

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

## 10x06 - "The Dream Box."

Screenplay by Martyn Dunn

Based on characters from the series

*Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*

and from the post-finale novels  
by Pocket Books

incorporating elements from

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

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

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

## TEASER

FADE IN:

### **1     EXT. DEEP SPACE NINE - ESTABLISHING**

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

### **2     INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

KIRA at the head of the room, in the white dress uniform...

Widen to reveal - MACET, the Cardassian military liaison...

She hands him a PADD, he takes it with solemnity...

...presses his thumb to the padd - an electronic BEEP...

...and the deal is done. A CROWD bursts into APPLAUSE.

The station's senior staff - VAUGHN, RO, BASHIR, NOG and SHAR - are also in dress uniform, plus TARAN'ATAR, Major CENN, Kai SOLIS, and Oralian Cleric EKOSHA (seen 8x20).

Respective security details - Starfleet, Cardassian and Bajoran - hover discreetly around the room. This is a big diplomatic event, with everyone on their best behaviour.

A couple of small automated CAMERA DRONES hover around the room, of the type seen in 8x20.

A buffet table fills one side of the room. QUARK, TREIR and HETIK move back and forth with trays for the partiers.

Vaughn approaches Ro, who is keeping a wary eye on all the goings on. She continues to scan the room as they talk...

VAUGHN

Nice work on the arrangements, as  
always, Lieutenant.

RO

Thank you, Commander.

VAUGHN

How are you settling into your new responsibilities?

RO

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

VAUGHN

No...

RO

Then they're great.

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

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

VAUGHN

You alright?

RO

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

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

...as Quark approaches the Jem'Hadar with a tray of drinks.

Quark looks up at him. Taran'atar looks down at the tray, then back up at Quark. Quark is like, "Well, go on then." Taran'atar takes a drink, baffled as to why it matters...

QUARK

What are you doing here anyway?

TARAN'ATAR

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

QUARK

As in, not killing each other.

TARAN'ATAR

Of course.

QUARK

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

TARAN'ATAR

Rule of Acquisition thirty-five.

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

Elsewhere, Kira and Macet are mid-conversation...

MACET

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

KIRA

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

MACET

(diplomatic)

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

KIRA

(waves it away)

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

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

MACET

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

Kira nods, and Macet moves away. Kira watches him go...

...then moves away herself. On the way, a camera drone buzzes uncomfortably near - she bats it out of the way...

KIRA

Get out of the way.

Taran'atar stiffens as Macet approaches...

TARAN'ATAR

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

MACET

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

Taran'atar would agree with that assessment...

MACET (cont)

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

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

TARAN'ATAR

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

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

MACET

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

TARAN'ATAR

If the Founders wish it, it will  
be so.

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

By the buffet table, Kira has been watching the exchange.  
She smiles, encouraged, then looks the other way...

...and sees Ro has been watching too. Their eyes meet...  
both realise... nod awkwardly and turn back to the party.

Elsewhere, Kai Solis and Cleric Ekosha are chatting...

EKOSHA

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

SOLIS

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

EKOSHA

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

SOLIS

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

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

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

SOLIS  
(warmly)  
Please, call me Tendren.

Ekosha smiles back...

### 3 CAMERA POV

...drift slowly across the room... Taran'atar, Macet, Kira,  
Vaughn, Ro, Quark... eventually landing upon Nog and Shar.

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

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

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

Shar reaches up, itches at one of his antennae...

NOG  
You okay?

SHAR  
The cameras. They... itch.

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

**4      BACK TO SCENE**

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

ZAP!! FLASH!! the camera gives Nog a small electric shock -

NOG (cont)  
Aah! You little...

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

Elsewhere, Bashir casually joins Macet at the buffet...

BASHIR  
Gul Macet. Nice to see you again.

MACET  
Doctor.

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

MACET  
Should he have?

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

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

BASHIR

I suppose.

MACET

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

BASHIR

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

MACET

I will.

BASHIR

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

Off Bashir's hopeful expression...

**CUT TO:**

**5     EXT. CARDASSIA SURFACE - DAY**

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

O'BRIEN

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

GARAK

To finance our glorious empire's rightful conquest of lesser worlds like Bajor, you mean? Yes, that was the popular theory.

O'BRIEN  
So how did you miss this?

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

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

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

**6     EXT. HEBITIAN RUINS - HIGH ANGLE**

Now we can see, stretching away from the three men, a huge  
CHASM in the ground.

