

*Starship: Excelsior*  
**"Her Hardest Hue To Hold"**  
(Season 2, Episode 3)

Transcribed by Peter Stine

**THEME SONG**

**NARRATOR:** *Murder in the Blue Morgue, Episode Three: "Her Hardest Hue To Hold"*

**SCENE 203-01****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR READY ROOM**

(Dovan sits at his desk, scrolling slowly through various files on his computer.)

(The door chimes.)

DOVAN: Veni.

(Note: "Veni" = Latin for "come in".)

(Parker enters.)

DOVAN: (mildly surprised) Admiral Parker. Music off.

(With an affirmative boop from the computer, the music switches off.)

DOVAN: What can I do for you, Admiral?

PARKER: What are you up to, Commander?

DOVAN: Reading through the *Excelsior's* history. Looking for clues.

PARKER: Find any?

DOVAN: Trivia, mostly. This really is a remarkable ship. Did you know that our second captain was court-martialled and kicked out of Starfleet for insubordination?

PARKER: Ah, yes, Captain Underwood. I remember that. He had a *mean* right hook. What's he up to now?

DOVAN: According to his file... (Dovan presses a button.) (disappointed) ...he's become a Scion hunter. Bought his own freighter and spent the last six years chasing rumours and hoaxes.

PARKER: Mmm. It's a shame, how those legends are able to have such a strong hold over people. Though I can't say it surprises me with Underwood. He was never quite... stable.

DOVAN: Sounds like somebody to model my life after.

PARKER: I hope not, Commander. I don't enjoy presiding at courts-martial. (pause) Do you know what the hardest part of command is, Mr. Dovan?

DOVAN: My guess is the chair. I've tried it out. It's not as well cushioned as they say.

PARKER: It's the act of taking responsibility. A Starfleet captain can think himself a hero — a God, even — and no one will question him. There isn't one man in a million who can do what we do. For good or evil, a captain will always be more legend than man. But he knows better. He knows that things go wrong — sometimes those things are his fault, sometimes... sometimes circumstances are beyond his control. But a captain is held responsible for everything that happens under his command, regardless of the circumstances. A captain is only human... but we hold him to the standards of God.

DOVAN: I'd be happy to remind you of your non-divinity, Admiral, if looking at you directly wouldn't blind my merely mortal eyes.

PARKER: A homage of Saurian Brandy delivered to the altar in front of my quarters would suffice, Commander. (pause; deep breath) Captain Cortez regained consciousness a few minutes ago.

DOVAN: She did? How is she?

PARKER: She's asked to see you... and your senior staff.

DOVAN: The senior staff... there's not much left of us, after Valandria.

PARKER: I'm afraid that's my point. She asked for Helder, Amara, Hastings, Hunter... all by name.

DOVAN: Jehosephat. She doesn't know.

PARKER: It seems the hospital staff wanted you to be the one to tell her.

(Dovan is silent and switches off his computer screen.)

PARKER: What are you going to tell her, Commander?

(Pause.)

DOVAN: The only thing I can tell her. That I failed. That I wish she'd picked someone better than me as her X.O.

PARKER: I see.

DOVAN: Admiral?

PARKER: You might turn out better than Captain Underwood after all, Dovan.

DOVAN: I'm sorry?

PARKER: There's another reason I'm here, Commander. If Captain Cortez survives, she's going to spend a long time recovering — months. Perhaps years. I am here to inform you that, until she returns to duty, or the Admiralty sees fit to replace you, Starfleet Headquarters has named you the Commanding Officer of the *Excelsior*. I'd offer my congratulations, if circumstances were different.

DOVAN: I-- (long pause) Admiral, if you'll excuse me? I'm needed on the surface.

PARKER: Of course. Good day, Commander.

(He exits.)

**SCENE 203-02**

**LOCATION: *RENEGADE BRIG***

(The door opens and footsteps approach. Ensign Hertzler arrives in front of the cell door and drops the forcefield. He draws a phaser.)

HERTZLER: Dinner, ma'am.

YUBARI: You don't need the phaser, Ensign. I don't bite.

HERTZLER: Your Starfleet record says otherwise, ma'am.

YUBARI: True. It was worth a try.

(He sets the tray down on the ground in front of him, then shoves it into the cell. He reactivates the forcefield and starts to leave.)

