

**STAR TREK: RENAISSANCE**

**"Beggars and Choosers"**

**Written by  
Andrew J. Leyton**

This teleplay is originally from  
[www.startrekrenaissance.com](http://www.startrekrenaissance.com)

"Star Trek" and related names are registered  
trademarks of Paramount Pictures, Inc.  
This original work of fiction is  
written solely for non-profit purposes.  
Copyright 2001 by The Renaissance Group  
All rights reserved

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. OFFICER'S QUARTERS

Looking out the window. Stars rush by. The room is dimly lit. In the reflection of the window, we see very little.

After a moment, we hear the sound of doors WHOOSHING open. At the same time, a rectangle of light appears at the doorway's reflection in the window.

A FIGURE passes through; we cannot tell who it is. The doors WHOOSH closed.

Constant FOOTSTEPS can be heard in the background. Seconds later, the figure quickly passes in front of the window. We cannot see who it is, not even make out a figure.

We hear heavy breathing.

As we look towards the floor, the figure passes by again, and comes back again.

We see only PACING FEET.

BLACKNESS

A caption appears: "SEVEN DAYS PRIOR".

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise at warp.

INT. BRIDGE

TALORA is in the command chair. DOJAR, SUKOTHAI and GUER man their stations.

Y'LAN stands at the back, watching the various crew with interest.

GUER

We're approaching the Cardassian system. I'm taking us out of warp.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise slows to impulse, and in the distance is a beige planet: CARDASSIA.

INT. BRIDGE

Same as before.

DOJAR

Onscreen.

The viewscreen is replaced by the image of Cardassia, a swirling beige marble.

Dojar looks in awe, and Y'lan watches Dojar with interest.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

It's been years since I've last been to my home planet.

Y'LAN

That's a relatively small amount of time. I have not been home in over a century. Is being away from home stressful for you?

DOJAR

(beat)

It's not stressful. But to me it's important to return home every now and then. It's an important part of me.

(beat)

Permission to be relieved, sir.

TALORA

Relieved?

DOJAR

(hesitant)

Yes, Commander.

TALORA

Permission denied. Stay at your station.

A surprised Dojar spins around in his chair and focuses on his station. Guer shares the expression.

EXT. SPACE

A giant beige marble hangs from the black sky. The ENTERPRISE is in orbit.

CROSS (V.O.)

Captain's Log, Stardate 78117.9. The Enterprise is in orbit of Cardassia Prime, where we are currently filling in for the USS Mercury, transporting foodstuffs and medical supplies to the surface to feed the hungry population.

(MORE)

CROSS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Lieutenant Dojar has also requested some extra time to visit his homeworld, and I have granted him access to the transporters so that he may visit as often as he likes.

INT. CARGO BAY

Giant containers -- each at least a dozen feet high, are stacked in rows in the giant room. About a dozen crew are taking readings, examining cargo, and other tasks.

In one corner of the bay, GREY is working at a console while CROSS looks over his shoulder.

GREY

I've located the distribution facility in Timarra city. We can transport whenever you give the order, Captain.

CROSS

Have you done the recalibration yet?

GREY

I ran a full diagnostic this morning, and I had Chief Ozran tune up the operation control systems. We had some problems interfacing with the biofilter, but I installed a previous model and it worked fine, sir.

CROSS

Let's hope the transporters will be able to handle this big of a load.

GREY

We shouldn't run into any problems, sir. Today's been a good day -- not many problems with the mix.

Cross' commbadge CHIRPS. He taps it.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Captain, the distribution facility is standing by. We're in geosynchronous orbit and ready to begin the transport.

CROSS

Acknowledged, Commander.  
(to Grey)

Mr. Grey, transport the first container.

GREY

Yes, sir.

Grey's fingers dance over the controls, and in the background, a container fizzles out of existence.

Grey reads his controls.

GREY (CONT'D)

The transport was successful.

CROSS

Good. I'm sure you can handle the rest of the cargo, Lieutenant.

GREY

Yes, sir.

Cross leaves the cargo bay, and Grey returns to his work.

INT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Cross strides down the corridor.

INT. CROSS'S QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

Cross enters the dark quarters, and the lights automatically come on. He passes a long, antique table along the wall. On it stand a few photographs as well as a futuristic lamp. He stops, and looks at one particular photograph. It's of a family of four -- two parents and a son and a daughter. He looks at it in contemplation.

EXT. SPACE -- FLASHBACK

A Federation ship EXPLODES into our view, cut into pieces by a squadron of DOMINION WARSHIPS. The two forces clash together violently.

INT. CROSS'S QUARTERS

Same as before, as Cross remembers events from years before.

INT. COMMAND CENTER (FLASHBACK)

A starbase command center, heavily damaged. Smoke, fire, and sparks flood the room. A young NEIL CROSS, perhaps ten years of age, is trying to get his MOTHER's attention as she works to repair damaged equipment. These are the mother and son from the photograph.

NEIL

Mom. Where's dad? And Julie?

She looks at him, eye level. There is no easy way for her to convey the news.

MOTHER

They... they're not coming, Neil.

INT. CROSS'S QUARTERS

Same as before. Cross isn't looking at the photograph anymore, but past it, into something we can't see.

INT. PRISON -- DAY (FLASHBACK)

The same young NEIL CROSS is just one boy in a prison of several hundred HUMANS, BOLIANS, VULCANS, ANDORIANS, and several other SPECIES. Everyone is in ragged clothing. CARDASSIANS and SOLDIERS are posted at the doors, glaring at any who dare come near. A few soldiers make their way through the crowd.

SOLDIER

Move along!

He shoves Neil out of the way, and into his Mother's arms.

INT. CROSS'S QUARTERS

Same as before. Cross puts down the photograph and sighs. He flops down on the couch. His eyes drift to the window, and CARDASSIA hangs outside.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. TALORA'S OFFICE

TALORA is sorting through some of her PADDs at her desk. A CHIME sounds at the door.

TALORA  
Come in!

The doors WHOOSH open -- it's Lieutenant GUER. He enters.

GUER  
Commander.

TALORA  
Lieutenant. At ease.

Guer relaxes.

TALORA (CONT'D)  
What can I do for you?

GUER  
I wanted to see you about an engineering position.

TALORA  
Engineering?

GUER  
Well, Commander, I do a lot of that kind of work in my job already, and frankly, I think I'm pretty good at it.

TALORA  
When you were at the Academy, you took the navigation track. You've stuck with that for your entire career.

GUER  
Commander, on the last Enterprise I couldn't stop working on the engineering systems, and I've been helping Lieutenant Grey with the integrated helm systems.  
(beat)  
I do a good job at engineering, and have plenty of experience in the field.

TALORA

I see. You also have piloted various classes of ships and outperformed your peers at every turn.

GUER

Commander...

TALORA

You would do better to remain on the Enterprise, Lieutenant.

Dismissed.

Guer is taken aback and confused.

GUER

Yes, ma'am.

He turns and exits.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is still in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. CORRIDOR

GREY strides down the corridor. DOJAR is several feet behind him, and quickens his pace to catch up. He's dressed in CIVILIAN GARB -- a jacket, shirt, pants, and boots.

DOJAR

Sir!

Grey sees Dojar, and is surprised at the clothing.

GREY

Lieutenant. Going somewhere?

DOJAR

Yes, actually...

GREY

(cutting him off)

Beaming down to Cardassia I'll bet.

DOJAR

I'm just going to visit Timarra City. I have a few friends there.

