elim. A source of wisdom few are allowed to experience... and be able to return and share. And surely you must know by now the reason you were sent there.

Garak looks back at her blankly. She chuckles again, amused and exasperated at his naivety.

NEL

Before an ancient Hebitian could be appointed as leader, he had to

make a pilgrimage to it. The Vinculum is a place where the living and the dead find common ground. After all, unless you've made your peace with the dead, how can you lead the living?

GARAK

I don't understand...

NEL

(passionate)

You made the pilgrimage, Elim. You have been called.

GARAK

If that's the case, why would a human - Julian Bashir - be the one to encourage me to lead the Reunion Project? Shouldn't that message - that call - have come from one of our own?

CRONAL

Are you sure it was really him?

Once again, Garak has the breath knocked out of him.

GARAK

But... why -

NEL

Elim, you're an extraordinary person. You're also a stubborn one. Perhaps you received the information from someone who appeared to be Julian Bashir because you wouldn't accept it from anyone else.

GARAK

Then who was it?

NEL

Only you can answer that.

GARAK

When I was in the Vinculum, your mother - or someone who appeared to be her - told me to save you.

NEL

Am I in danger?

GARAK

I think we all are.

NEL

Then you have to save us all.

As Garak sits, gazing at the shifting patterns on the stone walls, trying to absorb what she's telling him...

24 EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS

Present. Garak is on the stage, looking out at the gathered Cardassians from all over the planet.

GARAK (v.o.)

And so I called for the speech. To attempt to reconcile all the scattered tribes of our world.

The crowd is still, prepared to listen for the moment.

GARAK

My fellow Cardassians...

He trails off, looking at their faces, at the various groups still separate and distrustful.

GARAK (v.o.)

As I prepared to thank them for coming, urge them to lay aside their differences, the faces of the past intruded even more. In the Obsidian Order, we are taught to operate on two or more levels of conscious intent at once. The mind has complete control over each level. But I had no control over the imagery now flooding my

mind. The speech I had wanted to give, the words of healing and hope... wouldn't come.

He is blank and emotionless, speaking without inflection.

GARAK

We've all gone mad.

They all look up at him, confused...

GARAK (cont)

Or we've reached the final stage in our evolution, where we've outlived our reason for being here at all. Perhaps all that's left is the final implosion.

Some in the crowd don't like this. They begin to shout and protest. Garak shouts over them...

GARAK

No no no no! Not your fault! You were only reacting to the circumstances that he created, and the injuries and insults that she committed. And every one of us is so wronged and insulted and inflicted with the deaths of those closest to us that we righteously believe we have the right to strike the last blow!

VOICE

Yes! We do!

GARAK

Alright. But let me ask you a serious question, my fellow long-suffering Cardassian. Have you thought about what this world will look like if you do strike the last blow?

Silence. They are actually thinking about what he said.

GARAK (v.o.)

Suddenly I hated them. I hated them all. I hated what we had become. The best of us had already been sacrificed, and the sooner the end came for the rest of us the better.

Garak looks down at them, sneering with his distaste.

GARAK

Think about it. It's very simple. Whichever one of you does strike the last blow, imagine the satisfaction as you stand all alone in a wasteland of dead bodies. All the barbarity and madness of our civilisation devolves on you. And at that point, all I can wish for you is that you have the strength to bury the rest of us. That is, if there's a shred of decency left in you.

The crowd is starting to respond, and they are not happy. On the stage behind him, Parmak murmurs a gentle warning.

PARMAK

Elim...

GARAK (v.o.)

This was not the calling Nel had spoken of. I knew that. Perhaps it was exhaustion... perhaps I was seeking my death. But I was facing a reality that defied all political idealism... and it had finally driven me mad.

The crowd boils over. The people surge forwards, ready to attack. Garak stands there, not caring anymore as they push towards him, baying for his blood...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

25 EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS

Where we left it. The crowd is fighting amongst themselves, but a significant number have targeted Garak himself.

VOICES

Death to Garak! Death to traitors!

Garak watches them approach, barely present. At the last he's grabbed from behind by Parmak and quickly hustled out of the way. It's not unlike when Jartek did the same for Ghemor. Will it have the same result? Garak doesn't care.

As what pitiful security there is futilely holds back the crowd, Parmak quickly drags Garak down behind the stage. There's an old grate in the building walls that once led into a sewer. Parmak pulls it aside, drags Garak into the opening with him, and pulls it closed. They've escaped.

26 INT. UNDERGROUND PASSAGE

A hidden square-cut passageway through the bowels of the city. Cold stone, damp walls, barely any light. Parmak and Garak dash along it.

27 INT. BASEMENT ROOM

A door opens and Parmak shoves Garak through it. As Parmak makes sure the door is securely closed, Garak goes to take a seat at a table. He sits, and looks down at the table, not looking at the other people in the room.