YUBARI: Ensign. Wait.

(Hertzler stops.)

HERTZLER: I'm not supposed to talk to you, ma'am.

YUBARI: Of course. Brahms has *always* been *obsessed* with compartmentalization.

HERTZLER: You know the General?

YUBARI: Does this mean you're talking to me?

HERTZLER: That depends on what you want to say.

YUBARI: I just want to know who you are. This isn't a normal ship. And you're not a normal crew.

(Pause.)

HERTZLER: That's true.

YUBARI: ...so?

HERTZLER: From what I'm told, the *Renegade* is on loan to the Division of Special Projects from another section. Brahms rechristened her for the occasion. We're on a... well, a special project.

YUBARI: What project?

HERTZLER: I'm afraid I don't have clearance to know that.

YUBARI: You don't know your own assignment. Why are you here, then?

HERTZLER: I was serving in the Charybdis Sector when I was contacted by a Colonel Sofia Hanas. She told me she was from a group that was trying to prevent an attack on the Raeyan Sector, and that I'd just been recruited. I have family on Raeya Prime. A wife and two sons. There was no question — I joined up immediately. This was all barely a week ago. I'm new here.

YUBARI: Didn't she give you any idea of who you're fighting against?

HERTZLER: As far as I can tell? (pause) We're fighting the future.

YUBARI: Did your people kill Leo Amara?

HERTZLER: Who?

YUBARI: Chief of Special Operations, Starship *Excelsior*.

HERTZLER: (stunned) Chief of... Ma'am, this ship might spend a little more time in the shadows than any of us would like, but we're still Starfleet!

YUBARI: So you deny it?

HERTZLER: I'm done with this.

(Hertzler begins to walk away.)

YUBARI: Ensign! What if I told you I had compelling evidence implicating General Brahms in the killing?

(Hertzler stops. Pause.)

HERTZLER: Do you?

YUBARI: Yes. I do.

HERTZLER: Then why are you the one behind a forcefield?

YUBARI: Because this isn't quite the Starfleet you're familiar with. Not where Brahms is concerned.

HERTZLER: Are you saying my commander's some kind of evil mastermind?

YUBARI: No. Not evil. He's not evil. ...but he might be a murderer. I need you to let me out of here so I can find out for certain.

HERTZLER: I... I don't think I can do that.

YUBARI: Then I order you to do it.

HERTZLER: Your rank doesn't apply, ma'am. You're under arrest.

YUBARI: Check the J.A.G. logs, Ensign. Check the Starfleet Judiciary Database. No one ever read me my rights. No one ever formally arrested me. In fact, you'll find that I'm still listed on active duty, and, therefore, I can still pull rank on you.



HERTZLER: You're... That's a lot for me to swallow, Lieutenant.

YUBARI: (with a sigh) Ensign... you need to get out of this line of work while you still can. Intelligence is no place for you.

(Pause.)

HERTZLER: One thing first: how can I go back to my life and be happy, knowing what's going on here in the shadows?

(Pause.)

YUBARI: Just remember that for every ship full of Isaac Brahmses, there's at least one of me. That's usually enough. Now drop the forcefield, Ensign.

(Hertzler presses a button and the forcefield drops.)

YUBARI: Come over here. I have to knock you unconscious.

HERTZLER: Will it hurt?

YUBARI: Yes.

HERTZLER: You're not a big fan of the "white lie," are you?

**SCENE 203-03****LOCATION: ROL'S QUARTERS**

(Lorhrok is rewiring the chip while Rol is at the computer.)

(Lorhrok stops for a second.)

LORHROK: (grunt) How'm I doing?

(Rol presses some buttons.)

ROL: Nanomatrix alignment is passing eighty percent.

LORHROK: Good. (he resumes working) I wonder what information we're going to find stored on this computer chip.

ROL: I can hardly imagine.

LORHROK: You really have no idea?

ROL: How could I?

LORHROK: I don't know. I thought it might have something to do with the encrypted transmission you sent out from your quarters earlier today.

ROL: Encrypted...? Sir, have you been looking through my communication logs?

LORHROK: Checked 'em before I came down here, in fact.

ROL: Why, sir! Are you aware that that's illegal?

LORHROK: (sarcastically) Is it?