GREY

I'm sure Cardassia's really nice. You seem excited.

DOJAR

It's not every day I get to go home.

(MORE)

DOJAR (CONT'D)

I haven't even been in the area since the handouts started.

GREY

I predict you'll be in for a surprise, Lieutenant.

DOJAR

No kidding. Last time I was here, the street was full of homeless people and beggars.

GREY

Are you staying long?

DOJAR

Not really, I'm just spending the afternoon there.

The two stop at a corridor junction.

GREY

Well, then, enjoy your trip, Lieutenant.

DOJAR

Thank you, sir.

The two go off in opposite directions.

INT. TRANSPORTER ROOM

CHIEF OZRAN, a Gorn in uniform, is manning the transporter controls. The doors WHOOSH open, and DOJAR walks through. Ozran stands at attention. Dojar steps up to the transporter pad.

OZRAN

Sir?

DOJAR

Set coordinates to the center of Timarra City, Chief.

Ozran works at the controls for a moment, then nods to Dojar.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

Energize.

As Ozran's hand slides over the controls, Dojar disappears in a bluish SHIMMER.

EXT. CITY STREET -- DAY

An unpaved, dirty, muddy, street lined by sagging buildings. Unattended Cardassian children scamper about.

Cardassian adults dressed in rags are everywhere. The road is a monument to poverty.

The occasional alien makes his way down the street. A BEGGAR stops several people as they are walking.

In the distance, Dojar appears in a bluish SHIMMER. Heads turn. He is overwhelmed as he looks around him - he is shocked and horrified.

The BEGGAR approaches DOJAR.

BEGGAR

A coin to spare for a poor old man?  
A bit of money for a meal, perhaps?

Dojar looks at the beggar in surprise. He digs through his pockets, and produces a small gold coin. The beggar is slightly disappointed, but he snatches it out of Dojar's hand and scuttles away.

Dojar stumbles forward, and catches himself. He approaches an old Cardassian WOMAN.

DOJAR

Excuse me...

WOMAN

(steely voice)  
I don't have any money.

DOJAR

I don't want money. I'm looking for a friend. I think he lives in the district.

WOMAN

(smiling now)  
What's his name?

DOJAR

Simad. Gerrim Simad.

WOMAN

Come with me.

She leads him down the street.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is small. Along one wall, a small kitchen of sorts, and by that, an old table. A bed is in another corner, and the door on another wall. A high window lets a little bit of light in.

SIMAD, a pale and skinny Cardassian, putters around, cleaning the kitchen counter with a rag.

A KNOCK on the door.

SIMAD

Who is it?

WOMAN

It's Delesk. Someone wants to see you. He claims to be a friend.

SIMAD

Come in.

DOJAR enters, and DELESK follows.

SIMAD (CONT'D)

(squints)

Dojar! Gril Dojar! How nice to see you!

(to Delesk)

Thank you, Delesk.

Delesk leaves, shutting the door behind her.

DOJAR

It's good to see you too, Simad.  
How have you been?

SIMAD

Fine. It's been a little rough lately, but I manage.

DOJAR

Do you still work at the factory?

SIMAD

No, I was fired when the new management took over. How's Starfleet been treating you? You a captain yet?

DOJAR

No, not yet. I'm still working on that. Right now, I'm tactical officer of the Enterprise.

SIMAD

The Enterprise. I've heard that name before.

DOJAR

(proudly)

It's the flagship. Most advanced in the fleet.

SIMAD

I'm impressed.

(MORE)

SIMAD (CONT'D)

(coughs)

So, what brings you here?

DOJAR

The Enterprise is delivering food supplies to Cardassia.

Simad gives him a blank look at first, but his face changes. He just realized what Dojar is talking about.

SIMAD

Right. The aid.

Dojar finally takes a look around the apartment.

DOJAR

Are you sure you're doing OK?

SIMAD

I'm fine. This isn't the Enterprise or a hotel or anything, but it's adequate for one old man.

DOJAR

One old man who's lost a lot of weight.

SIMAD

Well, I suppose I've been a little sick lately. A bug that's going around, nothing I can't take care of.

(beat)

Gosh, I haven't seen you in years. We need to catch up. Now, sit and tell me about this ship of yours.

Dojar sits reluctantly at the table, and Simad joins him after putting away the rag.

EXT. SPACE

The ENTERPRISE in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. SICKBAY

ELRIS is doing a checkup on GUER, who sits on the edge of a biobed. She is using a TRICORDER.

ELRIS

That's it. You're fine, Lieutenant.

GUER

Thanks, Doctor.

Guer hops off of the bed as he says this, and exits the Sickbay. As he walks out, TALORA walks in.

ELRIS  
Commander.

TALORA  
Doctor.

ELRIS  
Can I help you?

TALORA  
I'm visiting the distribution facility.

ELRIS  
Oh?

TALORA  
I'm interested in the Federation's aid program. It's one-of-a-kind.

ELRIS  
Well, there aren't many other aid programs, so I suppose you're right.  
(beat)  
Can I help you?

TALORA  
I'd like you to come along.

ELRIS  
Oh. What time did you have in mind?

TALORA  
Meet me in the transporter room in an hour.

ELRIS  
I'll be there.

INT. FACILITY OFFICE -- DAY

A small office of Cardassian architecture. At the desk sits GARASH, a Cardassian in very formal civilian clothing. A SECRETARY pokes her head through the door.

SECRETARY  
Sir, there's a man out here who wants to speak to you.

GARASH  
Who is it?

SECRETARY

Something like Edrik. Maybe Adrik. I don't remember.

GARASH

Tell him I'm busy this week.

SECRETARY

There's two more people, sir...

Garash sighs.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

Two women, a Romulan and a Bajoran.

GARASH

I didn't realize the carnival was today.

SECRETARY

It isn't, sir. They're from Starfleet.

GARASH

Starfleet?

(beat)

Let them in.

The secretary leaves, and a moment later, ELRIS and TALORA appear at the door.

GARASH (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Ladies, how nice to see you both!

He extends his hand, and Talora and Elris shake it.

TALORA

I'm Commander Talora, first officer of the USS Enterprise, and this is our Chief Medical Officer, Commander Elris.

GARASH

(rambling, but jovial)

Enchanted! The Enterprise? This is new! I'm sorry my office is such a mess - I really didn't have much notice.

TALORA

I apologize for the inconvenience, Mister...

GARASH

Garash.

TALORA

Garash. We'd like to see the distribution facility while we're in orbit.

ELRIS

And I have a few questions about the medical supplies.

GARASH

I'd be delighted to show you our facilities. I can give you an overview of the entire operation, if you'd like.

TALORA

That would be great.

GARASH

Come this way.

They step out of the office.

INT. CORRIDOR

Garash leads Elris and Talora down a wide and busy corridor. They stop in front of a wide bay of windows, which looks in on a large, squeaky-clean WAREHOUSE ROOM filled with conveyor belts. Roughly cubic packages, about two feet high, move past workers who gradually disassemble them and throw the excess packaging in large barrels.

At the end of the line, the packages have become groups of smaller packages of various shapes. These move down a chute and out of view.

GARASH

This is actually the second stage of the process. The containers that are beamed down contain these units of food, which are then unpacked here. The ones you see right now contain vegetable and fruit products, I believe.

TALORA

How do you keep the place so clean?

GARASH

(points towards the ceiling)

During breaks in processing, when no food comes through, pipes along the ceiling release a harmless gas into the air.