Sat behind a fairly large and ornate desk is PYTHAS. He sits in a primitive wheelchair, and his face is disfigured and warped - not with the disease like Palandine's, but with burns from the original Dominion attack. His voice is calm and measured, despite the enormous pain he must be in.

Standing behind him is LIMOR, Enabran Tain's former aide as seen in 8x09 "A Stitch in Time." Thin and wiry, the kind of man who barely ever moves or speaks, so that when he does, you know he has a purpose.

PYTHAS

What was that all about, Elim?

GARAK

I couldn't give the speech.

PYTHAS

Obviously.

GARAK

I'm tired of them. They behave like children.

PYTHAS

So you scold them like children? Did you think that would bring them together? They're afraid.

GARAK

I'm sorry. I couldn't control myself.

Garak looks up, still empty. Limor is staring back at him.

The door opens again, and DEJAR enters (last seen 10x07 "Instinct"). She's been listening to a comm chip in her ear, and reports to Pythas, as if Garak isn't even there.

DEJAR

It's getting worse. The battle is raging throughout the Tarlak Sector. It seems the Directorate had planned on breaking up the rally in any event. Garak just made their task easier.

PYTHAS

Send the Paldar and Akleen units.

DEJAR

That will exhaust our reserves.

PYTHAS

What else can we do, Dejar? Give them the coordinates and stay in touch.

Dejar accepts the instructions and leaves the room again.

GARAK

How many more fires can we put out, Pythas? This happens every time. Whenever we make some kind of progress, negotiate a truce, a reconciliation... some act of violence destroys it all again.

PARMAK

(quiet, sympathetic)

He's not wrong, Pythas. Mondrig is still out there somewhere, whipping up paranoia. And who can blame them for listening? There has to be a reason why so many have died, and Federation genocide makes as much sense as anything else.

GARAK

It's a stalemate, Pythas. There's no productivity, our resources are at a critical low -

PYTHAS

Yes, I know this, Elim. And the fact that you know it as well makes me wonder all the more why you weren't able to control yourself and follow through with our plan to reconcile those groups out there.

GARAK

Because it's futile. All you had to do was look into their eyes. They want revenge, someone to blame. The thugs were waiting for the opening to attack us, Dejar said so herself. The only people

who want reconciliation are the plague survivors, and who's going to listen to them?

PYTHAS

Then what, Elim? You must have had something in mind when you delivered your lecture today.

GARAK

We have to contact the Federation.

Nobody expected him to say that. In the silence that follows, Dejar re-enters the room again. She notices the awkward silence, but chooses not to break it. Finally, Pythas clears his throat.

PYTHAS

I quote you, Elim. It's futile.

GARAK

Futile to return to the Vinculum, perhaps. For whatever reason, Doctor Bashir was not able to maintain our contact there.

PARMAK

(patient, said
it all before)

If Bashir was ever there.

Garak glares at him, but Parmak stands his ground. In the silence again, Dejar finally speaks.

DEJAR

The Directorate is pinned down. They want to negotiate a truce that would let them return home.

PYTHAS

(derisive)

A truce.

LIMOR

Kill them.

PYTHAS

No. They don't need any martyrs.
Keep them isolated. I want to talk
to their commanders.

Dejar nods her acceptance again, but before she can leave,
Garak brings it back to his favourite topic. He's a dog
with a bone, and he won't let it go.

GARAK

Maybe Bashir was never in the
Vinculum. Maybe it was a dream.
But the vaccine I came back with
wasn't a dream. Parmak and I have
travelled this planet
administering it, and it works.

PARMAK

Again, I can't deny what Garak is
saying, Pythas.

GARAK

And the Federation approved our
receiving the formula. Anyone who
says that they would try to murder
us all with disease doesn't know
them the way I do. If I can
somehow explain to them what our
present needs -

PYTHAS

Must I remind you, Elim, why
Ghemor was assassinated?

GARAK

He was assassinated because he
trusted the wrong people!

PYTHAS

Precisely. Mondrig wanted him dead
because he was friendly towards
the Federation. That's part of the
reason we rejected their support
afterwards. If the Reunion Project
formally allied with the
Federation, what's to stop the

Directorate from allying with the Klingons or the Romulans in response? And then where would we be?

GARAK

What is to stop them doing that anyway? We cannot let fear of what they might do stop us from doing what we know is necessary.

PYTHAS

The risk is too great, Elim. To many of our people, Ghemor was a traitor for even speaking to the Federation, and for all we know it was one of our own people who killed him.

Garak keeps quiet - he hasn't told anyone the truth about that. Pythas continues, getting almost irate.

PYTHAS (cont)

And what are you going to do, Elim? Announce your departure for Earth with the intention of standing before the Federation Council, and leave us to face the reaction to your treachery?

Pythas is making good points. Garak is a bit petulant about that. But he already has a plan. Quietly, confidently...

