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Deep Space 9: "Soliloquy"

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. QUARK'S BAR.

It is before opening time. The bar is in semi-darkness. Quark and Bashir are present.

QUARK

(reading, with feeling)

"If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that."

BASHIR

Quark, that's marvelous.

QUARK

(mock modestly)

Well, I—

BASHIR

Really, it's as if you've read the part before.

QUARK

What did you call it again?

BASHIR

"The Merchant of Venice."

QUARK

Never heard of it.

BASHIR

You have a remarkable sympathy with the character. I would be honored if you would take the part.

QUARK

Don't have the time.

BASHIR

I'm planning to hold the rehearsals outside of business hours.

QUARK

Running a bar takes more time than you might think. There are the accounts, the inventories... Rule of Acquisition number—

BASHIR

I thought that we could perform the play in here. I'll gladly pay you for the privilege. It should draw quite a crowd. I expect you'll have to hire some part-time help to handle the extra business.

QUARK

(thinking)

Let me get back to you.

BASHIR

Excellent!

KIRA (V.O.)

Kira to Bashir.

BASHIR

Bashir here.

KIRA (V.O.)

Doctor, we're receiving a distress call. It appears to involve an injury. Proceed to the infirmary and await further orders.

BASHIR

On my way.

Bashir starts to leave, then stops in the doorway and turns to Quark.

BASHIR

You will think about it?

Quark looks about the bar, estimates the size of the audience and how much money he can make.

QUARK

I'll think about it. You're sure I'd be good?

BASHIR

Quark, you were born to play Shylock.

CUT TO:

INT. DS9: OPS.

Dax, Kira, and O'Brien are present. Sisko comes out of his office. The voice we will later know as Stan's is speaking over the PA. In a moment we will also hear the voice we will later know as Jane's.

STAN (V.O.)

Hey, Federation, you out there?

(sing-songey)

Fe-der-a-tion! Hey, what's it take to get an answer out of those guys?

DAX

He's not responding to our hail.

JANE (V.O.)

Try this.

There is the sound of jumpy static. The signal fades out and comes back. We do NOT see Jane and Stan. However, for later reference: They are between twenty-five and thirty years old. Stan has blow-dried blond hair. He has the smile and 'how-ya-doin' manner of a game show host or the pastor of a Southern California megachurch, but he is even a little more aggressive and blustery. Jane is skinny and fair. She has straight pale hair that could be auburn or blond. She speaks in a flat, emotionless voice, as if she were trying to imitate a computer.

STAN (V.O.)

Hey, there they are. Hi, guys!

DAX

They can see us.

SISKO

What is the nature of your emergency?

STAN (V.O.)

It's an emergency, all right. John flipped out and went after Barb.

Uh-oh! There go the lights!

JANE (V.O.)

Our associate, Barbara Zelig, has suffered multiple puncture wounds.

STAN (V.O.)

Sure wish we knew where John went.

SISKO

Where are you?

DAX

I've decoded the tracer signal. It's coming from the biological research station on Gamma Cygni 5.

SISKO
(troubled)

Gamma Cygni 5? John? John Lake?

JANE (V.O.)

That is corr—

The signal from GC-5 is cut off.

SISKO

What happened?

The signal returns, fainter and with more static.

JANE (V.O.)

—Zelig—[static]—ife support. A speedy respon—

SISKO

Dax!

DAX

I've lost them. [beat] There's nothing. The signal's gone.

SISKO
(decisive)

Odo, O'Brien, Bashir. You're with me in the Orinoco.

Sisko and O'Brien exit to the turbolift.

FADE OUT

ACT I

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL)

The *Orinoco* moves past.

SISKO (V.O.)

Station log, supplemental. The research outpost on Gamma Cygni 5 reports that its leader, John Lake, has assaulted one of the station personnel. The communication was cut short, and for now we have no clues to the motive or motives behind this attack. Chief O'Brien believes that the station may have suffered a total power failure. We are proceeding to GC-5 at maximum warp.

CUT TO:

INT. ORINOCO.

Sisko and O'Brien are at the controls. Bashir and Odo are seated behind them. Bashir is reading a PADD.

SISKO

Chief, I want you to get the power restored as soon as we reach Gamma Cygni 5. If Lake was responsible for shutting it down, find some way to keep him from doing it again.

O'BRIEN

Yes, sir. These underground stations usually have force fields that come on during earthquakes. I should be able to rig something up.

SISKO

Doctor, you'll have to determine how soon you can transport your patient back to DS9. Doctor?

BASHIR

(flustered)

Hmm? Certainly, sir. As soon as we get there.

ODO

Must be absorbing, whatever it is.

BASHIR

"The Merchant of Venice." I'm thinking of putting it on.

ODO

Huh.

BASHIR

I am looking for volunteers. As a matter of fact...it has quite a good part for you.

ODO

(flat, cynical)

Really.

BASHIR

Do you know the play?

ODO

I read it.

BASHIR

I thought you'd be right for the Duke. You remember him?

ODO

Refresh my memory.

BASHIR

You remember Shylock?

ODO

The one who asks for his "pound of flesh." I remember. The Duke gives him his comeuppance at the end. Who's your Shylock?

Bashir does not answer. Odo looks at him. Bashir gives a kind of facial shrug—maybe he looks at the ceiling. Odo gets it, and looks away.

ODO

I'll think about it.

BASHIR

That's all I ask. Hope you won't mind my inquiring, but, I'm curious, Odo: what prompted you to read "The Merchant of Venice"?

ODO

As part of my introduction to humanoid cultures, the Bajorans had me read in the literatures of several species: Klingon epics, Ferengi love poems—

O'BRIEN

(mutters)

Heaven help us.

BASHIR

What did you think of Shakespeare?

ODO

Parts of his plays struck me as reading like a police blotter.

BASHIR

(mainly to himself)

I'm always amazed at how he makes his people so real, so lifelike; more so, because he makes it look so easy. One almost feels as if he didn't have to make them up, but that he simply wrote them down, as they were living, before his eyes. Of course, that's absurd. A writer friend once told me that that was the most difficult part of her job: to draw a convincing human character.

Bashir glances at Odo.

BASHIR

No offense.

ODO

None taken.

Odo looks away, abstracted; he self-consciously rubs the bridge of his nose.

O'BRIEN

Commander, I gathered that you know John Lake.

SISKO

Our parents were friends. I knew him before I went to the Academy. He's about ten years older than I am.

O'BRIEN

Something like a big brother.

SISKO

More like a distant cousin. We were never close. He has a medical degree, with a specialization in reconstructive neurosurgery . . . repairing brain injuries caused by strokes, concussions. He practiced for a few years, then he left medicine and became an evolutionary biologist.

O'BRIEN

Wonder what brought him out here.

SISKO

GC-5 is in transition. It's on the verge of developing multicellular life. That's why the station's underground, to avoid any chance of contamination. The planet doesn't even have an oxygen atmosphere.

Sisko stops. He realizes that he has been evading the main point.

SISKO (CONT.)

But mainly, it's isolated. That's the real reason he went there. I remember, my parents always referred to him as "poor John." They said that he would struggle to make friends and then, when those friends failed to live up to his expectations, he would quarrel with them and drive them away. He didn't know how to be with people without trying to control them . . . control them completely. One autumn, when I was fifteen, he coached one of the teams in our neighborhood soccer league. It was his parents' idea. John Lake's players were only eight and nine years old, but no coach worked his team harder. He drilled them like a sergeant, and when they failed to execute the plays perfectly, he was furious. I saw him scream at children; he'd reduce them to tears, right in front of their parents.

O'BRIEN

It sounds like he must not have—

SISKO

But he's not violent. I just remembered something. John shouldn't have any assistants. He chose Gamma Cygni 5 because it was a one-man post.

O'BRIEN

Could be visitors. Another research team?

Sisko keys an inquiry into the runabout's computer and reads the display in front of him. He shakes his head.

SISKO

I don't see any record of scheduled research visits in this sector.

O'BRIEN

It looks like someone at Star Fleet dropped the ball. We're entering a synchronous orbit over the station now.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE (OPTICAL)

The *Orinoco* is in orbit around GC-5.

INT. ORINOCO.

O'BRIEN

Power levels are . . . they're zero. I'm not reading any life support.

SISKO

What's the air like?

O'BRIEN

Hard to tell. We should take respirators. Temperature seems to be okay, though.

SISKO

Life signs?

O'BRIEN

Fluctuating. Looks like they're centered in the infirmary. I'll put us down there.