(MORE)

GARASH (CONT'D)

The polarized particles slowly fall to the floor and pull the dirt and dust along with them. It settles on the floor, and are swept away using pressurized oxygen sweepers.

ELRIS

Fascinating. I'm sure our engineer could use something like that in our engine room.

TALORA

In that engine room it would be waste.

GARASH

It's not exactly needed here either. We have one of the cleanest facilities in the sector. Shall we move on?

INT. APARTMENT

Same as before.

DOJAR

So, who's Delesk? A lady friend?

SIMAD

I met her through work. And yes, she's just a friend. And speaking of ladies, do you have one yet?

DOJAR

(laughs)  
No, not yet.

SIMAD

What, you? There's got to be plenty of young women on the Enterprise. Don't tell me that you don't have your eye on any of them?

DOJAR

No, Simad, I don't.  
(joking)  
Some of those Admirals, though...

The two laugh at the joke. A brief and awkward pause follows.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

Gosh, I must have been here for at least an hour. Well, it was good catching up with you, Simad.

SIMAD

You're leaving?

DOJAR

Sorry... I to be back aboard the Enterprise.

(beat)

Duties.

SIMAD

Can you come around again?

DOJAR

(slightly uncomfortable)

I may be able to come back tomorrow afternoon.

SIMAD

(smiling)

Please do.

Dojar taps his commbadge.

DOJAR

Dojar to Enterprise. One to beam up.

OZRAN'S COMM VOICE

Acknowledged.

Dojar disappears in the SHIMMER of a TRANSPORTER BEAM.

INT. SICKBAY

Elris is just sitting down at her desk when Dojar enters.

DOJAR

Doctor!

ELRIS

Lieutenant. How can I help you?

DOJAR

I need you to visit a friend of mine.

ELRIS

I'm sorry?

DOJAR

His name's Simad.

ELRIS

(confused)

Is there something I should know?

DOJAR

Just bring your medical tricorder.

ELRIS

Lieutenant, we have very specific orders with regard to Cardassia. You know I'm not allowed to treat anybody without going through the Cardassian government.

DOJAR

You can't treat anybody, Doctor. But you can scan them, can't you?

ELRIS

Sorry, but I can't do that either.

DOJAR

I don't understand why not.

ELRIS

There's a little technicality at work here: doctor-patient confidentiality. If I break it, what kind of a doctor am I? Certainly not the Chief Medical Officer of the USS Enterprise.

DOJAR

I think my friend is sick, and I'm requesting a scan. You must be able to do that!

ELRIS

I'm sorry, Lieutenant. You're dismissed.

Dojar studies Elris' face. She isn't completely behind what she is saying. Dojar walks out of Sickbay.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. READY ROOM

Cross sits at his desk. On it is a small metal box with a black ring on top.

Along the front are some controls, and Cross presses one of these. A tiny holographic MAN in a Starfleet uniform appears standing inside the black ring.

MAN

Hey, Neil, it's Dad. I want you to know... that I love you very much. You're a great son, you always have been.

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

I know that some day, you'll be the best Parrises Squares player in the Quadrant. I'm so proud of you, son.

A CHIME at the door.

CROSS

Come.

Talora steps though, carrying a PADD.

TALORA

Captain.

CROSS

Commander. What can I do for you?

TALORA

I have the report on my visit with the Superintendant and...

(sees the hologram)

Did I come at a bad time?

CROSS

No. I'm fine. I'm just...

(beat)

reminiscing.

TALORA

Generally, people reminisce with others. May I ask who it is?

CROSS

My father. He was in Starfleet, too. This was his latest recording... before he died.

TALORA

I think I understand how you feel. I have a similar recording from my elder brother.

CROSS

Sometimes I like to look at this. It's the only active holo I have of him. He hated recording them, and this one was recorded six months before he died.

TALORA

(searches for something to say)

I'm sure he would have been proud to know that you sit in this office.

CROSS

He certainly didn't predict it. I  
wanted to go into sports.

Talora stands there, speechless. If she's ever been  
uncomfortable, it's now.

CROSS (CONT'D)

(almost to himself)

He didn't die for any reason, you  
know? I heard that he was killed in  
cold blood by a Cardassian, his hands  
raised. He surrendered...

(beat)

I'm sorry, Commander. I didn't mean  
to make you uncomfortable.

TALORA

Quite alright, Captain. My report.

She places the report on the desk. Cross doesn't even glance  
at it. After a few seconds, she turns and leaves. As Cross  
looks at the hologram, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. DOJAR'S QUARTERS

DOJAR sits at his desk, reading a PADD. His face lights up - he's found something important in what he's reading. He gets up and scrambles out the door, taking the PADD with him.

INT. SICKBAY

ELRIS stands at a research table with a young ensign. Various test tubes are on the table, along with some scientific equipment. The ensign is running some scans with a TRICORDER while Elris works with some of the equipment. Dojar enters with the PADD.

DOJAR  
(excited)  
Doctor.

Elris sees Dojar.

ELRIS  
Hello again.  
(to Ensign)  
Excuse me, Ensign.  
(to Dojar)  
In my office.

Dojar follows Elris to her office. She sits down at the desk, and he hands her the PADD.

ELRIS (CONT'D)  
What's this?

DOJAR  
It's the treaty signed by the Federation and Cardassia at the end of the war. Go to Section 12.

ELRIS  
(reads the PADD)  
This is the part about humanitarian aid for Cardassia.

DOJAR  
In the fourth paragraph, it specifies that the Federation provides resources, but the Cardassian  
(MORE)

DOJAR (CONT'D)  
government is responsible for  
distributing the aid.

ELRIS  
And Federation officials and Starfleet  
personnel can't treat people or  
provide resources without first going  
through the government.

DOJAR  
Read a little further, and you'll  
see that an analysis is allowed.

Elris puts down the PADD.

DOJAR (CONT'D)  
I'm requesting that you analyze a  
small portion of the population.

Elris considers, then stands up.

ELRIS  
Meet me in the transporter room at  
the end of the shift.

DOJAR  
Thank you!

ELRIS  
Now, if you'll excuse I have an  
experiment to do.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise in orbit.

EXT. CITY STREET -- DAY

Same as before. Heads turn again as Elris and Dojar beam  
down to the surface.

Elris is certainly surprised upon seeing the poverty. Dojar  
is in civilian clothes; Elris is in uniform.

DOJAR  
Now, he doesn't know that you're  
scanning him, so be discreet.

ELRIS  
(uncomfortable)  
All right.

DOJAR  
And... don't let him know that you're  
a doctor.

ELRIS

A doctor? I could have sworn I was  
just your personal tricorder.

Dojar doesn't laugh.

INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

Same as before, except SIMAD is reading a book in the corner.  
A KNOCK on the door...

SIMAD

Come in!

Dojar and Elris enter.

DOJAR

I brought someone with me. I hope  
you don't mind. This is Commander  
Elris.

SIMAD

(smiles courteously)  
Nice to meet you.

ELRIS

Nice to meet you too, Simad. Dojar's  
told me all about you.

SIMAD

Oh?  
(looks at Dojar)  
Have a seat.

ELRIS

I can't stay for long.

Elris and Dojar sit, and as they speak, Elris pulls out her  
TRICORDER and holds it out of view. She looks at Simad while  
holding the tricorder open for a second, and then quietly  
folds it up without looking at it.

SIMAD

So, Elris, what do you do on the  
Enterprise?

DOJAR

She's a science officer. She...  
(beat)  
Studies physiology.