With jagged crumbling edges, it reveals what looks like an  
entire buried city hidden under the ground. It's as if they  
have discovered the Cardassian version of Pompeii.

**7     ON O'BRIEN**

Looking suitably impressed...

BLACK OUT:

**END OF TEASER**

## ACT ONE

FADE IN:

### **8     EXT. SPACE - CARDASSIA**

The dirty and turbulent grey-yellow world from orbit...

### **9     INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

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

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

MACET

I hope I'm not interrupting.

GHEMOR

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

MACET

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

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

GHEMOR

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

EKOSHA

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

GHEMOR

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

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

GHEMOR (cont)

He's been invaluable to me.

Ekosha nods polite acknowledgements...

MACET

Mister Garak isn't joining us?

JARTEK

(spiky)

Is he needed?

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

MACET

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

GHEMOR

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

EKOSHA

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

JARTEK

Not everyone. People like having  
someone to blame for their  
problems. And Alon's opponents in  
the Directorate are happy to cast  
the Federation in the role.

EKOSHA

Why?

JARTEK

I honestly couldn't say.

MACET

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

Ekosha shakes her head, with a sad chuckle...

GHEMOR

Something amuses you, Cleric?

EKOSHA

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

GHEMOR

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

EKOSHA

(smile)

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

Off Ekosha's hopeful face...

**10    EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT - DAY**

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

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

11     **INT. ANDAK - O'BRIEN'S APARTMENT**

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

O'BRIEN

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

KEIKO

(grin)

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

GARAK

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

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

MOLLY

Hi, Dad.

O'BRIEN

Don't I get a hug anymore?

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

KIRAYOSHI

Unkee Ga'ak!

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

GARAK

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

KEIKO

He said, "Uncle Garak."

Garak looks absolutely horrified. O'Brien chuckles...

O'BRIEN

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

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

KEIKO

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

GARAK

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

KEIKO

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

GARAK

(mock warning)

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

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

KIRAYOSHI

Do you want to play Space Shuttle  
with me?

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

O'BRIEN

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

GARAK

(glower)

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

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

## 12 INT. HEBITIAN RUINS

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

EKOSHA (o.s.)

Doctor Lakhat?

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

FERIC

Cleric Ekosha - this is an honour.

EKOSHA

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

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

FERIC

Please excuse me... must be the dust.

He reaches to grasp Ekosha's arms, but realises his hands are filthy with dust. He wipes them on his trousers --

-- and they come back even dirtier. He LAUGHS, embarrassed. She laughs with him and grasps his arms in return...

EKOSHA

Don't worry about it, Doctor.

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

FERIC

You came alone?

EKOSHA

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

FERIC

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

EKOSHA

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

(glances around)

You are also alone?

FERIC

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

EKOSHA

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

FERIC

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

He COUGHS a couple more times while leading her around...

FERIC (cont)

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

EKOSHA

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

FERIC

These carvings over here were  
especially intriguing...

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

Ekosha peers closely at the statues. Feric COUGHS again...

EKOSHA

These are in remarkable condition,  
considering their age.

FERIC

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

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

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

FERIC

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

Ekosha gazes at Feric in wonder...

...then he starts coughing again. And coughing. And again. It doesn't stop. Hands to his mouth, eyes flare in alarm. He pulls his hands away, looks at them --

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

EKOSHA

Doctor...?

He coughs, racks his throat out harder and harder, mouth filling with blood. His strength gives out and he CRUMPLES to the rocky ground, coughing all the way.

Alarmed, Ekosha rushes to help him...

EKOSHA

Doctor!

On Feric's bloody face...

BLACK OUT:

**END OF ACT ONE**

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

### **13     INT. CARDASSIAN INFIRMARY - ISOLATION**

FERIC, Hitching one breath at a time, covered in primitive medical supports - tubes, plasters, monitors.

A FIGURE hovers over him, wearing a cloth mask and rubber gloves, and adjusts the medical instruments around him...

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

Feric nods his understanding. What else can he do?

The masked figure moves away, opens a hole in the clear rubber sheet that's acting as a wall around the bed area...

### **14     INT. CARDASSIAN INFIRMARY - MAIN ROOM**

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

He strips off his mask -- revealing PARMAK, the Cardassian doctor from 8x09 "A Stitch in Time." Waiting for him in the room are Ghemor, Garak, Ekosha, Macet, O'Brien and Keiko...