All but Odo don breathing masks. O'Brien and Sisko have phasers. Bashir has his medical kit. O'Brien has a 24th Century toolbox, which he might carry in his hand or in a shoulder bag. They step into the transporter and beam down.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Darkness. Barbara Zelig, in the background, lies unconscious on a bed. She is darker and fuller-figured than Jane. Her neck, shoulders, and arms show multiple cuts. Jane and Stan are sitting at a communications console, slumped over. Sisko, O'Brien, Odo, and Bashir MATERIALIZE. Odo and Sisko immediately turn on their torches. Bashir and O'Brien flip out their tricorders. Bashir walks to Stan and Jane.

O'BRIEN

The air's marginal. We'll have to keep our masks on until I get life support running and it's had time to replenish the oxygen.

SISKO

How long until you can restore auxiliary power?

O'Brien goes to a wall panel and opens it. He sees a switch—a real, physical switch—that is clearly labeled EMERGENCY POWER. After a glance at Stan and Jane, he throws it. The lights and ventilation—i.e., the life support—come on. Odo, O'Brien, and Sisko exchange looks of wonder.

Bashir reads his tricorder near Stan and Jane.

BASHIR

They're alive.

Bashir gives them hypos.

BASHIR

These should sustain them until the air improves.

Sisko looks toward Barbara.

SISKO

What about her?

Bashir rushes over.

BASHIR

Barely alive. Good Lord. None of these wounds is very deep, but—

SISKO

What is it?

BASHIR

These wounds are at least two days old, but nobody has treated them. They're badly infected.

Bashir administers a hypo.

BASHIR (CONT.)

That will take care of her oxygen deprivation. I can arrest the spread of the infections temporarily, but I'll need to synthesize blood soon. I shouldn't move her at all until I've performed at least one transfusion.

Bashir goes to a medical replicator.

BASHIR

Replicator, one unit of O-negative human blood.

REPLICATOR (V.O.)

Unable to comply at current power levels.

BASHIR

The Orinoco's replicator won't make blood. I need the main power restored.

O'Brien seats himself at a console.

O'BRIEN

The primary coupling is two levels below us. I'll have to do it from that end. Shouldn't be any trouble once I get there.

ODO

I'll go with you.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Odo, O'Brien, and Sisko ENTER from the infirmary. A double door leads to the outer hallway. It is heavily armored, like the holodeck doors on the *Enterprise*. O'Brien checks his tricorder.

O'BRIEN

I'm not picking up isolated power emissions. At least he doesn't have a phaser.

Sisko, standing beside the door's control panel, works the control that opens it. The door opens.

O'Brien looks at his tricorder in disbelief.

O'BRIEN

Commander—

Odo also notices something. He sniffs twice and is about to speak to Sisko.

SISKO

What is it?

O'BRIEN

The air out here is good.

O'Brien checks his tricorder again. He slowly pulls the mask away from his face and inhales cautiously. He turns to Sisko.

ODO

He's right.

Sisko removes his mask. He looks back toward the infirmary.

O'Brien approaches the door control. He resets his tricorder and reads it.

O'BRIEN

The door was closed from the outside. But the people in there could have opened it anytime.

O'Brien enters a code into the panel.

O'BRIEN

I've changed the admittance code. That will keep Lake out.

SISKO

Assuming Lake is out there. Get the power on as soon as you can. Return immediately. If you find John Lake, bring him back here.

O'BRIEN

Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

O'Brien and Odo ENTER from the anteroom. The doors close behind them. O'Brien and Odo move off quickly.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR.

The corridor is illuminated only by emergency lights. Odo and O'Brien ENTER, and proceed cautiously. O'Brien periodically checks his tricorder.

O'BRIEN

What do you think made him do it?

ODO

We don't yet know that he did.

O'Brien glances at Odo.

ODO

However, I grant that the facts appear to indicate it. A case like this occurred during the occupation. An intelligence officer stabbed his sweetheart when he learned that she was having an affair with a gul.

We see Lake once, hiding around a corner. Lake's eyes have an expression that is both fearful and grief-stricken. He hears Odo and O'Brien and furtively watches them.

O'BRIEN

What happened?

ODO

He hid himself on the station. When we found him, three days later, he had committed suicide.

CUT TO:

INT. A DIFFERENT CORRIDOR.

Odo and O'Brien come out of a ladderway. As they approach the power control room, the station shows signs of increasing decay and neglect: dust, intermittent emergency lighting, equipment abandoned in the hallway, etc.

O'BRIEN

It looks like nobody's been down here for—

ODO

Years.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REACTOR ROOM.

Odo and O'Brien ENTER, and approach a door.

O'BRIEN

(reading his tricorder)

It's behind here.

O'Brien pushes the button on the panel that opens the door. The door makes mechanical, straining sound and opens about six inches. He tries again. The door opens another inch or two, making the same sound, but somewhat louder. O'Brien removes the wall panel,

examines the circuits, and probes them with one of his tools. Nothing. He grabs the door and pulls hard. Odo helps him.

O'BRIEN
(strained voice)

Wonder how Lake did this.

The door opens just wide enough to let O'Brien get through. He cautiously enters. Odo remains outside and keeps watch.

CUT TO:

INT. REACTOR ROOM.

It is dark and there is dust everywhere. O'Brien ENTERS, sits at a console, and turns on a monitor.

O'BRIEN

O'Brien to Sisko.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

SISKO

Come in, Chief.

CUT TO:

INT. REACTOR ROOM.

O'BRIEN

Lake didn't cut the power, sir. Nobody's done any maintenance on this system for over five years. The safeties finally kicked in. It looks like the reactor's been off for at least a month.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

SISKO

Can you restore power to the medical replicators?

CUT TO:

INT. REACTOR ROOM.

O'BRIEN

I can override the safeties. The reactor's still out of the red zone. We should have plenty of time to evacuate before she starts to leak.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

SISKO

Do it. Sisko out.

CUT TO:

INT. REACTOR ROOM.

O'BRIEN

Here goes.

CUT TO:

INT. GAMMA-CYGNI 5: MONTAGE.

There follows a quick montage of corridors and rooms, with lights, computers, ventilation systems, etc., coming on.

CUT TO:

INT. REACTOR ROOM.

The room is now fully illuminated. O'Brien stands up.

O'BRIEN

Now just hold together, sweetheart.

(to Odo)

I'm done here.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REACTOR ROOM.

O'Brien comes out of the reactor room. He and Odo step away from the door. There is a white flash as a force field comes on.

O'BRIEN

That'll keep him out, in case he has any ideas. I've rerouted the controls through the console upstairs.

ODO

Let's go.

They walk off.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR.

Odo and O'Brien are proceeding cautiously, but their caution is not as evident as earlier. O'Brien does not have his tricorder out: they know the way now.

CUT TO:

INT. A DIFFERENT CORRIDOR.

Lake is mounting a small box, about the size of a cigarette pack, on a wall, while occasionally glancing down the corridor. He gets it mounted, turns it on—a small light comes on—and gets out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

The three patients, still unconscious, are all lying on beds. The air has been restored, and Bashir and Sisko have removed their masks. Bashir looks at his patients with some relief and satisfaction.

BASHIR

The medical replicators are working. The injection I gave her should do its work in a few minutes. Then I can start with the transfusion. I'll need some help with that, though.

SISKO

I am at your service.

BASHIR

I assume that she's the one they called Barbara. What are their names?

SISKO

We don't know. The transmission was cut short. [beat] Barbara.

BASHIR

Does that name mean anything?

SISKO

My father told me that Lake almost married a Barbara.

BASHIR

"Almost"?

SISKO

We would have got a wedding invitation. I guess it didn't work out. And, I guess, I'm not surprised.

Bashir checks the medical monitors on Stan's and Jane's beds.

BASHIR

These two are reviving. They'll be able to tell us who they are in a few minutes.

SISKO

I wonder what triggered it.

BASHIR

These things happen, even nowadays. Hundreds of light-years from home, separated from family and friends for months or years. It's not unlike the situation of Nineteenth Century whalers.

SISKO

But John Lake is no Captain Ahab. He didn't have a white whale. What's more, he wanted to be alone.

BASHIR

Perhaps that's the answer. These people disturbed his privacy.

SISKO

Nothing could disturb it that much, doctor. Look at what was done to that woman. No. He could deal with people professionally, for short periods.

BASHIR

They may have been here longer than we think.

SISKO

What are you suggesting?

