

Star Trek: Anbar
Season Fifty-Nine: *The Barrier*
Episode 12: **"Sunset"**
by James Heaney

Transcribed by Peter Stine

Known falsely by some as:

Starship Excelsior
"Sunset"
(Season 3, Episode A: April Fool's Special)

SCENE S3EA – A (ADVERTISEMENT)**LOCATION: EMPTINESS**

NARRATOR: *Tonight... the legend ends. (Pause.) For almost sixty years, the valiant crew of the S.S. Anbar has wandered in the infinite night beyond our galaxy – lost in space.*

LOCATION: ANBAR – ORIGINAL BRIDGE

CHRIS COX: Tom... did we break the sensors in that wormhole?

TOM SKOLUND: Uh... No. No, don't think so.

CHRIS COX: Then where the hell are the stars?

LOCATION: EMPTINESS

NARRATOR: *Through every villain, every nightmare, you've been by their side.*

LOCATION: ANBAR – ORIGINAL BRIDGE

BOOMING VOICE : Your ship is *alone*, human. You are two hundred *thousand* light-years from your home planet.

CHRIS COX: Really? One sec. Mister Chen, is that a long way?

MR. CHEN: At maximum warp... that's three hundred years.

CHRIS COX: Well... at least we know where we stand.

LOCATION: EMPTINESS

NARRATOR: *You've been with them through life...*

LOCATION: ANBAR SICKBAY

(A baby cries.)

JACK SENIOR: What're we gonna name him, Sam?

SAM COX: I think... Jack. Jack Junior. If that's okay with you.

JACK SENIOR: No argument from me, Skipper.

SAM COX: Damn straight.

SAM COX (simultaneous)
(to the baby)
Now quiet down, Jack Junior.
Mommy's here.

JACK SENIOR (simultaneous)
I guess I'll just have to get used to
being Jack Senior.

(singing quietly)
Frère Jacques, frère Jacques,
Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous?
Sonnez les matines! Sonnez les matines!...

(singing in round)
*Frère Jacques, frère Jacques,
Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous?...*

LOCATION: EMPTINESS

NARRATOR: ... *You've been with them through death.*

LOCATION: ANBAR ORIGINAL BRIDGE

(The bridge is roaring with flames! TOS-style red alert klaxon blaring in the background!)

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper! Four seconds to breach!

CHRIS COX: No, I don't *think* so! RAMMING SPEED!

(Massive explosion.)

LOCATION: EMPTINESS

NARRATOR: *Tonight, the Anbar's long Exile from our galaxy comes to an end. But will their voyage end in triumph, or in tragedy? Will the colonists on Paradise be able to trade their marshy homesteads for real homes... on an Earth they've never seen? Will the Anbar and their Scion allies stop the invasion of the Zero Parasites... or die trying?*

THE ELIMIST: ...and the Barrier shall be rent, and all shall come to ruin and darkness.

NARRATOR: *In the eternal black of the Big Empty, no good thing is ever assured. But some things are still certain.*

LOCATION: WOODED MEADOW – NIGHT

TAWNY COX: Doc, you ready?

BRADY WINTERS: I'm not a real doctor, Tawny.

TAWNY COX: Yeah, whatever. Charge!

(They run through the woods, trampling underbrush beneath them.)

TAWNY & BRADY: (shouted battlecry) Yahhhhh!

(They fire TOS style phasers.)

LOCATION: EMPTINESS

NARRATOR: *As long as Sam Cox, Jack Junior, Tom Skolund, Tawny, Becca, Brady, Chen, and the Anbar crew are still out there, fighting for their lives – and fighting for ours – as long as they live... there's hope. The epic series finale of Star Trek: Anbar begins... right now!*

LOCATION: ANBAR – THE HOLD

SAM COX: Because I'm the Skipper! And I say... we're going home!

SCENE S3EA – B (RECAP)**LOCATION: PARADISE COLONY – MAIN SQUARE****NARRATOR:** *Previously on Star Trek: Anbar.***BECCA SANDERS:** What if the buggers got past us somehow?**JACK JUNIOR:** The Zero armada has ten million warships, and they build more every day. They get past us, it's bye-bye Milky Way.**LOCATION: ANBAR LIVING QUARTERS****TOM SKOLUND:** We've been waiting five years for this chance, everyone. Ever since we acquired the trajector technology, we've been looking for a weak point in the Galactic Barrier. Well, we've found it. Barely a light-year from the Colony, too. It's a great big dark matter nebula where subspace is fragile. The problem is... the Zero know about it, too.**SAM COX:** Simple plan, folks. We're going to the Nebula, with a hundred of our best friends behind us, and by friends I mean Scion megaships. We get there first. The *Anbar* uses the trajector to open the Passage through the Galactic Barrier. We go through, and seal the Passage from the other side - permanently. Then the buggers warp right into a Scion ambush. We escape to the Milky Way, the Scions blow the Zero to Hell's Ninth Circle, and nobody in the Big Empty has to worry about leasing their brain stem to a cockroach ever again. Kills three birds with one stone. Any questions?**LOCATION: PARADISE COLONY – MAIN SQUARE****SAM COX:** (with a loudspeaker) Paradise Colony hasn't ever been easy – not for one day – but it has served us well. It's been a breadbasket, a haven, even a home. But now it's time to pack it in, leave Paradise to the next group (gang) of lost aliens who wander through this patch of space. Because you? Me? All of us – tomorrow, we're starting our search for a new home... a home called Earth.

(The crowd cheers.)

LOCATION: ANBAR – THE HOLD

(Jack, at helm, is pressing some controls.)

JACK JUNIOR: Uh, Mom? Mom... this is bad.

SAM COX: What is it, Jack? The nebula's still there, right?

JACK JUNIOR: Yeah, it's still there. But so are the Zero. They got here before us, Mom. They've already raised a Barricade, and they're standing right between us and the Passage.

TOM SKOLUND: Then the buggers are about to feast on a whole galaxy of new hosts.

SAM COX: And we're screwed. Call the Scions. Now.

SCENE S3EA-01**LOCATION: EMPTINESS**

NARRATOR: *And now, the conclusion.*

(Silence)

NARRATOR: *2326 A.D. The twenty-second year of the Anbar's Exile.*

LOCATION: ANBAR OLD BRIDGE (FLASHBACK)

CHRIS COX: Evening, Tom. I was hoping you'd be the one on duty tonight.

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper? What are you doing up here?

CHRIS COX: We're hiding in orbit of an enemy planet in silent running mode. We're waiting for daybreak so we can start a shooting fight that could easily end with you, me, and every family on this ship getting killed. Are you telling me I'm the only one having trouble sleeping?

TOM SKOLUND: No one else is worried, Skipper. We're in the good hands of Captain Christopher Cox.

CHRIS COX: Good hands... Tom, some of us are going to die tomorrow. Even if this goes perfectly – and it won't – I can't save all of us!

TOM SKOLUND: You don't have to. You just have to lead us to our... Well, it's like you always say. Win or lose, we go to a Graceful End.

(Pause.)

CHRIS COX: Tom, I have a confession to make.

TOM SKOLUND: Hold on. Let me get my Roman collar.

CHRIS COX: I'm serious, Tom.

TOM SKOLUND: Serious is a bad idea the night before a big fight.

CHRIS COX: Look, if you don't wanna talk, let's —

TOM SKOLUND: No, no, I -- I didn't mean that. (sigh) What's on your chest, Chris?

CHRIS COX: You can't tell the crew.

TOM SKOLUND: (Jokingly; Tom is not actually a priest) And break the seal of confession? I'd be defrocked. Go on.

(Pause.)

CHRIS COX: (exhales) Tom, I think that when you're dead, you're dead, and that sucks. There is no Graceful End. At least... regardless of what I've been telling the crew for twenty years, I've never believed in one.

SCENE S3EA – 02**LOCATION: PARADISE COLONY – MAIN SQUARE**

NARRATOR: *2363 A.D. The fifty-ninth year of the Anbar's Exile.*

BECCA SANDERS: No, these are vegetables. We're loading perishables outside the schoolhouse. That's – do you know where that is?

YOUNG BOY: Is it--?

BECCA SANDERS: No, it's a little ways down that road, towards the lake.

YOUNG BOY: Oh, right. Thanks.

BECCA SANDERS: I wish the grownups here were as good at taking directions as you.

YOUNG BOY: Miss Sanders? I have another question.

BECCA SANDERS: I'm very busy right now.

YOUNG BOY: Will we ever come back here? I have a pet turtle named Buzz, and—

BECCA SANDERS: No. No, the *Anbar's* never coming back here. Now run along.

(The boy walks away.)

BECCA SANDERS: (calling out on a megaphone) A reminder to everyone: the main square is for loading building materials only! Perishable food goes to the schoolhouse, farming equipment to Avenue B, and personal items take all the way to the lake! Let's keep it organized so we can get this done!

(Jack Junior approaches.)

JACK JUNIOR: Becca?

BECCA: What is it, Jack Junior?

(Jack sets down the heavy container with a grunt.)

JACK JUNIOR: Miss Becca Sanders, I present you with... your house. You really scrimped on plastifiber when you built it. I got the whole thing in one box.

BECCA SANDERS: We didn't have a lot of resources then.

JACK JUNIOR: And you were being bombed on a regular basis.

BECCA SANDERS: Also, that. Are my personal effects in here, too?

JACK JUNIOR: Nope. I sent 'em down to the lake, like you asked.

BECCA SANDERS: Okay, you win. You're a nice man.

JACK JUNIOR: Mm. Glad you think so.

(They kiss.)

BECCA SANDERS: You need a shave.

JACK JUNIOR: Don't you have enough colonists to boss around today without micro-managing my facial hair?

BECCA SANDERS: Oh, Jack. For once, I don't want to think about my colonists. It just reminds me of what we're leaving behind here.

JACK JUNIOR: (chuckles) Which part? The bad food? The horrible weather? The boghog bites?

BECCA: Don't laugh. This... this place was the first time any of us have ever had anything like stability. We called it Planet Paradise for a reason.

JACK JUNIOR: Yeah. The reason was irony.

BECCA: Maybe, that's how it started, but... it's just not ironic anymore, Jack. I know you didn't notice, because you and the section heads lived up on the *Anbar*, but the kids down here... This generation of *Anbar* children has known peace. Can you imagine how different that is from how you and I grew up?

JACK JUNIOR: I've wondered about that. Living under a sun and a moon. Real food. Having space, to run around... instead of corrugated metal bulkheads. No battle alerts. No... no parasites.

BECCA: I don't want them to lose this.

JACK JUNIOR: If you think this is nice... just imagine how great Earth will be.

BECCA: You sound like your mother.

JACK JUNIOR: Is that a problem?

Jack's communicator beeps from his hip. He grabs it and flips it open.)

JACK JUNIOR: You've reached Navigator Jack Cox. Please leave a message. Beep.

TAWNY COX: *Very funny, Jack. Free time's over. We need you up here.*

JACK JUNIOR: Tawny? What's going on? Where's Mom?

TAWNY: *Mom's in a meeting with the Scions. She's trying to stop them from canceling the battle plan.*

JACK JUNIOR: What? The Scions can't pull out! If they back down, the Zero are gonna win!

TAWNY: *The Scions say it's over already. They don't think we can recapture the nebula with only a hundred ships.*

JACK: I'm beaming up.

TAWNY: *Tell Becca I said hi.*

BECCA: I'm right here, Tawny. Hi.

TAWNY: Jack, did you ask (her yet?)

JACK: (hastily) Jack out.

(Jack shuts the communicator quickly, cutting off Tawny's question.)

JACK: I have to go.

BECCA: Oh, you don't think I'm going to let you get away *that* easy, do you, Jack?