ROL: Well. If you didn't know it was illegal, I guess I can hardly press charges for it. We'll let it go... this time. I was calling my mother. We hadn't talked in a while.

LORHROK: Your mother. Why the encryption, then? Is there anything wrong?

ROL: No, nothing like that. She's just a little paranoid.

LORHROK: Imagine that.

(Lorhrok switches off his device. Pause.)

ROL: Sir?

LORHROK: Look, are you sure you didn't kill Leo Amara?

ROL: Alec! You really don't trust me, do you?

LORHROK: You've never given me one reason why I should.

ROL: Well, then why would you believe my denial?

LORHROK: I was hoping for an admission.

ROL: (chuckling) No such luck today, I'm afraid.

LORHROK: Hm.

(Lorhrok resumes working. They are both silent.)

ROL: But let's say — hypothetically — that I did.

(Lorhrok drops his tool and nearly chokes.)

LORHROK: (cough) Excuse me, Leftenant?

ROL: Hypothetically. Let's just say that I did murder Mister Amara. Now, the question is: why would I do that?

LORHROK: I... I'm really not sure what to say to this.

ROL: Simple enough question, sir. If you want to accuse anybody of murder, you'd better have a motive first. And this... it just doesn't make sense.

LORHROK: I... I haven't accused you of anything yet, Mr. Rol. I was just asking.

ROL: Fair enough. But you did ask. So speculate. What motive would I have for killing Leo Amara?

LORHROK: Hard to say. Nearly everything you've ever told me has been a lie.

ROL: Sir! I've never lied to you! You just aren't very adept at reading between the lines. You don't see the wheels within wheels.

LORHROK: And you wonder why I'm suspicious of you. Wait. Are you saying that, when you told me you'd always uphold the Starfleet Oath... you actually meant that?

ROL: In all honesty, sir, my oath is probably the truest thing about me.

LORHROK: Then you can hardly have killed one of your fellow officers.

ROL: Is that so?

LORHROK: Was Amara a spy? A villain?

ROL: Not as far as I know. He was just an officer. A skilled one, at that.

LORHROK: Then, no. There's no way to reconcile murdering him with following the Oath, to say nothing of regulations.

ROL: What if Mister Amara posed a clear and imminent threat to the safety of the entire Federation?

LORHROK: I thought he wasn't a villain.

ROL: That doesn't preclude him from being an existential threat to our existence.

LORHROK: I'm not sure what you're getting at... but no. No. No matter what kind of trouble someone who wears our uniform has gotten himself into, if he's a good and honest officer, there's no excuse for killing him in cold blood.

ROL: (a little wistful) "A just society must go to any lengths to defend itself."

LORHROK: That is the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

ROL: (stunned) I'm... Excuse me?

LORHROK: What kind of a "just society" do you really have, if you just go around killing everybody who gets in the way?

ROL: (defensively) A safe one.

LORHROK: But not a just one. There's... There's a... Look, I'm not going to pretend I can point to it and say, "There! There is the line!", because I don't think anyone can – but there is a line between defending paradise and destroying it, Rol. Killing our people, even if we think we're protecting the Federation, doesn't uphold the Oath; it degrades it.

(Silence.)

ROL: So leaf subsides to leaf. So Eden sank to grief. So dawn goes down to day...

LORHROK: What?

ROL: (distractedly) A poem. I'm sorry; you're quite right.

LORHROK: And?

ROL: And I need a moment to think.

(Lorhrok resumes his work. Long pause.)

LORHROK: Look, Rol. If you're in some kind of trouble – if there's anything I can--

(The console beeps urgently.)

ROL: Nanomatrix reconstruction at one hundred percent. I don't believe it, sir. You fixed it.

LORHROK: (pleased) So I did.

ROL: Now, let's plug it in and find out--

(As if interrupted by another speaker, Rol pauses, then answers:)

ROL: Oh, it's you. (displeased) No, not again. It isn't necessary.

LORHROK: Rol?

ROL: And if I refuse?

LORHROK: Rol? Who are you talking--? Rol, put down the phaser. Put it down, now.

ROL: (ironic; to the unseen voice) Ah. I see.

**SCENE 203-04**

**LOCATION: CORTEZ'S ROOM, KASS MEDICAL CENTER, UNION III**

(Havaris Laren, Cortez's physician, enters.)