ELRIS

(glares at Dojar)  
Mainly new encounters.

SIMAD

Oh. Well, you're very lucky to have a friend in Dojar.

DOJAR

Thank you.

Simad folds his hands on the table. Elris notices a cut near his elbow. She can only see one end of it - the sleeve covers most of it up.

ELRIS

Simad, you have a cut on your arm.

SIMAD

It's nothing.

ELRIS

No, it looks like something.

Dojar looks at the cut. It's near the elbow and the surrounding bluish-brown skin suggests an infection.

DOJAR

How did you cut yourself?

SIMAD

Oh, I fell and scraped my arm against the counter. Nothing serious.

ELRIS

(leans forward)

Well, let me have a look.

SIMAD

(slightly exasperated)

I'm fine.

(settles)

I'm fine. Don't worry about me. It's just a minor cut.

ELRIS

(settles back into her chair)

I see.

Simad fumbles for small talk.

SIMAD

So, tell me more about yourself.

EXT. CITY STREET -- DAY

Dojar and Elris walk out of the building. Again, a few heads turn.

DOJAR

Well?

ELRIS

He's sick.

DOJAR

Tell me more.

ELRIS

He has Kemmet's disease. The condition is exacerbated by an empty stomach, which he also has.

DOJAR

Is it serious?

ELRIS

It could be, it might not be. I'd need to take him to Sickbay to find out. But that's against our agreement with the Cardassians.

DOJAR

All right. Thank you.

ELRIS

I'm beaming back up.

At that moment, the BEGGAR from before approaches Elris. He is again clothed in mere rags, which seem like even less in contrast to Elris' uniform.

BEGGAR

Food for a beggar?

Dojar digs in his pockets and pulls out a coin. The beggar snatches it away and scampers off. Elris looks after him thoughtfully. After a beat, she taps her commbadge.

ELRIS

One to beam up.

She disappears in a shimmer.

Dojar walks back into the building.

INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

Same as before. Dojar enters.

SIMAD

Did she beam up?

DOJAR

Yes.

(MORE)

DOJAR (CONT'D)

(beat)

We need to talk.

SIMAD

About what?

DOJAR

Simad... you're getting really thin.  
I'm afraid you're not eating enough.

SIMAD

I'm fine.

DOJAR

You've lost a lot of weight. Simad,  
please. Tell me what's going on.

SIMAD

I haven't always been able to get  
food, that's all. It's a hard life.  
I'm doing pretty well, considering.

DOJAR

Considering?

SIMAD

It's nothing.

DOJAR

I realize the aid that comes in isn't  
much, but you wouldn't be this thin,  
would you?

SIMAD

There really isn't much food. I  
stopped going to the facility. It  
wasn't worth the trip.

DOJAR

I'm going to get you some food, Simad.

SIMAD

It won't do any good. You'll hardly  
get anything.

DOJAR

We'll see about that.

SIMAD

You're wasting your time!

DOJAR

And you're wasting away. Please, let  
me try to help.

Simad finally backs down. He sighs.

SIMAD

If you're going to go, take my ID card. You'll need it for the food.

DOJAR

Alright.

Simad hands Dojar a small red card, and Dojar walks out the door.

INT. TALORA'S OFFICE

Talora is shuffling PADDs around at her desk. A chime sounds at the door.

TALORA

Come.

It's GUER.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Did you decide on medical science this time?

GUER

No, ma'am. But I wanted to request that you consider me when you find an opening in Engineering.

TALORA

I thought you might come back. But I'm afraid we have more than a full staff.

GUER

I know that. I was thinking of a position on another ship.

EXT. NICER CITY STREET

Dojar makes his way down another Cardassian city street. This one is nicer -- paved sidewalks, nicer buildings in decent repair. There are few people about and those that are in the street are moderately dressed -- nothing like the rags from Simad's district.

One one sidewalk is Dojar. He is walking quickly. He spots a large, building about a half-kilometer away, and starts toward it. Heavy FOOTSTEPS behind him. A HAND grasps Dojar by the shoulder and he spins round to face a POLICE OFFICER.

OFFICER

What are you doing here?

DOJAR

I'm sorry?

OFFICER

By the looks of you, you're not from around here. Let me see your ID.

DOJAR

I'm going to get food for a friend.

OFFICER

(harsher)

I want your ID.

DOJAR

I don't have an ID If you'll let me pass, I can get on my way.

OFFICER

Alright, you're coming with me.

He grasps Dojar's arm. Dojar resists.

DOJAR

I haven't done anything wrong.

OFFICER

That's what they all say, isn't it? Come on.

DOJAR

My name is Gril Dojar and I'm Chief Tactical Officer of the Federation Starship Enterprise.

OFFICER

Yep. That's what the last guy said, too. You're quite popular around here.

Dojar wrings his arm free and pulls his commbadge out of his jacket.

DOJAR

Here's my insignia. If you don't believe me now, believe me when I say that you'll be sparking an interstellar incident.

The officer is quite taken aback.

OFFICER

I'm sorry, sir. I didn't know...

DOJAR

I told you, didn't I?

He continues down the street in a huff.

INT. FACILITY ROOM

A longish room, with windows along one wall. An attendant stands at each window.

Long lines of Cardassians stem from each. A door on another wall. Every few moments, the person at the front of each line walks away with a small package - not bigger than a small medkit.

Near the front of the line stands Dojar. He shifts from foot to another. He looks as if he's been here a while.

The DOOR opens, and a tall Cardassian man walks out. He's clad in military garb.

He carries a large package, about the size of a grocery bag. Dojar stares as he walks by. His attention is caught by another, similarly dressed man who comes through the door with a similar package.

The door shuts, and Dojar shifts back to his other foot. He turns to the man behind him.

DOJAR

Excuse me, could you tell me something?

MAN

What?

DOJAR

Why are there a few people coming through there...

He points to the door.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

With so much more food?

MAN

(bitterly)

Those are government officers. Watch the next man that comes through. He'll have a uniform and polished boots.

Dojar turns back around. After a moment, the door opens again. Another figure walks out, with a large package of food. He fits the man's description perfectly.

INT. FACILITY ROOM

Several minutes later, Dojar is at the head of the line.

ATTENDANT

Your ID?

Dojar fishes out Simad's red ID card from his pocket. The attendant takes it, studies the picture, and looks back up at Dojar.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

This isn't you.

DOJAR

It's for a friend, not me.

ATTENDANT

(eying Dojar  
suspiciously)

I see.

She swipes the card through a little machine. After a response from the computer, she takes a small package out and gives it to Dojar, also returning the card.

Dojar takes the package, and opens it.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Move along.

(to next person in  
line)

Next!

Dojar doesn't move.

DOJAR

Did you know that I'm in Starfleet?  
On my ship, a meal is usually enough  
to fill one's stomach.

ATTENDANT

I suppose you're Gril Dojar. C'mon,  
I don't have all day.

DOJAR

Do you know how many times I've heard  
that? You're not funny, but you are  
mistaken.

Dojar pulls out his commbadge, and looks questioningly at the attendant.

ATTENDANT

(surprised)

I see. Sir, there's a door to your  
left. I'm very sorry about the mix-  
up.

DOJAR

(grumbling)

At least I'm famous around here...

INT. WAITING ROOM -- DAY

A desk at one end with a SECOND ATTENDANT seated behind it, and a row of empty chairs begging for an occupant. The room is much nicer than the previous -- cleaner, brighter, well-furnished. Several Cardassians -- many dressed in military or at least formal clothing -- stand around, chatting idly.