BASHIR

I'm not sure. Perhaps an accident. They may be stranded.

SISKO

DS9 would have been notified.

BASHIR

True.

(thinks)

This will sound trite, but: two men, two women... jealousy?

SISKO

I don't think so. Jealousy takes time to develop. And nothing in their message suggested it. The attack seemed to come out of the blue.

BASHIR

If they said so. But, they don't seem to be very observant.

Sisko has turned to look at Barbara. His face shows sadness and bewilderment.

SISKO

Sometimes you think you know a man—

CUT TO:

INT. A DIFFERENT CORRIDOR.

This is the corridor we just left. Odo and O'Brien ENTER. Ahead, they see (apparently) Lake's unconscious form lying face down on the floor. They approach to within approximately six feet. O'Brien takes out his tricorder.

O'BRIEN

I'm not picking up any life signs.

O'Brien pockets his tricorder (or puts it in the toolbox) as Odo warily approaches the body.

The real Lake comes out of concealment behind O'Brien. Lake knocks O'Brien unconscious and takes his phaser. Odo sees him and startles. Lake fires at Odo. Odo shape-shifts and pretends to be destroyed. IMPORTANT: WE HEAR A METALLIC RINGING SOUND, which is Odo's combadge hitting the floor. Lake, frantic with the horror of what he has just done, points the phaser at the unconscious O'Brien and holds it on him for a beat or two: should he or shouldn't he? Then he regains partial control of himself. He runs off in the direction from which Odo and O'Brien came.

FADE OUT

ACT II

FADE IN:

INT. A DIFFERENT CORRIDOR.

The scene is as at the end of Act I. Odo reforms. He picks his combadge up from the floor and reattaches it. He sees the box—a miniature holographic projector—on the wall. He goes to O'Brien, who is coming to.

O'BRIEN

What happened?

ODO

(nods toward the box)

It's a hologram.

O'BRIEN

He got my phaser.

ODO

He went that way.

O'BRIEN

Better for us. O'Brien to Sisko.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

SISKO

Sisko here.

CUT TO:

INT. A DIFFERENT CORRIDOR.

O'BRIEN

Commander, we found Lake . . . or he found us. He got the jump on us.
He has a phaser.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

SISKO

Stay put. I'll beam you here.

O'BRIEN (V.O.)

After what I saw below, sir, I'd rather not go through the station's transporter. If I were you, I'd activate your section's force field immediately.

SISKO

Agreed. I'm turning the field on... now.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

There is a flash around the doors as the force-field comes on.

CUT TO:

INT. A DIFFERENT CORRIDOR.

O'BRIEN

O'Brien out.

O'Brien gets to his feet. He turns off the projector. The hologram vanishes. O'Brien takes down the box.

O'BRIEN

We'll deprive him of one toy.

O'Brien drops the projector into his toolbox. He and Odo move off quickly.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR.

ENTER Lake, running. He stops, looks back. He looks at the phaser and grips it, as if to say, "I have it now!" He pockets it. He looks ahead, down the corridor, and then walks off quickly.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR NEAR PERSONNEL QUARTERS.

There is a door marked PERSONNEL QUARTERS. We can faintly see the force field. ENTER Lake. He attempts to open the door and is thrown back by the force field. He gets up and tests the field gingerly, in several places, with his fingers: no way in. He looks both ways down the corridor. Then he remembers the phaser. He takes it out, steps back, aims at the door, and fires. He continues to fire for several seconds, but stops when he sees that he is having no effect. He stops, and cautiously moves off toward the right. As he moves, he constantly studies the field, searching for a weakness.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Jane slowly sits up. A moment later, so does Stan.

BASHIR

Commander.

Jane and Stan notice Bashir and Sisko, and startle. Stan struggles to come out of his daze while Jane speaks.

SISKO

I'm Benjamin Sisko, commander of Deep Space 9. This is Doctor Julian Bashir. We answered your distress call.

JANE

When did you arrive?

BASHIR

About half an hour ago.

SISKO

Our chief engineer has temporarily restored your power and life support systems.

Stan shakes himself, as if he were waking up from a nap, then thrusts his hand forward for an *extremely* hearty handshake.

STAN

Put 'er there!

After hesitating for a moment, Sisko takes Stan's hand. Stan pumps Sisko's hand like an overeager salesman.

STAN

You're Federation, aren't you?

SISKO

Yes. We're—

STAN

How'd you get so dark?

SISKO

Dark?

JANE

My associate refers to your skin pigmentation.

SISKO

(jolted)

What?

BASHIR

(jumping in)

We were hoping that you could give us some clues into possible motives for the attack.

STAN

(cheerful, and forgetting his question completely)

Yeah. Where'd he go?

SISKO

(hesitantly, but recovering his composure)

Lake has assaulted two of our people.

STAN

That's John!

JANE

We make no hypothesis.

SISKO

When you say, "That's John"—

STAN

(pointing, with a bizarrely cheerful manner)

You can see what he did to Barb!

SISKO

(self-restrained, taking refuge in formal language)

Do you mean that the attack on Barbara Zelig was not the first violent episode?

STAN

Heck no! It was kind of weird for him not to take it out on me, though.

JANE

Twice in the last six months.

STAN

Hey, but not with a knife; just his hand.

BASHIR

You've been here for six months?

JANE

We have lived here for ten years, three months, twenty-one days.

Sisko and Bashir exchanged stunned looks.

BASHIR

(recovering from the shock)

And John Lake began to exhibit erratic behavior—

JANE

Two years ago.

SISKO

How, specifically?

While Jane speaks, Stan watches her with an expression of schoolboyish awe.

JANE

Alienation, evidenced by withdrawal from all purely social contacts. Increasing time spent alone in his quarters. Irritability. Perfectionism. Picking at faults. A progressively shorter and more violent temper. Delusions of persecution. In the final stages, physical violence.

BASHIR

Sounds like a textbook case of paranoid schizophrenia.

SISKO

Possible causes?

BASHIR

Any number of things. Heredity plays a role. Chemical influences. Brain injury . . . though that's more likely to produce epilepsy.

SISKO

(frustrated)

What is . . . You are, I take it, his colleagues?

JANE

He is the leader.

STAN

(in the sense of, "Who else could it be?")

Who else? I mean, for a general kind of science station. Like, we do all kinds of things here. Rocks, plants, air, the works.

Jane looks directly, and somewhat accusingly, at Stan. Stan does not notice this.

BASHIR

(who does not see)

I see.

SISKO

(controlling his unease)

Would John's work have put him in contact with anything . . . chemicals, or a virus . . . that might have brought on his behavioral changes?

STAN

Not likely, 'cause we haven't changed one bit.

JANE

Affirmative. We remain unchanged.

For a moment, Bashir and Sisko are at a loss for words.

BASHIR

(with a note of desperation)

Commander, it could have been a shock. . . News from home, possibly?

SISKO

You said that he was withdrawing to his quarters. Are they nearby?

JANE

Yes.

SISKO

I think I should examine them.

Sisko expects Stan or Jane to offer to lead him there, but they just look at him.

SISKO

May I see John Lake's quarters?

JANE

You may.

But still, nobody moves.

SISKO

Please take me to them.

JANE

This way.

She gets up and leaves. Sisko follows her. Bashir remains behind. He attends to Barbara. He is obviously very uncomfortable at being left with Stan.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S LIVING ROOM.

It is dark. A door opens. The lights come on. Sisko and Jane ENTER.

JANE

These are his quarters.

She turns and leaves while Sisko speaks. He does not see her go.

SISKO

Thank you. I'll just look around and—

He abruptly notices that she is gone.

Sisko moves about the apartment slowly—uncomfortably aware that he is invading another's privacy—picking up knickknacks from cabinets and tables, looking around, eventually opening drawers, etc. He passes into the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR.

Lake is moving along warily, checking the field. He notices that it is shimmering. He aims the phaser and fires. Still no effect. He moves on as before.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko moves and looks around as before. There is an unmade king-size bed with two pillows. Sisko is about to open a closet when he notices something in the lower portion of a nightstand. He removes it. It unfolds in three sections, like a triptych. It is three photographs: of Stan, Jane, and Barbara. Their faces have natural smiles. Sisko wonders at them.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Jane has returned. Stan is sitting quietly on his bed. Jane is seated at the communications console. Bashir is holding the tricorder near Barbara's head. He suddenly looks puzzled and concerned. He glances toward Stan and Jane.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko replaces the triptych and returns to the closet. He opens the door onto a small, dormant holodeck.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Stan is watching Bashir.