GARAK

No-one will know I've gone.

Pythas goes quiet. His scarred face gazes at Garak.

PYTHAS

You're serious about this.

GARAK

Yes.

PYTHAS

Fine. But when you turn up in Paris, who is not going to know you're there? You're no longer some anonymous operative in the Order. You've become the public face of the Reunion Project.

GARAK
(insistent)
No-one will know.

Garak looks at Limor. The way the old man looks back at him implies he knows precisely what Garak is suggesting.

GARAK
How is Mindur Timot's health these days?

LIMOR
He's well enough. But I'm not so sure about you, Garak.

PYTHAS
What's this about?

LIMOR
I believe Garak wants to go to Earth... as a hew-mon.

PARMAK
That's impossible.

GARAK
No. Pythas, do you remember when Entek abducted the Bajoran, Kira Nerys, and had her transformed into a Cardassian?

Pythas looks back at him blankly. Limor takes pity.

LIMOR
Timot devised and performed the procedure to make a member of one species appear as another. A Bajoran as a Cardassian... a Cardassian as a hew-mon.

PYTHAS

Was this done often?

LIMOR

A number of occasions. But the procedure lacked... precision.

GARAK

I'll tell that to Kira the next time I see her.

PARMAK

But why would you want to take the chance, Elim?

GARAK

Because we've run out of other solutions, my friend. And if we don't find one soon, you'll be able to add Cardassians to the interplanetary list of extinct species. And because I made a promise to someone.

PYTHAS

And how would you explain your absence?

GARAK

After today's behaviour? Easily.

The room goes quiet as everyone ponders the idea, weighing up the pros and cons. Pythas looks to Limor and Dejar. Limor gives him an almost imperceptible nod. Pythas sighs.

PYTHAS

How would you present yourself?

GARAK

How else, Pythas? As a plain and simple tailor.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

28 EXT. SPACE

In Earth orbit. The great mushroom-shaped Starbase hangs in space. But we're looking at a shuttle that has just left the station, and is travelling down towards the planet.

ATTENDANT (v.o.)
Faded, hasn't it?

29 INT. SHUTTLE

Bright and clean and advanced, a comfortable Federation passenger shuttle, filled with happy travellers sat in rows like a standard commercial airliner. We are looking out of one of the portholes towards the approaching planet.

Then our POV turns in response to the voice speaking to us, and we see an ATTENDANT smiling down at us, as we sit in one of the rows. He noticed us gazing out of the window.

GARAK (o.s.)
Hmm?

ATTENDANT
According to the accounts of the first astronauts, the intensity of the blue was almost too much to bear. But I think the more often you see it, the more you get used to it.

GARAK (o.s.)
Yes, I suppose so.

ATTENDANT
We'll be landing at Charles de Gaulle in just a few minutes, Monsieur Tranger.

With a polite smile, the attendant moves on. Our POV moves back to the window. Reflected in the glass, superimposed

over the planet, is a human face. Our focus shifts to look at the reflection...

MATCH CUT TO:

30 INT. MEDICAL SUITE

Our POV turns back to look at another smiling face - the affable and chatty older Cardassian surgeon TIMOT. He pulls off his surgical mask, and smiles with pride at his work.

TIMOT

Now, Elim, relax. Everything has worked out fine. But before you look at yourself, just remember that humans have an entirely different sense of, how shall we say... physical attractiveness. Now I've taken as a model someone I've been assured is a perfectly average example of the human male.

GARAK (o.s.)

But what am I? There are so many types.

TIMOT

Elim, with these humans, there is no such thing as a pure racial type. Regardless of how repellent the idea of mixing races is to us, on Earth any given mixture is possible... especially with the French.

Friendly and cheerful, Timot turns away and grabs a mirror. He holds it up, but Garak doesn't really want to look.

TIMOT

Come now, my boy. You're going to have look at your new face eventually. I'm eager to know what you think of my handiwork.

Grudgingly, Garak looks closely at his reflection, and we finally see Garak's new face clearly.

GARAK

Oh Mindur... where am I?

TIMOT

You're right here, my boy! But you look like Emile Tranger of Paris, France, Earth. Thankfully I've ironed out some of the kinks since I did this for Gul Dukat. You look marvellous!

CUT TO:

31 INT. PARIS ARRIVALS

Among the surging crowds of humans and other species, Human-Garak emerges into the arrivals hall. He's a little thrown by the sheer numbers of people rushing back and forth. He spots a name-card with his name, held by a young female chauffeur, MILA. Garak approaches her...

MILA

Monsieur Tranger?

(Garak nods)

Please follow me.

The chauffeuse turns away and leads Garak through the crowd. NOTE: This is the same actress who played Nel earlier, although Garak doesn't seem to recognise that.

MILA

I hope you don't mind, Monsieur, but the fastest way into town is the Metro. I've arranged for your baggage to be picked up and delivered to your apartment.