GHEMOR  
How is he, Doctor Parmak?

PARMAK  
He's dying, is how he is. I've tried to make him comfortable, but... it's already gone too far.

O'BRIEN  
What has?

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

GARAK  
Or something old...

GHEMOR  
You think this came from the ruins  
at Gardat?

GARAK  
You don't?

KEIKO  
But Miles was there too...

GARAK  
(gently pointed)  
As was I. And the Cleric.

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

GHEMOR  
Agreed. Cleric, can you think of  
anything else that might help us?

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

GHEMOR  
Macet - find out who this Brennet  
is, and send an officer to his  
house to check on him.  
(beat; reluctant)  
Have him wear an infection mask,  
just in case.

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

KEIKO  
Maybe it only affects Cardassians...

PARMAK

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

KEIKO

(piqued)

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

GHEMOR

(breaking in)

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

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

YEVIR

Castellan, forgive me. I heard  
about Doctor Lakhat...

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

GHEMOR

(harried, but  
being diplomatic)

No, that's fine, you're always  
welcome, Vedek Yevir.

YEVIR

He's a good man. I wonder if I  
might pray with him...?

EKOSHA

I will join you.

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

EKOSHA

Doctor, if the Hebitian ruins are  
the source of this, then I've  
already been exposed.

Parmak relents, reluctantly. He tries Yevir...

YEVIR

The Prophets will protect us.

...and they enter the isolation room. Through the clear  
rubber, we see them go to Feric. O'Brien rolls his eyes...

O'BRIEN

Idiot.

GARAK

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

The door BURSTS open again - JARTEK, looking for Ghemor on  
urgent business. Doesn't acknowledge the others...

JARTEK

Alon, I need you to come with me.

GHEMOR

This is not a good time, Mev.

JARTEK

This is more important...

PARMAK

(angry)

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

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

JARTEK

Mondrig's at it again.

That gets Ghemor's attention...

15     **INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

The screens show a VIDEO of a massive rally in a public square. Hundreds of bedraggled Cardassians gather, the poor and hungry. One man stands at the front, shouting rhetoric to the crowds - MONDRIG, last seen 8x09 "A Stitch in Time."

MONDRIG (screen)

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

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

MONDRIG (cont)

He says the Federation has withdrawn from the Dorvan sector... But are there not Federation ships in orbit of our world right now? Are there not Starfleet officers parading around as if they own us? He says they bring us food, medical supplies. But they demand we live by their rules before they give us the food. Before the Federation and the Dominion brought us to this --

(gestures around)

-- the Central Command provided for the Cardassian people. Always. That is why it was created - to protect us, and let us live as Cardassians, not humans or Bajorans.

Ghemor, Macet, Garak and O'Brien watch... Ghemor grits his teeth with frustration... Jartek lurks in the background...

GARAK

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

O'BRIEN

Who is he?

GARAK

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

GHEMOR

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

O'BRIEN

Mine?

GHEMOR

The Federation's, yes.

GARAK

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

**16    EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS - DAY**

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

MONDRIG

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

Roars of disapproval...

MONDRIG (cont)

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

17     **INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

Where they continue to watch on the screens...

O'BRIEN

Don't they even notice he's being inconsistent? First Bajorans are the enemy, then it's a bad thing to kill Bajorans.

GHEMOR

Doesn't matter to him, as long as he can use it against me.

O'Brien shakes his head in exasperation...

18     **EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS - DAY**

Back to Mondrig. More of the little automated CAMERA DRONES bob back and forth in the air - that's where Ghemor is getting his video feed from.

MONDRIG

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

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

...the party on DS9, and the moment where MACET reaches out and shakes TARAN'ATAR's hand. The clip repeats every few seconds. As the crowd gapes, Mondrig intones solemnly...

MONDRIG

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

(w/ disgust)

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

19     **INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

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

JARTEK

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

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

MACET

Castellan, I assure you --

GHEMOR

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

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

20     **EXT. TARLAK GROUNDS - DAY**

Back to the rally...

MONDRIG

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

(pause for drama)

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

21     **INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

O'BRIEN

What?!

GHEMOR

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

Hissing in fury, Garak again looks over to Jartek. Jartek looks back at him, rather offended at Garak's insinuation. On the screen, Mondrig continues...

MONDRIG (screen)

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

He pauses as the crowd build themselves into a frenzy...