STAN

Sometimes I wish I'd been a doctor.

BASHIR

Really? What prevented you?

STAN

Never had the time.

BASHIR

What do you do?

Jane briefly glares at Stan.

STAN

Keep John company. We all do.

BASHIR

I see how that could take up quite a lot of time.

Bashir approaches Stan and Jane while watching his tricorder.

BASHIR

You know, it just occurred to me that I should check to see whether the oxygen deprivation you endured produced any neural damage.

STAN

I feel great!

BASHIR

I'm sure you do, but . . . this will only take a second.

Bashir approaches Stan with the tricorder. What he sees concerns him, but he tries to keep an impassive face. He flicks a glance at Stan to see if he has noticed his concern. Stan is looking straight at him and, oddly, notices nothing. Bashir puts on a cheerful face.

BASHIR

Good. No permanent harm. Jane, if I might—

JANE

No.

BASHIR

It's really nothing—

JANE

No.

STAN

Hey, Jane, what harm can it do? He did it to me.

Jane looks at Stan and Bashir, and appears to consider this.

JANE

You may proceed.

Bashir quickly completes the scan, giving no telltale facial response this time.

BASHIR

Once again, nothing serious. One less thing to worry about it.

A pause while Bashir absorbs Jane's passively malevolent glare. He returns to Barbara.

SISKO (V.O.)

Sisko to Bashir.

BASHIR

Bashir here.

SISKO (V.O.)

I've found something that you ought to see.

BASHIR

(with an uneasy glance at Stan and Jane)

On my way.

He turns to go, then realizes that he does not know the way.

BASHIR

I need to go to Lake's quarters.

JANE

This way.

She leads him out.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR.

Lake is moving along. Now the field is flickering much more and is visibly porous. Lake tries the phaser again. It partially penetrates the field, leaving scorch marks on the wall, but there is still no way for *him* to get through. He shows momentary frustration, followed by determination. He continues moving toward the right.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S LIVING ROOM.

The door opens, Bashir and Jane ENTER. Sisko is waiting for them.

JANE

Here.

Jane EXITS to the corridor and the door closes. Bashir turns to look at the door.

SISKO

You look like you have something you want to show me, too.

BASHIR

Until a few minutes ago, I was beginning to think that Lake's insanity was almost healthy, compared with—

SISKO

What have you found?

BASHIR

I did a neural scan on Barbara. I was afraid that she and the others might have suffered brain damage while the life support was down. I didn't find that. What I did find is even more alarming. Her neural

pathways don't show normal growth patterns. Neither do Stan's or Jane's.

SISKO

Explain.

BASHIR

When we learn a skill, or have a profound experience, a pathway is laid down in our cerebral cortex. Later, when we build on that skill, or apply that experience, the pathway branches. Over time, a network of pathways and nodes forms that is unique to every individual.

SISKO

And they don't have the patterns?

BASHIR

On the contrary, they have too many. Their brains show signs of having tried to grow several different networks, all but one of which have been almost entirely erased. It's as if they'd been forced to re-learn the same things several times, after repeatedly being forced to forget them.

SISKO

"Things"? What sort of things?

BASHIR

It's hard to know from one scan. The erased regions were widely distributed. In the speech centers; in the hypothalamus, which controls emotions—

SISKO

Disease?

BASHIR

I heard you tell the chief that Lake used to be a surgeon.

SISKO

Reconstructive neurosurgery. [Beat.] Let me show you what I found.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko and Bashir go to a desk that has a computer terminal. Sisko sits at the desk. Bashir watches over Sisko's shoulder.

SISKO

(reading from the terminal)

Stanley Anderson, Barbara Zelig, Jane Annette Rumford.

BASHIR

So they do have last names.

SISKO

He has a file named after each of them, and some others that are listed by number only. The numbered files are encrypted. And look at this—

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

A montage of scenes around the station, mixed in with blank screens.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

BASHIR

To keep tabs on them, possibly. Classic paranoia. Why are there blank screens?

SISKO

My guess is that they broke down.

BASHIR

Makes sense. No irony intended.

SISKO

He also has a subspace communication center.

CUT TO:

INT. DS9: OPS.

Kira and Dax are at their stations.

DAX

Major, we're being hailed. It's Benjamin.

KIRA

On screen. Commander, what is your situation?

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

It would take too long to explain. Dax, run a biographical check, with cross-referencing, on these four Terrans: John Lake, Barbara Zelig, Stanley Anderson, and Jane Annette Rumford. Here are their Citizen Identification numbers.

INT. DS9: OPS.

DAX

Accessing Federation archives. This will take a few minutes.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

O'Brien and Odo ENTER, quickly but cautiously. They approach the door. Flashes indicate that the force field is still on.

ODO

How did you plan to reach the panel while the field was up?

O'BRIEN

Can't think of everything. O'Brien to Sisko.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Sisko here.

O'BRIEN (V.O.)

Commander, we need you to lower the field.

SISKO

I don't see the controls here.

BASHIR

We're not in the infirmary, chief.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

O'Brien and Odo exchange looks. They hear something like a FOOTSTEP that makes them turn around.

FADE OUT

ACT III

FADE IN:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

BASHIR

Wait and I'll—

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

O'BRIEN

Can't wait.

O'Brien takes the holographic projector out of the toolbox and pops open the back. He keys in a code. They hear more APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS.

ODO

Do you think you can fool it with that?

O'BRIEN

With any luck. Panels like this are pretty sensitive.

O'Brien aims the projector's beam at the door's control panel. The doors do not open.

O'BRIEN

When they're maintained, they are. I'm upping the beam.

The beam brightens. There are more footsteps. Odo looks back and sees Lake's shadow. The doors open.

O'BRIEN

(returning the projector to the toolbox)

Wait for the field to drop.

They hear running footsteps approaching. The field goes off. Odo and O'Brien leap through the doorway. A phaser beam passes beside them and hits the wall panel, which explodes. A second beam passes into the infirmary anteroom and hits a wall.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Lake, walking/running and firing.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

O'Brien and Odo take cover on both sides of the doorway. O'Brien tears off a wall panel and furiously works.

CUT TO:

O'BRIEN

He's knocked out the primary unit. I'll have to re-route it through the backup.

(to himself)

Hope it has a backup.

The doors close partway. The phaser tears holes in them.

O'BRIEN

(urgently chiding)

Come on, come on.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko and Bashir hear the NOISE. It is quite faint, and not recognizable as weapons fire. They exchange troubled looks. After a moment, Bashir hurries out. Sisko turns to the screen.

SISKO

Come on, Dax.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Lake approaching, firing, breaking into a run.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

LOUD SOUNDS: BLASTS AND PHASER FIRE.

STAN

Wonder what all that is?

Stan EXITS toward the anteroom.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

ENTER Stan. He sees Lake and waves.

STAN

Hey, John! You've come back!

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Lake sees Stan. Lake halts, as if stunned. Struggling with himself, he slowly raises the phaser and aims it.

STAN

(cheerful, and utterly unaware of his danger)

Boy, can't tell you how g—

Lake fires. Stan disintegrates. Lake continues firing. The phaser beam is interrupted; it sprints as the field comes back on. The mangled doors close.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

O'Brien collapses against the wall.

CUT TO:

INT. DS9: OPS.

DAX

Commander, I have something, but it looks like a mistake. I'm running it through again.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

What?

CUT TO:

INT. DS9: OPS.

DAX

Wait. No mistake. You'd better see it for yourself. Here are the files.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

(studies screen; surprise)

Are you sure?

DAX (V.O.)

Identification positive.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

O'Brien gets up and runs into the infirmary. Odo follows.

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'Brien sits down at a console and rapidly works. Odo looks on. Jane watches impassively.

JANE

Where—

O'BRIEN

(continuing to work)

He's dead. Lake got him.

(to Odo)

The backup field won't keep him out for long. I'm increasing the reactor output and channeling the additional power up to this level. There. We're safe... for the time being.

ODO

And how long is that? If you don't mind my asking.

O'Brien glances at Odo, then turns to Jane.

O'BRIEN

(beginning to calm down)

Your friend walked right into a phaser.

JANE

(emotionless)

That information does not surprise me.

Note: from roughly this point on, Jane's manner becomes more and more impassive, tending toward catatonia.

O'Brien is stunned. Odo is taken aback, but is also intrigued. He studies Jane for a few seconds. When he asks the following two questions, he seems to be as much interested in *how* she answers as in what she says.