GARAK

What is your name?

MILA

Mila.

Garak stops in the crowd, amazed. After a moment, Mila realises Garak is not with her, and turns, surprised.

MILA
Monsieur? Are you alright?

Garak fumbles and fakes looking for something in his coat.

GARAK
Yes... for a moment, I thought I'd forgotten... ah, here it is.
(awkward pause)
We haven't met before, have we? ...Perhaps it's just that you remind me of someone.

Giving him a curious look, Mila turns and carries on. Off balance, Garak follows through the throng as best he can.

GARAK (v.o.)
Mila... the name of my mother. The name of my first pet, my first friend. And now, this strangely familiar young woman guiding me through the tumult of my first trip to Paris. I couldn't believe how clumsy I was. It was as if I'd never known something unexpected to happen before. Political life had made me obvious and stupid.

Under the above, Mila slices a straight line through the crowd with no problem. But following her, Garak is buffeted from all sides. A native Parisian man bumps into him in one direction, swearing at him MOS to get out of the way.

As Garak gapes in astonishment he's knocked again the other way by a woman with a baby carriage, who doesn't bother to even acknowledge his existence. Realising he needs to keep moving or be trampled, he chases after Mila as best he can.

32 EXT. CHARLES DE GAULLE SHUTTLE PORT

Mila and Human-Garak are now outside, standing by the taxi rank outside the shuttle port. The crowd are just as heavy and chaotic out here as inside.

Garak is sweating and breathing in short gasps - even outside, the claustrophobia is kicking in. With one hand out to hail a taxi, Mila notices Garak's distressed state.

MILA

Do not worry, Monsieur. It's the beginning of the holiday, and everyone wants to get away.

A taxi finally stops for them - one of a line of individual pods that swing below a monorail track. The door opens and Mila clammers in. A little bemused, Garak follows her.

33 INT. PARIS TAXI

Garak collapses into one of the seats, with Mila perched primly in another. The DRIVER looks through the partition.

DRIVER

Votre destination?

MILA

Menilmontant, s'il vous plaît.
Près de la Gard du Nord.

The driver pulls away, jerking Garak back into his seat. NOTE: the driver is played by the same actor as Cronal earlier, although again Garak doesn't recognise him.

Garak resettles into the seat, the air conditioning calming his claustrophobia. As they travel on, he looks out of the window at the city passing by. Mila stays quiet, trying not to look like she's watching him.

The city is a motley collection of old stone buildings and modern glass and metal constructions, seemingly totally random. And yet the people filling every square inch seem to be able to move through it all smoothly and easily. The golden sunlight makes the chaos seem warm and happy even.

Garak watches all of this, intrigued and spellbound.

MILA

It's not how you remember it?

GARAK

Yes... for the most part. But I'm always surprised at how different it is from... some other places I've been.

MILA

The Americans and Germans call us obstinate. They call Paris the 'museum city,' because we wouldn't make the changes they have made to their cities.

The driver turns in his seat and looks directly at Garak with piercing eyes. The taxi continues to drive itself.

DRIVER

But they keep coming here, don't they? And do you know why?

GARAK

Uh... because they like museums?

DRIVER

Au contraire, m'sieur! They live in sterile boxes. But they don't want to forget what real life is like. So they come and eat our real food and walk our real streets and begin to feel real feelings again. They remember what it is to be a human being! Why do you think the Federation chose us to build their centre?

GARAK

Uh... because they want to be in a real city?

DRIVER

Voilà!

Satisfied, the driver turns back to his job. A little baffled, Garak goes back to looking out of the window.

GARAK (v.o.)

I remember you once describing the French to me, Doctor, as "different." I saw that I was being introduced to a diehard culture that wasn't featured in Federation propaganda.

34 EXT. PARIS APARTMENT BLOCK

The taxi glides to a halt on its monorail, outside a block of apartments, housed in a fairly old building of classical Parisian design. Not exactly crumbling, but far from 24th Century Federation modern. The kind of place that you can imagine hasn't changed in centuries.

Garak clambers out of the taxi and gazes up at the building while Mila handles the fare. Then she joins him on the pavement and the taxi zooms off.

Garak stands there, absorbing what to him is an astonishing experience. People just going about their lives. The sounds of children happily playing. Washing hanging out on lines. Neighbours greet neighbours with a warm kiss-kiss and chat openly about their day. Garak almost can't handle it.

35 INT. PARIS APARTMENT

Garak opens the door to enter the apartment, finding a room that suits the building's outside perfectly. Wooden floors, white painted walls, wrought iron fittings, stucco in the corners. As Mila carries in his bags behind him, Garak goes to the already open window.

OUT THE WINDOW

There's a courtyard in the centre of the apartment block. All the other apartments open onto it, and most of their windows are open too, allowing all their neighbours to see inside, into their lives. People go about their business in their apartments, enjoying each other's company.