Dojar enters. A few heads turn, but for the most part, he is ignored. He walks up to the desk, and slaps his commbadge down on it.

DOJAR

I'm Lieutenant Dojar of the USS Enterprise. I've come to get a meal for a friend.

SECOND ATTENDANT

Certainly, Lieutenant.

She pulls out a large bag like we saw before and hands it to him with a smile.

SECOND ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Have a good day.

Dojar is already on his way out.

INT. APARTMENT -- DAY

Dojar arrives with the food.

DOJAR

I brought you this.

Simad looks at the food, and almost conceals his surprise -- and excitement.

SIMAD

Thank you so much, Dojar. What would I do without you?

DOJAR

Not much, I'm afraid... I had to use my Starfleet ID to get this.

SIMAD

I'm not surprised.

DOJAR

Simad, did you know that malnourishment causes Kemmet's disease?

(beat)

It can be serious, you know.

SIMAD

(quietly)

How did you find out?

DOJAR

That's not important.

SIMAD

It was Elris, wasn't it? She scanned me with one of your Starfleet tricorders.

DOJAR

I'm sorry, Simad. I was worried. I wanted to help, and you wouldn't let me. The scanning only confirmed what I suspected.

SIMAD

(angry)

Well, very nice of you to waltz in here and take charge of things. I see Starfleet taught you well.

DOJAR

I'm your friend, Simad. You can't even tell me that your sick?

SIMAD

There was nothing you could do. You would have worried, so I didn't tell you. It was better that way.

DOJAR

But I'm sure I could help, in some way. You can trust me, Simad.

SIMAD

Apparently, I can't.

DOJAR

Simad... What if I can help you?

SIMAD

(bitter)

I don't think you can. The Cardassian government wouldn't allow it.

DOJAR

(angry)

We can work around that! I work on the Enterprise. My captain is a diplomat!

SIMAD

(insistent)

Please... don't worry about me. You can't help, just keep it off your mind. It's better that way, Dojar.

DOJAR

Yes, it's always better, whatever way you choose. Always better.

SIMAD

You can leave, Dojar.

DOJAR

(angry)

I think I will.

As Dojar storms out, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. CORRIDOR

CROSS is leading a stately-looking Cardassian woman, GOVERNOR HAMARRIN, and her bodyguard through the ship.

HAMARRIN

Your engine room is quite organized.  
You run a tight ship.

CROSS

Lieutenant Grey is to blame for that,  
I'm afraid. Not everything on board  
is quite that  
(beat)  
sterile.

HAMARRIN

He's an efficient leader, I can tell.

CROSS

(smiling)  
As a Cardassian, I'm sure you can  
appreciate that, ma'am.

HAMARRIN

As a Cardassian?

CROSS

(beginning to back-  
pedal)  
Oh, well, the Cardassian government  
is renowned for its efficiency.  
Starfleet could take a lesson from  
you.

HAMARRIN

(forcing a smile)  
Yes, I'm sure it could.  
(beat)  
What's next on the tour?

INT. BRIDGE

TALORA is running the nerve center at the moment, and various officers are manning the stations. Cross, Hamarrin, and her guards enter from the rear.

TALORA stands.

CROSS

Welcome to the Bridge, Governor.

HAMARRIN

Impressive.

CROSS

Governor Hamarrin, this is my first officer, Commander Talora.

HAMARRIN

It looks like you're lucky to be here, Commander.

TALORA

(forcing a smile)

I am, Governor.

(beat)

This is the control center of the Enterprise. Flight, operations, sciences, weapons, they're all controlled from the Bridge.

CROSS

And also security.

HAMARRIN

Lieutenant Dojar is the head of that department, if I recall correctly?

CROSS

Yes. He's not here right now, for personal reasons, but when he's on duty he keeps very close tabs on his security officers. We rarely have any trouble with them.

HAMARRIN

Yes, I would hope so. I'm afraid I have some pressing matters on the surface at the moment, so if you'll excuse me, I'll return to the transporter room.

Hamarrin exits quickly and her bodyguards follow. Talora turns to Cross.

TALORA

Dojar would be happy to know you have such a high opinion of his security procedures.

CROSS

I was just trying to make a good impression, Commander. That's important, you know.

TALORA

Yes, it is.

She looks at Cross, and he tries to read her expression. When he fails, he walks toward his ready room.

CROSS

I'll be in my ready room, Commander.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is still in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. READY ROOM

CROSS sits at his desk, working at his computer. Outside the window, the large beige planet... The door CHIMES.

CROSS

Come in.

The doors part, and DOJAR and TALORA enter.

DOJAR & TALORA

Captain.

CROSS

At ease.

(to Dojar)

You don't look so happy. Did your visit go well?

DOJAR

No. Captain, I have bad news...

CROSS

(stands)

What happened? How is your friend?

DOJAR

He's sick, but that's not the point.

CROSS

What is it?

DOJAR

I went to get food for him, but to get a full meal, I had to tell them I was in Starfleet. They treated me just like one of their Guls, which is much better than how they treat the rest of the population. They get quick service, and plenty of food. I was stuck with the rest of the population.

CROSS

And?

DOJAR

Most people are getting a little bread, maybe some fruit sauce or something. Not much more.

TALORA

It would appear that Superintendent Garash wasn't completely honest in our meeting.

DOJAR

There isn't much in the way of medical aid, either. I'd like to request that we send a team of doctors to the facility.

TALORA

Lieutenant!

CROSS

Not yet.

(beat)

I have to speak with Starfleet first. I don't want to hear about it anymore, understood?

DOJAR

Yes, sir.

CROSS

Dismissed, Lieutenant.

Dojar exits.

CROSS (CONT'D)

This doesn't look good, Commander.

TALORA

Lieutenant Dojar isn't going to help the situation, either. I hope he doesn't try to take matters into his own hands.

CROSS

I doubt he'll do that, but it is important that he respect the chain of command.

(beat)

I might need your support on this, Commander, when we're talking to my superiors.

TALORA

I'll do my best.

CROSS

I suppose that's all I can ask, isn't it?

TALORA

Yes, sir.

CROSS

Thank you, Commander.

Talora exits. Cross settles back in his chair and thinks for a moment. He looks out at Cardassia again.

He taps his COMMBADGE, which CHIRPS.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Cross to Bridge.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Talora here.

CROSS

Send a message to Superintendant Garash. Tell him I'd like to speak with him as soon as possible.

TALORA'S COMM VOICE

Aye, sir.

CROSS

Cross out.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. CORRIDOR

Elris and Dojar walk briskly down the corridor.

ELRIS

What did he say?

DOJAR

He didn't want to do anything just yet.

ELRIS

Welcome to the world of politics -- and Neil Cross.

DOJAR

I asked him about sending a medical team to help out at the facility. He was... hesitant about that.

ELRIS

I can imagine.

DOJAR

Doctor, you saw what it's like out there, in the streets. We need to help. But he won't listen to me, and Commander Talora's just the same. Can you go talk to him, Doctor?

ELRIS

What makes you think he'd listen to me?

DOJAR

Well...  
(beat)  
You're his wife.

ELRIS

(harumphs)  
And that means I have special powers?

DOJAR

You have his ear. You can influence him.

ELRIS

I don't like the sound of that.

DOJAR

Welcome to the world of politics, Commander.

INT. READY ROOM

Cross sits at his desk, with a cup of coffee in one hand. A CHIME at the door.