ODO

Where are Commander Sisko and Doctor Bashir?

JANE

I do not know.

ODO

Where do you think they might be?

JANE

A ranking in order of decreasing probabilities assigns the greatest likelihood to John Lake's private quarters. The second most—

ODO

Take me to John Lake's quarters.

She rises. She and Odo leave. O'Brien watches them go out, then continues to work at the console.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Lake is firing. The field holds. There are tears in his eyes. He is overwhelmed—with guilt and horror—at what he has done—but also, paradoxically, with frustration: he almost got through. He continues firing for several seconds, but shuts the phaser off when he sees that he cannot get through the boosted field. He backs away cautiously and retraces his steps.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE LIVING QUARTERS.

Jane and Odo meet Bashir.

BASHIR

Odo, you're—

ODO

We weren't harmed. Lake killed the man.

Bashir turns around. The three walk to Lake's quarters.

BASHIR

You mean Stanley. Lake got in?

ODO

(with a note of urgency)

No. I have to see Sisko.

They come to Lake's door. Jane turns back there and returns to the infirmary. Odo and Bashir watch her walk off, then they enter Lake's quarters.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko is still studying the screen. Odo and Bashir ENTER.

ODO

Commander.

SISKO

Constable.

ODO

Chief O'Brien says that we're safe, "for the time being." The man who called himself Stanley has been killed.

SISKO

Killed!

ODO

Yes. He seemed to think that Lake would regard him as a friend.

[Beat.]

SISKO

I've learned something about our hosts.

ODO

I think I can guess what it is. Doctor, what sort of play would William Shakespeare have written about these people?

Bashir gives a puzzled look.

SISKO

According to Federation records, Lake's "assistants"—

ODO

Are dead.

SISKO

No. They're alive and well. But, according to Federation records, none of them have ever left Earth.

ODO

These are their clones.

Bashir stares at Odo.

ODO

A policeman can tell, doctor.

SISKO

I believe you're right, constable.

Bashir looks from Odo to Sisko: he is thinking.

ODO

What was, or is, the relation between these people, I mean the originals, and John Lake?

SISKO

(skimming the screen)

Stanley Anderson is a geochemist at the University of Chicago, where Lake visited for six months. Jane Rumford was a medical librarian at Harvard, where Lake was an intern. We don't know what Barbara Zelig's relation was, but she lives just outside Cambridge.

ODO

It sounds as if being near John Lake is all that they have in common.

BASHIR

You think that Lake cloned them?

ODO

Who else?

BASHIR

How? With what?

SISKO

Dax found a record that two hospitals, in Chicago and Cambridge, reported the apparent theft of blood samples shortly before John Lake left Earth for the last time.

BASHIR

But, why do it?

ODO

Most of the clones I encounter are used to establish alibis.

SISKO

As companions, perhaps.

ODO

If that's so, why is he trying to kill them?

BASHIR

No, the commander's right. When I asked Stanley what he did, all he could say was that he, and all of them, kept Lake company.

ODO

They appear to have had a falling out.

SISKO

Doctor, you'd better get back to your patient.

Bashir EXITS.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR.

Lake retracing his path. The force field, which flickered earlier, is now completely stable. There is no way to get through it. He hurries on, still searching for a weakness.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Lake has a number of encrypted files. I'm guessing that they might tell us more about his "friends," if only we could read them. Does any of this look familiar to you, constable?

Odo and Sisko watch screens of random numbers flash by.

ODO

Vaguely. But breaking into computer systems isn't really my line. It's a pity we didn't bring Quark.

SISKO

(a sudden thought)

Sisko to O'Brien.

O'BRIEN (V.O.)

O'Brien here.

SISKO

How's your code-breaking, Chief?

O'BRIEN (V.O.)

What's the job?

SISKO

Lake has encrypted some files that might contain information about the clones. I'm hoping that you can unscramble them.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Clones? What clones?

O'Brien looks around. He sees Bashir nod toward the catatonic Jane.

O'BRIEN

Oh. Let me see 'em.

(scans his screen)

Uh-huh; uh-huh. This looks like an old Star Fleet cipher. Give me a second.

O'Brien diddles on the console.

O'BRIEN (CONT.)

Wait.

He diddles some more.

O'BRIEN (CONT.)

How's that, sir?

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

You're a miracle worker!

O'BRIEN (V.O.)

I'll remember to pass that on to my wife.

SISKO

Let's see what we have.

ODO

(reading over Sisko's shoulder)

Accelerated mitosis. Cloning. Surgical records.

SISKO

Personal diary.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

We see Lake, about ten years younger, sitting at the desk where Sisko is now, speaking to the camera. His gaze wanders as he speaks.

LAKE

I dreamed about the blood again last night. It came out of the bottles and it talked to me. It molded itself into forms like the people on the holodeck, and it asked me how long I was going to go on wasting time on the holodeck, when I could have real friends. Why did you steal me, it asked, if you were never going to use me? I had no answer. I never wanted to see those people again when I left Earth. I stole the blood because... No, I never wanted to see them again.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Lake, as before, but with some time lapse indicated by e.g., change of clothing, growth of beard.

LAKE

I'll do it tomorrow.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Lake, as before, with some time lapse indicated.

LAKE

I will do it tomorrow. This time I promise.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Lake, as before, with some time lapse indicated. He has all the lights on and keeps glancing around.

LAKE

I did it. Or at least began it. Scary ... What's there to be afraid of?
Three clonings. So what if they don't come out perfect. Clones can be fixed.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko and Odo look stunned.

SISKO

(half to himself)

My God.

ODO

Commander, are you all right?

SISKO

I'm fine. Let's go on. That record was made eleven years ago. Jane said that they had lived here for more than ten years.

ODO

I've known clones that were made in a week.

SISKO

In your experience, does such rapid growth lead to psychological abnormalities?

ODO

I couldn't tell you. Most of the clones I meet don't come from what you would call "normal" originals.

SISKO

I get your meaning. Sisko to Bashir.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Bashir is examining the unconscious Barbara with a tricorder; O'Brien works at a terminal.

BASHIR

Bashir here.

SISKO (V.O.)

How's your patient?

BASHIR

Alive. A little better, in fact. She's responding well to the injections. Still unconscious, though.

SISKO

When will you be able to move her?

BASHIR

Within the hour, possibly. I'm worried about the other one now. She's becoming catatonic.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko and Odo exchange looks.

SISKO

Doctor, according to Lake's records, these clones were grown in a few months at the most. Could that account for their... peculiarities?

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

BASHIR

The time shouldn't matter, unless Lake made errors, through haste. But if he made errors, those should have produced physical defects as well, and I haven't seen any.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Thank you, Doctor. Sisko out.

(returns to the monitor)

Two weeks later.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Lake, as before, with some time lapse indicated.

LAKE

I can recognize their faces now, and the hair is growing, even while their skin is transparent. I haven't been to the holodeck in weeks. Who needs those people anymore? Stan will come out first, then Jane, then Barbara. Barbara will be my masterpiece.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. A LABORATORY.

The apparently unclothed and *adult* Stan, seen from the waist up, lying on his back in a large improvised hospital crib. A mobile is suspended over his head. Stan opens his eyes, smiles, sees the mobile, reaches for it. It is obvious that he has not yet mastered control of limbs. His fingers tap the mobile but he cannot catch it, despite trying several times. The cheerful smile does not leave his face.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. A ROOM IN THE STATION.

A room with toys in it. Stan, now fully clothed, is sitting on the floor, playing with colored blocks. He builds a tower and it falls over. He claps his hands.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. A ROOM IN THE STATION.

The same room, sometime later. Stan is playing with stuffed animals, making them talk to each other, etc. Stan holds a yellow-faced monkey and a goofy blue bird with big floppy wings.

STAN
(as Bird)

Hey, Yellow, watch me!

Bird jumps up and comes down on Monkey's head. Monkey scoots away.

STAN
(as Monkey)

What you doing?

Bird hits the floor and rolls around. Gets up and jumps again.

STAN
(as Bird)

I'll get you for that!

Monkey scoots out of the way again, with the same result.

STAN
(as Monkey)

What you doing?

Now the bird flies and begins to follow the monkey around.

STAN
(as Bird)

You won't get away this time, you yellow monkey, you.

The monkey hides under one of Stan's legs.

STAN
(as Bird)

No fair!

Bird lands. The two animals get into a Punch-and-Judyish fight. The bird pushes the monkey onto its back and stabs it with the absurdly flexible beak. The monkey makes dying sounds: "Unh! unh! unh!" The fight suddenly stops. Stan separates them and sets them up facing each other.