MONDRIG (screen)

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

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

BLACK OUT:

**END OF ACT TWO**

### ACT THREE

FADE IN:

#### 22 INT. CARDASSIA CITY - CONFERENCE ROOM

Little more than a table and some chairs. GARAK sits at the table, solemnly reading through a series of PADDs. The door opens; O'BRIEN enters and makes his way to a seat...

O'BRIEN

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

GARAK

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

O'BRIEN

That too. Macet says fights are  
breaking out in the streets...

GARAK

(nods sadly)

Whatever his motivation, Mondrig  
is an effective speaker.

O'BRIEN

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

GARAK

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

(faux casual)

And of course, Setlik Three.

O'Brien reacts with a start - proving Garak's point. The door opens again and YEVIR enters, gentle and solemn...

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

O'Brien and Garak both look suitably saddened...

YEVIR  
(takes a seat)  
Ekosha remained with him. I believe  
there was an Oralian death ritual  
she wished to enact on his behalf.

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

O'BRIEN  
What's that?

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

#### **INSERT - THE PADD**

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

#### **BACK TO SCENE**

O'Brien studies the screen...

O'BRIEN  
The program translates it to...  
"Vinculum."

YEVIR  
And what is that?

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

GARAK

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

YEVIR

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

GARAK

The Vinculum was where the living and the dead found common ground. Prospective tribe leaders were required to make a pilgrimage.

YEVIR

And what did they find?

GARAK

Wisdom. Knowledge. The secrets of the universe.

YEVIR

Then perhaps this "Vinculum" is exactly where we need to go.

O'BRIEN

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

GARAK

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

(taps padd)

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

O'BRIEN

Let me see that...

O'Brien grabs the padd and buries his head in the material. Unperturbed, Garak picks up another of his padds...

GARAK

There's more. We know the principal deity of the Hebitian culture was Oralius, usually symbolised as the sun, providing warmth and nourishment to his people. But it turns out he was only one of many. The leader, in fact, of a pantheon of gods they called the Fates.

YEVIR

A frequent enough feature of many religions.

GARAK

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

YEVIR

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

GARAK

Quite. The humans have the fallen angel, Lucifer. The Klingons have *Fekh'lar*, fearsome jailkeeper of the dishonoured dead...

YEVIR

Even Bajor has the *Pagh*-wraiths.

GARAK

It's just strange to think of we Cardassians falling into the same trap...

YEVIR

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

GARAK

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

YEVIR

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

GARAK

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

O'BRIEN

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

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

## 23 INT. CARDASSIAN INFIRMARY - ISOLATION

FERIC's dead body lies on the biobed, cold and pale, with discoloured patches all over his skin.

EKOSHA sits by his side, head bowed, eyes closed, murmuring quiet prayers. Her own breathing is laboured, she shakes her head to clear the fog. The action makes her dizzy...

EKOSHA

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

A COUGH hits her... and her eyes widen in alarm. She coughs again, harder, and bloody phlegm bubbles up. She looks at it, knows what it means, begins to cry softly to herself...

EKOSHA

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

Racking coughs come again, blood spattering on the sheet...

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

PARMAK

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

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

GHEMOR (v.o.)

My fellow Cardassians...

**24    EXT. CARDASSIA CITY - PUBLIC SQUARE - DAY**

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

GHEMOR

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

**ON JARTEK**

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

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

GHEMOR

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

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

**GARAK AND YEVR** stand at the back of the crowd, watch from  
a distance. They chat quietly, mostly small talk...

GARAK

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

YEVR

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

GARAK

Unofficially, perhaps. But Alon  
made it clear I am to remain in  
the shadows for the time being.

YEVR

And what of Mister O'Brien?

GARAK

...I felt he should be with his  
family.

(beat, thoughtful)

Do you have family on Bajor, Vedek?

YEVR

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

Garak seems to relate...

**GHEMOR** continuing his speech...

GHEMOR  
I am not myself a follower of the  
Oralian Way --

CROWD VOICE (o.s.)  
(interrupting)  
Liar!

GHEMOR  
(keep going)  
...but that does not mean I seek  
their destruction. They are not  
disease spreaders - they have done  
nothing to harm you or anyone.

A WOMAN in the crowd shouts out, interrupting again...

WOMAN  
How do we know we're not next?

Mutters, shouts from the crowd agree with the question...