Cross sighs.

CROSS

Come in!

The doors part, and ELRIS steps in.

ELRIS

Hello.

CROSS

(short)  
What is it?

Elris shows a bit of surprise at his rudeness.

CROSS (CONT'D)

I'm...

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

(lightens up)

I'm sorry. It's been a rough few days.

ELRIS

I'll say.

CROSS

So, Doctor, what can I do for you?

ELRIS

I'd like to send a medical team down to Cardassia.

Cross stands, takes a swig of coffee.

CROSS

I see Dojar got to you.

ELRIS

What are you talking about, Captain?

CROSS

He's been asking me for all sorts of things...

ELRIS

Excuse me, but I went down there myself.

CROSS

Why?

ELRIS

To meet a friend of Dojar's.

CROSS

So, Dojar got to you.

ELRIS

(angry)

I believe in some of the same things as the rest of the senior staff. You know -- food, medicine, things like that. I don't think of it as some crusade from a fellow crewmate, I think of it as an issue.

CROSS

Alright. I'm sorry.

(beat)

Now, about this medical team?

ELRIS

I'd like to send a medical team down to Cardassia, so that they could help more people.

CROSS

I believe that goes against our treaty.

ELRIS

Our doctors would work in the facility. They'd almost be working for the Cardassian government. I'm sure they'd love a few more doctors on hand.

CROSS

I'll consider it.

ELRIS

Consider it?

CROSS

(a little harsh)

Yes, I'll consider it. Dismissed, Commander.

ELRIS

Are you sure you're alright?

CROSS

(sighs)

Yes.

Elris walks out.

INT. MESS HALL

Various crew sit about at the tables. At one table sit GUER, KINNAN and ATKINSON. As they chat, TALORA enters, spots the trio, and approaches.

TALORA

(to Guer)

Lieutenant Guer.

GUER

Yes, Commander?

TALORA

Come with me.

Talora leads him out the door, while Kinnan and Atkinson share surprised looks.

INT. CORRIDOR

Talora and Guer walk briskly down the corridor.

TALORA

I talked to a few different captains for you.

GUER

Anything?

TALORA

No, Lieutenant. There just aren't any open engineering positions.

Guer frowns, but Talora isn't finished.

TALORA (CONT'D)

The XO of the Corsica is moving out in a month, and Captain T'lavok is still looking for a replacement.

GUER

First Officer?

TALORA

Yes.

GUER

Did you tell him anything?

TALORA

I didn't talk to T'lavok yet, but I have looked over your previous evaluations and reviewed your file. Say the word, and I'll recommend you for promotion.

Guer is overwhelmed.

GUER

This is...

(beat)

wow...

(beat)

This is really something...

TALORA

Yes, Lieutenant, it's something.

GUER

I don't know. Command is a big step.

TALORA

You would get a promotion to Lieutenant Commander.

(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

The Corsica is a small ship. You would be more than capable of running it.

GUER

I still don't know...

Talora pauses, as if she's not sure whether she should say what she's thinking.

TALORA

If I may say so, you'd be missing out.

GUER

I'll think about it.

(beat)

Does the Captain know?

TALORA

No.

GUER

Thank you, Commander. I appreciate it.

TALORA

I think that...

(beat)

It's part of the job.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. BRIDGE

Talora is in the command chair. Dojar is at Tactical, SUKOTHAI at Ops.

SUKOTHAI

I have an incoming hail for the Captain on an official Cardassian frequency.

Talora taps her commbadge.

TALORA

Talora to Captain Cross.

CROSS' COMM VOICE

Go ahead.

TALORA

I believe Mr. Garash is returning your call. Should I route it to your ready room?

CROSS' COMM VOICE

No, I'll take it on the bridge.

Cross out.

Talora nods to Sukothai. GARASH appears on the view screen. Seconds later Cross enters the bridge from the side.

CROSS

(cordial)

Superintendent Garash, I'm Captain Cross of the Enterprise.

GARASH

Captain, how nice to see you! How can I help you?

CROSS

Several of my officers have beamed down to your facility.

GARASH

Yes, I believe I met Commander Talora and Doctor Elris.

CROSS

They've noticed some problems with the distribution of the resources that the Federation provides.

GARASH

There are some problems, Captain. But the Cardassian government is taking care of them.

CROSS

I believe the problems might be bigger than that.

GARASH

(abruptly)

I don't have time to discuss this.

The screen goes blank.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is still in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. DOJAR'S QUARTERS

The room is dark. A little bit of light streams in from the window. Outside, CARDASSIA hangs from the sky. DOJAR stands in front of the window, looking at the planet. His commbadge CHIRPS.

CROSS' COMM VOICE

Cross to all senior staff. Please report to the conference room immediately.

Dojar turns to go.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

CROSS sits at the head of the table, and TALORA, Y'LAN, ELRIS, GREY, DOJAR, and QUINLAN are seated around it.

CROSS

I've gotten word back from Starfleet Command.

QUINLAN

That was quick.

CROSS

They've got a few problems of their own right now, so they've given me full diplomatic powers for the duration of this mission. I can negotiate treaties, act upon them, whatever.

(beat)

As of now, I am Starfleet Command. Commander Talora's briefed you all on the current situation, and I need your help to make this decision.

TALORA

We have three options available. First, we can take charge of the distribution, so that we control who gets what. Second, we can threaten not to send aid at all.

Several officers look up.

TALORA (CONT'D)

Third, we can choose not to do anything about it at all. We could keep sending the aid, and let the Cardassian government do what they please.

DOJAR

In other words, we could look the other way.

Cross silences him with a glare.

Y'LAN

How difficult would that first option be?

QUINLAN

That's a big job. We'd have to send a lot of people in.

TALORA

It is possible to just replace the administration with Starfleet people, and let Cardassian personnel do the actual work.

QUINLAN

(sarcasm)

There's an idea.

DOJAR

A good idea.

QUINLAN

I was going to say the opposite, actually. Why should we enforce what we believe on another nation? After all, Cardassia is a sovereign nation.

DOJAR

Not while the Federation is sending aid.

QUINLAN

The political status doesn't matter! There are hundreds of governments that we don't recognize, but we don't shove the Prime Directive down their throats!

DOJAR

But we can't just stand by while people are starving!

Elris is near the point of sighing again.

CROSS

(to Elris)

Doctor, I haven't heard anything out of you.

ELRIS

I'm with Lieutenant Dojar. We have to take action.

The table is silent for a moment.

QUINLAN

(half-muttering)

I'll bet somebody was having this discussion a few thousand years ago...

CROSS

(to Quinlan)

Who did you have in mind?

QUINLAN

Just a few Changelings, who had to decide whether they should try to impose order on a chaotic galaxy.

DOJAR

You can't compare the Dominion to us. We weren't in chaos, Cardassia is!

Again, the table falls silent.

GREY

I suppose we could try the second option.

TALORA

To threaten to halt the aid?

GREY

I don't see why not. Cardassia depends on us -- we have leverage. We should use it.

DOJAR

What if we don't have as much leverage as we think we do? Then what?

CROSS

All right, Lieutenant. I've heard enough. I'll see about sending in facilitators.

Cross turns toward the window.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Dismissed.

The rest of the officers file out, but TALORA stays behind.

TALORA

Something on your mind, Captain?

CROSS

Why?

TALORA

You've been brooding a little lately, and taking a less hands-on role in the operations of the ship. Call it a hunch.

(beat)

Is something bothering you?