STAN

Now be friends?

He makes them nod at each other, then kiss. He sets them aside and picks up two other animals.

STAN
(addressing the "newcomers")

Ready?

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. ANOTHER ROOM IN THE STATION.

Stan is sitting at a computer screen, working through a middle-to-high-school level educational program. Cartoons of molecules move on the screen. Stan looks anxious and unhappy.

ENTER Lake. Lake rests his hand on Stan's shoulder.

LAKE

How is it going? Making any progress?

STAN

(whimpering)

I don't know.

Lake raises his hand an inch or so from Stan's shoulder and, after a second, replaces it.

LAKE

(level voice)

Think harder, Stanley. I know you can do it.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. A ROOM IN THE STATION.

Stan and Lake are in the room. Stan is walking out. Lake gets up and starts to go after him.

LAKE

Stanley! Come back here!

STAN

(childishly)

You don't want to have fun.

LAKE

Come back!

Stan walks out. Lake looks into the camera.

LAKE

Follow us.

Lake pursues Stan through corridors. The camera follows them, in a series of cuts, *cinéma vérité* fashion. Lake stops. Stan is nowhere in sight.

LAKE

Stanley Anderson! Stan!

In the background—Lake does not see—Stan takes a quick peek around a corner.

LAKE

Stan!

Stan leaps out and makes a face at Lake.

STAN

Nyah! Nyah!

Stan runs off.

LAKE

Son of a—

Lake runs to the corner, but Stan is already gone. Lake hears Stan clambering down a ladder. He rushes to the ladder but, now out of breath, he realizes that he cannot catch him. He hangs onto the ladder, looking down, and tries to contain his anger.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Lake enters. He switches on a monitor *there*, and the view now changes to what he is seeing: this is what he chose to record at this point.


CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR.

Stan, running through the corridors in a childlike exhilaration that is quickly turning into fear.

LAKE (V.O.)

Stanley, you're on the second level. I can see you. You might as well come back. There's no place to run. Stanley?

Stan runs for a bit, then stops, tries to enter a the door marked PERSONNEL QUARTERS— the same one we saw Lake try to phaser his way through.

LAKE (V.O.)

I've locked all the doors, Stanley. Do you want to spend the night in the hall? Why don't you come back and be my friend? *Please* come back and be my friend.

Stan looks around in fear and confusion. He wants to run but does not know where to go.

LAKE (V.O.)

Stanley, listen. I've shut off all the replicators outside the main living area, and I'm turning down the heat. You're going to get very cold and hungry if you stay out there. I know you hear me. Do you know what "cold" and "hungry" mean?

Stan is petrified with terror. The lights suddenly dim.

LAKE (V.O.)

Look, there go the lights. Oh, but don't worry. I'll leave you just enough light to find your way home. Do you want to come home, Stanley?

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko has a stunned expression.

SISKO

(shaking himself out of it)

Next day.

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Lake is in the anteroom. Lake has a tricorder out and is reading it. He puts the tricorder away and opens the outer door. We see Stan's unconscious form curled up outside the threshold. Lake quickly kneels down and gives Stan a hypo in the neck.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Lake speaks into the camera.

LAKE

Medical note. The Stanley clone endured mild dehydration and hypothermia, but was never in any serious physical danger. I have sedated him and placed him under restraint in the infirmary. He should regain consciousness this afternoon, at which time I plan to effect a reconciliation.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Lake and Stan are sitting on chairs that face each other. Stan has his head bowed and his hands are loosely clasped between his knees. Stan is disheveled, his clothing looks slept-in, and he has circles under his eyes.

LAKE

Why did you run? Look at me. Stanley.

Stan slowly raises his head. His gloomy, guilty look tentatively, and briefly, breaks into a mischievous, boyish smile.

LAKE

(sincerely pleading)

Why, Stan?

Stan shrugs, and playfully punches Lake in the shoulder.

LAKE

None of that.

STAN

(uncertain, turning sad)

It was fun?

LAKE

Fun?

STAN

(crying)

Tired of school and learning about rocks. I want it to be like it was before. Why can't it be like it was before?

LAKE

I've told you why. You can't be a child forever.

STAN

Why not?

LAKE

You have to know about rocks. Rocks!

Stan looks up at him with an expression of bottomless sorrow.

STAN

I want my bear.

LAKE

You can't have the bear. It's gone.

STAN

Where'd he go?

LAKE

It's just gone. It isn't coming back.

Stan cries. Lake stands and raises both his hands. He could be getting ready to bless Stan or strike him. Lake's face shows helpless anger: he realizes, for a moment, that this failure to come to terms with Stan—and, by extension, the other yet-to-be-born clones—is what he was afraid of earlier.

LAKE

God.

FADE TO:

INT. A CORRIDOR IN THE STATION.

It is the present. Lake is moving along, cautiously, like a hunted man. The lost, fearful expression on his face is the same as in the previous scene. He goes past a ladder that

leads to the next lower level. He stops, and goes back. He has an idea. He climbs down the ladder.

FADE OUT

ACT IV

FADE IN:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Lake is sitting at the desk, speaking to the camera.

LAKE

I will have to narrow his emotional range, again. Jane is... *not* going to come out like this. Today is stardate... stardate... Computer, fill it in.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

One month later.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. A ROOM IN THE STATION.

Stan, Jane, and Lake are standing.

LAKE

Stanley Anderson, I would like to introduce Jane Annette Rumford. Jane, this is Stanley.

STAN

(sticking out his hand)

Put 'er there!

Stan puts out his hand for a *very* hearty handshake. Jane's arms remain at her sides.

JANE

(monotone)

I am female.

Stan's open hand remains suspended between them. Stan does not appear discomfited. Lake grabs Stan's arm and pushes it back to his side. Stan does not resist.

LAKE

(wincing)

You're Jane.

JANE

(to Lake)

Jane is female.

LAKE
(insistent)
Speak to Stanley.

JANE
(to Stan)
Jane is female.

STAN
Like rocks?

LAKE
Jane is a librarian.

JANE
(to nobody, as if trying the word out)
“Librarian.”

LAKE
(to Stan)
A librarian oversees data.

STAN
You mean like rocks?

LAKE
Sometimes.

JANE
Librarian is female.

STAN
Hey, what about that?

LAKE
What?

STAN
What she said.

LAKE
(rising frustration)
She’s female. She’s—

STAN
She really put it together, didn’t she?
Stan sticks out his hand again.

STAN
Put ’er there!

Jane observes Stan's hand for a moment, then grabs his thumb.

LAKE

Let go of his thumb. Let go—

Lake feels himself losing control. He storms out.

Stan begins to move his hand up and down while Jane holds on. He is pleased. Jane observes the process without emotion.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Stan and Jane are unconscious, on beds. Lake is standing over them, reading medical monitors.

LAKE

Computer, what is the condition of the cryogenic unit?

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Scheduled maintenance on all cryogenic apparatus is seven months overdue. Unit efficiency, 43%.

LAKE

(to the sleeping clones)

Well, my friends, I've got a problem. Barbara's due to become conscious in two weeks, so I don't have the time see what's wrong with you right now. I can't freeze you, either. You'll have to stay doped up, at least until Barbara starts talking.

Lake looks up at the monitors again. His face shows bewilderment and worry.

LAKE

Wish I knew what was wrong.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Lake is at his desk.

LAKE

When I practiced surgery, I didn't know my patients prior to the accidents that brought them to me. I relied on holorecords and what their friends and relatives said to ascertain their undamaged personalities. And that seemed good enough. Their friends, their lovers, even their parents, would tell me that I made them as good as new. Better, in

fact. I had a gift; or, I believed I did. [beat] The final adjustments to Barbara must be made in the next seventy-two hours. This time, I will be guided by my own memories and my own holorecords. These should be as good as anybody else's, shouldn't they? I've tried to think of her as if she were a stranger, as if my memories were stories I had heard from somebody else. I have not been successful at this. My memories have become, very recently... I don't want to say what they've become.

There is a jump in the film. Evidently the camera was turned off, then turned on a moment later. Lake is standing.

LAKE

Addendum to the last entry: "They've become like incidents in a bad novel, one I enjoyed very much, and which I want to experience over and over."

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

ODO

(embarrassed in spite of himself)

I don't think we need to see any more of this.

Sisko is thinking. Sisko turns toward the holodeck.