LAREN: (gently) Captain Cortez?

CORTEZ: I... Yes?

LAREN: You have a visitor.

CORTEZ: Just one?

(Silence.)

CORTEZ: Show him in, please.

LAREN: (Whispering) You can come in now, Commander.

DOVAN: (muttered) *Thank you.*

(He steps into the room, following the doctor. The door closes behind them.)

CORTEZ: (cheerfully) Number One.

DOVAN: (grim) You've never called me that before, Captain.

CORTEZ: Time to start. Where's the rest of the senior staff? We have a meeting to conduct.

(Silence.)

CORTEZ: (distantly) Doctor, could you give us a minute?

LAREN: (polite) Of course. I'll be back in twenty minutes for your yonarum injection. And you remember you're scheduled for another surgery in an hour?

CORTEZ: (very distantly) Of course.

(Laren exits. Silence.)

CORTEZ: Just say it, Commander, so I can hear it.

DOVAN: Captain... I'm sorry.

CORTEZ: (coldly) Who's left?

DOVAN: Lohrok. And Doctor Sharp.

(Silence.)

CORTEZ: (grim) I'll need to speak with your new chief of security. And there's an engineering diagnostician you'll--

DOVAN: Lieutenant Yubari is the new chief of security, Captain.

CORTEZ: Really. Brahms allowed that?

DOVAN: Well... not exactly.

CORTEZ: Then you know about the *Anbar*.

DOVAN: Actually, Captain, we were hoping you could shed some light on that. (cautiously) I don't know if you've heard, but Captain Siresh is dead.

CORTEZ: Yes, I... I was aware of it. I'm sorry, Commander. The yonarum helps with the pain, but it makes it difficult to... remember.



DOVAN: Then there's nothing...?

CORTEZ: Not now. Later. Later. (Pause) Dovan, what happened?

(Pause.)

DOVAN: They hit us where I didn't see it coming. I...

CORTEZ: How many?

Dovan knows these numbers all too well.

DOVAN: Twelve in ground combat. Twenty-six killed in space engagements, including all eighteen marines aboard the *Kilimanjaro*. Thirty-three died of plague. Total, seventy-one killed, twelve permanently wounded, ten on indefinite medical leave. I failed, Captain.

CORTEZ: Failed.

DOVAN: I promised, Captain. I said I'd--

CORTEZ: --that you'd get them out alive. I remember that. (pause) Dovan... Number One, do you remember the first time you came into my office?

DOVAN: (off-balance) Yes, Captain.

CORTEZ: Do you remember what I said about how I chose Mister Lorhrok?

DOVAN: You told me what kind of man he was. That he'd crawl through every Jefferies Tube on a ship just to get to know her, that he'd court the *Excelsior* like a woman instead of studying her like a tin can.

CORTEZ: Character, Commander. I told you about Alec's character. That was what I looked for in my crew, I said. I told you I wasn't looking for good officers; I was

looking for people who were ready to grow into something great. When you asked me that question – why did I choose someone like Mister Lorchrok? – I saw the real question you were asking. So, when I answered, I wasn't talking about Lorchrok; I was talking about you. (pause) And now I know I made the right decision.

DOVAN: Captain--

CORTEZ: Number One, I never should have asked you for that promise.

(Silence)

CORTEZ: (deflating) I'd like some time now. To mourn.

DOVAN: Yes, of course.

(Silence)

DOVAN: (sincerely) Thank you, Captain.

(Dovan exits.)

CORTEZ: I just wish I could forgive you.

**SCENE 203-05****LOCATION: RENEGADE BRIDGE.****OPERATIONS: Mid-day field agent reports.****BRAHMS: Thank you, Operations. Has there been any word from our asset aboard the *Excelsior*?****OPERATIONS: None.****BRAHMS: Unfortunate. Command is yours.****(Brahms stands and crosses to his ready room.)****LOCATION: RENEGADE READY ROOM****BRAHMS: Computer, prepare the subspace transmitter for--****YUBARI: That's far enough.****BRAHMS: Asuka. It seems I underestimated your technical skill almost as much as I overestimated your loyalty. How did you get in here?****YUBARI: The only important thing, General, is that I'm in here, and I have a gun.****BRAHMS: (friendly) I like the blue uniform. It suits you.****YUBARI: The doctor I stole it from was about two sizes too small. But she did have this antigrav gurney handy, so I guess it was a fair tradeoff.****BRAHMS: Shall we get to it, then?****YUBARI: I think so, yes.**

(She stuns Brahms with the phaser.)