CROSS

Nothing.

(beat)

Well, something.

TALORA

A hard decision?

CROSS

Commander, I've made hard decisions before. I've even negotiated on the Federation's behalf before. But this...

(beat)

this is different.

TALORA

Why?

CROSS

I'm not sure that I'm completely...

(beat)

Unbiased.

TALORA

Yes, I forgot. The prison.

CROSS

Maybe I am biased against Cardassia. Unsympathetic. But in a way, they earned this. They betrayed the Alpha Quadrant.

TALORA

Would you like my opinion?

CROSS

(smiles slightly)

Why not...

TALORA

The Cardassians did betray the rest of the Alpha Quadrant when they joined the Dominion. But at the end of the war, they turned on the Dominion. If not for them, the Dominion would have overrun Romulus and eventually the Federation.

CROSS

If they hadn't joined in the first place, we might have won early on.  
(beat)  
Thanks for your help, but... I'd rather get through this alone.

TALORA

(straightening up)  
Yes, Captain.

Talora exits.

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is still in orbit of Cardassia.

INT. CORRIDOR

Dojar ambles down the corridor, in no particular hurry, but in a melancholy mood. Elris appears from behind, catches up, and matches his pace.

ELRIS

I forgot to ask before, but how's Simad?

DOJAR

He admitted he had Kemmet's, but he wasn't too happy about being scanned. He got angry.

ELRIS

What did you say when you saw him again?

DOJAR

I haven't seen him yet.

ELRIS

Really? It's been what, three days?

DOJAR

I suppose.

ELRIS

We won't be in orbit forever.  
(MORE)

ELRIS (CONT'D)

We have to get back to the Klingon border soon.

DOJAR

I know. It's just... Why's he so stubborn? He can't even accept a little help from a friend.

ELRIS

Some people have a lot of pride.

DOJAR

I'll say.  
(exasperated)  
I wish he would let me help, though.

ELRIS

Maybe he would.

DOJAR

If?

ELRIS

If you apologized to him.

DOJAR

I'm not the one who should be apologizing.

ELRIS

That's probably true.  
(beat)  
It's funny, though, because if you did apologize, he might actually let you help.  
(beat)  
Just a thought, that's all.

As she walks off, she leaves a contemplative Dojar behind her. A moment later, Talora passes Dojar in the corridor.

TALORA

Lieutenant.

DOJAR

Commander.

FOLLOW Talora as GUER catches up.

GUER

Commander! I'd like to apply for the promotion.

TALORA

I thought you might.  
(MORE)

TALORA (CONT'D)

One other person just put in an application -- Lieutenant Rugat from the Valiant. If you do get the position, I can help you take all the required tests for the command level.

GUER

I guess I could be administering the tests in a while.

TALORA

You've only applied for the position, Lieutenant. Don't get excited.

GUER

Right, Commander.

TALORA

You should hear back in a week or so. We also need to do one other thing.

INT. READY ROOM

Cross sits at his desk. Talora and Guer are also present.

CROSS

You're leaving?

GUER

Maybe, sir. I've only applied for the position. First Officer of the Corsica, sir.

CROSS

Oh.

(smiles)

Well, that's good, Lieutenant. You deserve a promotion.

GUER

Thank you, sir.

CROSS

Any other applicants?

TALORA

One. Not much of a contest, though.

CROSS

Well, good luck. I don't know whether to hope you get the position, Lieutenant, if you know what I mean. You're a hell of a pilot.

GUER

(beams)

Thank you, sir.

CROSS

Dismissed, Lieutenant.

Guer leaves.

CROSS (CONT'D)

Commander, you came at just the right time. I made my offer to Cardassia -- the facilitators, that is.

TALORA

How did it go?

CROSS

They didn't seem to happy about the facilitators.

(beat)

I spoke to Garash, and he wasn't too supportive of the idea. As for his superiors, they probably won't be either.

TALORA

Cardassians value their independence. I'm not surprised.

CROSS

Neither was I. The thing is, that leaves us with only two options.

INT. APARTMENT

Simad lies in bed, asleep. A knock comes at the door, but he doesn't stir. After a moment, another knock comes and Simad wakes up.

SIMAD

Who is it?

DOJAR

It's Dojar.

Simad sits up in bed.

SIMAD

Come in.

The door opens and Dojar walks through.

SIMAD (CONT'D)

You're back.

DOJAR

I think I owe you an apology. For...  
butting in.

SIMAD

How about adding lying about a friend  
to the list? And scanning me?

DOJAR

Touché.

A moment of silence.

SIMAD

Apology accepted.

DOJAR

Thanks, Simad.

SIMAD

I'd also like to apologize. I didn't  
mean to get angry.

DOJAR

That's quite all right.

INT. BRIDGE

CROSS is in the command chair, with TALORA at his side. DOJAR,  
SUKOTHAI, and GUER all man their stations.

SUKOTHAI

I'm receiving an incoming transmission  
from Superintendent Garash.

CROSS

(grimly)  
Put it onscreen.

Garash appears on the viewer.

GARASH

Captain, we've considered your offer.

CROSS

I hope it was satisfactory?

GARASH

It was not.  
(beat)  
We believe that how Cardassia  
distributes its aid is its own  
business.  
(sincerely)  
I'm very sorry, Captain.

CROSS

I hope you realize the possible  
consequences of that decision.

(a beat, then to  
Sukothai)

End transmission.

The viewer goes blank.

TALORA

(sotto voce)

Time for another staff meeting?

CROSS

I don't think so. It's my decision  
now.

On Cross' grim expression, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. SPACE

The Enterprise is still in orbit of Cardassia. It is serene and quiet in the night.

INT. CORRIDOR

Cross slowly strolls down the corridor. Other crewmen pass him, and several address him. Everything glides over his head, and he doesn't notice the other crew.

INT. TURBOLIFT

Cross steps into the turbolift, finding himself with GUER and AGOLIVE.

GUER  
(a formality)  
Ensign.  
(to Cross)  
Captain, I wanted to talk to you.

CROSS  
Not now, Lieutenant.

GUER  
Yes, sir.

Cross is on the verge of reprimanding Guer just for responding, but he restrains himself. Guer notices, and raises an eyebrow at Agolive.

She smiles.

CROSS  
Something to say, Lieutenant?

GUER  
No, sir.

CROSS  
I didn't think so.

Guer straightens up, as does Agolive. Their expressions go blank.

The turbolift stops, and Cross exits. Guer and Agolive exhale.

INT. CROSS' QUARTERS

Large and nicely furnished. The antique table we saw before, plus a bookshelf stands in one corner, with some old-fashioned books as well as a few pads. On another wall is a replicator, a computer, and a smallish view screen. A sitting area is by the windows, and more rooms are off to one side.

Outside the large windows, Cardassia watches the silence.

The doors whoosh open and Cross strides in. He walks to the replicator.

CROSS

Hot chocolate, touch of mint.

The hot chocolate mug materializes, and Cross takes it. He blows on it for a second and takes a sip. Satisfied, he seats himself in the sitting area. He is facing Cardassia.

INT. BRIDGE

The bridge is calm and serene with the night shift. SUKOTHAI is in the command chair. Only a few stations are manned. TALORA arrives and walks to the command chair. She carries a PADD.

TALORA

Relieved, Lieutenant.

SUKOTHAI

Commander?

TALORA

I'll take the rest of the shift. I can't sleep.

SUKOTHAI

Yes, Commander.

