

11x18 – “The Never-Ending Sacrifice”

Note: *This is based on an existing novel of the same name, written by official Cardassian intrigue writer Una McCormack. I have neither the time nor the permission to reduce another entire novel to episode-length script form, so this plot breakdown will have to suffice. The original novel is one of the most recommended in the entire novel line, however.*

Teaser – Garak potters around his new residence – the official Cardassian Embassy in Paris, in the former East German embassy. He suspects the location is a subtle jab by somebody about former totalitarian regimes. There is a surprise knock at the door; he doesn't get many visitors. A young Cardassian man enters. “Do I know you?” asks Garak. “My name is Rugal Pa'Dar,” the man replies, and begins to tell his story.

Act One – Immediately after “Cardassians”, Rugal goes to live with his wealthy and influential family on Cardassia. He promised his Bajoran parents that he would find a way to come back, and lashes out at every Cardassian he meets. The family matriarch, Geleth, is especially cruel and unwelcoming. He meets a girl, Penelya, whose parents were murdered by Maquis. She now lives as a virtual slave of her uncle, and the two become friends. But before he can contact home, news arrives that his adoptive Bajoran parents have died, broken-hearted at losing him.

Act Two – Rugal rejects his powerful family and trains as a nurse, helping the homeless of Cardassia City. There Rugal hears gossip that his father actually supports the dissident movement, with an especial hatred for Dukat. He is not impressed – the dissidents don't want to reform Cardassia, they just want to take power for themselves. When the Obsidian Order falls and the civilian government takes control, he is proven right – the new leader, Meya Rejal, refuses to allow open elections. Then the Klingons invade...

Act Three – Pa'Dar is evacuated to DS9 with the Detapa Council, unwillingly leaving Rugal and Geleth behind. The old woman is dying, and chooses Rugal for her *shri'tal*. Rugal and Penelya briefly meet Tora Ziyal, but he splits from Penelya when she allows her uncle to send her to a colony world, Ithia. Rejal becomes increasingly paranoid about her rule, depending on the military to beat down any objections. Then Dukat launches his coup with the Dominion, executes Rejal, and Rugal finds himself scooped up from the street and conscripted into military service.

Act Four – Rugal is sent with a Cardassian garrison to another colony world, Ogyas. He serves with distinction, even gaining medals. But he deserts rather than be killed by the Jem'Hadar or taken prisoner by Romulans. He unofficially adopts a little human girl, a survivor of the Jem'Hadar Purge called Hulya. The first time he meets her, she bites his hand, having learned to hate humans after the Maquis attacked her home. But eventually the two become inseparable, even when a police officer tries to remove Hulya from Rugal's protection.

Act Five – Having been through so many changes, Rugal has now come to understand and pity the civilisation he once despised. He even forgives Garak, though he once hated him for starting all of this. Garak uses his authority as Cardassian ambassador to reverse Sisko's original decision and reinstate Rugal's former Bajoran citizenship. And since Bajor is now a Federation member, that makes Rugal the first Cardassian-born Federation citizen. That done, Rugal takes Hulya and returns to Cardassia, and finds the rubble of the great Pa'Dar house, where Penelya is waiting...