BRAHMS: (Grunts in pain/surprise)

(Brahms collapses.)

(Yubari drags him over to the gurney and lifts him on.)

YUBARI: Computer, open... emergency escape hatch Brahms One.

(A wall panel slides open.)

YUBARI: Thought so.

(She steps in with the gurney.)

LOCATION: RENEGADE TURBOLIFT

YUBARI: Computer, what is our position?

COMPUTER: *Information restricted.*

YUBARI: Can I reach Starbase Nine-One-One from this turbolift?

COMPUTER: *Information restricted.*

YUBARI: Computer, take me to Starbase 911, Berth Nine, *Excelsior* umbilical.

(The computer beeps affirmation.)

YUBARI: Oh, of course that works.

LOCATION: RENEGADE BRIDGE

(A quiet alert starts beeping at operations station.)

TACTICAL: Operations, my board shows that the General just tripped the silent alarm.

OPERATIONS: Noted. (presses some buttons) And confirmed. The alarm is active.

TACTICAL: I will investigate.

LOCATION: RENEGADE READY ROOM

(A door chime. Pause. Another chime. Still no answer.)

(After a moment, the man outside inputs a security override, opens the door and steps in.)

TACTICAL: General, the silent alarm just-- General Brahms.

(He taps his combadge.)

TACTICAL: Security, this is Tactical. I have a code four-seven-alpha in the General's ready room. The general has been abducted. Repeat: the general has been abducted.

LOCATION: TURBOLIFT

COMPUTER: *Now entering Starbase Nine-One-One primary hull.*

YUBARI: How far are we from the *Excelsior*?

COMPUTER: *Travel distance three-point-eight kilometers.*

PARKER: *Parker to rogue turbolift.*

(Silence.)

**PARKER:** *Parker to rogue turbolift. You are in violation of Starbase Nine-One-One traffic control policies. Respond.*

(Silence.)

**PARKER:** *Lieutenant Yubari, if that's you, be aware that there's a turbolift following close behind you. Two lifeforms inside. We can't do much from here, but we will make sure traffic is clear between you and the Excelsior. The rest is up to you.*

(The comm line is closed)

**YUBARI:** Thank you, Admiral.

**BRAHMS:** (regaining consciousness) Uhhhn... What did you put in that phaser, Asuka? I can't move.

**YUBARI:** The gurney's restraining field is on. You won't be able to move a muscle until I switch it off... once you're safely in our brig.

**BRAHMS:** You have no idea what's begun here, do you?

**YUBARI:** As I recall, leaving me in the dark was all part of your plan, wasn't it?

**BRAHMS:** Now that I've seen how you adapt to evolving circumstances in the field, you've only made me more certain our decision was the right decision.

**YUBARI:** "Our" decision? Who else?

**BRAHMS:** Wouldn't you rather find out on your own?

**YUBARI:** No.

**BRAHMS:** Well, my guess is that you'll learn soon enough anyway.

(The turbolift slows.)

**COMPUTER:** *Approaching U.S.S. Excelsior.*

**YUBARI:** Head down, sir.

**BRAHMS:** I seem to have very little choice in that.

(The turbolift stops. The doors open. Just outside, the airlock doors do the same. Yubari darts through with the gurney before the airlock is done opening.)

**YUBARI:** Coming through!

**BRAHMS:** Help! I'm being kidnapped! Arrest this woman! Arrest this--!

(Brahms is silenced by a phaser blast from Yubari.)

**BRAHMS:** (surprised grunt) (falls unconscious)

**YUBARI:** Clear the way! I have a medical emergency here! Medical emergency!

(The pursuers' turbolift arrives. They give chase.)

**TACTICAL:** Everyone get on the ground!

(He fires his phaser down the hall. It hits a wall panel, which explodes in a sparkling shower.)

**YUBARI:** Sunnuva--! That phaser's set to kill! Computer, seal off Deck Three, Section Sixteen! Authorization Bezu-Two-Two-Seven!

(A forcefield flashes up.)

TACTICAL: The hallway's been sealed.