Looking down to the ground several floors below, there's children tossing a ball about among the plants and flowers. The delicious smells and happy sounds echo up to him.

BACK TO THE ROOM

Garak is astonished at all of this. It's almost enough to make him cry. He turns back to Mila, only see to see that she has been watching him closely. He clams up a little.

GARAK

Who arranged for these living quarters?

MILA

(confused)

Monsieur Sharib. I thought -

GARAK

(sharp)

I know who my contact is. I just want to know who he used as an intermediary.

MILA

Ah - an estate agent, you mean.

GARAK

Yes, whatever you call it.

MILA

I only know of Monsieur Sharib. His information is on the data padd, just there. He told me to tell you welcome, and he'll be in touch.

She points across the room to a sideboard, where a standard Starfleet data padd sits. Garak nods, trying to bring his jittery behaviour under control. Mila just waits politely.

GARAK (v.o.)

I tried to repress my anger at my own ineptitude. I was losing my control. I had to be more careful. I knew that Mila was picking up everything. She was too good to be just a tourist guide. And she was too careful to reveal any kind of reaction to my ridiculous behaviour.

MILA

Well... is there anything else,
Monsieur?

GARAK

No. Thank you, Mila. You've been
very kind. How do I find you... if
I need you for some reason?

MILA

That information is also on the
padd.

She gives him a sly smile, and leaves.

Alone now, except for the sounds of life going on outside,
Garak stands in the middle of the room, pondering. He looks
around at all the old architecture, the old fittings. Opens
his suitcase, begins to move things, organise his space.

GARAK (v.o.)

Mila had said that the building
was nearly five-hundred years old.
A conservative estimate, I
thought. Never in my life did I
imagine I would be living in an
alien culture's ancient history. I
wondered if I hadn't died and been
transported to some bizarre
afterlife.

Garak pauses in his thoughts...

GARAK (v.o.)

Then a more frightening question
took shape. What if I had come to
this place to die? What if this
was me... seeking my death? A few
days before I would have welcomed
the thought, but now, with new
hope on the horizon...

Shaking off the thought as ridiculous, Garak moves to the
sideboard and picks up the Starfleet padd. He looks at its

screen, which features a picture of BASHIR. Garak frowns at this, somewhat confused...

Around him, the sounds of life, of conversations and food cooking and children playing, begin to grow louder. They echo, swirl, blend and separate. Garak looks up, confused.

The walls of the apartment have begun to move. Patterns play over the surfaces, like in Nel's basement hideout. Shapes form and dissolve. The entire apartment seems to be moving around him, flowing, circling.

He looks back down to the padd in his hand, and it **MELTS**. The padd and the hand both flow like liquid, like a Dali painting. They are caught up in whatever is happening to the rest of the room.

Garak is terrified. The noises and sights and colours swirl around him. The padd has become a tiny black hole, and everything orbits it before being inevitably sucked in.

Garak finds himself bent into impossible shapes, his belly being sucked towards the black hole in front of him as his head tries to pull away. Eyes flared, confused, panicking.

As all the room swirls tighter and tighter, disappearing into the ever growing black hole at its centre, Garak is the last to be pulled in. He has nothing to grab on to. He's falling down the hole, like it or not.

And then, he's gone. The blackness is all there is.

36 **BLACK OUT**

Gradually, and slightly **FADE UP**...

Until we recognise the face of Garak, gazing out at us. Not the human version, but the original Cardassian. The face is ghostly in the darkness, watching, confused but curious...

What is going on here?

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

37 ON GARAK

...in the darkness, watching, more confused and curious than afraid. Voices drift to him across the darkness...

PYTHAS (o.s.)
How would you present yourself?

38 GARAK'S POV

The shadows and nothingness form into the shapes of people standing or sitting - it is the meeting in the dark room after Garak's breakdown at the rally.

But the room itself has gone - it is just the people in the dark, replaying the last few moments of that conversation, unaware of anyone watching them. Garak, Parmak, Pythas, Dejar and Limor.

GARAK
How else, Pythas? As a plain and simple tailor.

Pythas accepts with a sigh. Garak smiles, satisfied with the deal made. Parmak guides Garak to the door...

PARMAK
Come along then, Elim. If you insist on going to Earth, I'll find you some kind of... guide book or something.

Garak lets himself be guided out, and then he's gone. But the scene continues. Pythas, Limor and Dejar look among each other, none willing to say what they're all thinking.

DEJAR
What do we do with him?

PYTHAS
He can never come back.

DEJAR
From Earth?

PYTHAS
At all. He's no asset to us now.

39 **ON GARAK**

...watching, listening, absorbing...

40 **GARAK'S POV**

The three Cardassians talk in the darkness...

LIMOR
I'll arrange it.

PYTHAS
I want him to live.