JACK: Huh?

BECCA: Didn't you have something to ask me?

JACK: Oh. You heard my sister blurt that out.

BECCA: Oh, Jack. You're a lovely man, but if you think Tawny's the only one who's been hinting, you're more naïve than I thought. It's been all over your face for weeks.

JACK: Then... you already know?

BECCA: Mm-hm.

JACK: Look, I – I wanted to take you down to the lake and ask you when we were alone. But now –

BECCA: It's alright, Jack. You're ship's navigator, I know that. But please... By this time tomorrow, we'll all be on the *Anbar* again. Ask me here, under a real sun and a blue sky.

JACK: But all the people.

BECCA: I don't care about the people.

JACK: Alright. (He gets down on one knee) Becca, we've been friends since I was born. I'm the captain's son, so when I got old enough, a lot of the girls set their sights on me. Not you. To you, I was always just that friend you joked with, cried to, yelled at. You never tried to make me your husband, and it stayed that way... until I finally noticed that the smartest, most beautiful woman in every room was never the one on my arm. Now I know better. And I want you on my arm forever. Marry me, Becca. Please.

BECCA: John Frederick Cox Junior, I've wanted to say this to you since I was six years old: Shut up and kiss me already.

(There is applause from the small crowd around them.)

JACK: (sheepish) Thanks, everyone.

BECCA: (teasing) Oh, get back to work, you louts!

(Jack frantically checks his pockets.)

JACK: Oh, God, I left the ring on the ship.

BECCA: It doesn't matter, Jack. We'll get it later. I love you!

JACK: (centering breath) Right. Okay. I love you, too.

(Jack flips open his communicator again.)

JACK: Jack to *Anbar*. Beam me up.

(Jack is beamed up TOS-style.)

SCENE S3EA – 03**LOCATION: MEGASHIP TRIASSA ONE – THE PARK / ARBOREUM****SAM COX: NO! dammit! You can't do that to us!****SCION #1: Nothing is done against any ally of the Scions, Captain Cox. Only that ships are withdrawn from an assault.****SAM COX: Yeah! Your ships! All your ships! You know? The big ones, with all the guns on them? For God's sake, it's not even an enemy armada we're up against; it's just a Barricade!****SCION #2: Because of the Nebula, the true numbers of the enemy cannot be known.****SAM COX: So you're just gonna assume they've got an armada. Instead of fighting, you're gonna surrender and let the Zero infest every living thing in the Milky Way. What do you think happens then? You think they're just gonna forget a ten-thousand year war with you people? When are you Scions gonna take your heads out of the crystalline Jefferies Tubes built into your backsides?****ZAREM: Captain Cox! That is enough! Scions, I must apologize —****SAM COX: Shut up, Zarem!****SCION #1: It is seen that the Captain of the *Anbar* is agitated by the Zero incursion. It is hoped that it is known to her that our agitation is as great.****SAM COX: Then do something.****SCION #2: On account of the Nebula, the enemy fleet is not able to be seen by scanners. However, based on new intelligence gathered by brave Servants, an estimate can be given at one million Zero vessels of frigate-class or better. It is impossible that our fleet of one hundred vessels, however mighty, should dislodge such a force.****SAM COX: Your intelligence was wrong once already. For all we know, the parasites have twelve ships behind that Barricade, and one of your megaships — just one! — could wipe the floor with them in ten seconds flat. There's only one way to find out!**

SCION #1: Once any attack might be launched, it would be impossible to retreat from the field of battle. The suicide of the Servants of the Scions will not be ordered. It is seen that, because of our decision, the *Anbar* will be rendered unable to fulfill its long-term objective to return to the Milky Way. Our fullest apologies are expressed to the Captain of the *Anbar*.

SAM COX: This isn't about me, and this isn't about getting back to Earth! It's about all of us!

(Silence.)

SAM COX: Are we done here?

(Silence.)

SAM COX: I said, *are we done here!*

(Stoney Silence.)

SAM COX: Zarem, end this transmission.

ZAREM: What! Captain Cox, one does not simply end an audience with the Scions of the Stars!

SAM COX: Zarem, the Shipmind gave you to me for today, so do what I say. End this.

ZAREM: My deepest apologies, Lords and Ladies. Cox is —

SAM COX: I'm leaving.

(She turns around and walks away.)

ZAREM: (in background) Captain Cox is not versed in Royal protocol, and so --

(The voices vanish.)

(Moments later, another set of footsteps approaches from the right and joins Cox's on a stroll through the park.)

TOM SKOLUND: Well, Skipper? How did it go?

SAM COX: "Assistance in your venture is not to be anticipated." Damn headjobs are leaving us out to dry. I had some... choice words for them.

TOM SKOLUND: Twenty-five years you've waited for the chance to speak to the actual Scion Council, and the first thing you do is chew 'em out. Your father would be proud.

SAM COX: (small chuckle) Chyeah. Yeah, I guess he would. Blasted Scions have had that coming to 'em for about four thousand years.

TOM SKOLUND: And you're certainly the only person in the universe who'd give it to 'em.

SAM COX: Skipper Sam Cox, Ace Diplomat-at-Large.

TOM SKOLUND: So, what now?

SAM COX: I don't know, Tom. I can't think here. It's too... big. I have two rules for starships: first, they should not have entire parks inside them. Second... Dammit, ships shouldn't be bigger on the inside than the outside!

TOM SKOLUND: Your mistake is that you still think of a Scion megaship as a starship. It's not, really. It's more like a blob.

SAM COX: Whatever they are, we can't win against the Zero without a hundred of them on our side. (sigh)

(Pause.)

TOM SKOLUND: It's beautiful, though, isn't it?

SAM COX: What?

TOM SKOLUND: The sunset.

SAM COX: It's fake. Simulated.

TOM SKOLUND: Still beautiful.

(Pause.)

SAM COX: I hate sunsets. (pause) They remind me of death.

(She unstraps her communicator and flips it open.)

SAM COX: *Anbar*, this is the skipper. Two for beaming, fire when ready. Cox out.

(She flips her communicator closed as they are beamed away.)

THEME SONG

INTRO:

SAM COX: My name is Samantha Cox. Almost sixty years ago, my father's cargo ship, the S.S. *Anbar*, fell through a wormhole and ended up in the void between galaxies, three lifetimes from home. We call this place the Big Empty. Since the day we got here, it's been a fight just to stay alive. But sixty years later, we are still alive. And we are going home. Welcome to the Big Empty. Welcome to the night that never ends. Welcome... to *Star Trek: Anbar*.

SPEAKER CREDITS:

SAM COX: Starring Eleiece Krawiec as Skipper Sam Cox. The *Anbar* is my ship.

TOM SKOLUND: ...with Karl Puder as Tom Skolund. I am the *Anbar's* living history.

BECCA SANDERS: Joyce Bender as Colonial Chief Becca Sanders. I feed the *Anbar*.

JACK JUNIOR: Gareth Bowley as Jack Cox, Junior. I am the pilot of the *Anbar*.

TAWNY COX: Janet Green as Allison "Tawny" Cox. I am the *Anbar's* conscience.

BRADY WINTERS: and Vivian Cheung as Chief of Triage Brady Winters. I'm what passes for a doctor 'round here.

CHRIS COX: With a special appearance by James Heaney as Captain Christopher Cox. The *Anbar* used to be my ship. Then I got killed.

NARRATOR: *Tonight, the final chapter of Star Trek: Anbar. The Barrier, Part Twelve: "Sunset".*

SCENE S3EA – 04**LOCATION: ANBAR – THE HOLD**

(Sam Cox and Tom Skolund enter the hold.)

MR CHEN: Skipper's back, everyone.

SAM COX: And not a moment too soon.

JACK JUNIOR: Mom! How did it go? What'd the Scions say?

SAM COX: They said no.

TAWNY COX: *What?* We need them. Hell, they need them! If they don't help stop the Zero, we're gonna get killed in there!

SAM COX: If we don't have Scion backup, we're not going in there, Tawny.

TAWNY COX: What?

SAM COX: Jack, signal the colony and tell them to start unpacking. We're gonna need Planet Paradise for a long time to come.

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper, I thought you were still thinking this one over.

SAM COX: There ain't much to think over, Tom. The *Anbar* wasn't a battleship to begin with, and sixty years haven't done her any favors. The only reason we were involved in this plan to begin with is because we're the only nice folks in the Big Empty who want a one-way ticket through the Barrier into the galaxy.

TAWNY COX: We've fought the parasites alone before!

SAM COX: A few, yeah. Sometimes, we've even won, but it's never been easy. The day your father died, we were up against four Zero frigates. The Scions estimate that there are a million frigates behind the Barricade. That could be wrong, but however many there are we can be damn sure it's

more than four.

TOM SKOLUND: So... Skipper, do you mean we're just giving up?

SAM COX: I've been working for this my whole life, Tom. We all have. We've fought, we've worked, borrowed, stolen, lived and died, all so we could get back to our galaxy – and keep the parasites out. Today, it looks like I'm losing on both counts. So, if you have any suggestions, now would be the time.

TAWNY COX: You know what the buggers are gonna do once they get inside the Milky Way, don't you? They're gonna swarm across a trillion stars like locusts. They're going to infest everyone.

SAM COX: What do you want me to do about it, Tawny? We go in there, they're just going to do the same to us!

JACK JUNIOR: Mom's right. We've lost. We've always known when to fight and when to run. That's why we're still alive.

TAWNY COX: Oh, you would say that, brother-of-mine.

JACK JUNIOR: What's that supposed to mean?

TAWNY COX: This can't look too bad from where you're sitting, can it? If we quit now, your girlfriend gets to keep running that hellhole of a planet she loves so much. You could even move down there, build a house... leave this ship out to dry!

JACK JUNIOR: Whoa, sis. I want out of the Big Empty as much as you do. Just because I'm capable of rationality doesn't make me a traitor!

TAWNY COX: You think it's irrational to--?

SAM COX: Enough, both of you! You're adults! Act like it!

TAWNY COX: This isn't about who does the dishes, Mom! This is future of the entire galaxy!

SAM COX: A galaxy I've never seen the inside of. I don't owe the galaxy anything. The people I owe are all on this ship and that planet.

TAWNY COX: What would Dad say?

(Pause.)

SAM COX: Right now, I think he'd say, "Young lady, get off your mother's bridge." And I think that'd be very good advice.

(Pause.)

TAWNY COX: Hmph.

(She turns and exits.)

SAM COX: God.

TOM SKOLUND: It's alright, Sam. What do we do now?

SAM COX: I'm gonna head down and check up on the colonials. They're probably gonna need help unpacking. And maybe... maybe it's time I picked out a place to live. Oh, God.

TOM SKOLUND: Go on, Skipper. We'll hold down the fort here.

SAM COX: (recovering with a deep breath or two) Thank you, Tom. Jack, keep my chair warm. I will be back.

(She exits. Brief silence.)

JACK JUNIOR: She's hurting.

TOM SKOLUND: Aren't you?

SCENE S3EA – 05**LOCATION: PARADISE – LAKESIDE – NIGHT**

(Sam Cox is slowly walking along the beach.)

(Becca approaches.)

BECCA: Mind if I join you, Captain?

SAM COX: Sanders. How'd you find me?

BECCA: It's hard for the captain of the *Anbar* to go anywhere on Paradise without being noticed.
(pause) I'm sorry about the Scions.

SAM: So am I.

BECCA: What are you going to do now?

SAM: What are we going to do now. I don't know.

BECCA: Are you going to keep the *Anbar* flying?

SAM: Of course.

BECCA: Are you sure that's still the right thing to do?

SAM: We're not giving her up, or scrapping her for parts. The *Anbar's* our home.