OPERATIONS: (dry) Noted. Can you override?

TACTICAL: Give me two minutes, and I'll have this ship's entire security system throwing lightswitch raves.

OPERATIONS: That won't be necessary. Just drop the forcefield.

TACTICAL: Understood.

(He gets to work on a computer screen.)

OPERATIONS: (matter of fact) You will not surrender now, I presume.

YUBARI: No.

OPERATIONS: Noted.

(Yubari hits her combdage.)

YUBARI: Yubari to Dovan.

DOVAN: *Dovan here! Yubari! The Admiral just--*

YUBARI: I've taken General Brahms into custody. I have two pursuers isolated in Deck Three, Section Sixteen — they're about to override the security grid.

DOVAN: *Never a wasted word with you, is there, Yubari? Computer, engage intruder control protocols, Deck Three, Section Sixteen!*

COMPUTER: *Error: There are no intruders in that section.*



YUBARI: They're Starfleet, sir! The computer can't read them as intruders because they're ours!

OPERATIONS: Tactical, haste would be appreciated.

TACTICAL: That was already assumed.

DOVAN: *Umm... I'm thinking here... Ah! Computer, the intruders are Changelings! They're posing as Starfleet Officers in that section! Deploy anesthazine gas now!*

COMPUTER: *Changeling override engaged. Flooding specified section.*

(Anesthazine gas rushes into the section.)

OPERATIONS: (coughing) Operations to *Renegade*. Code seven: mission failed.

(He and Tactical slump to the deck.)

YUBARI: (takes a deep breath of relief)

DOVAN: *Did that work?*

YUBARI: Yes. A little faster next time would be appreciated.

DOVAN: *Not even a thank you?*

YUBARI: How did you do that, anyway? They're not Founders, and there's nothing to suggest that they are.

DOVAN: *Back during the War, you could blame anything on Changeling infiltrators. I gambled that Starfleet Security had never gotten around to deprogramming those protocols.*

YUBARI: And if they had?

**DOVAN:** *Two things are infinite, Lieutenant: the universe, and Starfleet paranoia. Those protocols will still be in the main computer in a hundred years.*

**YUBARI:** What do you want me to do with them?

**DOVAN:** *Your pursuers? Keep 'em unconscious and have 'em deposited quietly on the Starbase. They'll find their way home one way or another. Then tighten security at all airlocks.*

**YUBARI:** What do I tell the crew? That this was an unscheduled security drill?

**DOVAN:** *Nah. Tell 'em we were kidnapping a Starfleet Intelligence general. Better yet, I'll tell them. Nothing throws tinfoil in the press's radar like a good dose of complete honesty. It'll be a week before they figure out I was telling the truth, and by then this will all be over.*

**YUBAR:** ...Understood, sir. Yubari out. (to Brahms) Now, General, let's see how you hold up on the other side of the interrogation table.

**SCENE 203-06****LOCATION: VISTOR'S LOUNGE, KASS MEDICAL CENTER, UNION III**

(Dr. Laren approaches Dovan.)

LAREN: Lieutenant Commander Dovan?

DOVAN: Yes?

LAREN: Would you come with me, please?

DOVAN: What is it?

LAREN: There were... complications with Captain Cortez's latest surgery.

DOVAN: What?

LAREN: She's dying.

**SCENE 203-07****LOCATION: ROL'S QUARTERS**

LORHROK: Lieutenant... put down the phaser.

ROL: I'm sorry, sir. The decision is out of my hands now. And I'm afraid I mean that quite literally.

LORHROK: Just set the phaser down on your desk and walk out that door, Rol. You won't get away with this if you do anything else.

ROL: Believe me, sir: I'm trying to do exactly that. But, like I said, it's--

(Rol fires the phaser, frying the chip.)

LORHROK: (distressed) The computer chip!

ROL: I'm sorry! I didn't mean to--

(Lorhrok injects Rol with a hypospray.)

ROL: (losing consciousness) ...do... that... ...uhhnn...

(Lorhrok releases Rol, who, unable to use any of his limbs, tumbles to the floor.)

(Silence.)

LORHROK: Great. *Now* what am I supposed to do with you?

ROL: Wha...? What did you do to me, sir?