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

The crowd don't seem to agree. Somebody throws a MISSILE at  
the stage - it just misses hitting Ghemor. Macet tenses,  
ready to move. Ghemor gestures him to stand down for now.

A moment of quiet on stage, as Ghemor gathers his nerves...

**GARAK** who is getting uncomfortable...

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

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

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

CROWD WALLA

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

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

MAN

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

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

MACET

Stop this at once!

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

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

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

Another bomb flies, hits the official buildings, EXPLODES, debris flying. The ROAR of the crowd is getting louder.

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

MACET

Jartek!

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

MACET (cont)

Take him, get him to safety.

JARTEK  
Of course...

Jartek pushes Ghemor ahead of him, no room for protest, to the back of the stage and down some steps.

There's a backstage area, then the door to the government buildings. There's no-one else there. Jartek opens the door and shoves Ghemor through it, closes it behind them...

**25     INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

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

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

GHEMOR  
Mev, thank you...  
    (turns to  
        Jartek)  
You may well have saved --

GASP of pain and shock. Caught by surprise, Ghemor looks up into Jartek's eyes, which are right in front of his face.

Ghemor gapes, grabs onto Jartek's shoulder. Jartek wraps his spare arm around Ghemor, holding him close.

Then with his main hand, he TWISTS the knife, DRIVES it in deeper to Ghemor's chest. Ghemor splutters and shudders.

On Jartek's open, clear, deadly eyes, missing nothing...

BLACK OUT:

**END OF ACT THREE**

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

**26     INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

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

JARTEK

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

The roar of riots from outside is getting louder - it brings Jartek back to his senses.

He pulls the knife out of Ghemor, lowers the dying man to the floor. Quickly rushes over to a REPLICATOR, places the knife into it, hits a few keys - the knife dematerialises.

Then he moves to a sink nearby and runs his hands under the water, washes off the blood.

Hurried FOOTSTEPS and raised voices from the corridor - Jartek quickly rushes back to Ghemor, crouches down by him.

Ghemor is not quite dead yet, shuddering in death throes. He looks up at Jartek, simple confusion in his eyes...

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

GARAK

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

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

JARTEK

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

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

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

And then he expires. Parmak rushes forward, pushes Jartek aside, trying to get to Ghemor's wound...

Yevir stays in the background, politely keeping to himself. He feels like a trespasser here.

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

YEVIR  
I will help you.

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

GARAK  
What does "m" mean?

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

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

**27    INT. ANDAK - O'BRIEN'S APARTMENT**

Keiko stands watching their TV set, horrified...

KEIKO  
Miles!

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

O'BRIEN  
Sweetheart, what's wrong?

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

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

O'BRIEN  
Oh hell...

KEIKO  
First Feric, and now this...

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

**28    INT. CARDASSIAN INFIRMARY - MAIN ROOM**

Ghemor lies dead on a biobed, not in the isolation room.

Parmak moves around the room, blank and emotionless. It's been a bad few days all around, and he's just worn out...

PARMAK  
I'm in no mood for one of your interrogations, Elim.

Revealing Garak lurking in the room...

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

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

He collapses into tears. Garak goes to comfort him...

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

PARMAK  
The knife wound, of course!

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

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

Something about that strikes Garak as odd...

29    **INT. CARDASSIA CITY - GHEMOR'S OFFICE**

Still the noise of rioting outside, flames out the window.  
Jartek moves around the office, putting things in order.

The door opens and Garak enters. He sees Jartek behind the  
desk, but doesn't react. Keeps it open and friendly...

GARAK  
Settling in already?

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

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

JARTEK  
It will. These things always blow  
over.

GARAK  
You sound very confident of that.

JARTEK

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

GARAK

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

JARTEK

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

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

GARAK

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

JARTEK

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

GARAK

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

(beat)

Did you really think you could fool me, Jartek?

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

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

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

GARAK  
Did you release the virus?

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

GARAK  
But you told Mondrig about it.

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

GARAK  
But you are working for Mondrig.

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

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

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

GARAK  
You've destroyed the Reunion  
Project!

JARTEK

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

GARAK

That's how you justify murder?

JARTEK

(passionate)

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

GARAK

(upset)

He had faith. He had a dream...

JARTEK

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

Garak snaps. In a split second his hands are wrapped around Jartek's throat, hissing with fury...

GARAK

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

JARTEK  
(gasping)  
I've saved everything!

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

Garak squeezes.