LIMOR
I don't understand.

PYTHAS
Let him live, Limor. Just as long
as he never comes back.

LIMOR
How can this be done?

PYTHAS
...The Vinculum.

LIMOR
Listen to me, Pythas. Garak has
many enemies. It would be a simple
matter to kill him. To spare his
life is no solution. Nor is it
mercy. His life has run its
course!

Pythas thinks about what Limor has said...

41 **ON GARAK**

...watching...

Focusing on Pythas, as he ponders. He doesn't speak out loud, but we HEAR his thoughts, ghostly and indistinct.

PYTHAS (v.o.)

He's right. Elim is exhausted. He has no more resources to draw on. His inability to give the speech shows how depleted his morale is. Perhaps it would be a kindness to kill him.

Garak's focus shifts to Limor, tall and thin and cold.

LIMOR (v.o.)

This is the sentimentality that Enabran allowed into the Order, and that nearly destroyed us. I taught Pythas to be harder. But the chain of command must be preserved. So be it.

Finally, Pythas makes his decision.

PYTHAS

Arrange it with Mindur Timot so that Elim goes to the Vinculum and never returns. Parmak assures me the controls are easy enough.

DEJAR

Should we worry about Parmak?

PYTHAS

He'll never find out, Dejar. Elim will disappear, and it will be revealed that he was assassinated while trying to make a deal with the Federation. I don't think I have to explain to you how this will work to our advantage.

LIMOR

I'll arrange it with Timot.

The scene over, the players fade back into the darkness.

43 ON GARAK

Sad, disappointed that his friends and compatriots could dispose of him so easily. After a moment, gentle light intrudes on the darkness, and Garak looks up to see...

44 GARAK'S POV

A full-length mirror now stands in front of him, revealing Garak's own image, standing there in old, Hebitian-style dress. He gazes at himself, intrigued...

Reflected in the mirror, Garak sees a door open in the darkness behind him. Bright light and cheerful sounds creep through it. He turns and walks towards the door. But at the threshold, he pauses and looks back over his shoulder...

45 INT. GARAK'S SHACK

...and sees his small shack, the only home he has now. The small cot he sleeps on, the primitive stove he cooks with. No mirror, but an ORALIAN MASK hanging on the wall.

GARAK
(to self)
Is this a dream?

PALANDINE
Does it matter?

Garak realises with a start that Palandine sits calmly on his bed, having blended in to the point of invisibility. Now she stands and approaches him in the doorway.

PALANDINE
Really, Elim. Does it matter if
this is a dream or reality?
(re the shack)
Because if you want to get out of
here, you're going to have to
learn to live in both worlds.

She walks past him into the bright light beyond the door, holds out her hand for him to follow. Lost in wonder and confusion, Garak takes her hand, and follows her into the light. But as they walk on, Palandine turns to smile at him, and it's not Palandine anymore. It's Nel...

As Nel leads Garak by the hand into the light, shapes form out of it, as if Garak's eyes are simply getting accustomed to the brightness that Cardassians instinctively dislike. Those shapes gradually resolve into...

46 **INT. BANQUET HALL**

It's a party, a pleasant gathering of seemingly hundreds of happy, civilised and friendly people. All Cardassian, but no sign of the militarism or arrogance one would expect from Cardassians. Because these are Hebitians.

Garak looks around at the people mingling and chatting. Flowers bloom, chandeliers glitter, happy voices drift.

NEL

Go ahead, Elim. Feel free.

Garak steps into the crowd, tentative at first, not sure he should be here. But he wants to be one of these people. In the distance is a familiar face, laughing with friends.

BASHIR turns, smiles in recognition. Beckons Garak to join him. Elated, Garak wades into the crowd. But the closer he gets, the further away Bashir seems to be...

TOLAN (o.s.)

Elim. I'm so glad you came.

Surprised, Garak turns and sees TOLAN ("A Stitch in Time"), dressed in the robes of an Oralian Guide. Nel stands behind him, observing happily. Garak gapes in amazement.

GARAK

Father... I've missed you.

The room around them changes again, almost imperceptibly. It darkens, the others disappearing, until the three of them are alone, standing in Nel's basement hideout.

47 **INT. STONE ROOM (CONTINUOUS)**

The black stone walls shift and blend, shapes shimmering and not quite forming. Garak steps closer, watching the shapes as they begin to coalesce.

They form a procession of figures. It's the Hebitian frieze that was painted onto the walls of the Oralian temple in "A Stitch in Time," but the figures are moving.

We slowly ZOOM IN on the animated people, cave drawings of Cardassians, walking one behind another along a path. They all seem comfortable, content, in harmony. They are dressed as farmers, hunters, ironworkers, priests, and so on.

The path loops gently around the walls of the room, until it disappears into the top corner. Garak watches the path re-emerge from the bottom corner, and continue.