LORHROK: A swiftly administered dose of oxalacaine — instant paralysis, complements of Doctor Sharp. I didn't walk in here entirely certain you'd let me walk out again.

Turns out I was right. Would you be interested in revising anything you've said so far in light of your current position?

ROL: I, uh... Well I did kill Leo Amara.

LORHROK: Believe it or not, I'd worked that bit out already. I'll bet you killed Commander Robins, too. My question is why?

ROL: (sigh) You're not going to believe the answer.

LORHROK: Probably because it's not going to be true.

ROL: It would hardly be interesting if I were completely honest, now, would it?

LORHROK: (sigh) You can either be completely honest with me and I'll try to keep you from getting sent to prison for the rest of your life, or you can keep playing your silly games and start picking out curtains for your cell. Now get on with it.

ROL: Well, when you put it that way... I did kill Lieutenant Amara. And Commander Robins. But I can't be held responsible for it.

LORHROK: How do you inject somebody with warp plasma by accident?

ROL: I didn't say it was an accident. I just said I wouldn't be found guilty in court. You have a tricorder handy?

(Lorhrok pulls one out of his engineering kit.)

ROL: Good. Run it over me. Adjust it to scan for epsilon-band radiation.

LORHROK: (exasperated) There are no epsilon emissions in organic tissue.

ROL: Most organic tissue.

LORHROK: (reluctantly) Fine.

(Lorhrok makes the adjustments and runs the tricorder over Rol. It immediately starts beeping an alert.)

LORHROK: Spast! What is that stuff?

ROL: Why don't you take a closer look? Zoom in on one of my thyroid cells. Check the gene at... seven-q-thirty-one.

(Lorhrok presses a few buttons.)

LORHROK: Some kind of... nanobot. It's hijacked your RNA... using it to create... Well, whatever that is, it isn't protein.

ROL: There's a lot of junk code in the human genome, Lieutenant. Quite a bit of space for rewrites.

LORHROK: You're saying you're genetically enhanced? Did you kill Amara to keep that a secret? Is that what was on the chip?

ROL: Yes, yes, and yes. But you're not there yet. Look closer. The underside of the nanite. You'll find some writing there.

(Lorhrok adjusts a few more controls.)

LORHROK: Yoyodyne Cybernetics...Yoyodyne? The defense contractor? But... genetic enhancement is illegal. No one that big could possibly be involved in something like this.

ROL: True, actually. Even if they wanted to — and they don't — no corporation could get away with something illegal of this scale in the Federation. Unless it were legal. Say, if someone made an exception.

LORHROK: Who? Who could make an exception like that?

ROL: Just a little further now, sir. Read the letters underneath.

LORHROK: It says, "S.P.-One-One-Seven-D.S.P.-S.I.-S.F.H.Q."

ROL: Special Project One-Seventeen, Department of Special Projects, Starfleet Intelligence, Starfleet Headquarters. Surprise! I'm a special project!

LORHROK: Genetic enhancements?

ROL: Not enhancements, exactly. Genetic control.

LORHROK: You lost me there.

ROL: I'll make it simple: let's just say those nanites enhance me in many ways, but they have a considerable influence over my free will. Yes, I killed Leo Amara and David Robins, but I was under orders to do so, and my superiors had no intention of giving me a choice.

LORHROK: That's... that's insane.

ROL: Which is why you'd never believe it if you weren't standing over me right now staring at the evidence.

LORHROK: (skeptical) And they told you to kill me just now. And took over your body to do it.

ROL: Well... It's a great deal more complicated than that. Suffice to say that the urge seems to have passed, and I don't expect it to return until I receive new orders from my superior.

LORHROK: And who is that superior?

ROL: A man named... Brahms.

(Pause.)

LORHROK: Security will be by shortly to pick you up.

ROL: Are you having me arrested?

LORHROK: You'll be detained on my authority until I can speak to the acting captain about... about all this.

(Pause.)

ROL: I understand. When will this paralysis wear off?

LORHROK: About an hour. Maybe more, maybe less. (Pause.) You know, before you tried to shoot me, Rol, I was about to offer my help if you were in any kind of trouble. (Pause) That offer stands. I choose to believe you. No matter how big this Brahms man is, I'm with you. And I intend to get Commander Dovan behind you, too. But if you're lying to me, about any of it, I'll charge you with both murders and let a public trial work it out.