Sukothai exits, and Talora picks up the PADD. She begins to read, but without interest. After a few moments, she puts down the PADD.

INT. CROSS' QUARTERS

Cross now sits on the couch along the window, with Cardassia to his back. He's not in deep thought, however. He stands, goes to the replicator, and puts his empty mug inside.

CROSS

Refill.

He waits a couple seconds, and then pulls out a full mug of hot chocolate. As he walks out of his quarters, the lights go out.

INT. BRIDGE

Same as before. Cross enters. Talora stands.

TALORA

(formally)

Captain on the bridge.

Cross doesn't say a word. He continues to his ready room, leaving as quickly and as silently as he came. A confused Talora sits.

INT. READY ROOM

Cross sits at his desk and taps his computer.

CROSS

Computer, open a subspace channel to  
Admiral Portman...

EXT. READY ROOM

Seconds later. We are looking into the room from outside the windows. Cross, cocoa mug in hand, is talking to his computer. He pauses, then sets the mug down. He gestures with his hands and speaks. He pauses again, watching the person on his computer screen. He nods in contemplation, and continues the conversation.

INT. MESS HALL

DOJAR sits alone at a table near the window. Y'LAN enters the mess hall, spots Dojar, and plops down awkwardly at the table.

Y'LAN

The Captain is making his decision  
now, Lieutenant.

DOJAR

I know.

(beat)

Y'lan, how long has it been since  
you were home?

Y'LAN

One hundred and twelve Earth years.

DOJAR

Do you think that when you return,  
it might be different?

Y'LAN

I doubt that it will be radically  
different.

(beat)

It is possible, though, that it could  
be completely alien to me. But  
unlikely.

DOJAR

What if you found your home at war?

Y'LAN

We are not at war.

DOJAR

Hypothetically, though...

Y'LAN

It is possible, of course. We are constantly exploring. Just like in this area of space, incidents are bound to spark. Why do you ask?

DOJAR

I haven't visited home since I joined Starfleet. I guess I expected it to be the same. I didn't realize it would have gone so far downhill.

Y'LAN

When I came to this quadrant a century ago, I didn't expect the Federation to become what it is today, either.

Y'lan leaves the table and the mess hall, leaving the last comment with Dojar.

Dojar's eyes turn to the window, where Cardassia hangs in the sky.

EXT. CITY STREET -- DAY

This is a different street than we saw before. Cross stands among the impoverished masses, seeing firsthand children in rags and old men sitting along in corners, with nothing to eat. At one end of the street is a wall about ten feet high. There are no buildings behind it, and large Cardassian characters are painted on the wall. Cross notices it, and approaches a VENDOR in the street.

CROSS

What's beyond that wall?

VENDOR

That's the bomb site.

CROSS

Bomb?

VENDOR

Well, I don't know if was a bomb or not. It's from the Dominion War -- you know, twenty-five years ago. I think the radiation was so bad that they couldn't get rid of it. If you go beyond the wall, you'll be poisoned.

Cross looks at the wall.

CROSS

How bad was it?

VENDOR

Well, I'm no historian, but I hear it was devastating. It left lots of people homeless and hungry -- even more dead. We're working on that, you know, but I think it will still be a while till we recover.

Cross can only nod in agreement.

INT. BRIDGE

Dojar is now at his station. Talora is in the command chair. Cross enters from the rear.

DOJAR

(immediately)

Captain on the bridge!

All the officers stand at attention, but Cross does not let them return to their duties.

TALORA

Captain?

Cross stops at the center of the bridge.

CROSS

Open a channel to the Cardassian government.

Dojar hesitates, then taps a few controls.

CROSS (CONT'D)

No, wait. Broadcast. All official frequencies. Audio and visual.

DOJAR

(beat)

Broadcasting, sir.

CROSS

(sounding official)

This is Captain Cross speaking for the United Federation of Planets.

(beat)

It has recently come to my attention that the government of Cardassia has been distributing the aid provided by the Federation poorly, in an unfair manner.

(MORE)

CROSS (CONT'D)

The Federation is committed to helping all of Cardassia's citizens, not just the wealthy or well-connected. But this commitment requires the help of the Cardassian government as well.

(beat)

Until Cardassia adopts and adheres to a policy of equal distribution, regardless of race, past, or social status, the Federation cannot provide any aid. I am hereby suspending all humanitarian aid to Cardassia.

He nods to Dojar, who doesn't respond. Cross turns around, and issues the order himself:

CROSS (CONT'D)

Computer, close channel.

(turns to Dojar)

I hope you understand my decision, Lieutenant?

DOJAR

(hollow)

Yes, sir.

Cross sits next to Talora.

TALORA

(sotto voce)

You spent a lot of time on that one.

CROSS

(sotto voce)

In the end, there was only one moral option.

TALORA

What did Starfleet have to say?

CROSS

They back my decision. The Council can still block it, but it's unlikely.

(beat)

Will you back my decision?

TALORA

Why does that matter?

CROSS

Maybe it doesn't matter to anyone else. But it matters to me.

TALORA

I don't agree with it.

CROSS

That's not what I asked.

TALORA

(beat)

I'll support it.

CROSS

Thank you, Commander.

INT. APARTMENT

Dojar sits at the table with SIMAD.

SIMAD

I wish that they didn't have do that.

DOJAR

It wasn't 'they.' It was my Captain.

SIMAD

It was inevitable.

(a bit of sarcasm)

The Federation has to be a moral society.

DOJAR

I'm not so sure about that.

(beat)

I'm leaving orbit in a few hours.

SIMAD

I see. Well, don't forget about me.

DOJAR

I won't.

SIMAD

Good.

DOJAR

I don't like good-byes.

SIMAD

(almost laughing)

Neither do I.

DOJAR

Well, we'll see each other again, won't we?

SIMAD

Yeah.

DOJAR

I've got to go.

Dojar stands, and taps his commbadge.

DOJAR (CONT'D)

Dojar to Enterprise. One to beam up.

He disappears in a shimmer, leaving Simad alone in the apartment.

INT. MESS HALL

Various officers sit at the tables. DOJAR sits alone. On a screen on the wall, an ANCHOR reads the news.

ANCHOR

(in middle of report)

and the Ambassador to Kronos has been recalled temporarily. More on the situation later.

(beat)

On the Cardassian front...

Several heads turn, including Dojar's.

ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Captain Neil Cross of the Enterprise Decided yesterday to withdraw humanitarian aid from Cardassia due to unfair distribution. The Federation Council supported his decision in an impromptu council meeting, telling the press only that the Federation is committed to fair distribution of its humanitarian aid.

Dojar gets up from the table as the anchor continues with the news and leaves the mess.

INT. DOJAR'S QUARTERS -- CONTINUOUS

We are looking out the window. Stars rush by. The room is dimly lit. In the reflection of the window, we see very little.

After a moment, we hear the sound of doors WHOOSHING open. At the same time, a rectangle of light appears at the doorway's reflection in the window.

A FIGURE passes through -- we cannot tell who it is. The doors WHOOSH closed.

Constant FOOTSTEPS can be heard in the background. Seconds later, DOJAR passes in front of the window.

Heavy breathing.

Dojar passes by again, and comes back again. As we look towards the floor, we see only PACING FEET.

RENAISSANCE: "Beggars and Choosers" - ACT FIVE

62.

Then we move up to a photograph next to the couch. It is of Simad and Dojar, younger and smiling, probably best friends.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER FAMILY PHOTO. A photo of Cross' family.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

THE END