SISKO

I think I agree with you. But there is one more thing, something that Bashir and I didn't get to.

Sisko rises. Odo accompanies him to the closet/holodeck. The door is closed. Sisko studies the program menu on the control panel. The camera pans down and lets us see some of the program titles: MALIBU, RISA, TAHITI, ST. TROPEZ, CAPE COD.

ODO

Lake has a marked fondness for holography.

SISKO

(selecting)

Last program.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Program complete. Enter when ready.

The door opens. Sisko and Odo go in. The holodeck has changed to the bedroom they just left, with them standing near the holodeck door. A brief look around to show their disorientation. They see Lake sitting at the computer console. The only light comes from a desk lamp next to Lake. He looks "through" Sisko and Odo (he is checking to see that the

holographic camera is on), then glances at the bed. Sisko and Odo turn and see Barbara Zelig, asleep. Lake's eyes go back and forth between the bed and the camera as he speaks.

LAKE

Are you on? Thank God. At least you're listening. You do listen.

Lake looks toward Barbara.

LAKE

The cloning and the programming went through perfectly. These three are exactly as I remember them. Her best of all. She's exactly as I knew her, only better. Never angry. Never cries; never blames. Always "available." Should that make me uncomfortable? She's better than new... better than new—

Barbara stirs but does not awaken.

LAKE

I never knew them.

Barbara stirs again, beginning to come out of sleep.

LAKE

I knew something, but it wasn't them.

(looking toward Barbara)

That's why you fought me, isn't it? As long as I was with you. Something inside you didn't want to be that Barbara... the one I wanted, the one I thought I knew. And now I have her. Now I have you. All of you. Exactly as I remember you. [beat] Don't ever clone yourself, Lake.

(with a long look at Barbara)

Although, maybe, in a way, you already have.

Barbara stirs again. Lake gets up and walks to the bed. He picks up his pillow and holds it a foot or so above Barbara's face. He lowers it—closer—closer. Then he hurls it across the room, toward the holographic camera. Sisko and Odo react as the pillow grows to enormous size and passes over their heads. Lake returns to the desk. He rubs the back of his head.

LAKE

(absent-mindedly)

A phaser.

Lake sits despondently. He appears to have forgotten that the camera is still on.

Barbara stirs and sits up. She smiles sleepily but affectionately at Lake.

BARBARA

John, who are you talking to?

LAKE

The computer, my love.

She looks "at" Sisko and Odo.

BARBARA

Silly boy.

She gets out of bed and goes to him. She stands behind Lake and puts her arms around him.

BARBARA

Always playing with your little box.

She kisses him on the cheek.

LAKE

I was just telling the little box how sorry I am for having created you, and how I wish that you would cease to exist. You and the others.

BARBARA

(with a little laugh, and no trace of irritation)

Again?

She kisses him once more. She starts to rub his chest, passing her hand inside his shirt. At first he stares straight ahead. He is holding back rising anger. Perhaps he splays his hand palm down on the desk, and then watches it as it tries to rise. Lake is afraid of what will happen if he clenches his fist.

Lake gets up and, neither gently nor roughly, but the way that a man might get out of a harness, detaches himself from Barbara.

LAKE

(with deliberate calmness)

No.

Note: he is saying "no" to Barbara, but also to himself, refusing violence for the time being.

His hand touches the desk console and the holodeck goes off.

Sisko and Odo look at each other: wonder. They walk out slowly.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko stares at the bed.

ODO

You said he screamed at children.

SISKO

We were looking for a motive.

CUT TO:

INT. A CORRIDOR IN THE STATION.

Lake approaches a door marked STORAGE. He tests it: no field. He goes in. He pokes at the ceiling with a piece of equipment, e.g., a pipe. Flashes from the field. He aims the phaser and tries to cut through.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

Sisko and Odo have moved toward the desk.

O'BRIEN (V.O.)

O'Brien to Sisko.

SISKO

Sisko here.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'Brien at the control console. Jane is sitting a few feet away from him. She has become completely catatonic. We hear a loud alarm, which O'Brien shuts off.

O'BRIEN

We've got a problem, sir. That run-down reactor won't maintain both force fields, not at these levels.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Can you lower one of them?

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Lake has a fully charged phaser. I wouldn't want to try that without knowing where he was.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Wait, chief.

CUT TO:

Sisko sits at the monitor. Odo looks over his shoulder.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

Blank screens alternate with views of the station. Finally they get the corridor outside the power control room. Sisko checks the side corridors, too. All are empty.

CUT TO:

SISKO

He's nowhere near the reactor, chief.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Got it. Keep a lookout. I'm cutting the reactor field.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REACTOR ROOM.

There is an "imploding" flash as the field goes off.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

ODO

We had better keep an eye on the second level. If the chief has to reactivate that field, he'll probably need all the lead time we can give him.

SISKO

Agreed.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

Views of empty corridors; then, an open door. Sisko and Odo see flashes of light from the phaser.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

ODO

It looks like we found him.

SISKO

As long as he stays put, we'll be all right.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE STORAGE ROOM.

Lake leaves the storeroom. The phaser is on his belt or in his pocket. He leans in the doorway and thinks. He looks to one side and sees a ladder going down, with a sign: REACTOR LEVEL. He runs to it and scrambles down the ladder.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Chief! He's headed toward the reactor.

O'BRIEN (V.O.)

Heard it. I'm cutting the infirmary field.

CUT TO:

INT. STOREROOM.

This is the room Lake just left. There is a flash on the ceiling as the field collapses.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

There is a similar flash as the field collapses.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Come on, darling.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. CORRIDOR: REACTOR LEVEL.

Lake comes out of the ladderway.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Chief, he's there.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

I'm on it.

O'Brien diddles the console.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REACTOR ROOM.

Lake sees the field wavering. He realizes that this is his chance—to destroy everything. He reaches for the phaser, but drops it. While retrieving it from the floor, the field comes on full strength. He sees this. He realizes that he has been outsmarted. He raises the phaser, sets it at maximum, and fires it at the field.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'Brien is at the console, Bashir is standing by the replicator.

O'BRIEN

The reactor shield's taking a beating. I'll have to shut everything down if he keeps this up. At least we know where he is. Doctor, I'd advise you to beam your patient up to the Orinoco now.

BASHIR

Not yet. Computer, three units of O-negative human blood.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Synthesis will finish in seven minutes.

O'BRIEN

If I were you, I wouldn't give that blood to anybody.

BASHIR

The blood's all right, chief. I checked it. In fact, all of the medical equipment's in good repair.

O'BRIEN

Looks like he stopped, for now. O'Brien to Sisko. Where is he?

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

He's still by the reactor.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REACTOR ROOM.

Lake has stopped shooting and is looking around, mostly toward where the walls meet the ceiling. Suddenly he is looking right at the camera. He aims the phaser: a flash, followed by blankness.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

ODO

Uh-oh.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Has he moved?

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

INT. A CORRIDOR.

Lake is viewed down the corridor, coming toward the camera, which is near the ceiling. Lake points the phaser at it and it blanks out.

CUT TO:

ODO

He might be headed our way.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Might be?

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

We see many blank screens, then a glimpse of Lake in a corridor. He turns and fires: blank.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Did you recognize it?

ODO

That looked like he was still on the third level.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

We see blank screens and empty corridors.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Where is he? There!

The monitor screen flashes.

ODO

He's on the second level. Looks like he's headed for the infirmary.

O'BRIEN

Tell me when he reaches the first level.

ODO

(flatly)

Right.

CUT TO:

MONITOR SCREEN.

Blank screens, then: Lake, climbing a ladder.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

ODO

He's there, chief.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

I'm switching the fields.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REACTOR ROOM.

The field flashes as it goes off.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Here we go again.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR ON FIRST LEVEL.

Lake reaches the top of a ladder. Before leaving the ladderway, he takes aim at a camera and destroys it. He steps out and begins to walk, searching for cameras as he goes, occasionally firing.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'Brien diddles.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

We see fitful flashes as the field comes on, then dies.

CUT TO:

INT. A CORRIDOR NEAR THE INFIRMARY.

Lake, walking, seeking and destroying hallway cameras.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Chief, you don't have much time.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'Brien still diddles.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

More fitful flashes.

CUT TO:

INT. A CORRIDOR NEAR THE INFIRMARY.

Lake, somewhat winded, walking toward the infirmary, not slow but not fast. He stops. He sees the sputtering flashes in front of the infirmary doors and understands their significance. He starts to run.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Hurry!