ROL: After everything we've been through, that's... that's very generous of you, Lieutenant. I'll do the right thing. I promise: I'll do the right thing.

(Lorhrok exits.)

ROL: (exasperated) But what part of "wheels within wheels" did he not understand? Read between the lines! (sighs) Computer, begin new personal log entry. Rol, Entry Five-Thirteen. As a result of a recent conversation, I have adopted a new mission objective.



**SCENE 203-08**

LOCATION: CORTEZ'S ROOM, UNION III

(Dovan rushes into the room through the door. The heart monitor is still active and steady.)

DOVAN: Captain! I came as soon as the doctor —

CORTEZ: Commander Dovan. *Just* the man I wanted to see.

DOVAN: Captain? They told me... They told me...

CORTEZ: That after three weeks and God knows how many surgeries, I've finally run into "catastrophic complications?" That, even now, my new heart is shutting down? That I'll be dead within the hour? Yes, that's all true enough.

DOVAN: You--

(Pause.)

CORTEZ: Now, I may be dying, but I still have one more duty, and it's very important that you listen closely. I've remembered everything I can about the *Anbar*. But they've ramped up my painkiller dosage, and my memory is... It isn't good. I can't... Just, take this.

(Dovan picks up a padd and clicks once.)

DOVAN: One-one-four mark three-eight-eight mark eight... is this is a course heading?

CORTEZ: Yes. From the, um... the Gateway. Fifty... no, *sixty*-seven light-years. Brahms will try to stop you. He thinks he's right, but he isn't. You have to get there and find... And find... *Damn!*

DOVAN: What is it, Captain? What do we have to find?

CORTEZ: I can't remember. All I have is a name, bouncing around inside my head. I'm not even sure it's related.

DOVAN: Who?

CORTEZ: Is there anyone on the *Excelsior* with the name "Dexter Remmick"?

DOVAN: Not that I'm aware of. Certainly not during our last mission. I'll look it up anyways.

CORTEZ: Good. There. Now that that's done. Time for my last wishes. Catch.

(She tosses something through the air. Dovan catches it, surprised.)

DOVAN: Captain?

CORTEZ: I was told earlier today that they gave you my ship.

(Cortez's heartbeat monitor begins to slow.)

DOVAN: It's true.

CORTEZ: But they didn't give you a rank that fits the *Excelsior*. I always figured I'd serve my first thirty years as a model officer, then spend my old age thumbing my nose at the Admiralty, but I guess I'm starting early. There's a gold pip in the box. Congratulations on your promotion, Commander.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Captain... why?

CORTEZ: Well, first things first, why don't rephrase your question to something a little more... candid? You'd like to know how the hell somebody like Alcar Dovan ended up running one of the most powerful ships in Starfleet.

DOVAN: Heh. Maybe that's part of it.

CORTEZ: The question you should be asking is "How do any of us?" Stop worrying, Commander. You'll do fine.

DOVAN: Thank you, Captain. Do you have any... advice for me?

CORTEZ: Yes. Practice your kadis-kot game. You were terrible.

DOVAN: (snort) Hmph.

CORTEZ: In all seriousness, Commander, I just gave you my best advice: don't let yourself worry, or that chair will swallow you up and tear you to pieces, and there's not anything anyone can do to save you then.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: We could have made a terrific team.

CORTEZ: It wasn't ours to have.

(Pause.)

CORTEZ: Dovan... I just felt the first twinge of pain. It's starting. Please... when you're out there, wandering... the starry seas... Remember me.

DOVAN: I'm right here, Captain.

CORTEZ: No, Commander. You see... I've always wanted to die... alone.

DOVAN: (surprised) I see. Understood, Captain. Understood.

DOVAN: (firmly, almost confidently) Captain Cortez, It has been both an honor and a privilege to have served with you. Peace, and long life.

**CORTEZ: And you, Alcar Dovan. Live long, and prosper.**

**(Dovan exits. He begins to walk away down the corridor, walking at an even pace, his feet clicking quietly against the floor. We can still hear the muffled heart monitor as he leaves. It continues to wind down, until it finally goes flat.)**

**(Long pause.)**

**(Dovan resumes his even step towards the door. The heart-monitor continues to flatline. As the door at the end of the corridor closes behind Dovan, everything fades out.)**