He holds Jartek's face close, watches as the eyes bulge and  
the breaths get shorter and tighter.

Garak squeezes.

Cartilage in Jartek's neck breaks. Blood vessels burst.  
Limbs spasm and flail around.

Garak squeezes.

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

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

BLACK OUT:

**END OF ACT FOUR**

## ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

### 30 EXT. ANDAK SETTLEMENT - DAY

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

### 31 INT. ANDAK - O'BRIEN'S APARTMENT

The door bursts open and GARAK rushes in, catching O'BRIEN and KEIKO by surprise. They were already worried enough as it is, but the sight of Garak, MACET and half a dozen Cardassian soldiers only makes it worse.

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

GARAK

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

O'BRIEN

What are you talking about?

GARAK

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

(calls out)

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

(back to O'Brien)

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

KEIKO

(flustered)

What? Kasidy...? But...

GARAK

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

O'BRIEN

I thought you said we could handle ourselves...

GARAK

This is different!

O'BRIEN

(get his attention)

Garak. Stop.

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

O'BRIEN (cont)

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

GARAK

This is worse! Exponentially worse!

O'BRIEN

Why?

GARAK

Because...

He looks over to Molly and Kirayoshi...

GARAK (cont)

Because I wasn't Uncle Garak before.

(beat)

Please, Miles... please take them and go. While you can.

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

O'BRIEN

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

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

O'BRIEN

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

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

MACET

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

GARAK

Thank you, Macet.

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

GARAK

(taps wrist-comm)

Garak to Xhosa. Ready at your convenience.

COMM VOICE

Acknowledged. Energising...

KEIKO

Thank you, Garak.

GARAK

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

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

GARAK

...I'm sorry.

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

Garak stands alone in the room. Looks around himself. The ruins of a life, all over again. He takes a moment.

Then he takes a deep breath, steels himself, and leaves...

**32    EXT. HEBITIAN RUINS - DAY - HIGH ANGLE**

The underground city where this all started...

**33    INT. HEBITIAN RUINS**

The caves, with their statues and ruins and dust.

Garak strides in, carrying O'Brien's padd plus a large DEVICE, about the size of a suitcase. He is not especially surprised to see that Yevir is waiting for him...

GARAK

You shouldn't be here, Vedek.

YEVIR

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

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

GARAK

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

YEVIR

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

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

YEVIR

What is that?

GARAK

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

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

YEVIR

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

GARAK

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

(beat)

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

Yevir understands. He and Garak have a moment...

GARAK

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

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

GARAK  
Where will you go?

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

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

He dematerialises in a Cardassian TRANSPORTER swirl...

**FADE TO BLACK**

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

**SLOWLY FADE IN** to reveal:

**34    INT. DS9 - WARD ROOM**

The cocktail party from the top of the episode...

...but subtly different. All the same people are there - Kira, Vaughn, Shar, Nog, Bashir, Macet, Ro, Taran'atar, Quark, Ekosha - but the feel is different.

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

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

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

BASHIR  
Elim! You made it!

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

At length he pulls back, looks around the room, trying to get a handle on the wooziness, process the unprocessable...

GARAK

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

BASHIR

(smile)

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

GARAK

(dare he hope?)

Are you real?

BASHIR

(amused)

Of course I am! What else would I  
be?

GARAK

But how did you get here?

BASHIR

(shakes head)

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

GARAK

You never called me Elim before...

BASHIR

What should I call you?

GARAK

You always called me Garak.

BASHIR

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

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

GARAK

I'm a survivor. Again.

BASHIR

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

GARAK

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

BASHIR

(gestures to  
the others)

We will help you. Here...

Bashir hands Garak a standard Starfleet padd...

#### **INSERT - THE PADD**

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

#### **ON GARAK**

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

BASHIR

(smile)

Better? Good.

Garak is still having trouble processing it all...

BASHIR

Now listen to me, Elim.

(get his attention)

Elim. Listen. We will always be  
here for you. I promise we will  
help you however we can. But  
you're the one we need out there.

(firmly)

Step forward, Elim. We're  
depending on you.

Bashir smiles, encouraging...

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

**35    INT. HEBITIAN RUINS**

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

...but then he pulls himself under control. He makes a  
commitment.

Bends down, gathers up the transporter equipment, picks up  
the suitcase and walks out of the cave...

**36    EXT. CARDASSIA SURFACE - DAY**

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

FADE OUT:

**END OF SHOW**