TOLAN

If they are able to understand how connected they are... if they can accept the connection... the tribes can come together... they can celebrate...

Garak watches the procession. The image shifts slightly, a ribbon appearing connected to each figure at the chest. A pinkish thread that leads from their heart up into the sky.

We FOLLOW the pink thread from one Hebitian as it rises up. Slowly, slowly... until the thread reaches its source. A hand-drawn representation of ORALIUS.

A winged figure, almost angelic, as seen on the paintings in the Oralian temple, and on the statue in the ruins at Gardat. The figure has countless similar pinkish threads leading out of its body, connecting to the people below.

TOLAN

We are all connected, Elim. All of us. Oralius came to teach us this, help us to understand and celebrate that connection.

Our focus moves to Oralius itself, wings spread wide. We close in on its semi-Cardassian face, seeming to smile with grace and love. And then we move closer, focusing on the indentation that adorns its forehead, like all Cardassians.

And then the "spoon" shape... blinks. Like an eye.

PULL OUT gradually - we see the indent has indeed become an eye. A large single eye, set into the face of an EAV'OQ.

PULL OUT further - we see the Eav'oq's body, white and warm, gently soothing, the single eye smiling.

Garak watches all of this, on the verge of understanding. He has never seen an Eav'oq, doesn't know what one is. He just sees this strange alien figure, hovering peacefully over the Hebitians below. He smiles, comforted.

The Hebitians are now closer to the Eav'oq, gathered around it. The pink ribbons thicken and strengthen, until it becomes clear that they are the Eav'oq figure's multiple limbs. They curl around the Hebitians, as if hugging them.

TOLAN

And he was right to. Because...
watch, Elim. Watch what happens
when the connection breaks.

The procession of figures continues. But one or two of them stumble, fall to their knees. The happy, peaceful feeling gives way to grey dullness. More Hebitian figures collapse in hunger or fatigue or choking. Garak watches in horror...

New figures arrive, dressed in black, carrying knives and guns. They attack the weakened Hebitians, laugh over their dead bodies. These are Cardassians, dark and ominous.

Above, the Eav'oq still hovers. Its pink ribbons are now snapped, the connections broken, its eye no longer smiling. It draws away, the image diminishing and growing smaller, pulling back until it is a mere dot... and then gone.

GARAK

No... come back... please...

TOLAN

He will, Elim. Oralius... is of
Cardassia. You are of Cardassia.
You are the Hand of the Fates.
Bring Oralius back to them.

Garak turns away, tears in his eyes...

48 **INT. GARAK'S SHACK**

...and finds himself back in the shack. Tolan is with him, as he was in "A Stitch in Time," showing him his gardening tools. Outside, it's normal daylight, before the Dominion. Inside, it's a boy and his father.

TOLAN
Are you still working with the
orchids, Elim?

GARAK
Not for a long time.

TOLAN
Cultivate what's left. And teach
someone else the method.

GARAK
I will.

Tolan smiles up at the wall, where the Oralian mask hangs.

TOLAN
You still have the mask! Wear it
next time you speak, Elim. It will
help to remind them.

Tolan stands directly in front of Garak, reaches out gently and touches his son's forehead, right on the spoon shape. Then the older man FADES from view, until he's gone.

Garak looks at the Oralian mask. It begins to GLOW with a warm, gentle white light. The mask seems to move, smile. Pink ribbons stretch out from all sides of it, reaching to make a connection. The light grows and grows until...

WHITE OUT

Then **FADE IN** to...

49 **PARMAK**

...Looking into camera, concerned and nervous.

PARMAK

Elim? Can you hear me?

50 **INT. PARMAK'S HOME**

Garak lies on a thin, rattling pallet in a small and ordinary room - nicer than Garak's shack, but not by much. He opens his eyes hesitantly, as if recovering from a hangover or psychedelic experience.

GARAK

Yes, Doctor. No need to shout.
Where am I?

PARMAK

(relieved)

An old family home. But... What happened to you, Elim? And how did they know to bring you here?

Garak sits up, wincing at the pain behind his eyes.

GARAK

They? Who are they?

PARMAK

I have no idea. A young woman and an older man. I'd never seen either of them before. But they told me there was a situation involving you, and somehow they knew this house was deserted. They made it very clear that I wasn't to tell anyone you were back. What happened on Earth?

GARAK

Yes... Earth...

Garak climbs slowly off the pallet and stands, testing his limbs, stretching out his fingers. He feels the ridges on his face and neck, as if confirming that he is Cardassian. He looks up at Parmak, smiles. He seems happier and more energised than he has in months.

GARAK

Never mind about that. What matters is that I'm here now. At long last. And we have much work to do.

PARMAK

We have?

Garak smiles affectionately at Parmak's confusion.

GARAK (v.o.)