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

The field comes on, with a vibrant hum. Lake stops, a few yards short of it. His rage and frustration are boundless. He raises the phaser and fires, to no effect.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

We hear sounds of phaser fire.

O'BRIEN

He's right outside the door.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

How long can the shield hold?

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

At this rate—

The phaser sounds suddenly stop. Bashir and O'Brien look at each other. Bashir rushes into the anteroom.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Bashir looks through the blasted doors.

BASHIR

I don't see him.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Where'd he go?

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

We don't know, chief. Lake has blinded us.

FADE OUT

ACT V

FADE IN:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Bashir flips open his tricorder.

BASHIR

I'm picking up life readings. He hasn't gone far.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

I won't be able to keep him out much longer. The reactor's failing fast.
These systems weren't made to repel phasers.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

BASHIR

The blood will be ready in two minutes.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Just when the reactor starts to leak. Has Lake gone anywhere?

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

BASHIR

No, he's—

There is a POINT-BLANK PHASER FLASH against the field. Bashir falls backward, momentarily stunned. The field flickers out for an instant before coming back on. When Bashir looks up he sees Lake trying to force his way through the field with his bare hands. Sparks are flying about Lake but he does not appear to feel them. Lake pushes his hands to where his fingers can almost touch the ragged fringes of the doors. Bashir, terrified, gets to his feet and walks backward into a wall. His eyes meet the madman's. He is transfixed for a moment, then backs out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Bashir ENTERS, somewhat restored to himself.

O'BRIEN

That was a close one.

BASHIR

Closer than you know, chief.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

Blood synthesis complete.

Bashir goes to the replicator and gets the blood.

O'BRIEN

Get ready to beam out as soon as the field drops.

BASHIR

(tapping his combadge)

Orinoco, three to beam up on my mark.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Make that "four." Chief, you'll be more use to us in the Orinoco.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

O'BRIEN

Sir, advise we all evacuate to the runabout and beam Lake up from there. I can set the transporter to disable his phaser.

CUT TO:

INT. LAKE'S BEDROOM.

SISKO

Agreed. Sisko out.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Bashir has wheeled the catatonic Jane next to Barbara.

BASHIR

Chief—

O'BRIEN

Eight seconds. More or less.

O'Brien grabs his toolbox and goes to stand by Bashir.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE REACTOR ROOM.

An explosion. Yellow clouds of gas billow out and rapidly flood through the station, as shown by a quick montage.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

The lights go off and the field fails. Lake is sitting on the floor, in a stupor of despair. His fingertips and palms are scorched from the force field. He suddenly looks up, with hope and madness in his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

The main lights go off, the emergency lights come on.

BASHIR

Orinoco, four to beam up.

CUT TO:

INT. ORINOCO.

O'Brien rushes to the controls while Bashir helps the women into chairs. O'Brien sets the toolbox down nearby.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR IN STATION.

Yellow clouds rush by.

INT. ORINOCO.

O'BRIEN

Locked on.

Odo and Sisko MATERIALIZE in the transporter and step out.

SISKO

Can you locate him?

O'Brien scans his console.

O'BRIEN

I found him but... The radioactivity's creating so much ionization that I can't get a pattern lock. If he were wearing a combadge I might—

Sisko enters the transporter.

SISKO

Prepare to energize.

O'BRIEN

It's too dangerous.

SISKO

I order you.

O'BRIEN

Commander—

O'Brien sees the toolbox.

O'BRIEN

I have an idea.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Lake climbs through the torn doors, badly cutting his right hand. He does not notice his injury. He transfers the phaser to his bloody hand and enters the infirmary.

CUT TO:

INT. INFIRMARY OF GAMMA-CYGNI 5.

Lake enters, warily looking around. Proceeds into the main living area.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE LIVING QUARTERS.

Lake approaches a door with a nameplate: STANLEY ANDERSON. He blasts it away, enters, destroys the quarters. Goes to a door marked JANE RUMFORD and does the same.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE INFIRMARY ANTEROOM.

Yellow clouds pass through the ripped doors.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE LIVING QUARTERS.

Lake emerges from Jane's room.

SISKO (V.O.)

John Lake! This is Benjamin Sisko!

Lake stops, then moves toward the voice.

SISKO (V.O.)

John, this is Ben. The brat. Your sister babysat me when I was in diapers. Our fathers went fishing together. This is Ben. Ben Sisko.

Lake comes around a corner and sees Sisko a few yards away. Sisko has his back to him. Sisko does not move.

SISKO

We know what you did. John, it's all right. You have to get out of here.

Believe me. Do you hear me, John?

While Sisko has been speaking, Lake has raised and aimed the phaser. He holds it on Sisko's back for a few seconds and then, overwhelmed with sadness, lowers it: he can't shoot him. He drops the phaser and, in a kind of daze, walks toward Sisko.

SISKO

John, you have to get out. There isn't much time.

Lake walks right into Sisko's form, which immediately vanishes. There is a SOUND OF TWO OBJECTS FALLING ONTO THE FLOOR—one plastic and one metallic. The metallic sound is a combadge—like the “ting” heard earlier when Lake attacked O'Brien and Odo. Lake looks down and sees the overturned holographic projector and the combadge.

SISKO (V.O.)

John!

Lake picks up the combadge. His face shows uncertainty and wonder. In the background, we see the yellow cloud.

LAKE

Benjamin?

CUT TO:

INT. ORINOCO.

O'Brien punches the console.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR INSIDE LIVING QUARTERS.

Lake TRANSPORTS OUT just as the yellow clouds reach his position.

CUT TO:

INT. DS9: SISKO'S OFFICE.

Sisko is looking at a computer monitor on his desk. Beside the monitor, and visible only to him, is a picture of Jennifer, his dead wife. The monitor is playing one of John Lake's diary entries. Lake is sitting at his desk in his bedroom and speaking to the camera.

LAKE (V.O.)

Another failure. I'll start another cycle of operations next week. But I'm afraid I already know the outcome. I don't know how long I can

take this. Which is worse: living with these... people, or knowing what they imply about me? I never listened, never saw them, when I was close to them; and now, I will never see them again.

The monitor goes off. We hear Sisko's DOOR CHIME.

SISKO

Enter.

The doors open and Bashir comes in.

SISKO

Doctor. How's Lake?

BASHIR

He took a sizable dose of radiation but, physically, he'll be all right. He's sleeping now. A transport is scheduled to take him to the psychiatric facility on Omicron Ceti 3.

SISKO

And the women?

BASHIR

The same, more or less. Barbara has yet to regain consciousness. Jane has gone into a coma. Lake's last outburst must have come as a terrible shock to them. It appears he didn't program them for psychological resilience.

SISKO

So it appears.

Bashir lays a PADD on Sisko's desk.

BASHIR

There's my report. The chief believes Lake became so obsessed with his project that, at first, he didn't notice how the station facilities were deteriorating, and then, later, when he wanted the clones to die, he allowed the decay to continue unabated.

SISKO

He couldn't bring himself to kill them outright. Until the end.

BASHIR

I've been going through Lake's journals, sir. What he attempted is theoretically possible, and I can't help wondering if his failure was due to something... I mean, I wonder if I would have done better. He believed that he knew his friends well enough to remake them, but when he tried to do it... well, we saw the result. I can't help but think of people I've

known. I remember them so vividly. If I were alone, as he was, I might attempt it...try to bring them to life...I feel as if it should be easy. And yet—

SISKO

You might discover that you never knew them all that well. And that, maybe, you never really wanted to.

BASHIR

Yes. But I wonder if—

Sisko glances at Jennifer's picture.

SISKO

I don't know, Doctor. It's not an experiment I ever want to try.

BASHIR
(soberly)

Commander.

Bashir leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. DS9: OPS.

Dax is at her station. Bashir comes down the steps, in a somber mood. Kira approaches him.

KIRA

Bashir, what's this I heard, you want me to be in a play?

BASHIR

(shaking off the mood as he speaks)

Yes. "The Merchant of Venice." I rather saw you as Jessica.

KIRA

Who's Jessica?

BASHIR

Shylock's daughter.

KIRA

Who's Shylock?

BASHIR

Uh, well, uh—

DAX

(without looking away from her work)

You know, Quark would make an ideal Shylock.

Kira catches Bashir's guilty look. She storms off.

KIRA

No. No. No.

Bashir pursues her.

BASHIR

Wait. You haven't heard how it ends.

CUT TO:

EXT. DS9 (OPTICAL)

FADE OUT

—Michael Wilson
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