BECCA: Is it?

SAM: What?

BECCA: I know it's still home for you, and probably for most of the people living up there. But the *Anbar's* not home for all of us anymore. You have... other choices.

SAM: Like what? Eat boghog stew for the rest of my life? Give up and settle for this... farming colony? Not a very Graceful End.

BECCA: This "farming colony" has a name. It's called "Paradise."

SAM: This is not Paradise! Earth is —!

BECCA: Earth is gone! Even if you could get there, pretty soon it's gonna be run by the parasites. This is as close to Eden as you get, Captain! Either make your peace with that, or spend the rest of your life fighting and dying and dealing and thieving to keep your century-old cargo ship flying. Either way, don't expect everyone to follow the *Anbar* just because the great Sam Cox can't cope with losing!

SAM: You —! *You--!* (She chokes off her comment and takes a few breaths) Thank you, Becca. I needed to hear that.

BECCA: Is your mind made up, then?

SAM: No. But this conversation has made my decision a lot clearer.

BECCA: Is that good?

SAM: For one of us.

BECCA: Which one?

SAM: I don't know yet.

BECCA: I'm sorry I yelled. I should be... well, I guess I should be treating you like my mom.

SAM: Mom?

BECCA: Didn't you hear the news?

SAM: What news?

BECCA: Jack proposed today. We're going to be married.

SAM: Oh. He didn't tell me.

BECCA: He didn't?

SAM: Well, congratulations. I'm glad you got what you wanted.

BECCA: I – I'll leave you be.

(She leaves.)

SAM: Thank you.

SCENE S3EA – 06**LOCATION: ANBAR – OLD BRIDGE (FLASHBACK)**

NARRATOR: *2326 A.D. The twenty-second year of the Anbar's Exile.*

TOM SKOLUND: *Bull.* I don't know what you think tonight, but I *know* you've believed in the Graceful End for twenty years.

CHRIS COX: You think you know what I believe better than I do?

TOM SKOLUND: I saw the eulogy you gave at Laura's funeral.

CHRIS COX: The *crew* has to believe in the Graceful End. I put on a front every day for you. Just like I did then.

TOM SKOLUND: Like I said: that's a load of bull. If you want my opinion – and I *know* you didn't ask – I'd say you've been suffering from a bad case of pre-battle jitters.

CHRIS COX: I don't get pre-battle jitters.

TOM SKOLUND: Maybe something's different about this battle. Maybe you have good reason for jitters. Sam's seventeen now. This is the first time she's ever manned a combat station, isn't it?

CHRIS COX: I... I would have opposed it, but... she wouldn't have taken no for an answer. And Engineering *pleaded* with me to say yes. They've been undermanned in Fire Control since L.T. died. So I gave in. My stupid daughter. Taking the most dangerous post on the ship her first time out of the Nursery.

TOM SKOLUND: Like her father. *She* believes in the Graceful End, you know.

CHRIS COX: What makes you say that?

TOM SKOLUND: You said it yourself. She's volunteered for the most dangerous duty on this ship. She could easily die tomorrow. You don't put yourself in harm's way like that unless you're a believer.

CHRIS COX: Oh, God, you're doing that *thing* again.

TOM SKOLUND: What?

CHRIS COX: That thing you people have started doing. You're talking about the Graceful End as if it were some kind of religion. It's not, Tom. It's just... You know what? I'm gonna read it to you.

(He stands up.)

TOM SKOLUND: I've memorized it.

(Chris walks over to the wall.)

CHRIS COX: I don't care. (He clears his throat) Our dedication plaque: S.S. *Anbar*. Comissioned stardate one-five-three-three-point-six. Quote: "If we must weep, let it not be for the fallen, but for ourselves. For our kinsmen met their fates in our service, and found rest in Allah. We live on only in the hope of gaining what they now possess, for they have attained the Graceful End." President Ayad al-Maliki, April, Twenty-Thirty-Eight. Now, you want to talk about a load of bull, let's start with this plaque.

SCENE S3EA – 07**LOCATION: ANBAR – THE HOLD**

(The doors swish open.)

BRADY WINTERS: Skipper?

JACK JUNIOR: Mom? What are you doing back here?

SAM COX: Better question: what's the doc doing here?

BRADY WINTERS: Me? I'm just loafing about. None of you people have needed my services today. Lucky you. I'm not even a real doctor.

SAM COX: No loafing on my bridge, Winters. Remind me to put a reprimand in your file just as soon as we make it back to Earth, register you as a Federation citizen, put you in the Teamsters Union, and get you a file.

BRADY WINTERS: Aye, Cap. Want me to do anything about it before then?

SAM COX: Naw. Sit back and enjoy the bridge. Mister Chen!

MR CHEN: Skipper?

SAM COX: Just testing your reflexes. Jack, anything new here?

JACK JUNIOR: No, ma'am. You caught me right at the end of my shift.

(Tom enters the bridge.)

SAM COX: Where's your relief?

TOM SKOLUND: Right here, Cap. What can we do for you?

SAM COX: Just checking in, Tom.

TOM SKOLUND: Good. Then I'm supposed to relay a message: your daughter wants to talk to you.

SAM COX: Talk, or shout?

TOM SKOLUND: She seemed talky when I saw her, but you know Tawny...

SAM COX: Better than anyone. Where is she?

TOM SKOLUND: E Deck Observation Port.

SAM COX: Where else? Thanks, Tom.

TOM SKOLUND: 'course.

(Sam walks back towards the door then stops and looks back at Jack.)

SAM COX: And, Jack. Next time you decide to marry a girl, I'd like to hear about it first.

JACK JUNIOR: What? Wait, Mom, I can —

(Sam exits.)

JACK JUNIOR: Dammit.

SCENE S3EA – 08**LOCATION: ANBAR – E DECK OBSERVATION PORT**

(Sam Cox approaches.)

SAM COX: Well.

(She sits down, a little heavily, on the metal floor next to her daughter.)

SAM COX: Dangling our legs over the side into the ladder-well? I remember when you told me you'd outgrown that.

TAWNY COX: So do I. I was fifteen. And an idiot. I think better when I let my legs dangle.

SAM COX: How's the view?

TAWNY COX: Black as ever. (pause) Mom, can I ask you a question?

SAM COX: Anything.

TAWNY COX: We're in the Big Empty. None of us has ever seen a starfield. The reason we look out these windows is because there isn't one. So why do you always ask me that?

SAM COX: Ha ha. I guess I don't... Well, actually. Now that you ask... My father used to ask me, every time he found me down here. "How's the view?" His little joke. He never sat here, though. He was always an Earthman at heart. I think it scared him to look out a window without seeing any stars.

TAWNY COX: Sometimes I wonder – if we ever get back to the Milky Way... are we going to be like that? Will we be scared by all the stars?

SAM COX: ...You're still young. Young enough.

(Pause.)

TAWNY COX: I'm sorry I yelled earlier.

SAM COX: I've had worse.

TAWNY COX: Only from me.

SAM COX: You are a little bit of a handful. Always have been.

TAWNY COX: I don't mean to be. I just...

SAM COX: You just think you're right. Always right.

TAWNY COX: Sometimes I am.

SAM COX: Yep. And the other times you're too damn close to getting yourself killed.

TAWNY COX: If doing the right thing gets me killed...

SAM COX: --then I'll commit every sin in the book to prevent it. Adultery right on down to Wrath.

TAWNY COX: Ha. You mean it, too.

SAM COX: Damn straight.

TAWNY COX: Is that why you're giving up on the Passage?

SAM COX: I'm giving up on the Passage because without the Scions attacking the Zero is suicide.

TAWNY COX: Probably suicide.

SAM COX: I only gamble when I have to, Tawny. This time, I don't have to.

TAWNY COX: The Zero are going to take that entire galaxy. You know we can't let that happen.

SAM COX: We not only can; we must. We will. And, just this once, you're going to listen to me, young

lady.

TAWNY COX: I'm not that young anymore, Mom. We have to try. If nothing else, it'll be a Graceful End.

SAM COX: (sigh) You should have been a redhead. Sometimes I wonder how much you value your own life.

TAWNY COX: No more than most. (pause) But no less, either.

SAM COX: Good. Tawny, I'm glad you have a conscience. I just wish it didn't get you into so much trouble.

(Sam stands up.)

SAM COX: Ohhh boy. These old legs aren't made for standing anymore.

TAWNY COX: Oh, come on. You're not even sixty. Tom's, what? Eighty?

SAM COX: Oh, just you wait. I gotta run, Tawny. I'm glad we had this chance to talk.

TAWNY COX: Yeah, Mom.

(Sam starts to walk away.)

TAWNY COX: And, Mom?

SAM COX: Yes, hon?

TAWNY COX: I love you.

SAM COX: I love you, too, Tawny.

SCENE S3EA - 09**LOCATION: ANBAR – J DECK CARGO BAY**

(Becca is up here doing some sort of heavy lifting with some of her colonials. The entrance hatch swings open and bangs against the wall, revealing Jack. Jack walks toward Becca.)

JACK JUNIOR: Becca! I knew the colonials were offloading some of the cooking supplies, but nobody told me you were on board.

BECCA SANDERS: Yeah! Now that we're... staying put, the colony has to unpack everything we spent last week taking apart. We're doing food first; otherwise there's gonna be some awfully hungry mouths tonight planetside.

JACK JUNIOR: Great. Can I help?

(Becca begins to cross to another side of the room.)

BECCA SANDERS: Yeah. I'll get you started on over here.

(Jack follows her.)

BECCA SANDERS: Just load what you can onto the carts and somebody'll take it down to the shuttlepod in a few minutes.

JACK JUNIOR: I can do that.

BECCA: (quietly) Jack.

JACK JUNIOR: (quietly) What?

BECCA: Why didn't you tell your mother?

JACK JUNIOR: Tell my mother what?

BECCA: About us! She shouldn't have had to hear that news from me! Especially given her opinion

of me.

JACK JUNIOR: Becca, my mom likes you fine.

BECCA: No she doesn't, but you didn't answer my question. Why didn't you tell her?

JACK JUNIOR: I, um... Well, I guess I don't know.

BECCA: Why don't you think about that for a while? See you later.

(She walks away.)

SCENE S3EA – 10**LOCATION: ANBAR – RUINED BRIDGE**

(Sam is sitting in her EV suit, looking through the blasted open ceiling. Tom approaches.)

TOM SKOLUND: *Wow. It's a long time since I was here last.*

SAM COX: *I think I was only up here once or twice, when it was still in one piece. I wasn't usually allowed on the bridge. And the day I became captain – the day I got permission to be up here every day – was the day it was destroyed.*

TOM SKOLUND: *The day your father died.*

SAM COX: *So it goes. I come here sometimes, when I need to be close to him.*

TOM SKOLUND: *You don't feel close when you're sitting in the command chair on our bridge?*

SAM COX: *Our bridge is a badly converted ship's bar, which was already a badly converted cargo hold. I know I've been commanding the Anbar down there for, what, thirty-seven years, now? but I'll always think of that room as the place where Judy Thingum and I used to build forts out of dabo tables. Where Leon the Barkeep slipped me my first champagne, despite my father's strict orders. Where I kissed Jack Senior for the first time. This is where my father worked. This is the heart of the Anbar. And if he were here, he'd know what to do.*

TOM SKOLUND: *I thought your mind was set. I thought we're giving up.*

SAM COX: *So did I. But Tawny...*

TOM SKOLUND: *She's a persuasive one. Good for her. (pause) Oh my God.*

SAM COX: *What?*

TOM SKOLUND: *It's still here.*

(He bends down to pick up a metal plaque, disentangling it from the metal that held it down and

brushing it off with his glove.)

SAM COX: *What's still here?*

TOM SKOLUND: *The Anbar's dedication plaque.*

SAM COX: *You think I'd just let that thing float away? My father died for the words on that plaque.*

TOM SKOLUND: *He and a lot of other people. I'm glad. I know the Graceful End lives as long as we believe in it, but... all the same I'm glad the plaque's still here.*

SAM COX: *Damn straight.*

(Pause.)

TOM SKOLUND: *It would be a Graceful End, though, wouldn't it?*

SAM COX: *Beats me. Tawny tried the same argument on me. I... don't see how it's a Graceful End if everybody dies for no good reason. And I don't see how we can prevent that from happening if we go in there. We do have the Trajector, so we could get through the Passage into the Milky Way, but... whatever buggers are in there would make mincemeat out of us before we made it halfway to the Passage. I don't care if it's a hundred ships or a thousand. We're dead either way.*

TOM SKOLUND: *But don't we have to try?*

SAM COX: *Why? Because we owe it to that galaxy the buggers are gonna eat? That's what Tawny said.*

TOM SKOLUND: *No. Because we owe it to your father. To ourselves. We have to try to get these people back to Earth, and, you know it as well as I do — we're never gonna get a chance like this again. I'm an old man, Sam. I've seen Earth. I lived there. I don't need to see it again before I die. But you... your generation. You deserve that. I trust the universe to make sure we get there.*

SAM COX: *So, basically, you want me to break through a fortified Zero position and count on God to keep us from getting killed? After everything you and I and this ship have been through, Tom, it*

hasn't occurred to you that God isn't on our side?

TOM SKOLUND: *We've survived in the Big Empty for almost sixty years. God's for us. Otherwise we'd have all died a long time ago.*

SAM COX: *Suckup.*

TOM SKOLUND: *Quoth the Skipper, "Damn straight."*

SAM COX: *Touché.*

(Pause.)

TOM SKOLUND: *So, what does your father think?*

SAM COX: *Sorry?*

TOM SKOLUND: *You were communing with him, weren't you? That's why you came up here?*

SAM COX: *Oh. I'm sorry, Tom. I just... I don't see how getting everyone killed is a Graceful End.*

TOM SKOLUND: *Oh. Are you sure you're hearing him right?*

SAM COX: *Tom...*

TOM SKOLUND: *Sorry. I'll just... I'll leave this plaque here with you.*

SAM COX: *Thank you.*

(He sets it down on the ground next to Sam, then he walks away and re-enters the ship through the hatch.)

(Pause.)

(Sam picks up the plaque.)

SAM COX: *"We live on only in the hope of gaining what they now possess, for they have attained..."*
(pause) *Dad? Dad, if you're out there... I'm sorry.*

SCENE S3EA – 11**LOCATION: ANBAR CORRIDOR**

(Tom is climbing down a ladder.)

TAWNY COX: Tom. Nice spacesuit. I take it you were talking to my mother.

TOM SKOLUND: You take correctly.

TAWNY COX: Did you change her mind?

TOM SKOLUND: Nope. She's made her decision. Now it's ours to follow.

TAWNY COX: Well... you tried. I gotta go, then.

TOM SKOLUND: Right. See you later, Tawny.

TAWNY COX: Good-bye, Tom.

SCENE S3EA – 12**LOCATION: ANBAR SHUTTLEBAY**

(Jack and Becca are here, loading the last of the cookware into Shuttle Two via its aft cargo ramp. Jack sets down a box and walks down the ramp.)

JACK JUNIOR: (claps his hands together) That's the last of the cookware. I'll fly the shuttle down tomorrow morning. Do we have clearance?

(Jack folds the cargo ramp back into the shuttle, by hand.)

BECCA: We will. C'mon, Jack. Let's grab some gruel.

JACK JUNIOR: Mmm. Gruel.

(They walk to the shuttlebay hatch and exit, closing it behind them. They walk in the corridor for half a minute or so, then stop.)

BECCA: You been thinking, like I asked?

JACK JUNIOR: Tryin'.

BECCA: Come up with anything?

JACK JUNIOR: (sigh) I don't know, Becca. I love you. Don't doubt that.

BECCA: I don't.

JACK JUNIOR: But... I don't know. You know, you're a woman of the colony. Hell, forget that. You are the colony, Becca. Ever since you saved the place from getting nuked fifteen years ago, you've fought tooth and nail – and more than a few of your fellow colonists – to drag that place out of the bogs and make something. And you did. You've made something beautiful on Paradise. You're strong, and brave, and... and you lead. Frankly, I think my mom wishes I were more like you. But Mom stands for this ship, and its mission. She's dedicated her whole life to getting this crew back to Earth. Paradise makes giving up and settling down look a little bit more comfortable. I think my

Mom's always been afraid that, one day, you and your colony are going to break up this ship. Break up her family. Every time you do something good for the colony, you make that risk more real. I lied when I said Mom likes you. She respects you. She doesn't like you.

BECCA: To be honest, I feel the same way about her.

JACK JUNIOR: Telling Mom that we're getting married... I'd be bringing some of her worst fears to life. I would have done it eventually, I promise... I was just waiting for the right moment. (Pause) You knew all this already, didn't you?

BECCA: Known it for years. So's your mom, for that matter. But you're the only one who could say it aloud. I hope that having said it you'll have an easier time choosing.

JACK JUNIOR: Choosing?

BECCA: Yeah. What, you don't see it?

JACK JUNIOR: What are you talking about?

BECCA: That colony is my life, Jack. Your mom's right — it is a mucky, boghog infested hellhole of a habitable world — but I love it anyway. I was ready to leave it behind when it looked like I didn't have a choice, but now that the Scions have ditched us... it looks like Paradise is staying put. Your life is up here, on the *Anbar*. You love this ship almost as much as your mother does, and there's no sense in me pretending otherwise. We've been friends for years, and we've been able to live two separate lives, but, Jack, we're getting married. We can't do that anymore.

JACK JUNIOR: So... we have to choose? Paradise or the *Anbar*?

BECCA: Unless you've learned to bi-locate. The Skipper has her dream. I have mine. Time to choose yours.

JACK JUNIOR: That's not gonna be easy.

BECCA: Just ask yourself one question: where do you want our kids to grow up? Here on the *Anbar*, like we did? Or on Paradise, in the daylight?

(An muffled alert goes off.)

JACK JUNIOR: Give me some time to-- Wait. Did you hear that?

BECCA: Hear wh--? It's coming from the shuttlebay.

JACK JUNIOR: The launch alarm? Has to be a malfunction.

BECCA: Come on.

(They run back down the corridor.)

SCENE S3EA – 13**LOCATION: ANBAR SHUTTLEBAY**

(The shuttle is revving for launch. The launch klaxon is still going off.)

(The hatch swings open. Enter Jack and Becca.)

JACK JUNIOR: Oh my God. The engines are revving up. Who's in there?

BECCA: I'm cutting power to the launch doors!

(She runs over to a wall and starts frantically hitting buttons while Jack walks toward the shuttle.)

JACK JUNIOR: Is that... Tawny? Tawny, what are you doing with our shuttle? Does Mom know about this? Tawny!

BECCA: Jack! The bay is decompressing! Get in here!

JACK JUNIOR: Tawny!

BECCA: Jack! Now!

(Jack hesitates a moment, then turns and runs as the gears of the shuttlebay doors begin to turn. He runs into the control room and pulls the door shut tight behind him.)

JACK JUNIOR: Can you close the doors?

BECCA: Too late. She's getting away. But where?

JACK JUNIOR: It doesn't matter. (He presses an intercom button.) Bridge, this is Jack. We've got Tawny trouble.

SCENE S3EA – 14**LOCATION: ANBAR – THE HOLD**

SAM COX: Tom!

(Tom is running to a console and taking a seat.)

TOM SKOLUND: Yeah, I got it! (His fingers dance over the controls.) She's on a direct course for the Passage.

SAM COX: What about the Barricade?

TOM SKOLUND: She's going straight through it.

SAM COX: No she isn't. How long until we lose sensor contact?

TOM SKOLUND: Not long. We're really not far from the nebula.

SAM COX: Hail her.

(Tom presses some buttons.)

SAM COX: Tawny! Tawny! Answer me!

TAWNY COX: *I'm here, Mom.*

SAM COX: Just what do you think you're doing, young lady?

TAWNY COX: Someone has to try.

SAM COX: You can't! The buggers are in there, and the shuttle's unarmed!

TAWNY COX: *The shuttle's faster than the Anbar. I'm gonna make a run for it. If I can just get through the Passage, I can warn the Milky Way. There's still time to stop the parasites.*

SAM COX: They'll kill you!

TAWNY COX: *They might.*

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper, she's beginning to enter the nebula.

(Static starts to invade the comm channel.)

SAM COX: Tawny, get back here, before they see you.

TAWNY COX: *Come on, Mom. I've done crazy things before.*

SAM COX: Nothing like this, Tawny! Nothing even close to this!

TAWNY COX: *I know. Mom, whatever happens, I love you.*

SAM COX: I'm going after her.

TOM SKOLUND: With what? We only had one shuttle.

SAM COX: Tawny, don't do this. Don't you go where I can't follow.

TAWNY COX: *I'm going to a Graceful End, Mom. Just like Dad.*

SAM COX: There's nothing Graceful about it, Tawny! There never has been! Your father was an idiot who got himself killed for nothing! He left us alone so he could be a hero – and we're the ones who've paid the price! His family paid the price! Don't do that to me again, Tawny! Don't leave me alone!

TAWNY COX: (Through very bad static) *There's one difference.*

SAM COX: What?

TAWNY COX: (heavily staticked) *I'm feeling lucky.*

(The comm channel goes dead.)

TOM SKOLUND: She's inside the nebula. We've lost her frequency.

SAM COX: Your father felt lucky, too.

LOCATION: SHUTTLECRAFT

(Tawny presses the comm button.)

TAWNY COX: Mom? (She presses the button again) Mom? I've lost her. Computer, time to the Passage.

COMPUTER: (whirring and stilted) *Estimated time: two minutes.*

TAWNY COX: Alright. Let's hope the buggers don't have too many surprises for me. Full impulse, computer.

(The engines audibly increase speed.)

TAWNY COX
*Frère Jacques, frère Jacques,
Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous?*

COMPUTER: (simultaneous) Multiple enemy contacts.

Tawny adjusts some controls on the board, but only redoubles her singing. Weapons fire starts to dance around the shuttle. Tawny executes evasive maneuvers.

TAWNY COX: *Sonnez les matines! Sonnez les matines!
Ding, ding, dong. Ding, ding doAHHHHH!*

(A phaser bolts hits the shuttle, dead on. There's an explosion. All the alarms start to go off.)

COMPUTER: *Shields: destroyed. Life support: destroyed.*

TAWNY COX: Hold course! Time to the Passage?

COMPUTER: *Insufficient – insufficient – warning: data failure!*

(The computer shuts down.)

TAWNY: Computer! Computer! Well, so much for feeling lucky.

(More weapons fire misses the shuttle narrowly.)

TAWNY: Engines! No! I need those engines!

(Weapons fire hits.)

TAWNY: Oh my God. My mother was right.

(Explosions! More sirens!)

TAWNY: (She screams) No! No, she wasn't right! (Pause) Someone had to try! Do you hear me?
Someone had to try!

(The shuttle begins to fragment.)

TAWNY: (infinitely sad) But I wanted to see the stars!

(The shuttle explodes.)

SCENE S3EA – 15**LOCATION: ANBAR OLD BRIDGE (FLASHBACK)**

NARRATOR: *2326: The twenty-second year of the Anbar's Exile.*

TOM SKOLUND: I don't quite see what you mean, Skipper.

CHRIS COX: What I mean is, if my daughter dies tomorrow, it's not gonna be worth one stupid stem bolt why she died. All I'm gonna remember's that my Samantha's dead.

TOM SKOLUND: That's not true, Skip. That's not true and you know it. Maybe not right away, but – God forbid – if Sam dies tomorrow, the fact that she died a hero instead of a coward is gonna be the fact that keeps you living.

CHRIS COX: But what if she dies her "hero's death", and we still fail? What if we all die, and everything we do tomorrow is for nothing?

TOM SKOLUND: The outcome doesn't matter. The heroism does.

CHRIS COX: You can't be a hero if you don't succeed. You're just... failing with style.

TOM SKOLUND: Failing with grace, you mean?

CHRIS COX: ...Maybe.

TOM SKOLUND: In the long run, isn't that all life is?

CHRIS COX: Maybe so. Maybe-- No. No. If we fail tomorrow, then there is no Graceful End. Every death we've suffered will have been in vain.

TOM SKOLUND: Then we'll have to agree to disagree. There is one way to avoid that, though.

CHRIS COX: Yeah?

TOM SKOLUND: Don't let us fail, Skipper.

SCENE S3EA – 16**LOCATION: MEGASHIP TRIASSA ONE – THE PARK**NARRATOR: *2363: the fifty-ninth year of the Anbar's Exile.*SAM COX: SCIONNNNS! SCIONNNNS! Scions, I WILL speak to you! I summon you! I SUMMON you!

(Zarem quickly approaches.)

ZAREM: Captain Cox, this is completely --!SAM COX: Get the hell out of my way, Zarem! SCIONS!

ZAREM: You're disturbing the other —

SAM COX: Zarem, I swear, if you don't get —

ZAREM: Your loss is not the Scions' responsib —

SAM COX: So you know about what happened! I knew it! SCIONS!

ZAREM: Captain, if you don't —

SAM COX: If you don't--!

(Suddenly, there is an audible flash that silences them both.)

ZAREM / SCION: You may unhand me now, Captain. Your demand has been heard, and I acquiesce to an audience.

(Cox lets go of Zarem's collar.)

SAM COX: Triassa? Is that you?

ZAREM / SCION: How could you tell?

SAM COX: You're using personal pronouns.

ZAREM / SCION: Ah, yes. A bad habit I have picked up. Too much time with corporeals, it is believed.

SAM COX: We do speed things up.

ZAREM / SCION: A certain... convenience is certainly noted. You requested this audience, Skipper, not I.

SAM COX: Damn straight I did. You saw what happened to Tawny. I know you did. You sat here in the most powerful ship in the known universe and you did nothing while my daughter died! What the hell is wrong with you people?

ZAREM / SCION: You are mistaken, Skipper Cox. We did not nothing. We advised against any attempt to reach the Passage.

SAM COX: And then when Tawny went in there anyway, you didn't lift a finger. I might have accepted that from the others, but, Triassa, you know Tawny. You watched her grow up. And then you just let her die?

ZAREM / SCION: In all our affairs, freedom of action must be preserved. Else we Scions are tyrants. Tawny chose to make the attempt, did she not?

SAM COX: It wasn't an attempt! It was suicide!

ZAREM / SCION: That is a matter of perspective, Skipper Cox. Is it not true that, mere days ago, you yourself were still considering an attack on the Passage, using only the Anbar?

SAM COX: I'm still considering it.

ZAREM / SCION: All the more, then. According to our estimates, there is no statistical difference between such an attack... and suicide. If you make the attempt, would you have us interfere?

SAM COX: No, but my daughter —

ZAREM / SCION: Tawny acted as humans act. Triassa has not been allied with the *Anbar* for three generations without learning of your... contempt for probability. Indeed, at times, you have decisively defied likelihood. It is precisely these defiant moments that have made you an attractive ally.

SAM COX: Does that mean that the Scions are reconsidering? If you're willing to give the Passage a shot —

ZAREM / SCION: We are not. But I perceive that you are doing more than "reconsidering." You are going to "give it a shot," yes?

(Pause.)

SAM COX: I only gamble when I have to.

ZAREM / SCION: That answer: it is neither "yes," nor "no."

(Pause.)

SAM COX: Yes. Yes, we're going to attack. Tom is making the preparations. We're going home, dammit, with or without the Scions' help.

ZAREM / SCION: May I ask the reason your mind has been changed?

SAM COX: No. No, you may not.

ZAREM / SCION: (gently) Do you even know the reason?

SAM COX: Back off, headjob.

ZAREM / SCION: I apologize.

SAM COX: Damn straight. I... I guess this is good-bye, Triassa.

ZAREM / SCION: Indeed.

SAM COX: Triassa, I hate your guts right now, but... I'm gonna miss you. You've been a good ally. Almost a friend.

ZAREM / SCION: I concur. Triassa shall mourn this day for a century. The loss of Tawny Cox, and the departure of the *Anbar*.

SAM COX: You can still help us.

ZAREM / SCION: Dislodging the Zero Barricade is impossible.

SAM COX: Improbable.

ZAREM: My words were well-chosen.

SAM COX: Someone has to try.

ZAREM / SCION: The Servants will not be ordered to commit suicide.

(Tense silence.)

ZAREM / SCION: Skipper Cox, I invite you to rest here for a while before returning to your ship. Assimilate the sensations of the Arboreum. Sometimes inaction is the proper salve for grief. My leave is taken.

(With a flash, he is gone — and so is Zarem's body. Cox is left alone.)

SAM COX: Sound advice. (She sits down on the grass.) Triassa?

SCENE S3EA – 17**LOCATION: ANBAR CORRIDOR**

(Tom and Jack are walking side-by-side. Jack is writing on a clipboard.)

JACK JUNIOR: Alright. So we'll send the main procession past the lake and assemble at the big open space. Eulogies will –

TOM SKOLUND: Jack, I really don't think you should be doing this. Tawny's been... (trails off; tries again) It's only been a few days.

JACK JUNIOR: Tom, my sister is dead. If I don't do something, I'm gonna fall apart right here on the spot.

TOM SKOLUND: Would that be such a bad thing?

(Sam comes out of a doorway.)

SAM COX: Tom, are we ready?

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper! I didn't--

JACK JUNIOR: Wait. Ready for what?

(Pause.)

SAM COX: Jack... I didn't see you there.

JACK JUNIOR: It's alright, Mom. Ready for what?

SAM COX: Um...

(Pause.)

JACK JUNIOR: Alright, why's everyone being so coy? My birthday's not for another – Oh my God.

You've changed your mind. You're going to take a shot at the Passage.

SAM COX: ...Yes. I'm sorry. I know you're don't think--

JACK JUNIOR: No. No... I agree with you. Tawny was right; you have to try.

SAM COX: For the galaxy's sake?

TOM SKOLUND: Or for ours?

JACK JUNIOR: Neither. For Tawny.

SAM COX: A little while ago, you thought the price was too high. A futile attempt to stop the buggers wasn't worth all our lives. What changed?

JACK JUNIOR: You thought the same thing.

SAM COX: But I asked first.

JACK JUNIOR: What changed is my sister died to convince me she was right. It worked.

SAM COX

Then I don't have to worry about finding a navigator to replace you?

JACK JUNIOR: No, I didn't say that.

SAM COX: What now?

JACK JUNIOR: I said that you need to make the attempt. And you do. You'd do it with or without my understanding, but, for what it's worth, I understand. It's just I'm not coming with you.

SAM COX: You... what?

TOM SKOLUND: Paradise. You want to stay behind on Paradise.

JACK JUNIOR: I am staying behind on Paradise. I've had time to think since Tawny died, Mom. I finally had to pick my dream. Turns out my dream isn't Earth. My dream's a very special woman, and she lives on a mucky, boghog-infested hellhole. That's where I'll find my end. I think lotta folks here'd tell you a like story. I'm just the first to follow through.

(Pause.)

SAM COX: Sanders finally did it. That woman is breaking up my family.

TOM SKOLUND: You mean it, Jack? You're leaving the *Anbar*?

JACK JUNIOR: Yeah. Which means we'll be saying our good-byes. Soon, you're gonna go where I can't reach you.

TOM SKOLUND: You mean the inside of the galaxy... or heaven?

JACK JUNIOR: Won't know that 'til you try. Mom, I'm sorry.

(Pause.)

SAM COX: I think you'd better go now, Jack.

JACK JUNIOR: Right. I... I'll see you later?

(He exits. Tom and Sam start to walk through the corridor again.)

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper, you alright?

SAM COX: I'm losing everything, Tom. Everyone.

TOM SKOLUND: Maybe you can still change his mind.

SAM COX: Naw. Did you hear his voice just now? He knows what he wants. Maybe for the first time in his life, he's sure of himself. I'm... honestly, I'm proud of him. But I'm not going to let that woman destroy this-- Excuse me, young man. Where do you think you're going?

YOUNG BOY: Um... Skipper?

SAM COX: "Captain" will do fine, young man. The transporter room is off-limits. What are you doing?

YOUNG BOY: I, um... I...

TOM SKOLUND: Out with it, Jonathan! This is Jonathan. Mister Chen's kid.

SAM COX: Wow. He's growing up fast. You heard Tom, Jonny! Out with it!

YOUNG BOY: I... I want to go to Paradise, Ma'am. I heard we've gotta fight the Zero tomorrow. I don't wanna. I want to go to Paradise, where it's safe.

SAM COX: Oh, Jon. You're on board the S.S. *Anbar*. That's the safest place in the universe you can be. Now get back to the nursery. I'm going to talk to your father about this, and I don't want to catch you down here again.

YOUNG BOY: I'm sorry!

SAM COX: Alright. Now git.

(He starts walking quickly.)

SAM COX: My God, Tom. I've got children trying to abandon ship. What are we coming to?

TOM SKOLUND: Maybe this is...

SAM COX: What is it, Tom?

TOM SKOLUND: It's heresy. I'm thinking heresy.

SAM COX: I don't care. Talk.

TOM SKOLUND: Well... Maybe little Jonny has a point. Maybe Jack's right. Maybe the Graceful End

isn't... isn't the same for all of us.

SAM COX: You're right.

TOM SKOLUND: Which part?

SCENE S3EA – 18**LOCATION: ANBAR – OLD BRIDGE (FLASHBACK)**

NARRATOR: 2326. *The twenty-second year of the Anbar's Exile.*

CHRIS COX: Ha ha! Alright, I'd drink to that!

TOM SKOLUND: Really?

CHRIS COX: Well, I mean... probably not *really*. Not a few minutes before a battle.

TOM SKOLUND: Oh, that's too bad. Because it so happens...

(He pulls a bottle of whiskey out from under his console.)

CHRIS COX: Is that...?

TOM SKOLUND: Single-malt whiskey.

CHRIS COX: How in God's name...?

TOM SKOLUND: Bought it at a human place on Vulcan, day before we left Port Eridani.

CHRIS COX: Tom, that was twenty-two years ago.

TOM SKOLUND: I've been aging it.

CHRIS COX: Whiskey doesn't age once its been bottled.

TOM SKOLUND: Yeah, I just found out the other day. Wish I'd known twenty years ago. Seriously, Skipper. This sun we're waiting for? Odds are good one of us is dead by the time it sets. Fine occasion for a drink.

CHRIS COX: Tom, I need you to fly this ship into combat in a few minutes.

(Tom unstoppers the bottle and pouring a shot.)

TOM SKOLUND: Says the skipper who just stayed up all night instead of getting the sleep he needs. I always fly better with a little lubricant in my system. Here, Cap. One shot. I think you need it more than I do.

(Pause. Chris takes the glass.)

CHRIS COX: Well, okay. You're probably right. My nerves are shot.

(Tom pours one for himself.)

TOM SKOLUND: Right you are. How about a toast?

CHRIS COX: I'd like that. (pause) To a Graceful End for all of us... ..whatever the hell that means.

TOM SKOLUND: Well said. Cheers!

(They clink glasses, down the shot, and set their glasses on the deck.)

CHRIS COX: The sun is rising.

TOM SKOLUND: It's beautiful.

CHRIS COX: It's time.

TOM SKOLUND: So be it.

(Pause.)

(Cox presses the intercom.)

CHRIS COX: All hands, report to battle stations. We're going in.

SCENE S3EA – 19**LOCATION: PARADISE – MAIN SQUARE**

NARRATOR: *2363. The fifty-ninth year of the Anbar's exile.*

BECCA SANDERS: So, what's the story? Am I packing or unpacking? Are we going or staying? Am I sleeping under the stars or under a – You know what? Never mind. I'm calling Cox. (She flips out her communicator.) Captain, this is your Colonial puppet government. Could you please give me an order that makes some kind of consistent so my people stop looking at me funny?

(A quiet roar begins to build in the background.)

SAM COX: *Hi, Sanders! Here's one: look up.*

BECCA SANDERS: *Say again, Anbar?*

SAM COX: *Look. Up.*

BECCA SANDERS: *Wha--? Oh.*

(The roar has gotten pretty loud.)

SCENE S3EA – 20**LOCATION: ANBAR – THE HOLD**

MR CHEN: Tom, you're older than dirt: how long's it been since the *Anbar* landed?

TOM SKOLUND: Oh, it'd have to be... twenty-three eighteen, the crash-landing on the Elimist's planet? I'm awful curious about whether or not the equipment still works.

SAM COX: Thor promised it was all still going.

MR CHEN: Most of engineering wasn't even born the last time we landed. I wasn't.

TOM SKOLUND: Whippersnappers.

SAM COX: Good point, Mister Chen. Tom, is there some kind of alert or something I should be sounding right now?

TOM SKOLUND: Union rules require a blue alert during landings.

SAM COX: Well, I am nothing if not loyal to the Teamsters. Blue alert, everyone!

(An unusual alert klaxon goes off.)

SAM COX: Huh. Didn't know we had that one.

MR CHEN: Entering the troposphere!

SAM COX: Take us down the rest of the way.

SCENE S3EA – 21**LOCATION: PARADISE – THE BIG OPEN SPACE**

(A crowd approaches from the village as the *Anbar* roars down from the sky and sets down on the ground with a great ruckus.)

BECCA SANDERS

Alright, everyone, stay back! I don't want anyone touching the outside of that ship while it's still hot!

(The *Anbar's* cargo ramp lowers to the ground. The crew streams out.)

BECCA SANDERS: Captain. Glad to have you drop in. What's this all about?

SAM COX: Get your people to the Rostrum in the center of town. I'll meet you there. Come on, people! Hurry it up!

(Becca bumps into Tom.)

TOM SKOLUND: You know, I don't think they want to hurry it up.

BECCA SANDERS: Tom! Have you seen--

JACK JUNIOR: Becca!

BECCA SANDERS: There he is. Thanks, Tom.

TOM SKOLUND: Anytime.

BECCA SANDERS: What's going on, Jack?

JACK JUNIOR: The conclusion. It's ending before our eyes, Becca. The rest of our lives – an epilogue.

BECCA SANDERS: Jack, you're not making sense.

JACK JUNIOR: I'm not? Let me say it again. You need a new cabin, Becca. The one you've got isn't big enough for our kids.

BECCA SANDERS: You mean--

JACK JUNIOR: Yeah. I brought the ring this time. (He pulls it out of his pocket.) Here. Let's get married.

BECCA SANDERS: Now?

JACK JUNIOR: Soon. After today. You'd better catch up with my Mom. She's got something in store.

SCENE S3EA – 22**LOCATION: PARADISE – MAIN SQUARE**

(Cox stands on a small speaker's platform with a microphone.)

SAM COX: Is this on?

ENGINEER THOR: (from the audience) It's on, Skipper!

(Becca catches up and steps onto the platform next to Cox.)

BECCA SANDERS: I see you're planning to address the whole crew – colonists and *Anbar* people. Why? I have a right to know what's going on, Captain.

SAM COX: You're about to find out, Sanders. Also, I thought you were calling me "mom" these days.

BECCA SANDERS: (sigh)

SAM COX: Alright, folks. I've been skipper thirty-seven years and I've never given a speech longer'n two minutes. Some you might want to make a day like this into a big elaborate event, but I've never stood on ceremony. My daughter died last week. She was trying to break through an impenetrable Zero Barricade because it was the right thing to do. It's still the right thing to do. The difference is, she was in an unarmed shuttle, and we'll be taking one of the most veteran ships in the Big Empty. Plus... I'm feeling lucky. We're going home, people, and I want you all to come with me. Earth or bust. Thing is, there's more'n a few of you who don't want Earth anymore. You've gone and started families, and you want them to be safe. Or you've managed to put down roots on this godforsaken marshrock and just plain don't want to live on the *Anbar* again. The *Anbar's* not a military ship. Even if I wanted to drag you all back onboard, kicking and screaming, I couldn't. Facts are facts: we've been a crew for sixty years, and, somehow, we're just not anymore. That's why we're leaving Paradise Colony here.

(The audience reacts with surprise.)

SAM COX: When the *Anbar* pulls out of here, anyone who wants to stay behind can. The colony will remain under the command of Colony Chief Becca Sanders. In a short while, I will cease to be your

Skipper, so let this be my final order: follow her as you would me. She will fight for this colony just as hard as we have all fought for the *Anbar*. She already has.

(Scattered, uncertain applause)

SAM COX: I wouldn't clap. This isn't a happy day. This is the day that something beautiful died, and all we can do is hope that something even better rises out of the swamplands here. If you decide to stay on Paradise, talk to my son. He's already elected to stay behind. If you're staying with the *Anbar*, report to your duty station. We leave tomorrow night with whoever we have on board. But today, we're together one last time. Half of you are related to me by blood, and the other half by marriage. We're all family here. Let's say our goodbyes.

(She turns off the microphone.)

(The crowd starts to clap – slowly at first, but then builds to a couple hundred people, clapping and cheering.)

SAM COX: And I guess I'd better start with you. Good-bye, Sanders. Take care of these people. Take care of my son.

BECCA SANDERS: Absolutely.

SAM COX: And... Sanders. I should have told you this a long time ago. You would have been a pretty good Captain.

BECCA SANDERS: I know. (Pause) Good luck up there, Skipper. Don't get killed.

(Pause.)

SAM COX: It's a beautiful sunset, isn't it?

BECCA SANDERS: Yes. Yes, it is.

SCENE S3EA – 23**LOCATION: ANBAR – THE HOLD**

MR CHEN: It's eight o'clock, Skipper.

SAM COX: Already?

MR CHEN: Finally.

SAM COX: Good answer, Mister Chen. Signal the colony. Let them know it's time. We're leaving.

MR CHEN: That all, Skipper?

SAM COX: We've said our good-byes. Same message to the Scions, but tell 'em we'll miss 'em on the front line.

MR CHEN: Still trying to convince the headjobs to come along?

SAM COX: Naw. Just trying to make 'em feel guilty afterwards.

MR CHEN: The colony's returning our signal. It's your son. He wishes us Godspeed.

SAM COX: (quietly, to self) Bye, Jack. (to Chen) Alright. Lock us down and get ready.

MR CHEN: Right quick.

SAM COX: And, Mister Chen – any idea how many of us are left?

MR CHEN: Nope. We haven't had time to figure out who all's stayin' on Paradise.

SAM COX: Well, then, it's time to take stock.

(She presses the intercom.)

SAM COX: Hi, everyone. Roll call. Section chiefs, report with readiness and manpower. Sickbay,

you're first.

BRADY WINTERS: *Chief of Triage Brady Winters here, Skip. I've still got a little more'n half my staff here, so I guess we're ready.*

SAM COX: Glad to hear it. Engineering, you're up.

ENGINEER THOR: *Thor here. Engineering ready with thirty percent manpower.*

SAM COX: Okay. Guns?

MR CHEN: Ready, Skip. Three-quarters of my guys stayed on.

SAM COX: Well done! In fact, Mister Chen, I'm surprised to see you here. Don't you have a family?

MR CHEN: A wife and a boy, Skipper. And I am going to build them a house. On Earth.

SAM COX: Yes you are. Navigation? Where the hell is Navigation?

The TOS-doors slide open, revealing Tom Skolund, carrying a bottle and some glasses.

TOM SKOLUND

Sorry, Skipper. Couldn't find a third shot glass for Mister Chen there.

SAM COX: You brought it?

(He shakes the nearly empty whiskey bottle he's carrying.)

TOM SKOLUND: There's just enough left in here for three small shots.

SAM COX: That whiskey's seen us through a lot of times out here. Good and bad.

TOM SKOLUND: And, one way or another, our time in the Big Empty ends tonight. It seemed appropriate. (He goes to his station.) Navigation reporting in, Skipper. One hundred percent manpower.

SAM COX: Very good. Take your station, navigator. Alright, everyone, we're ready. Remember: our goal is to make it through the Passage, get inside the Milky Way, and start broadcasting a warning signal right away. We don't have the guns to beat a buggler fleet, even if it's as small as we hope it is – and it *better* be small. So we just go as fast as we can and hold them back with phasers and missiles long enough for us to break the Barricade. Then we're home-free. Clear? Clear. Odds are, not all of you are going to make it through with us. In fact, the smart money says we're all getting killed out there. Now, I've got a feeling in my gut that says this ship is gonna see us through... but, in the end, it doesn't matter whether we succeed or not. It matters that we tried. I owe it to my daughter. You owe it to your families. *We* owe it to everyone who's sacrificed the last sixty years to get us here. And, like it or not, somehow we owe that poor defenseless galaxy out there, too. But if you didn't already know your debts, you wouldn't be here, would you? You'd be in a cosy cabin on Paradise, keeping the boghogs out and trying to forget everything you've ever heard about Earth. So why'm I lecturing you? Because I'm the Skipper, dammit, and lecturing is what we do. Now let's go make our parents proud. Tom, set course for the Barricade. All ahead full.

(The ship lunges with speed.)

TOM SKOLUND: Answering all ahead full, Skipper.

SAM COX: Good. And break out those glasses. We've got a couple minutes.

TOM SKOLUND: Good idea.

(He unstoppers the bottle and starts pouring three small shots.)

MR CHEN: Tom, it's been a while since you flew the *Anbar*. You sure you should be drinking right now?

TOM SKOLUND: I fly best with a little lubricant, Chen. Here, take a glass.

(He hands it off, and another to the Skipper.)

SAM COX: I wonder if alcohol will be less rare in the Milky Way.

MISTER CHEN: There's a hundred billion star systems in there. *Everything's* less rare.

TOM SKOLUND: Before you drink, I remind you that there's traditionally a toast.

SAM COX: Got something in mind?

TOM SKOLUND: To home. May the colonists make a home on Paradise... and may we find ours on Earth.

MISTER CHEN: Cheers.

SAM COX: May I?

TOM SKOLUND: Absolutely.

SAM COX: To my daughter, Tawny. That what we're doing today gives her death some meaning.
(deep, ragged breath)

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper?

SAM COX: No, I'm alright, Tom.

MISTER CHEN: To Tawny Cox, a beautiful woman. A hero.

SAM COX: (contemptuously) A hero? My daughter was an idiot. (softening into love and affection:)
Just like her father. I miss them.

TOM SKOLUND: To Tawny.

MISTER CHEN: And, if I may?

SAM COX: Please, Mister Chen.

MISTER CHEN: To our victory. We meet our fates in the service of our kinsmen and our God.
Whatever happens, may it remain a Graceful End.

SAM COX: Well said, Mister Chen.

TOM SKOLUND: We're approaching the Nebula.

SAM COX: Right. Glasses down, eyes forward. Time for the big dance. Mr. Chen, bring missiles online, secure the nursery, (breath) and sound battlestations. Tom... take us through the Barricade. Let's see what the buggers have in store for us. Brady, you ready to do your thing down there?

BRADY WINTERS: *You mean coin collecting?*

SAM COX: I mean triage.

BRADY WINTERS: *I hate triage. Yeah, we're ready, Cap.*

SAM COX: Good. Mister Chen?

(Chen is staring into a science scope.)

MISTER CHEN: Getting some early readings now, Skipper. I'm picking up the Triangle Wave. I guess the buggers have already opened the Passage.

TOM SKOLUND: Their fleet must be going through now.

SAM COX: Then they're already fortified. That's bad. Can we get a good reading on their numbers yet, Mister Chen?

MISTER CHEN: Not yet. But... I'm picking up a familiar pattern at the center of the formation. I think it's King Mab.

SAM COX: King Mab? Where?

MISTER CHEN: The parasites need one ship to fire a trajectory beam to hold the Passage open. It looks like they're using Mab's flagship.

SAM COX: So Mab's their point man on this. This just gets better and better.

TOM SKOLUND: We're entering the nebula, Skip.

MISTER CHEN: Picking up readings now. Fifty bugger ships. No, a hundred. No, a thou — a — a...
Oh my God.

SAM COX: What's the bad news, Chen? (Pause) Chen!

MISTER CHEN: There are two million bugger battleships in here, Skipper. The Scions undercounted.

SAM COX: Good God.

MISTER CHEN: Skipper, do we retreat?

TOM SKOLUND: Couldn't if we wanted to. They've already locked onto us.

SAM COX: Time to enemy intercept, Tom?

TOM SKOLUND: Pretty much... now.

(Weapons barrage strikes the *Anbar!*)

SAM COX: Hold course for the Passage. Return fire, all batteries! Full speed ahead!

(Another barrage strikes!)

SCENE S3EA – 24**LOCATION: ANBAR – THE HOLD (FLASHBACK)****NARRATOR: *Twenty-three-twenty-six.*****(A door opens.)****BRADY WINTERS: Who's in — Sam? Sam! You're alive! I heard the Fire Control team —****SAM COX: It's true, Brady. Whatever you heard... Most of us didn't make it out in time.****BRADY WINTERS: Tom's on D Deck trying to find out who's still alive. A, B, and C are... gone. What... what are you doing down here?****SAM COX: Watching the sun set.****BRADY WINTERS: 'scuse me?****SAM COX: When that sun came up... my dad was still alive. And now...****BRADY WINTERS: Are they gonna make you...?****SAM COX: Captain? They already did.****BRADY WINTERS: Oh my God. And this...?****SAM COX: This is going to be the new bridge, once we've rebuilt. We'll tear out the bar, rewire the electronics... those dabo tables are gonna be our navcom.****BRADY WINTERS: Kind of a makeshift bridge.****SAM COX: That's okay. I'm kind of a makeshift captain. Perfect fit.****(Pause.)****BRADY WINTERS: Look, um. Sam. I mean... Captain.**

SAM COX: "Skipper" 'll be fine, Brady.

BRADY WINTERS: Skipper, I was up on the bridge a few minutes ago.

SAM COX: Did you find my father?

BRADY WINTERS: No, he's... they all... It was explosive decompression. But we found the *Anbar's* dedication plaque. It was right there on the cushion of his chair, like it intended to be there. We tethered it so it won't float away. Figured it was all that was left of your dad.

SAM COX; You were right. Thank you. He never stopped believing in the words on that plaque. Yesterday, he died for them.

BRADY WINTERS: I don't know, Sam. Lotta people died in my arms today. Think it was worth it?

SAM COX: Everybody dies, Brady. Might as well die for something.

BRADY WINTERS: For a few words on a slab of bronze?

SAM COX: I've heard worse.

SCENE S3EA – 25**LOCATION: ANBAR – CORRIDOR****NARRATOR:** *Twenty-three sixty-three.***(Brady Winters scrabbles amidst the wreckage, helping those she can, and leaving the rest to die.)****BRADY WINTERS:** (to medic) No! (to engineer) I'm sorry, Thor.**MEDIC #1:** But we can help him!**ENGINEER THOR:** Please... please...**BRADY WINTERS:** No we can't, dammit! Thor, you're going to die. I'm sorry I can't help you!**ENGINEER THOR:** Then, please, just... stay with me.**BRADY WINTERS:** We can't spare the medics, Thor. I'll tell your sister you love her.**ENGINEER THOR:** Please... please stay.**BRADY WINTERS:** Move out, medic.**ENGINEER THOR:** No!**MEDIC #1:** Brady –**BRADY WINTERS:** I said go!**(There is an explosion down the hall. They run.)****BRADY WINTERS:** I hate this job!**MEDIC #1:** Oh my God.

BRADY WINTERS: What now?

MEDIC #1: Over here, Brady.

BRADY WINTERS: Jonathan...

YOUNG CHILD: Doctor!

BRADY WINTERS: I'm not a doctor.

(She kneels down next to him.)

BRADY WINTERS: But I am gonna try to help you, Jonny.

MEDIC #1: Brady, he's —

BRADY WINTERS: I know he is. You go on; I'll stay with him.

MEDIC #1: But —

BRADY WINTERS: I know! I'm a hypocrite! But this isn't Thor. This is a child! I can't just... Can't...

MEDIC #1: I understand.

BRADY WINTERS: Then go!

(The medic goes on, trying to pick his way through the wreckage.)

BRADY WINTERS: Jonny... hold my hand.

YOUNG CHILD: Doctor? It hurts a lot. Hurts all over. I can't... can't breathe. How you gonna fix me?

BRADY WINTERS: I'm gonna hold your hand, Jonny. I'm gonna hold your hand, and you're gonna close your eyes and go to sleep. And when you wake up you're gonna be all better.

YOUNG CHILD: Will I be awake by the time we get to Earth?

BRADY WINTERS: Yes. Definitely.

YOUNG CHILD: Good. My Dad — (he gasps for breath) My Dad's gonna build us a house there.

BRADY WINTERS: Then go to sleep, Jonny. Dream about your house. You'll be there soon enough.

YOUNG CHILD: Am I gonna need stitches?

BRADY WINTERS: (tearing up) Nope. No stitches.

YOUNG CHILD: Promise?

BRADY WINTERS: Would I lie?

YOUNG CHILD: Good.

(With a deep, shuddering breath, he dies)

BRADY WINTERS: Jonny? (pause) Jonny? (long pause) It's over.

(She flips out a communicator.)

BRADY WINTERS: Skipper, it's bad down here.

SAM COX: *Brady, it's bad all over. Have we lost any key personnel?*

BRADY WINTERS: ...No. No... key personnel. Just... Skipper, how much longer?

LOCATION: ANBAR — THE HOLD

SAM COX: The only way out is through, Brady. We'll be at the Passage in five minutes!

BRADY WINTERS: *Not good enough!*

SAM COX: Best I can do! Brady? Brady, are you there? She hung up.

MR CHEN: I was going to ask if she'd seen my son.

SAM COX: The nursery's the most heavily shielded part of this ship, Mr. Chen. I'm sure Jonny's fine.

TOM SKOLUND: You might have mentioned to Brady that it's five minutes to the Passage... but only one minute 'till we explode.

SAM COX: I didn't think that particular detail was germane.

TOM SKOLUND: "Germane"? Awful fancy word, Skipper.

SAM COX: It's from the Latin for focus on your flying, Tom.

MISTER CHEN: Skipper! We're being... hailed!

SAM COX: What?

MISTER CHEN: The flagship wants to talk to us! It's King Mab!

SAM COX: Great. Answer them.

(The viewscreen activates, though only with the audio.)

SAM COX: Mab! Is that you?

KING MAB: *Hello, Samantha. Audio only? I thought we could use our screens for this conversation.*

(King Mab is played by the same actor who played Jack Senior, Cox's husband from the advertisement at the start of the episode.)

SAM COX: Our viewer exploded in your last barrage.

KING MAB: *Oh, that reminds me. (to someone else) Have the other ships stop firing on the Anbar,*

would you? (Pause) Thank you so much.

(The constant weapons-bombardment finally stops.)

KING MAB: *That's better. I was hoping I'd get to talk to you again, Samantha.*

SAM COX: So was I. But I was hoping it'd be in person.

KING MAB: *Ah, a more intimate setting.*

SAM COX: ... so I could rip your spine out through your Adam's apple.

KING MAB: *My, my, Samantha. A bit macabre, aren't we?*

SAM COX: You killed my husband.

KING MAB: *Funny. I like to think I saved him.*

SAM COX: Is this a social call, Mab?

KING MAB: *No, this is business. Samantha, this is really silly. Most of our ships have already gone through the Passage, and thousands more slip away every second. Even if you destroyed my starship and stopped us sending any more battleships through, all you'd do at this point is destabilize the Passage – and who knows what that could lead to? And even if you could get through the Barricade now, my forces would just kill you on the other side.*

SAM COX: You want to give me another option? Recall your forces, promise to stay out the Milky Way?

KING MAB: *(laughs) My word, Samantha. You always did wear the pants. No, I'm afraid our surrender is off the table. However, I'm prepared to offer terms to you.*

SAM COX: I think we both know my answer.

KING MAB: *Hear me out. Surrender the Anbar, Samantha. It's true: we don't need you. We certainly*

don't need your crew. Your "ship" is a joke. But... the Zero have developed a certain fondness for you and your crew, Samantha. This would be a senseless death for you all, and we will not tolerate it if we are able.

SAM COX: I assume infestation is part of the package deal, here.

KING MAB: *We prefer to call it "cohabitation," Samantha. And it has its advantages. It's much better than dying.*

SAM COX: I beg to differ.

KING MAB: *Talk it over with your crew, at least. Perhaps some will choose to turn themselves over to us. I know you won't stand in their way if they do.*

SAM COX: An old weakness of mine. (Pause) Fine. Give me two minutes to talk to my crew.

KING MAB: *I'm not stupid, Samantha. Thirty seconds.*

SAM COX: Sixty. (Pause) Please.

(Pause.)

KING MAB: *Well... our races do share a love of drama, and you have put on a fine show for us these last fifty-nine years. For that, I grant you exactly fifty-nine seconds. We'll hold for you.*

(The viewscreen deactivates.)

TOM SKOLUND: We're not seriously considering surrender. Are we, Skipper?

SAM COX: Of course not. But sixty seconds of deliberation is sixty seconds closer to the Passage. And sixty seconds to lick our wounds.

TOM SKOLUND: Fifty-nine seconds. Well, now, more like forty.

SAM COX: Quiet, Tom.

Mister Chen, what's left of my ship?

MISTER CHEN: Not much, Skipper.

SAM COX: Details!

MISTER CHEN: Let me put it this way: if you landed us right now on Tirion and sold us for scrap, the whole ship'd be worth about two sacks of fruit.

SAM COX: Fruit's expensive on Tirion.

MISTER CHEN: Not *that* expensive.

SAM COX: On second thought, I *don't* want details. Tom, time to the Passage?

(Tom presses some buttons.)

TOM SKOLUND: Just one more minute, Skipper.

SAM COX: Can we make it?

TOM SKOLUND: Never say never.

SAM COX: I'm inspired. Is our time up yet?

TOM SKOLUND: In three, two, one...

(The *Anbar* is hit again by heavy weapons fire.)

SAM COX: So much for diplomacy.

(Suddenly, the ship swings off course.)

SAM COX: Tom, what are you doing? Hold your course!

TOM SKOLUND: Can't, Skipper! Mab just fired a bugbomb!

SAM COX: A bugbomb... Chen, do we still have facing shields?

MISTER CHEN: Cap, we don't have any shields.

SAM COX: Tom, evasive!

TOM SKOLUND: I'm evading! I'm evading!

MISTER CHEN: Impact in fifteen...

TOM SKOLUND: These engines... No! Don't give up on me now! No!

(The engines fail, and the *Anbar* rapidly decelerates to a stop.)

SAM COX: Tom, a bugbomb —

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper, we have no engines. No shields.

SAM COX: Jack would find a way —

TOM SKOLUND: Maybe he would! But I'm not Jack!

MISTER CHEN: Impact!

(The enormous cylinder drills into the hull around E Deck. All are thrown from their stations. A fire roars to life right here in the Hold. A new klaxon starts going off.)

SAM COX: (pressing the intercom) Fire control team to E Deck!

(No reply.)

SAM COX: Anyone who can hear me: get to E Deck! We've got a bugbomb!

(No Response.)

SAM COX: Anyone!

(The *Anbar* is no longer being fired upon.)

TOM SKOLUND: They can't hear you, Skipper. Comms are out everywhere below this deck.

MISTER CHEN: I'm showing every system in the red. We're down to one sack of fruit, Skipper.

SAM COX: Then we'll get out and throw rocks. Tom, engines are gone. Is our momentum enough to carry us through the — ?

(Suddenly, a massive shockwave rolls over the *Anbar*. The ship groans and creaks as the shockwave passes.)

TOM SKOLUND: What in tarnation was that?

SAM COX: And, more importantly, why didn't it kill us?

MISTER CHEN: Third question: why aren't they shooting at us anymore?

SAM COX: They're... wait, what?

MISTER CHEN: Feel the deckplating. There's no weapons vibration.

TOM SKOLUND: He's right. We're stable. The buggers have stopped firing.

SAM COX: That... does not make any sense. Chen, how bad are the sensors?

MISTER CHEN: Beyond repair. I'll see if I can get something on simple visual, though.

(The door slides open.)

BRADY WINTERS: Skipper!

SAM COX: Brady! What are you doing here?

BRADY WINTERS: When we lost contact with this deck, we thought... I thought you were all dead. I came up because I didn't want any of my people to see that.

SAM COX: How is it below?

BRADY WINTERS: If we live, you can see for yourself. If we die, I'd rather not trouble your conscience with it in your last moments. None of you are hurt?

SAM COX: Not yet.

BRADY WINTERS: Then —

MISTER CHEN: Skipper! I got the forward camera working.

SAM COX: On screen.

(The viewscreen activates.)

(A massive energy weapon slice through two Zero battleships like stale butter.)

SAM COX: Is that — ?

TOM SKOLUND: Yup.

BRADY WINTERS: The Scions of the Stars.

MISTER CHEN: They came dancing after all.

SAM COX: Must have been that message we sent 'em.

MISTER CHEN: No doubt.

BRADY WINTERS: The Scions are *tearing* through the buggers. It's like the Zero ships are made of

paper. *Cheap* paper. With gasoline poured on it.

TOM SKOLUND: It makes great fireworks. Of course, we've gotta remember that most of the parasites already made it through the Passage. The Scions are just cleaning up the leftovers.

MISTER CHEN: All the same, I'm not complaining.

TOM SKOLUND: Neither am I, Mister Chen. Neither am I.

BRADY: Then that shockwave we felt...?

SAM COX: I think it must have been King Mab's ship.

MISTER CHEN: The king is dead?

TOM SKOLUND: Long dead the king.

SAM COX: Then... we're saved. Do we have hailing frequencies?

MISTER CHEN: Maybe? I honestly have no idea, Skipper.

SAM COX: Give it a try. Hail the lead Scion. I'll bet it's *Triassa One*.

MISTER CHEN: Trying...

ZAREM / TRIASSA: *Skipper Sam Cox. It is agreeable, if surprising, that you are not dead.*

SAM COX: Very agreeable. All part of the plan, though.

ZAREM / TRIASSA: *There was a plan?*

SAM COX: Step one: get ridiculously outmatched and outgunned. Step two: wait for the Scions to rescue us. I just improvised that one ten seconds ago. Seriously, Triassa, why are you here? You seemed pretty sure of your probability and your equations. What changed?

ZAREM / TRIASSA: *Of the underlying facts? There were no changes. However, when your message was received, and it became clear that you would lead the Anbar into this impossible battle -- suddenly Scion perception of the facts was changed. Suddenly, the Scion sense of justice was found inflamed, and the importance of our own safety was no longer clearly seen. And so our premises remain, but our conclusions have changed. Isn't that peculiar, Skipper Cox?*

SAM COX: Actually, Triassa, it sounds pretty familiar to me. Welcome to the fight. You and... how many ships did you bring?

ZAREM / TRIASSA: *Of the original one hundred? Ten were persuaded by Triassa's illogic.*

SAM COX: It looks like ten was enough, at least to buy us some time and control of this end of the Passage. Now we can take a breather, plan our next move. Take the fight to the Zero on our terms, before they can start conquering whole planets.

ZAREM / TRIASSA: *It is deduced that the Anbar's sensors must be disabled.*

SAM COX: It is deduced accurately. Why? Am I missing something?

ZAREM / TRIASSA: *Unfortunately, Skipper Cox, the Passage has been destabilized -- I fear by the destruction of King Mab's ship. In consequence, all within the nebula is being pulled inexorably toward the Passage's maw.*

SAM COX: You mean, we're going through the Barrier right now, whether we like it or not.

ZAREM / TRIASSA: *It is as described.*

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper, I can confirm that. I can't tell you what's going on inside the Passage, but we're definitely still moving towards it. And it's not just momentum -- we're picking up speed.

BRADY WINTERS: So we're going through the Barrier. Mission accomplished.

TOM SKOLUND: We're gonna get through the Barrier, alright, Brady. But with no shields and no hull sealants to speak of, we're gonna get through the Barrier with such a plasma shock that, if our brains melting doesn't kill us, the warp core breach definitely will.

(The ship starts to shake slightly.)

SAM COX: What are our odds?

TOM SKOLUND: Remember how I said "never say never" earlier?

SAM COX: Yeah?

TOM SKOLUND: I take it back.

SAM COX: What about the Scions?

MISTER CHEN: Triassa is trying to morph long enough to shield us from the chock, but he's way too far away. He'll never make it.

SAM COX: I need some options.

(The shaking worsens.)

MISTER CHEN: Too late! We just crossed the event horizon. All the warp engines in the world couldn't free us from the Passage now.

BRADY WINTERS: Then is that it? We die? For nothing? All these sacrifices, all these years we've spent... all just wiped out?

TOM SKOLUND: No, Brady. Not for nothing. Look at those Scions, right behind us, trapped just the same. We're not gonna survive the crossing, but they will. We brought them here. We're the reason they came into this fight. And now the Milky Way galaxy is going to get ten Scion defenders against the Zero. It's not much, but... maybe it'll be enough.

MR CHEN: But what if it isn't? If our galaxy falls? If Earth dies, and everything comes to ruin and darkness?

SAM COX: Then we have the Graceful End, Mr. Chen, because we died trying. But that's only true if we

die. I'm not givin up hope. Tom, prepare to ride us through.

TOM SKOLUND: Skipper —

SAM COX: Tom, you once told me to trust that God would get us through the Barrier. Now trust me.

TOM SKOLUND: (not angrily) You're not God.

SAM COX: No, but I've got a much better track record.

(The ship is shuddering very badly now.)

TOM SKOLUND: Entering the Passage now. We are officially crossing the Galactic Barrier.

SAM COX: Tom, you said we don't explode until after we get through the Barrier, right?

TOM SKOLUND: Yeah?

SAM COX: So, whatever happens, I get to see a sky full of stars before I die. I can't wait.

TOM SKOLUND: (laughs) Sam, you never cease to amaze me.

(She presses the intercom.)

SAM COX: All hands, this is Skipper Sam Cox. Brace for impact!

(Smash away to:)

SCENE S3EA – 26**LOCATION: PARADISE – LAKESIDE - NIGHT**

(It's quiet. The wind breezes gently over the water. Becca rolls over on the bed.)

BECCA SANDERS: Jack.

JACK JUNIOR: Yeah, Becca?

BECCA SANDERS: What are you thinking about?

JACK JUNIOR: I was thinking about our house. I think I'm gonna put it over there, on that little rise. We'll give the nursery an easterly view, so the kids'll wake up every day with the sun right in their eyes. (Pause) Why, honey? What about you?

BECCA: I was wondering... Do you think they made it?

JACK JUNIOR: We'll never know. (Pause) No, no. That's not true. (Pause) Becca, I don't know where they are, and I never will... but I know, somehow... We all made it home.

END CREDITS

NARRATOR: On behalf of the entire cast and crew of Star Trek: Anbar, we'd like to thank you for your long years of enjoying and supporting the show. From the day we crashed into the Big Empty until tonight, this series couldn't have succeeded without the legions of devoted fans who kept us fired up to tell the stories of the Captains Cox and their courageous crews. When we started, we never dreamed what Anbar would become and now that it's over, we can't imagine life without it. We hope you enjoyed our final episode, and we wish you all "A Graceful End."

SCENE S3EA – C (VALANDRIA EPILOGUE)**LOCATION: VALANDRIAN CATACOMBS – LOWEST LEVEL**

NARRATOR: *Meanwhile, in the catacombs of Valandria...*

YUBARI / MYRIAD: It is time.

Eight thousand years we have waited, and now... It is time.

We stand. We search. We search across a hundred billion stars, until... We find. I find.... Now we have but to reach across space. We shall reach across space, and the War will finally be won.

I reach. I find. I find the *Starship Anbar*. I breathe life into her. I rescue her. I pull her across space. I push her across time.

History bends around us. Nineteen years. Nineteen years will be optimal. We save the *Anbar*, We destroy the Federation.

We are Myriad. We are Legion. We are victorious.

SCENE S3EA – D (SURESH EPILOGUE)**LOCATION: DENEVA – MODERATELY BUSY STREET – OUTSIDE SOMEONE’S FRONT DOOR**

NARRATOR: *Twenty-three eighty-two: Nineteen years later. Three months before the Valandrian Civil War.*

(Someone rings the doorbell. It’s a real doorbell.)

SHARVAH SURESH: *Coming!*

(The door opens.)

SURESH: Isaac! I certainly didn’t expect to find you on my doorstep!

ISAAC BRAHMS: Captain Suresh. These are my associates, Second Lieutenants Leo Amara and Ryan Willis.

LEO AMARA: Captain!

THE MAJOR: Sir!

BRAHMS: May we come inside?

SURESH: Yes, of course! In fact, I was just sitting down to dinner, and I accidentally made more samosa than I can eat. Help yourself!

(They enter the house and close the door.)

BRAHMS: Captain, a few days ago the Starbase Nine-One-One picked up an emergency distress call. We’ve identified the beacon as belonging to a missing cargo vessel called the S.S. *Anbar*, registry—

SURESH: One thing you can’t do, Isaac, is get me to go on another mission. I’m retired! And I intend to keep it that way.

BRAHMS: Captain, in exchange for your cooperation on this mission, I’m prepared to offer you full

command of the *Starship Excelsior*.

(Pause.)

SURESH: Alright. You've got my attention.