I looked at him, wondering how I could ever explain. Parmak is a man of science, Doctor, like yourself. He believes that we can reconstruct a society based on a purely rational model. I had believed that myself, before. I had thought that was the very message you had been trying to give me when we met in the Vinculum - that you represented the Federation, giving me their blessing to lead Cardassia in a new era of rationality. But I understood now that I was wrong.

GARAK

Oh yes, my friend. It's about the connection, you see. That's what's important.

PARMAK

All very mysterious, I must say. Perhaps I should contact Pythas -

GARAK

(urgent)

No. Don't tell anyone I'm here. No Cardassian, anyway. However, I would like to send a message to your Federation contact.

Parmak's eyes go wide, his mouth drops in shock.

PARMAK

How... did you know...

GARAK

That you're still in contact with Yevir? I know, Doctor.

PARMAK

(nervous)

You were the one who convinced me we could work together with the Bajorans, Elim. I hope you understand, I meant no...

GARAK

(warmly)

I do understand, my friend. I know you were the one who helped smuggle the Vedek off Cardassia and back to Bajor, despite the quarantine. And I'm glad.

PARMAK

I only didn't tell you because -

GARAK

Because you were afraid to tell anyone, I understand. Now I need you to get a message to him. And from him, on to someone else. But them only. No-one else must know I'm here. Can you do that?

PARMAK

But surely Pythas -

GARAK

No-one. It's also vital that I find a way to Lakarian City as quickly and quietly as possible.

PARMAK
(what now?)
Lakarian...

GARAK
There's much work to do, yes. But more importantly, it's work that we've never done before. Or not for a long time, anyway.

Parmak nods, not having the tiniest idea what Garak is going on about but trusting his friend.

51 EXT. CITADEL - NIGHT

Garak stands again in the darkness, feeling the ancient and pliable black stone of the Citadel. The Blind Moon peeks out from behind the clouds, casting a ray of silver light.

GARAK (v.o.)
So that's how I began my new mission, Doctor. Not as some political leader standing on the galactic stage as the respectable face of the new democratic Cardassia. But as the Hand of the Fates, trying to rebuild the links between us, helping us to understand that we are connected, however much we try to deny it.

52 EXT. LAKARIAN CITY - NIGHT

The deserted streets of the old city. Our POV travels slowly down them, seeing the numerous dead apartments crammed in tight.

GARAK (v.o.)
It's strange - I feel the need to apologise for breaking our initial agreement, even though I misunderstood it at first, and it

was not even really you with whom
I made it. But I do hope you won't
be offended that that agreement
has now been superseded by
another.

As we get to one apartment in particular, we see a candle
shining in its window. One singular spark of light in the
dark, deserted streets.

We slowly **CROSS-FADE INTO...**

53 **EXT. BAJOR - DAY**

One of the standard establishing shots of the surface of
Bajor, bright and sunny and peaceful.

GARAK (v.o.)

I've tried my best to explain as
clearly as I am able everything I
experienced, and the effect it has
had on me. It's entirely possible
I failed on that score. I'm not at
all sure I understand it myself
yet.

54 **INT. YEVIR'S OFFICE**

The same office seen in 8x20 "Twist of Faith." YEVIR sits
behind his desk, in an outfit rather simpler than the usual
elaborate Vedek's robes. The jevonite figurine has pride of
place on his desk. He's reading from a Bajoran padd.

GARAK (v.o.)

But if you find anything of use in
it, I'm glad. I just wanted you to
know. After all... we are
connected, you and I. And as much
as I can't help worry that you're
safe, I think I'd know, deep down,
if you were not. If you have any
need to contact me, you know how.
In the meantime I send my warmest
regards. Be well, Doctor.

Having finished reading, Yevir places the padd back onto his desk and sits back. It's all running through his mind, and he's trying to process it. He's absolutely amazed. He reaches out and picks up the jevonite figurine, traces the Cardassian neck ridges, the Bajoran nose lines.

YEVIR

We're all connected...

He places the figurine back down and calls out.

YEVIR

Mika? Mika!

A young woman opens the door and enters. It's MIKA, the former *pagh*-Wraith cultist and current Ohalavar, last seen in "Twist of Faith." She is working as Yevir's assistant.

MIKA

Vedek - is there a problem?

YEVIR

(excited)

I need you to arrange for a secure delivery to Deep Space Nine - I have an important message I need to pass along.

MIKA

Yes, Vedek. Is that everything?

YEVIR

No. Contact the monastery at Ashalla. I need to speak with your uncle as soon as possible.

MIKA

My uncle? The Kai?

YEVIR

Yes, Mika. While you're at it, send a message via the station into the Gamma Quadrant. Ranjen Opaka should hear this too.

MIKA

Hear what, Vedek?

YEVIR

Oh, Mika... we are connected.

Connected, Mika! ...Go.

Mika nods and leaves the room. Yevir sits back, full of wonder and revelation at what he's figured out...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW