

*Starship: Excelsior*

**"Don't Let The Door Hit Ya'"**

(Season 5, Episode 13)

by James Heaney

Transcribed by Peter Stine

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Note: Lines in brackets were recorded but interrupted. The complete line is left here for fuller context:

**SCENE 5J-01****LOCATION: AN URBAN BATTLEFIELD**

(Air raid sirens sound in the distance. There's also gunfire, cannon fire, and energy weapon fire, all off in the distance.)

**PROPAGANDA TRUCK / DIVITIAN PRESIDENT:** *Attention, rebels! You are in violation of the Divitian Software Licensing Agreement! [Lay down your arms and surrender your pirated license keys and you will be escorted peacefully to an Acceptable Use Re-Training Center. Do not force us to continue this pointless conflict, which producers are certain to win. Save yourselves. Save your families. Save your neighbors. Lay down you arms and surrender your license keys.]*

(The truck fades, as we hear a child crying.)

**CHILD:** (sniffing) Mom? Mom, just hang on 'til they get here.

(footsteps approach.)

**THE MAN:** No one is coming.

**CHILD:** They said--!

**THE MAN:** The ambulances just got de-licensed. They can't move. No one is coming.

**CHILD:** So help me carry her!

**THE MAN:** Those bullets bit deep. Do you still think we can save her?

(Pause. The child is still crying.)

**THE MAN:** Me gwinna need to hear you say it.

**CHILD:** She's dead.

**THE MAN:** Then you be my responsibility now. The city's surrounded and in flames. You're too young to shoot, but there be other ways you can help.

**CHILD:** Help?

**THE MAN:** I am the Man of the Lost City of Kao, and the Grand Army of the Tulian League fights beside me. The Perenthorias killed your mother, so I offer you the only help I can give you: revenge.

**SCENE 5J-02****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

DOVAN: Hey, Alec. What'd you know about this guy "Gene Roddenberry"?

LORHROK: What's that, sir?

(He rises and starts walking over.)

DOVAN: "Rear Admiral Gene Roddenberry." His name's on our dedication plaque, and I just realized I have no idea who he is.

LORHROK: Oh, he's been around for a while. He was on the *Steadfast* dedication plaque, too. Chief of Staff, I think?

DOVAN: Yeah, it says that here. Huh. I guess nobody can know every admiral. Well, whoever he is, I hope we've done Roddenberry proud.

LORHROK: Two years of exploration. Thirty-four hundred light-years. Four hundred seventy notable stellar phenomena, a hundred twelve sapient races, thirty-five formal first contacts. (pause) Nobody's put up numbers like that since Tryla Scott.

DOVAN: Well, when you put it that way, he'd better be proud of us. The Singing Suns alone...

LORHROK: The Singing Suns were worth the whole two years.

DOVAN: *Ex astris mirificentia*. From the stars, wonder. (deep breath) How long you think we'll be in spacedock?

LORHROK: After two years in deep space? It won't be a full R.C.O.H. but we'll be in for a while. Why? Planning how to use all that pent-up leave time?

DOVAN: I just wanna get back out there and do it all again.

SYLVESTE: Approaching the Gateway, Captain.

DOVAN: Ensign... bring us home.

SYLVESTE: Gateway is responding, sir... (button presses, sensor alerts) Gateway is active.  
Transition in three, two, one.

(they pass through.)

SYLVESTE: Confirming arrival in Union System, Alpha Quadrant.

YUBARI: Sir, Starbase Nine-One-One LSO sends her compliments and instructs us to dock at Berth Nine.

DOVAN: By all means, Ensign Sylveste.

(The turbolift doors open.)

SHARP: Alcar?

DOVAN: Melissa? Neeva? Kestra?

NEEVA: Permission to take our stations, sir.

DOVAN: Permission, uh, granted. But, Melissa, do you have a...?

(All three start moving toward their posts.)

SHARP: Mine's the one across from Alec. Technically, I'm ship's counselor.

J'NAYA: We just wanted to help bring the *Excelsior* into port, Captain.

DOVAN: Of course. Something we certainly need an engineer for. And a counselor.

SHARP: Maybe if the captain wasn't such a basket case...

YUBARI: You know, I seem to recall having a few "counseling sessions" with you myself. Down in the Delta Lounge? After Divitia.

SHARP: Well, yeah! They dropped me out of a starfighter! From orbit!

YUBARI: Pfft. Low orbit. If you'd taken that class with me, Mels, instead of trying to drag me to that party...

NEEVA: Wait, that's where you were that night? You told us you had an overdue use-of-force report!

LORHROK: Well, that should've been your first hint. As first officer, let me assure you that Commander Yubari has never put anything aside to finish an overdue report.

J'NAYA: Oi, in her defense, didn't she turn out to be under the control of a neural parasite that day?

DOVAN: Hold on: "Mels"? We're gonna talk about that, right?

LORHROK: Better hold that thought, captain. We've entered spacedoors. Sir? The chair's yours if you want it.

DOVAN: Hit it, Commander.

LORHROK: Yes, sir. (he presses the intercom.) All hands, stand by to dock.

SYLVESTE: All decks report ready to dock, sir.

LORHROK: Wait for it... Annnnd... there! Engage mooring beams.

(Yubari presses some buttons and we hear the muffled sound of tractor beams through the hull.)

YUBARI: Mooring beams engaged.

LORHROK: Lock us off.

(Sylveste presses some buttons and there's a satisfying *ka-chunk* that reverberates through the ship.)

SYLVESTE: Locked. Docking complete, sir.

DOVAN: Good work, Ensign Sylveste.

SYLVESTE: My pleasure, Captain.

DOVAN: Ah, "captain." Think Admiral Parker'll finally give me the pip to go with the title, Number One?

LORHROK: "Finally"? You've been a commander for barely two years. Wait. Why ask me?

DOVAN: Double or nothing?

LORHROK: Too rich for my blood. Lieutenant Warrick, you have the bridge.

WARRICK: Aye, sir.

(Dovan rises. Then he opens his pocketwatch.)

DOVAN: Huh.

J'NAYA: Sir?

DOVAN: My pocketwatch. The one Underwood gave me.

LORHROK: The one that cheats and tells you when parties are?

DOVAN: It started a countdown a few days ago. It's labeled "the end". I assumed it was counting down to our arrival.

NEEVA: It wasn't?

DOVAN: It still has... looks like maybe a week left. Weird.

(He shrugs, snaps the watch shut, and heads for the lift.)

YUBARI: I hope that doesn't mean you're going to get murdered this week.

DOVAN: Eh, it's a weird watch. Probably waiting for me to complete my report for Admiral Parker. Surprise, gonna take a lot longer than a week!

(Everyone follows him to the turbolift.)

### LOCATION: TURBOLIFT

DOVAN: You're all coming? Didn't realize we were so eager to meet the dock commander. Umbilical!

(The computer boops acknowledgement and the turbolift gets going.)

J'NAYA: I'm only coming because I have a date with Jack. Starbase observation deck.

NEEVA: Ooo, I wish my boyfriend took me nice places.

LORHROK: Docking day's a lot of work for the X.O.! And the Chief of Operations.



NEEVA: Sure, but...

DOVAN: Any key work I should know about?

NEEVA: Well, we're going to make sure the base-monkeys replace your chair, sir.

YUBARI: Oh, yeah, I heard it's "lumpy."

LORHROK: Aw, that's just 'cause of the phaser he keeps under the cushion.

(The turbolift stops. They all exit.)

LOCATION: Excelsior Corridor

DOVAN: It's because my chair is *a historical artifact*, *don't you dare replace it*, and Numerus Unus, the phaser's supposed to be a secret!

NEEVA: Don't worry, sir. Everyone saw it last month when you shot yourself with it.

LORHROK: Technically, that was the one on the battle bridge.

SHARP: Hell, I'm old enough to remember when Joshua Underwood was gonna shoot him with it.

DOVAN: And I'm old enough to remember the time we met Captain Uhura herself and saw her sitting in the exact same chair so if any of you so much as touches it I will shoot you with the phaser that definitely isn't under it.

(Dovan hits a control and the door to the umbilical opens.)

LOCATION: STARBASE 911 - BERTH NINE

(They out onto it down an umbilical gangplank, their footsteps clanking on the exposed metal deck of Berth Nine.)

NEEVA: Here comes the welcome team.

LORHROK: Is that...?

YUBARI: It better not be.

SHARP: I think it is.

DOVAN: One way to find out. Ho there! Underwood, is that you?

LORHROK: Why's he have so many engineers with him?

YUBARI: Not engineers. They're armed. Security.

UNDERWOOD: Yes, it's me, Dovan!

DOVAN: It's him.

YUBARI: Yeah, we heard.

(Someone else comes down the gangplank.)

MEYERS: Kestra?

J'NAYA: Jack! You made it! Captain, permission to disembark to the observation deck?

DOVAN: Hold up for one minute, I want to introduce you to Underwood.

J'NAYA: Of course, sir.

UNDERWOOD: Alcar Dovan. On behalf of Admiral Parker and Admiral Tenson, welcome home. It's good to see you. And the *Excelsior* is still...

DOVAN: Breathtaking.

UNDERWOOD: I was going to say "a mess, thanks to you," but fair enough. I must admit the *Voltaire* wasn't looking too much better by the time we put in for overhaul last week.

DOVAN: The *Excelsior's* in order, ready to receive starbase teams. My report. (he hands Underwood a PADD; Underwood clicks through it a bit.) Permission to have off-duty personnel disembark for shore leave.

UNDERWOOD: I'm afraid that can't be authorized just yet.

DOVAN: What?

UNDERWOOD: We got word this morning: the Perenalthorias Council has declared an Enforcement Action.

YUBARI: That's P-Counts doubletalk. You mean they started a war.

LORHROK: On who?

SHARP: Who do you think?

UNDERWOOD: The Tulians. The quantum computers they acquired from the *Excelsior* collapsed the balance of power. We sent Ambassador Shria Hst to help, but even she couldn't stop it.

DOVAN: Jehosephat.

NEEVA: Acquired? The Tulian Islanders stole those computers from the *Excelsior*.

YUBARI: I did the investigation myself.

UNDERWOOD: Your resources were limited, Commander, and there's no shame in that. Your own reports called it inconclusive. In light of events, Starfleet Security has decided to put its full weight behind this one.

DOVAN: Meaning?

UNDERWOOD: They are going to find out who helped the Islanders get those computers if they have to tear the *Excelsior* apart to do it.

LORHROK: Don't you think that's jumping to conclusions?

DOVAN: And you, Underwood? Did Parker send you to tell me because he knows I like you?

UNDERWOOD: No, Dovan. Admiral Parker sent me because I'm now in charge of the investigation. He wants me to bring him a name.

**SCENE 5J-98**

Opening credits.

**SCENE 5J-03****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR****RANDOM OFFICER #5J-1: Aye, sir.****UNDERWOOD: And did we ever get the reports from those lockers?****RANDOM OFFICER #5J-1: I'll look into it, sir.****(From behind, Dovan approaching, waving a padd.)****DOVAN: UNDERWOOD! What in the NINE HELLS is this?****UNDERWOOD: Well, I don't know, Dovan, you'll have to stop angrily waving it so I can read it.****DOVAN: Personal logs of the entire engineering staff? You're seizing protected information — private information — and I want to see your probable cause on each and every individual you're targeting!****UNDERWOOD: Well, Dovan, I'm afraid that, under the [Starfleet Security Act of 2375...]****DOVAN: And if you cite the Dominion War Acts from a dozen years ago [one more time...]****UNDERWOOD: Then take it up with the Federation Council, you impossible peacock, not with me!****(Pause.)****DOVAN: You called me a peacock?****UNDERWOOD: (sigh) It was the first word that came to mind.**

DOVAN: (deep breath) This is a good crew, Underwood, you know that. And they haven't had real R and R at a home port since before Valandria. Lords, that feels like a baker's dozen years ago.

UNDERWOOD: Barely two. The old starcruisers used to go a lot longer than that. It should only be a few more days. Maybe weeks.

DOVAN: And Admiral Parker couldn't be bothered to tell me this to my face?

UNDERWOOD: Actually, that was my doing. I was concerned you might do the same thing I did back when I was captain of the *Excelsior*.

DOVAN: Punch him in the face?

UNDERWOOD: Mmm.

DOVAN: ...You may have been right about that. But the fact remains, you've been here two days and turned up nothing.

UNDERWOOD: I wouldn't say "nothing"...

DOVAN: The improperly filed duty rosters from last year are on me, fine, but Parker knew who I was when he hired me, and Ensign Reeves' false records really are nothing. All you've found about Tulia is that this crew was exemplary at Tulia, under very trying circumstances, and you're punishing them for it. I promise you, none of them were involved. You're tearing up their quarters, reading their personal logs...

UNDERWOOD: People are dying in battles half a galaxy away because of what was taken from this ship a few months ago. Starfleet needs to find out exactly what happened.

DOVAN: We already know exactly what happened. The Tulian Islanders were being incinerated by licensed Divitian engines that were starting fires in their atmosphere. They wanted — well, frankly, needed — our computer equipment so they could crack the license keys and deactivate the engines.

UNDERWOOD: And you said no.

DOVAN: And I said no. Because Starfleet General Orders gave me no way to say yes.

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR TRANSPORTER ROOM (FLASHBACK)

DOVAN: Maybe I didn't explain this well enough before, Man. We have a law against interfering in other societies. I pushed its limits [splice] because you're the good guys on Tulia. But we can't give you advanced technology!

THE MAN: We're not asking you for atom bombs, Captain. We want a little machine that spits out some numbers that will let us seize control of an illegal and dangerous technology.

DOVAN: I'm sorry. There's nothing the Excelsior or its crew can do for you.

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR

UNDERWOOD: But the Islander leader --

DOVAN: The Man.

UNDERWOOD: -- yes, The Man. He wasn't willing to take "no" for an answer.

DOVAN: Underwood, his people were dying. He didn't have a choice. So he did what I would have done. He attacked.

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR WEAPONS LOCKER (FLASHBACK)



DOVAN: I'm sorry, Mister Man. [splice] We'll each have to fix our problems by ourselves.

THE MAN: I had to ask, one more time.

(He pulls out a phaser.)

DOVAN: What?! That's one of our phasers! Where did you--AGGH!

LORHROK: What are you doing?!

THE MAN: Fixing our own problems, Lieutenant.

LORHROK: Security! to Deck Ten, SectionAGH!

(He's shot, too. His body hits the deck.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR

DOVAN: And that was that. They broke into equipment lockers with forged access codes, then blasted their way out with the stolen phaser.

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE (FLASHBACK)

SHARP: Did you stop them?

THE MAJOR: Not one.

YUBARI: We can't figure out how they broke through the transporter lockout so fast. This morning they thought it was magic.

SHARP: Who was on duty?

YUBARI: Meyers. Doctor Maiek is with him. Stunned. Are they okay?

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR

DOVAN: We were fine, but the Tulians were already on the planet, using our tricorders to take over Divitian equipment. That created enough distractions across the planet that we were able to rescue Neeva and Kestra, who were being held hostage by the Capital. Did I mention that? How the Divitian licensing scheme made the Capitol put two of my officers on death row?

UNDERWOOD: Captain, do you think your sympathy for the Man and his Islanders affected your investigation into the attack in any way?

DOVAN: Uh, yeah, definitely.

UNDERWOOD: Would you care to elaborate on that?

DOVAN: Depends. Are you recording this conversation for the official record?

UNDERWOOD: (deep sigh) (He deactivates his padd) Speak freely, Dovan.

DOVAN: If you broke into Commander Yubari's logs, you already know I told her not to turn it into a crusade. Whoever masterminded the attack -- The Man, one of his lieutenants, whoever - - didn't just save Neeva and Kestra, but probably a lot of Islanders, too. I'd happily give him one of my many medals. But Starfleet would throw him in prison instead.

UNDERWOOD: Yes, well, geopolitical morality aside, don't you think we at least ought to find out how The Man forged your personal access codes and hijacked a transporter?

DOVAN: Curious? Yes. Prepared to put imprison somebody for it? No, not really.

(Another officer comes running up.)

RANDOM OFFICER #5J-2: Commander Underwood!

UNDERWOOD: Yes, Petty Officer?

**RANDOM OFFICER #5J-2: We found something in Waste Reclamation. Something you should see right away.**

**SCENE 5J-04****LOCATION: ADMIRAL PARKER'S OFFICE - STARBASE 911 (FLASHBACK)**

*This one's a bit fun, because, in the original scene from "Every Good Captain Has Admiral Issues," Admiral Parker was played by Phil Stonhouse. For this episode, the Parker lines had to be recut current Admiral Parker Nathan Lysne, alongside the original Dovan lines!*

**PARKER:** 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. (pause) 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. (pause) 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.

**SCENE 5J-05****LOCATION: SCIENCE LAB - OVERLOOKING WASTE EXTRACTION**

(A small anti-grav field is running on one of the desks.)

**UNDERWOOD:** So what exactly have you fished out of the proverbial pipes for me, Lieutenant Commander?

**DOVAN:** Three threads suspended in an anti-grav field? Okay, I'm intrigued.

**LORHROK:** You should be. Those white "threads" aren't string. They're quantum control filaments.

**UNDERWOOD:** And the smell?

**LORHROK:** Well, it is Waste Extraction.

**J'NAYA:** Ask him what it used to be, sirs.

**LORHROK:** I was getting there!

**UNDERWOOD:** Alright, Commanders, what did it "used" to be?

(The door opens, Jack Meyers enters wheeling a big piece of equipment, an imager of some kind.)

**J'NAYA:** An isolinear processing chip. The casing and cores were destroyed, but control filaments are resilient. Take months to fully break down. And they contain the chip's core logic. Jack, glad you're here with that imager; get it hooked up for the sweep.

**JACK MEYERS:** Right you are, boss-lady.

(Jack hooks up the machine.)

**UNDERWOOD:** I thought we stowed old isolinear chips for reprogramming. How'd this get to Waste Extraction?

**J'NAYA:** Well, that's just it.

**LORHROK:** A chip is too expensive to throw away. If you really need to, you recycle it in the replicator.

**J'NAYA:** But the replicator'd keep a log. So either someone dropped a chip in the toilet and didn't tell anyone...

**LORHROK:** Or someone flushed it deliberately so it would go missing without a trace.

**J'NAYA:** ...and we're leaning toward the latter.

**DOVAN:** Why?

**LORHROK:** Because the filaments contain forged access codes for one Commander Alcar Dovan.

**DOVAN:** Forged? Are you sure?

**J'NAYA:** Unless you put your access codes on an isolinear chip, corroded away the outer casing with some kind of strong acid, then flushed what was left.

**DOVAN:** I'm not sure you're familiar with Bolian plumbing requirements, Miss J'Naya, but what you just described is more plausible than you might think.

**LORHROK:** We'll know in a minute.

**DOVAN:** And how's that?

J'NAYA: I'll have Chief Meyers explain.

MEYERS: Oh, no, Commander, I'd really rather you did.

J'NAYA: Really? Just trying to make you look good in front of the boss. Okay, well. Some of the code segments are corrupt, but we got lucky: the metadata blocks were only scrambled, probably by whoever tried to destroy the chip. One of Neeva's algorithms is unscrambling that data now.

LORHROK: You see, each workstation on the ship saves a record when it's used to reprogram a chip, and, once we know which workstation was used, the computer will check who was logged in at the time.

UNDERWOOD: A login could be forged, too.

LORHROK: Without another forged control chip, not easily... and Commander Yubari can check surveillance footage to see who was in the area at the time.

J'NAYA: We'll at least be able to rule out your "put my codes on a chip then accidentally flushed it down the head," theory, Captain.

DOVAN: Or prove it.

MEYERS: You're all set up here. If you'll excuse me, Commander, I left a warp field diagnostic running in Engineering that I should get back to.

J'NAYA: That can wait a minute, Jack. Don't you want to see who it is?

MEYERS: Alright. Yep, okay.

LORHROK: I should mention, sirs, we were very lucky to find this. We wouldn't have without the extra manpower Commander Underwood threw at us.

DOVAN: If this thing is what you think it is... why wouldn't a forger just dump the remains of a control stick into space?

LORHROK: Same reason Bev Rol couldn't drop that dicosilium memory chip into space a few years ago: EVA and space dumps are logged to within an inch of their lives.

(The computer beeps to indicate that it's finished.)

J'NAYA: We have a result! Workstation K-Seven-One-Six-Four, Deck Twenty-Two.

UNDERWOOD: And who was logged in at the time? Let's see his face.

LORHROK: Bringing it up now...

(Something comes up on the screen as Lorchrok enters more commands.)

DOVAN: What?

J'NAYA: It can't be!

LORHROK: Who is it? I can't see from over here!

J'NAYA: Jack! What am I... [seeing?] what did you...[do]?

MEYERS: I'm... I'm sorry, Kestra.

DOVAN: It's Chief Meyers, Alecz. Whoever forged my access codes used Meyers' account. And, from his face, Mister Meyers isn't the least bit surprised about that.

J'NAYA: Now, hold on, [Captain!]

UNDERWOOD: You were the one on transporter duty that day, weren't you, Chief? We were wondering how they managed to operate it. Perhaps you helped them.



MEYERS: I... don't know what to say, sir.

UNDERWOOD: Master Chief John Edward Meyers. By the authority of Admiral Athos Roark-Parker, I'm placing you under arrest.

J'NAYA: What?

MEYERS: Yes, sir.

UNDERWOOD: Security? Please take the suspect into custody. Chief, you have the right to remain silent. Anything you say [can be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney and to have an attorney present during questioning.]

DOVAN: Now hold on, Underwood. I'm sure there's some reasonable explanation for this.

UNDERWOOD: Then you can discuss it in the starbase brig, because Mister Meyers is now the prime suspect in a crime that started a war. Officers, read him his rights--

RANDOM OFFICER #5J-2: Yes, sir.

UNDERWOOD: --then take him away.

**SCENE 5J-06****LOCATION: AN ALIEN SPACE CRUISER - COMMAND DECK**

STRATEGOS SYNOLL: Perenalthorias Council fleet has broken off pursuit.

SHIPMASTER JERRIN: Fortunate for us.

(In the background a door opens and the child walks out onto the deck.)

THE MAN: We live to fight another day, Shipmaster. Nor will the Council soon forget what our Alliance just did to their shipyards.

CHILD: Sir?

THE MAN: Oh, yes, Nessie?

STRATEGOS SYNOLL: Mister Man, if you would kindly remove your ward from the command deck of this battlecruiser?

CHILD: There's a call for you. From the Judaat prime minister.

THE MAN: Thank you, Ness, I'll take it in our quarters.

(The Man begins to leave.)

SHIPMASTER JERRIN: Before you go, "Mister" Man... Strategos, how many of our brothers' songs were silenced today?

(Synoll presses some buttons to bring up the report.)

STRATEGOS SYNOLL: Nineteen thousand, two hundred and forty.

**THE MAN:** And how many Council wings were clipped in exchange?

**STRATEGOS SYNOLL:** Intelligence is still preliminary, but we estimate twenty-seven thousand aboard the shipyards.

**THE MAN:** In other words, we won. Any more questions, Shipmaster?

**SCENE 5J-07****LOCATION: READY ROOM**

YUBARI: I still don't quite understand, sir.

DOVAN: Then let me make it simple, Miss Yubari: I want you to prove Chief Meyers' innocence. Quickly and irrefutably.

YUBARI: Um, yes, sir, I'll do everything I can. But... what if he's guilty?

DOVAN: As of this moment, Commander, that is no longer a possibility you are at liberty to consider.

YUBARI: Yes, sir.

NEEVA: The forged command codes can explain how the Islanders got into the equipment lockers. But we still don't know how The Man got a phaser. We did a full inventory of the weapons lockers -- none missing.

LORHROK: Let's hammer that, then. The isolinear chip points straight at Jack. But it is awfully convenient. If we can prove he's been framed...

NEEVA: I was going to say just the opposite. Find out where the phaser really came from and we might learn the truth about the chip.

DOVAN: Whoa whoa. I think our leading theory shouldn't be some kind of conspiracy. There's probably some logical, innocent explanation for what we found in Waste Reclamation.

YUBARI: With all due respect, sir, that's the dumbest thing you've ever said to me.

DOVAN: Yeah, right. You have a catalog? What was the previous record-holder?

YUBARI: Quote, "Belay that, prepare for an L-4," unquote, Stardate Five-Nine-Nine-Five-Three-Point-Five.

DOVAN: ...Okay, fair enough.

YUBARI: Sir, the forensic evidence clearly establishes that Jack Meyers forged your command codes a few hours before your same command codes were used to steal advanced Starfleet equipment. That equipment instantly reversed the balance of power on Tulia and has now plunged a major interstellar power into civil war. So unless somebody else gave fake command codes to The Islanders that night and framed Meyers, the Chief is going to New Zealand Penal for a very long time.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Fine. Meyers was framed. But focus your investigation on external suspects. Maybe the Islanders did it. Maybe a changeling infiltrator. But I made Underwood the same promise I'm making you: no member of the *Excelsior* crew helped the Islanders.

YUBARI: Captain, there are hundreds of people in this crew. How can you possibly make that promise?!

DOVAN: A little something called FAITH, Miz Yubari, and I will thank you to remember that when you speak about members of this crew! Dismissed!

LORHROK: Sir, I'm certain [Commander Yubari didn't intend it that way.]

DOVAN: All of you! *Dismissed!*

(Yubari is growling.)

LORHROK: Yes, sir.

(He leads Neeva and Yubari out to the bridge.)

**(Dovan sinks into his chair with a deep sigh.)**

**DOVAN: (a deep sigh) (pause) Damn it to hell.**

**SCENE 5J-08****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR READY ROOM**

DOVAN: If you can think of a loophole, Number One, I'll jump on it like a grenade. Right now, all I see when I close my eyes is the Prime Directive, written in stone letters twenty thousand meters high.

LORHROK: I know, and you're right, it's just... a long time ago, you told me if I ever have to decide between regulations and lives...

DOVAN: ...save the lives. (pause) I wasn't the captain, then.

LORHROK: You asked why I joined Starfleet.

DOVAN: Actually, I asked whether you regretted joining.

LORHROK: Never had occasion to, sir. Even when I lost Simon, and then Bev, it was because they believed in Starfleet's highest principle: "a just society must go to any lengths to defend others."

DOVAN: (Exhales) You're not talking about Neeva and Kestra there, are you?

LORHROK: I saw the bodies after the skyfire too, sir.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: My first duty is to my crew, and that includes not getting you all imprisoned.

**SCENE 5J-09****LOCATION: STARBASE 911 - BRIG**

(Dovan enters. Meyers jumps to his feet in his cell.)

MEYERS: Sir!

DOVAN: Nice salute, but relax, Chief. That's an order.

MEYERS: (deep breath) Okay.

DOVAN: So. Why'd you do it?

MEYERS: Captain, I know this looks... really bad, but I swear to you, I did not give the Islanders [anything without authorization.]

DOVAN: Chief, you're a member of my crew, I believe you, don't worry about that. But you have, as you say, put yourself -- and me -- in a bit of what my favorite mother likes to call "A Circumstance." You didn't help the Islanders. So why'd you forge my command codes?

(Pause.)

MEYERS: For Kestra.



**SCENE 5J-10****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR TRANSPORTER ROOM (FLASHBACK)**

**SHARP: Beam me and my wounded directly to Sickbay! Energize!**

**MEYERS: Right quick!**

**(He beams them out.)**

**DOVAN: Chief Meyers... where's Mister Lorth?**

**MEYERS: I relieved him, sir. I needed to help get Commander J'naya back. Where is she?**

**DOVAN: I don't know, but, Chief, we will get her back.**

**SCENE 5J-11**

LOCATION: STARSHIP 911 - BRIG

DOVAN: Okay, you wanted to save your one true love. Understandable. First, you took extra transporter duty... then, you forged my command codes. What did you have in mind there? A trade? You give the Man quantum computers, he rescues Kestra?

MEYERS: Something like that, sir. But I didn't [go through with it, I swear.]

DOVAN: I know, you didn't actually do it.

MEYERS: Once I thought it through, how could I? What was happening to the Islanders was terrible, but I can't go playing God with a whole civilization, just little old John Meyers making that decision by himself.

DOVAN: You're dead right about that. It wasn't your place -- not even to think about it, Chief.

MEYERS: Right, that's why they call it the Prime Directive.

DOVAN: But we can have a long chat about that after you're exonerated. Go on.

MEYERS: So... I burned the chip with xylathoric acid. Thought it would be strong enough, nobody'd ever find the filaments. I never used the chip.

DOVAN: Okay. (nods) Okay, that's good. Now we just have to figure out how we prove it to a court-martial board.

MEYERS: Youu think it could come to that, sir?

DOVAN: Chief, I'm not going to let this come back on you. You're not going to jail, you're not losing your career, you're not walking out of this with so much as a light fog of suspicion hanging over your head. If you go before a court-martial board, it'll only be so we can

vindicate you, once and for all. I promise, okay? ...but, yes, Admiral Parker wants heads, so I think a court-martial is in our future.

(The door opens. Kestra enters.)

J'NAYA: Oh, captain!

(She drops a bottle of wine...)

MEYERS: Kestra!

(...which shatters.)

J'NAYA: Oh, good gravy. That was a nice wine, too.

DOVAN: Let the basemonkeys clean it up, Kestra. We'll call it a down payment on what they owe us for falsely imprisoning the Chief.

J'NAYA: Sir, I'll just [wait until you're finished.]

DOVAN: No, we're all finished. I've still got an appointment to keep.

(He checks his pocketwatch.)

J'NAYA: Magic clock close to zero yet?

DOVAN: Nah, few days to go. K.B.O., Chief.

MEYERS: K.B.O., aye, sir.

(Dovan exits.)

---

KBO is shorthand for "Keep bugging on."

MEYERS: What are you doing here, Kestra?

J'NAYA: That's a pretty dumb question, Jack. You promised me a date on the starbase. Well... this is the starbase!

MEYERS: (chuckles) It's the brig.

J'NAYA: The starbase brig!

MEYERS: Kes, I appreciate it, but, if you're seen with me now [it, I hate to say it, could hurt your career.]

J'NAYA: Mister Meyers, I understand you almost committed a galactic felony for me!

MEYERS: Is that, uh... are you saying that as a good thing or a bad thing?

J'NAYA: Oh, well, if you'd actually done it, who knows? Tough choice then. But almost? Almost is perfect.

**SCENE 5J-12****LOCATION: SICKBAY (FLASHBACK)**

DOVAN: Neshent!

SHARP: Quickly, Mike. These nanites are eating him alive.

DOVAN: Neshent... we got you the kromgel.

NESHENT: Ah, when I woke up, still alive somehow, I knew it was too good to be true.

SHARP: I'm sorry, Neshent. The damage is catastrophic. I can make you comfortable, but you have... maybe a couple minutes.

DOVAN: This should have worked.

NESHENT: So sorry I didn't live up to your expectations, Dovan.

DOVAN: After everything you survived, everything we set in motion to save you... it can't end like this.

**SCENE 5J-13****LOCATION: STARBASE COURTROOM**

(Admiral Parker enters, flanked by two other officers: Commodore Robinson ("Commander Dogface") and Captain Kel Marya.)

MASTERSON: All rise for the Officers of the Court!

(All rise.)

PARKER: Order, order.

(Parker strikes a bell with a small stick. *Chime-chime, chime-chime, chime-chime.*)

PARKER: This court is now in session. Be seated.

(All sit.)

PARKER: Commander Alcar Dovan, the accused's commanding officer, represents the accused. Caitlin Dor, attorney-at-law, will advise them. Commander Joshua Underwood represents Starfleet and Lieutenant Ska of Tellar, attorney, will advise. As to the members of the court, Admiral Tenson is away on assignment. I have therefore appointed Commodore Robinson, of Task Force Eighty-Six; Captain Kel Marya, of the U.S.S. *Voltaire*; and myself, Vice Admiral Athos Roark-Parker, Commanding Officer, Starbase Nine One-One, Union. Hearing no objection, I [will ask Commander Masterson to read the charges.]

(Dovan rises to his feet.)

DOVAN: I object.

PARKER: Please remember you are addressing this court, Commander Dovan.

DOVAN: Fine, I object, sir. I served on the *Merrimac* under Commodore Dogface -- I mean, Commodore Robinson. He had me transferred to the *Virginia*. I think there's a risk of prejudice to my crewmember's case.

PARKER: (long exhale) Captain Kel, your evaluation?

KEL: The *Merrimac* was almost twenty years ago, sir. Commander Dovan and Commodore Dog-  
- er, Robinson, have both gone on to decorated Starfleet careers. Besides, Commander Dovan is not the one on trial here. Which is good, because I'd have to recuse myself, too: we've been friends since we served on the *Tokyo*.

PARKER: Commodore, do you have anything to add?

DOGFACE: Only that I harbor no ill feeling toward my former CONN officer, and I'm sorry to hear that he suspects otherwise.

PARKER: Objection overruled. We also have with us today in the gallery President Zahl, head of state of the Divitian Republic and representative to his world's permanent chair on the Pe[renalthorias Council.]

DOVAN: Objection!

PARKER: Commander? ...The nature of your objection?

DOVAN: It's...! He's... You don't bring the Jem'Hadar into the courtroom!

DOGFACE: Surely, Commander, you're not insulting a foreign dignitary whose people have suffered a serious injury due to the Federation's negligence. And you're certainly not doing so by speaking ill of the Federation's friends in the Dominion?

DOVAN: Of..... course not, withdrawn.

(Dovan sits down heavily.)

PARKER: As I was saying, President Zahl represents his world on the Perenalthorias Council, which has just initiated an enforcement action due to the events at issue today.

DIVITIAN PRESIDENT: A conflict which has already claimed over a hundred thousand lives, many of them innocents! We are pleased that Federation of Planets invited me here today, so that my worlds can see a small measure of justice done to one of those who caused this hell.

PARKER: Commander Masterson will read the charges.

MASTERSON: Chief Petty Officer John L. Meyers?

(Meyers stands.)

MEYERS: Present.

MASTERSON: You are charged with one count of felony forgery, one count of illegal arms dealing, two counts of theft from a military installation... and one violation of the Prime Directive, in the first and highest degree. Specification: that, on Stardate six-one-three-four-seven-point-seven, Chief Meyers did transfer forged command codes into the possession of the Tulian military leader known as The Man, which The Man did use to access *Excelsior* equipment stores and acquire advanced technology that transformed his society. Chief, how do you plead?

MEYERS: (deep breath) Not guilty, ma'am.

PARKER: A plea of not-guilty is entered. This court-martial stands in recess until fourteen-thirty hours.

(Parker rings the bell again to call recess. *Chime-chime, chime-chime.*)

(The crowd murmurs.)

DOVAN: Well, that could have gone better. Where are we on the acid?



NEEVA: Close. Science can date the destruction of the chip to within three days.

DOVAN: Three days? We need to be able to date it to about three hours.

NEEVA: They're working on it.

DOVAN: What else? There's got to be another way to prove Jack never used it. Come on.

LORHROK: Captain, may I have a word?

DOVAN: Course.

(They exit the courtroom.)

LOCATION: CORRIDOR - STARBASE 911

LORHROK: Sir, what's wrong?

DOVAN: What'd'ya mean?

LORHROK: You've been riding the crew hard on this. Too hard, sir. It's not helping and, frankly, it isn't like you.

DOVAN: I'd throw myself in front of a phaser for any of them. That includes Jack Meyers.

LORHROK: Yes, I know. We know. We all saw you do it a month ago. Did you forget they'd do the same for you? And for him?

DOVAN: The crew -- You're right. I'm sorry.

LORHROK: Let them do their jobs, Alcar.

DOVAN: I know.

LORHROK: They will find the truth.

DOVAN: Can I tell you something, Number One? In absolute confidence? That's what worries me, Alec.

(Pause.)

LORHROK: You don't believe him. You want to, but you don't.

DOVAN: I believe Jack completely... and so do you. That's an order.

**SCENE 5J-14****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR SICKBAY (FLASHBACK)****DOVAN: Captain.****CORTEZ: Mister Dovan... get these people out of here alive.****DOVAN: I will, Captain.**

**SCENE 5J-15****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR SCIENCE LAB**

(A test result comes back with some beeps and boops.)

YUBARI: Nope. Negative for fingerprints, negative for DNA, negative for exotics.

NEEVA: (sigh) Alright. Let's try the isolinear inventory logs again. Maybe there's something we missed.

YUBARI: Nope. We've been over them a dozen times. It's the phaser, Neeva.

NEEVA: Well, we tried figuring out where the phaser came from more like a hundred times.

YUBARI: Yes, we did. But it's the phaser.

NEEVA: Alright, we'll try tracing the phaser again. Right after we get [through these inventory logs, okay?]

YUBARI: Neeva. It's the phaser.

NEEVA: On the other hand, maybe we should just-- [break for lunch] Oh, space, you're serious aren't you? You figured something out!

YUBARI: The captain has the investigative instincts of a drunk Tellerite. So, when he said the phaser probably wasn't important, I realized it was our best lead. And, the hundred and first time thinking it over, it just... it clicked.

NEEVA: Well? And?

YUBARI: ...annnnd now I'm trying to figure out what to do about it.

NEEVA: Well, you could start by telling me where the phaser came from!

YUBARI: Do you really want to know? The Tulians were going to execute you. The Islanders saved your life.

NEEVA: Yubari!

YUBARI: Fine. Where did we look? For the phaser, I mean?

NEEVA: Every weapons locker, every security office. We didn't have to look further. Every authorized sidearm was accounted for.

YUBARI: Every authorized sidearm.

NEEVA: Yes, which includes every gun on this starship.

YUBARI: Not every gun.

NEEVA: Sure, lost or destroyed guns get de-authorized. And, yes, someone could, in theory, report a phaser destroyed and actually keep it for herself. But we thought of that! You're the one who helped us trace down every weapon on the original registry!

YUBARI: We missed one.

NEEVA: No, we didn't. I can show you the nadion anal[ysis of the splash pattern from Ensign Tigan's gun.]

YUBARI: You're right. We missed two.

NEEVA: Two? There is absolutely no way we-- (pause) Oh no. Spast no. Those have to be on the registry.

YUBARI: They're not. I checked on my way here. The one I found was registered to the U.S.S. *Tokyo*, not the *Excelsior* -- and was reported lost almost ten years ago, during the last Battle of Chin'Toka. The one I didn't find... is the one The Man used to shoot Lorhrok and Dovan and steal the tricorders.

NEEVA: But that was... We have to tell Underwood.

YUBARI: No. We tell the captain.

NEEVA: I thought you were looking for advice!

YUBARI: And then you gave me that terrible advice to tell Underwood, and that made up my mind. So thank you.

NEEVA: You just told me you don't trust Dovan's instincts. And if you're right [about this, you're right not to!]

YUBARI: If I'm right or I'm wrong, he is the captain. We tell him first. He'll have an idea what to do.

NEEVA: And what if he doesn't? I outrank you. This isn't just your call anymore.

YUBARI: You are my senior officer, Neeva. And you're my friend. So you do what you have to do. But if you try to do it before we talk to the captain -- and I say this with all the love in the world -- I'll break both your legs before you get to that door.

(Pause.)

NEEVA: Alright. Excelsior Rule Number Thirty-Nine: never get in a fight with the cyborg lady. Let's find the captain.

**SCENE 5J-16****LOCATION: SPACE (FLASHBACK)**

*DOVAN: Captain's Log, supplemental. We're a few hours from the Iconian meeting planet. In my gut, I know we'll find the Mapstone there. I've never had trouble falling asleep before. Once, on the Merrimac, I slept six hours hanging upside down from a dilithium articulation frame just to annoy Commander Dogface. I know this mission is more dangerous than anything we've done since Gevinon... but I slept like a baby before Gevinon. (sigh) If anyone asks, I'm touring the ship the night before a battle. But, confidentially, I'm looking for a nice quiet window seat, a glass of something blue, and a chance to ask myself... why am I afraid tonight?*

**SCENE 5J-17****LOCATION: STARBASE COURTROOM**

J'NAYA: [Thirty-three minutes after we run the test], the reagent sets and we're able to see when the acid attacked the isolinear filaments, with a high degree of precision.

DOVAN: Exactly how high?

J'NAYA: With ninety percent confidence, we can tell you to within three hours when the isolinear chip was destroyed.

DOVAN: And, according to your tests, when was that chip destroyed?

J'NAYA: Between twenty-three hundred and oh-two-hundred hours on Stardate Six One Three Four Seven.

DOVAN: So The Man couldn't have used those codes in his attack at oh-six-twelve hours, correct?

UNDERWOOD: Objection, speculative.

PARKER: Sustained.

DOVAN: Think I've made my point. My compliments to you and the *Excelsior* science department, Kestra. Your witness, Commander.

(Dovan takes his seat and Underwood rises, checking a couple notes on a PADD as he walks to the witness stand.)

UNDERWOOD: I agree with Mister Dovan; marvelous work, Commander J'Naya. Let me just get one or two things clear. You say you invented this method of dating the acid just last night?



J'NAYA: Yes, sir, we did.

UNDERWOOD: Have you had it validated?

J'NAYA: We sent our technique to the Manner Institute for peer review, but they obviously haven't had time yet.

UNDERWOOD: Well, then, Admirals, I think I need to ask for a recess until the Manner Institute gets back to us.

PARKER: For what reason?

UNDERWOOD: Admiral, my job is to prove Chief Meyers guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. If this new technique gives him and his forged codes an alibi, then I'm relieved to admit that I won't have much of a case against him!

DOGFACE: I wouldn't be so quick to give up, Mister Underwood.

UNDERWOOD: With all due respect, Commodore Robinson, I have no desire to prosecute an innocent man.

DOGFACE: Lieutenant Commander J'Naya, your science team invented this method for dating xylathoric acid decay last night out of thin air, didn't you? No one ever dreamed this kind of precision was possible until perhaps three days ago.

J'NAYA: We're Starfleet Science, sir. Making the impossible possible is half the job description, and my team is [the best Starfleet Science team there is.]

DOGFACE: Yet even you admit your unverifiable new technique is only ninety percent reliable. That's not quite the gold standard in forensic science, Lieutenant Commander.

DOVAN: Objection!

PARKER: Commodore Robinson is a judge in this courtroom, Mister Dovan. You cannot object. Miss J'Naya?

J'NAYA: Well, I don't know about gold standards, sir, but [we think the findings speak for themselves.]

DOGFACE: I know a bit, Commander. I came up through science division, and my first posting was aboard a crime lab. I've read your preliminary, and, as far as I can see, your ninety percent confidence should actually be about seventy-two percent.

DOVAN: Objection!

PARKER: Dovan... Commodore, I am curious how far afield [you plan to take us.]

DOGFACE: Just a couple more questions, Athos, thanks. Lieutenant Commander?

J'NAYA: I, well, I stand by my team's work, Commodore, and I'd be happy to send you what we submitted to the Manner Institute [this morning.]

DOGFACE: Please do. I'll wait.

J'NAYA: Um, okay.

(She picks up a nearby PADD and starts pressing some buttons.)

DOGFACE: Is it true, Lieutenant Commander, that you led this team?

J'NAYA: Yes, sir.

DOGFACE: Is it also true that you're romantically linked to the defendant?

(Dovan jumps to his feet.)

**DOVAN: Admiral, objection!**

**CAITLIN DOR: Admiral, as legal advisor, I really must agree!**

**PARKER: For the last time, Commander: overruled. Commodore, this court has accepted Lieutenant Commander J'Naya as an expert witness and our inquiry will focus on the material facts.**

**DOGFACE: Understood.**

**KEL MARYA: Should we take a recess while he reviews the documents?**

**DOGFACE: This'll only take a minute.**

**SCENE 5J-18****LOCATION: STARBASE CORRIDOR**

(Neeva and Yubari walk up to the marine guard posted at the courtroom door.)

YUBARI: Corporal!

STARBASE MARINE CORPORAL: Ma'am. (to Neeva) Ma'am.

NEEVA: We have new evidence. May we enter?

STARBASE MARINE CORPORAL: Court is in session, ma'am, so floor access is closed until the next recess. Gallery access is just down the corridor, if you'd like to view the proceedings from there.

YUBARI: Well, Neeva? Should I break his legs?

STARBASE MARINE CORPORAL: Ma'am?

YUBARI: Nothing personal, Corporal. Line of duty.

STARBASE MARINE CORPORAL: Uh-huh.

NEEVA: Our evidence isn't going anywhere. We can wait for a recess.

**SCENE 5J-19****LOCATION: STARBASE COURTROOM**

(In the background, Kestra's still on the stand, collating files and transmitting them to Dogface, who is studying the papers and taking down notes.)

DOVAN: It's not working.

MEYERS: It's not?

CAITLIN DOR: It is. Despite Commodore Robinson's questionable impartiality, it's actually going quite well, Chief. Trust your lawyer.

DOVAN: No. Dogface is going to use this squabbling about the science to open a crack of doubt about Chief Meyers.

LORHROK: He doesn't need a crack; he needs proof beyond a reasonable doubt!

DOVAN: To send him to the stockade for twenty years, sure. To make a cloud follow him the rest of his career? A crack will do. Junior Lieutenant Dovan never should have beamed Dogface into the Mess Hall naked.

DOVAN: (sigh) ...at least not until the Kretassan delegates left.

CAITLIN DOR: Pardon?

LORHROK: They're still going to find Jack Not Guilty.

DOVAN: But that's not what I promised him. Is it, Chief?

MEYERS: Captain, I'm just glad that you and Kestra and the crew believe me. Thanks to all of you, half of Starfleet will be on my side. You've done more than I imagined -- and everything you can.

DOVAN: No, I haven't. I haven't even done what you deserve, Jack. And it's well past time I fixed that.

(The pocketwatch, quite quietly, rings. Its countdown has expired, and a small quite antique mechanical alarm goes off.)

LORHROK: What's that?

DOVAN: Heh. (Dovan opens the watch and the alarm stops) The end. (Pause.) Alecz, give this pocketwatch to Underwood. But tell him what time it says first.

LORHROK: Your watch? But [isn't this some ancient artifact for captains?]

DOVAN: It'll make sense soon. (he stands up, his chair scraping back.) *Ex astris mirificentia*, Alecz. From the stars, wonder. (pause) Lords, I envy you.

LORHROK: Captain, [what are you doing?]

DOVAN: Admiral! Watching Dogface read a PADD is riveting drama and all, but I can tell you exactly how The Man and the Islanders stole our technology and why Chief Meyers' forged codes couldn't possibly have had anything to do with it.

DOGFACE: Objection. This is completely out of order.

PARKER: A panel member cannot object to a witness, Commodore.

KEL MARYA: Alright, Commander Dovan. Why couldn't The Man's forged access codes have come from the Chief?

DOVAN: Because they weren't forged.

**SCENE 5J-20****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR - THE MAN'S QUARTERS (FLASHBACK)**

(The doorbell chimes.)

THE MAN: Come in. Whoever you are. Please.

(Dovan enters.)

DOVAN: Mister Man.

THE MAN: Ah, Captain. Come and join me at the window. Me was just noticing the blackened and burnt-out island of Elpam and wondering how long 'til my island of Kao looks the same?

(Dovan doesn't move.)

DOVAN: I didn't come to brood.

THE MAN: It's the middle of the night. So what did you come for?

(Dovan draws and charges a phaser.)

DOVAN: This is a type-one phaser.

THE MAN: Is that a threat, Captain?

(Dovan un-charges it and sets it on the table in front of him.)

DOVAN: No. (pause) A gift. Stunlocked. Can't kill anyone. Don't try to unlock it; it'll explode.

(The Man begins walking over to Dovan.)

**THE MAN:** From your United Federation of Planets?

**DOVAN:** From me. This is the phaser I keep under the cushion of my chair on the bridge. Nobody but me will ever know about it. Is that very clear?

(Short pause.)

**THE MAN:** You're wearing gloves.

**DOVAN:** Very astute.

**THE MAN:** Continue, Captain Dovan.



DOVAN: A padd. (Dovan hits some keys on it then sets it down on the table) I've infected it with a virus. In one hour, everything on it will erase. Its contents will be replaced by a letter I've written to you on behalf of the Federation, formally rejecting your request for aid.

THE MAN: And what's on it until then?

DOVAN: Security overrides, blueprints, transporter codes, today's security schedule. Everything you'll need. (pause) You'll be visiting your wounded men. Alecz and I will escort you to Transporter Room Eight. He knows nothing. Nobody knows but me.

THE MAN: Your crew would not approve?

DOVAN: My crew would follow me to Hell, but I'll be damned before I lead them there. You'll ask me one more time for the tricorders. When it's time, I'll give you the signal: "We have to fix our problems by ourselves." You'll have less than two minutes. Get in, get out, nobody -- nobody -- gets hurt.

THE MAN: ...And my people are saved.

DOVAN: Your people get a few dozen tricorders and a fighting chance. The rest is up to you.

(Pause.)

THE MAN: Why, Captain?

DOVAN: We've got a funny habit, my people. We see a bunch of innocents getting dead and we come up with excuses for not helping them. Logistics, laws, a twisted kind of compassion. Then, after you're exterminated, we promise, "Never again." I just skipped ahead to the part where you're all dead, and I asked myself what I wish I'd done about it.

**SCENE 5J-21****LOCATION: STARBASE COURTROOM**

(There is commotion in the gallery, but you could hear a pin drop up front.)

PARKER: Commander, you realize what you're saying.

DOVAN: Yes, sir, I do. I concealed a violation of the Prime Directive. I falsified reports and misled investigators.

KEL MARYA: Why?

DOGFACE: Isn't it obvious, Captain?

DOVAN: Yeah, I hate to agree with Dogface, Kel, but isn't it?

KEL MARYA: No. Explain yourself.

PARKER: Captain Kel, [now is not really the time for further questions.]

KEL MARYA: Admiral, I beg the court's indulgence, as it indulged the commodore.

(Pause.)

PARKER: Very well.

KEL MARYA: Thank you, sir. Mister Dovan: the violation, I think I understand -- but why the coverup?

DOVAN: Uh... because violating the Prime Directive is a really big crime and I didn't want to go to jail?

KEL MARYA: I don't believe that reason.

DOVAN: Why not? Seems reasonable.

KEL MARYA: For a normal person, yes. For Alcar Dovan? You remember on the *Tokyo*? That Vorta who said the Dominion "couldn't possibly be held responsible" for eight hundred million Cardassian dead?

DOVAN: Gelnon.

KEL MARYA: You knew Vorta were immune to poison, so you baked him a cake filled with a chemical you'd specially calculated would act as a Vorta laxative.

DOVAN: I was on report for a year. I almost got demoted!

KEL MARYA: Yes. Why?

DOVAN: Because it caused a diplomatic incident!

KEL MARYA: Because you put your name on the cake! Big blue frosting letters. "From Lieutenant Commander Alcar Dovan with all due respect." I've seen you do a lot of things, Alcar. But there was never any doubt who did them. What the hell were you so afraid of this time?

(Pause.)

DOGFACE: Respectfully, Captain, he betrayed his oath!

DOVAN: No! I swore to "protect the natural rights of all sapient beings!" I also swore to obey Starfleet directives. I had to pick. The Oath listed people before orders. It was correct. My mistake was covering it up. My mistake was not trusting you. But supplying the Islanders wasn't a mistake -- it was probably the most good I ever did, forget all my combat medals! --

and if I know anything about what Starfleet stands for, you'll do the right thing and dismiss these charges right now. Otherwise you'll be putting me on trial for stopping a genocide!

DIVITIAN PRESIDENT: Genocide? This is outrageous! We never lifted a finger against the Islanders!

DOVAN: And yet they kept dying because of your engines, even after they begged you for help. Which is worse, Mr. President: genocide from hatred, or genocide from apathy?

DIVITIAN PRESIDENT: Needless to say, honored judges, any relationship you may someday hope to have with the Perenalthorias Union will be predicated on your locking this war criminal up for a long, long time!

PARKER: Thank you, Mister President, for your diplomatic perspective. I will share it with the Chief of Staff. Of course, judges, you will disregard anything in that statement that would tend to incline you towards any specific verdict. Mister Dovan, you certainly sound high-minded now that you've been caught.

DOVAN: Technically, I gave myself up.

PARKER: Thus saving a member of your crew. Interesting coincidence: your decision to shred the Prime Directive also saved members of your crew. Tell me: when you suddenly became an evangelist for benevolent intervention, how many other options did you have left for saving Commanders J'Naya and Neeva?

DOVAN: Look, I'm not a lawyer. I'm a captain. Maybe you read Prime Directive paragraph eighteen clause three close enough, you can prove that giving the Islanders the tools to protect themselves wasn't my duty to Starfleet. (pause) But it was my duty, all the same. (pause) So, at this point, I don't think I'm the one on trial anymore.

PARKER: As a matter of fact, you never were. This is Chief Meyers' trial.

DOVAN: No, Admiral. It's yours.

(Pause.)

KEL MARYA: Admiral, I think a recess might be in order?

PARKER: Yes, quite right, Captain. I would like both attorneys in the conference room, and, Commander Masterson, if you would get the sector JAG on comms?

MASTERSON: Aye, sir.

(Parker rings the bell again. *Chime-chime, chime-chime.*)

PARKER: This court stands in recess.

(There is COMMOTION in the gallery!)

(Dovan sits down.)

LORHROK: We beat the bluegills, sir. We'll beat this the same way: together.

DOVAN: You're telling me in the nicest way possible that I should have told you months ago.

LORHROK: Yes I am.

DOVAN: I'm sorry, Number One. I wanted to protect you.

LORHROK: That's pretty generous, since, between you and me and the Chief here, how much of this is my fault? Because of my little speech about "defending others"?

DOVAN: Between you and me and the Chief here, I'm not sure I have much of a conscience, Alecz. Certainly not compared to yours. I'm a very lucky man to have benefitted from it.

LORHROK: Don't thank me yet; I think I saw Neeva leaving the gallery a moment ago.

MEYERS: Uh, sirs? If I may?

DOVAN: Of course, Chief.

MEYERS: I just want to say thank you, captain, and [I just am confused about one thing.]

DOVAN: No. You have nothing to thank me for, Chief. I got you into this mess.

MEYERS: Well, that's just it, Captain, you saved Kestra. But you told me, sir, not to play God. Not even to think it. You said it wasn't my place.

(The doors open.)

DOVAN: Of course not, Chief. I'm the captain. It was mine.

LORHROK: There's our senior staff now.

(Yubari and Neeva and Sharp all walk up. Neeva stomps.)

DOVAN: Commanders, Doctor.

YUBARI: Sir.

NEEVA: We had you, captain. Dead to rights. The phaser on the bridge, the one you keep under your chair. You stuffed a rock under the cushion so nobody would notice it was missing!

DOVAN: Good. Now no matter what happens with this trial, at least I won't have to sit on that rock anymore.

NEEVA: Who the hell do you think you are, Captain?! Mark Jameson?! If the Man had asked for phaser rifles, would you have handed those over, too?!

DOVAN: The Man held up his end of the bargain, and we got you out of there alive.

NEEVA: I swore an oath, Captain, and so did everyone on that Away Team - to give our lives before we interfered! Apparently you didn't swear the same one!

DOVAN: And what about the Islanders? Did they swear an oath, too, or are you willing to martyr them anyway?

NEEVA: You think the Islanders are saints? You think they won't commit atrocities right back at the Divitians - deliberate ones, worse ones - to win? I'm not the one with blood on her hands!

DOVAN: Kirk did it! Captain James T. Kirk on planet Neural. The Klingons gave gunpowder to one native tribe, so Kirk gave gunpowder to the other, so they could protect themselves!

NEEVA: And how'd that work out for him? Do you know what happened to Neural, or did you skip that class? Do you know why the Prime Directive is so strict now? Because the Klingons upgraded their weapons, and so did we. Onward and onward, faster and faster. In just twenty-five years, they learned about grapeshot, trench warfare, the atom bomb! A hundred million people died!

(Pause.)

DOVAN: And? Who won?

NEEVA: Who won? Nobody won! Maybe the few surviving oncologists! The undertakers' guild!

DOVAN: The Klingon Empire was not kind, Neeva! Klingon occupation back then meant military governors, chattel slavery, forced abortions, famine. Kirk gave them a fighting chance. So this is not a rhetorical question: after all those millions dead, who won? The Klingons? Or us? We know how it would've ended if they didn't fight back at all!

NEEVA: That's not fair! People are actually dying because of what you did. You can't pretend to know what would have happened if you didn't!

DOVAN: I have a pretty good idea.

NEEVA: So did Brahms. That's why he blew up New Victoria. How'd that turn out for him?

DOVAN: I helped innocents. I didn't kill them.

(Pause.)

NEEVA: You've always put your crew first, Captain, sometimes ahead of the rules. You taught me that's okay, and I'm grateful. But you were supposed to know that there was a line. Some rules aren't just paper. Permission to be dismissed.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Granted.

(Neeva leaves, walks straight out the big holodeck doors.)

DOVAN: Yubari? Your turn to ream me out?

YUBARI: You're the captain.

DOVAN: Hopefully.

LORHROK: Speaking of which...

(The admirals re-enter from their chambers and Parker rings the chime.)

MASTERSON: All rise for the Officers of the Court!

(All rise, although our senior staff is already standing. Then the officers of the court take their seats and everyone else then sits.)



PARKER: This court has been forced to consider a most unusual situation. The Judge Advocate General assures us that this is not without precedent, and that the civilizations that make up the Federation have had various approaches to similar problems. The charges against Mister Meyers will be dropped. Yet now we must decide what to do with Mister Dovan while he awaits a new trial. Commodore Robinson, how do you rule?

DOGFACE: I hate to see one of my former officers come to disgrace. But he broke the law. Not any law -- our highest law. And thousands of people are dead because of it. I would rule that Commander Alcar Dovan be arrested and remanded to the stockade on Jaros Two, without bail, there to await trial and, presumably, sentencing.

PARKER: Thank you, Commodore. Captain Kel, how do you rule?

KEL MARYA: (slow breath) A long time ago, another captain of the *Excelsior* said this: "I always hoped that, if the choice ever came down to betraying my country or betraying my friend, I'd have the guts to betray my country. Ahead warp nine." That captain was Hikaru Sulu. He committed treason that day--treason which saved the Khitomer Conference and peace with the Klingons. Commander Dovan's actions at Tulia were of the utmost gravity. There will be a trial, and I do not know what the verdict will be. But I would rule that Dovan be released on his own recognizance until then, and that he remain in command of the *Excelsior* pending its outcome.

PARKER: Thank you, Captain. With the court-martial board divided, I must rule.

DOVAN: If I may say one thing in my defense, Ad[miral--]

PARKER: You may not. (silence.) I would rule for Commander Dovan's immediate arrest and detention pending trial. The Jaros Two Stockade will be notified to send a courier immediately. Commander Dovan, you are hereby relieved of your command of the U.S.S. *Excelsior*. Commander Masterson, you will take the prisoner into custody. It is so ordered.

(He chimes the bell again. Uproar in the gallery.)

DOVAN: (whispered) Jehosephat.

SHARP: What... what's the sentence? If they find him guilty?

YUBARI: First-degree Prime Directive? Twenty years, give or take.

LORHROK: Captain, you-- We'll help. We'll, uh, [we'll hire the best lawyers.]

DOVAN: No. Don't. I had to help the Islanders, but I did it this way so the rest of you wouldn't go down with me. Let me have that.

(Commander Masterson has walked up.)

MASTERSON: If you'll please come with us, sir.

DOVAN: Oof. Even your "sir" already sounds different. Alecz...

LORHROK: Captain...

DOVAN: Alecz: just remember. Wherever you go...

LORHROK: ...there... ...there you are. *Excelsior!* Present! Arms!

(Everyone salutes.)

DOVAN: Thank you, Mister Lorhrok.

MASTERSON: Sir, I must insist.

DOVAN: Lead the way, guards.

(Dovan begins to walk away.)

LORHROK: Order! Arms!

(Everyone lowers their salute. Dovan + Masterson + Guards exit through the big doors.)

(Sharp breaks the silence by running out after him, getting into the corridor just as the doors shut.)

LOCATION: STARBASE CORRIDOR

SHARP: Alcar!

DOVAN: Melissa!

MASTERSON: Hold.

SHARP: When will we... when will I see you again?

DOVAN: I don't know.

SHARP: You know, this is exactly why... you and me? Would never work.

DOVAN: You don't date guys who start wars? Honestly, I can't blame you.

SHARP: Hey. No. No self-pity. You saved thousands of men, women, and children. Somebody else chose to start a war over it.

DOVAN: You think I did the right thing?

SHARP: (chuckles) Alcar, I figured it out the day we left Tulia. Why do you think I didn't tell anyone?

DOVAN: So why would we never...?

SHARP: Because, when you know you're right, you don't hesitate, you don't ask permission, and you don't give way for anything. Neither do I. And when we're both right, I don't dare imagine what could stop us. But when you're wrong...

DOVAN: (chuckle) That's never happened.

SHARP: It certainly won't happen if we're together -- because we'd kill each other the first time it did. Doesn't work. Look, Alcar, there's a monastery on Jaros Two, mendicants, I know the prior. Maybe some kind of work-release [could happen if Starfleet allows it.]

(Parker emerges at that moment from a side door.)

PARKER: Comman--that is, Mister Dovan, if you'll join me for a moment. The Committee would like a word.

DOVAN: What, the Committee on Highly Decorated Prisoners? Sure thing, Athos.

PARKER: Mister Dovan!

DOVAN: Seeya, Melissa. Thanks.

(Dovan turns and follows the Admiral.)

SHARP: Make good choices, Alcar.

(The door shuts with a hiss on Alcar and the Admiral.)

SHARP: That's the only real power we've got.

**SCENE 5J-24****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR READY ROOM (FLASHBACK)**

DOVAN: Quite the opposite, Underwood. To do nothing -- that would have put the crew at risk. I put my ship at risk. I put my career at - No, never mind: I threw my career in the incinerator. But, in the end, I put only one person in any danger of life, limb, or rank. Me. And if I save just one person before I get drummed out, then it was worth it. Dismissed, Commander.

(Pause.)

UNDERWOOD: Dovan--

DOVAN: Don't worry, Underwood. I'll keep your seat warm.

**SCENE 5J-25****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR - MAIN BRIDGE**

YUBARI: No, of course being captain doesn't make him perfect, it just means we're in no position to judge him. We weren't in his chair.

NEEVA: And the flag officers who just threw him in the brig?

YUBARI: Also not in his chair. Not that day. You sure are letting us argue, Kestra.

J'NAYA: Isn't arguing with Neeva the core of your friendship? I'm happy to just sit here on an empty bridge and sip my ale. (takes a sip)

NEEVA: Now, that's hardly fair.

YUBARI: And you're hardly sipping.

NEEVA: So what do you think?

J'NAYA: Oh, I'm not brave enough for politics.

(She takes a big gulp.)

NEEVA: This isn't politics! He violated Starfleet's highest principle!

J'NAYA: Ah, see, when people start taking their principles and ranking them, that's how I know politics is about to start happening to me. Sure, I'll miss the captain. I liked him... and me and Jack owe him one, now.

NEEVA: You owe him nothing.

J'NAYA: But we'll get a new captain. It's a big fleet. She'll be good, too, in her own way.

NEEVA: Assuming we're not mothballed.

YUBARI: We're not getting mothballed.

(The fore turbolift doors slide open.)

LORHROK: Ah, so this where you've all been hiding.

J'NAYA: The Delta Lounge is dismal tonight.

NEEVA: And the *Excelsior* is docked and powered down for overhaul. Half the crew on shore leave. Figured the bridge was open.

(Lorhrok heads over to the captain's chair and takes a seat.)

LORHROK: Well, I suddenly have rather a lot of Saurian Brandy to share -- but I see you're already got that handled.

J'NAYA: That stuff's Saurian? Crack it open, sir.

(He does. Cork pops, pours a glass as he talks.)

NEEVA: Where'd you get a bunch of Saurian Brandy?

LORHROK: I walked into my quarters tonight and found several hundred cases stacked up... well, everywhere. I may need a place to stay tonight, Neeva.

NEEVA: My couch is free.

LORHROK: Your couch?

NEEVA: Docking day's a lot of work for a Chief of Operations. I need my rest.

LORHROK: It's oh-one-thirty hours.

YUBARI: Love watching you two bicker, but this is important: who sent the brandy?

LORHROK: Anonymous. But it must have been the captain, making a down payment. He made all those bets with me, and... I... think he knows he's not coming back.

NEEVA: Speaking of coming back, where's Jack, anyway, Kestra?

J'NAYA: Asleep! Turns out being acquitted in a career-ending court-martial is exhausting.

YUBARI: Was the acquittal exhausting? Or the celebration after?

J'NAYA: Mm, six of one, Commander.

(Underwood enters the bridge from a turbolift -- then stops.)

UNDERWOOD: Oh! Sorry. I didn't realize all of you... I hope I'm not intruding.

NEEVA: Underwood!

LORHROK: You're one of the crew, Underwood. Have a drink.

UNDERWOOD: Well, actually, I was hoping to talk to [Mister Lorhrok for alone for a minute.]

J'NAYA: Hey, he put Jack on trial!

NEEVA: Kestra, he was under orders.

YUBARI: Gevinon was before your time, Kestra, but Underwood proved he's one of us.

UNDERWOOD: Well, actually [that's rather something I need to discuss.]



LORHROK: He probably has a few good Dovan stories of his own. Come on, Underwood, have a seat.

UNDERWOOD: Well, [Mister Lorhrok, if you'd just let me explain...]

J'NAYA: And a drink. If you all vouch for him.

LORHROK: And a drink. What's your poison, Commander?

UNDERWOOD: Well, you see, that's sort of the thing, exec. Look again.

LORHROK: Huh?

UNDERWOOD: You called me "Commander."

NEEVA: New pip.

(Yubari leaps to her feet with a salute.)

YUBARI: Captain on deck! Attention!

(The others follow suit. Kestra drops her flask, which spills on the floor.)

UNDERWOOD: As you were, gentlemen.

LORHROK: Congratulations, sir. Does this mean...?

UNDERWOOD: Yes, indeed it does... exec. (pause) Now, I know we should all spend tonight talking about your former captain--our former captain. He earned that. However, we have a mission to accomplish first.

J'NAYA: A mission? Uh... sir?

UNDERWOOD: That's right. Commander Yubari, begin main computer primary boot sequence.

YUBARI: Yes, Captain.

(Yubari takes her actual station, presses some keys, and the bridge comes to life.)

UNDERWOOD: I want to clear all moorings in two hours. Staff briefing in twenty minutes.

NEEVA: Uh, sir?

UNDERWOOD: Yes, Commander.

NEEVA: It's almost two in the morning, sir. Half the crew is on shore leave. I'm not even sure where Doctor Sharp is.

UNDERWOOD: Ah, Admiral Parker has approved Melissa's transfer request. She's heading to Starfleet Medical to research the Wasting, hopefully wake up the last few victims still in comas. Doctor Maiek will be heading up the *Excelsior* medical department from today.

J'NAYA: Melissa's gone?

UNDERWOOD: As to the rest, Commander Neeva, I can assure you it's a milk run. We're to deliver an emergency shipment of xenite and a fresh herd of yaks to the colonists on Edge, at their request. There and back before beta shift.

NEEVA: Do we have the cargo bay configured for, uh, yaks?

UNDERWOOD: That, Commander Neeva, is, in fact, my question for you.

NEEVA: Uh, yes, sir! I'll see to it.

(She heads to her station.)

UNDERWOOD: Exec, my ready room, please.

(Underwood heads toward the Ready Room -- then pauses.)

UNDERWOOD: Exec?

(Pause.)

LORHROK: Oh! That's me!

(He follows Underwood.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR READY ROOM

(Underwood stops in the middle of the room and turns.)

LORHROK: Sir, the crew is... very tired.

UNDERWOOD: The crew is moping, Commander. And they've every right to. But I suspect Admiral Parker does not want any jailbreaks, and we have our duty. How much buffer time do the lower decks currently get?

LORHROK: Fifteen minutes.

UNDERWOOD: Generous. Your doing or Dovan's? Never mind. Double it. Let them grieve. We'll launch in three hours, then. Recall what crew you can; we'll leave the rest behind.

LORHROK: Aye, sir. Um.

UNDERWOOD: Anything else, exec?

LORHROK: Um, well... the captain told me to give you this.

UNDERWOOD: The Captain's Pocketwatch. Thank you.

(Underwood opens it.)

LORHROK: It went back to a regular stardate as soon as the countdown ended.

UNDERWOOD: Who told you? Dovan was under arrest.

LORHROK: I checked it myself.

UNDERWOOD: You did?!

LORHROK: ...yes?

UNDERWOOD: Mister Lorhrok... the Novachron masters designed this watch as a gift for a specific purpose: to thank the captain of the *Excelsior* for saving their world. Only a captain of the *Excelsior* can open it. That's why it always stays here.

LORHROK: But Yubari and I...

UNDERWOOD: Yubari, too? Interesting. We both have a lot of work to do, exec. Dismissed.

(They both walk out.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE

(Everyone is now busily at work.)

YUBARI: Captain on the bridge!

(As Underwood takes his seat in the center chair, Neeva approaches with a PADD.)

NEEVA: Captain, Cargo Bay One will be ready for yaks in forty-five minutes.

J'NAYA: Engineering are prepared for initial moored thruster tests.

SYLVESTE: Helm ready as well, sir.

NEEVA: Is there anything else Neeva or I should be ready for on Edge? Xenite implies a botanical plague.

UNDERWOOD: Well, there is one other thing. Although it was probably just a computer error -- almost certainly, actually -- it's just...

J'NAYA: Sir, I have been drinking just a little bit too heavily to put up with this.

UNDERWOOD: Well, Commander, the transmission we received from Edge... the timestamp said Stardate six two one seven naught point nine.

J'NAYA: But... that's five days from now.

UNDERWOOD: As I said, probably computer error. But why don't we find out? Helm, I believe the customary term on this bridge is... .."hit it."

(The *Excelsior* begins to fly out.)

**SCENE 5J-26****LOCATION: DELTA LOUNGE (FLASHBACK)**

LORHROK: So, being-who-looks-like-Alcar-Dovan, perhaps you'd like to take off those heavy metal pips and join us? In fact, I believe this fine young human here was about to buy us another round.

J'NAYA: I was? I mean — yes, I was, wasn't I?

SHARP: But not for anyone wearing their pips. You understand.

NEEVA: Drinks are only for beings, not for officers.

DOVAN: ...Alrrrrright. Let me just — (he takes off his pips) — there.

(The beings who look like the senior staff send up a cheer.)

DOVAN: *Captain's Log, supplemental to the supplemental. Now it seems obvious. I'm afraid I might lose all this.*

**SCENE 5J-27****LOCATION: EMPTINESS**

**NARRATOR:** *The Licensing Wars, as they came to be known, now involve twenty-eight star systems, and have so far claimed some three million lives. (pause) The outcome remains in doubt.*

**(pause)**

**NARRATOR:** *Three months after his arrest, Alcar Dovan was sentenced to sixteen years' imprisonment.*

**END CREDITS**



**SCENE 5J-28 - Post-Credits****LOCATION: SCION SHIP (FLASHBACK)**

**TRASSA:** And you, Dovan? Do you feel better, having said goodbye?

**DOVAN:** To Rol? I didn't get —

**BRAHMS:** No, not to him.

**DOVAN:** Then what do you [mean?]

(The "transible" dematerialization effect begins.)

**SCENE 5J-29****LOCATION: A MONASTERY ATRIUM**

(Night. Crickets.)

DOVAN: Oh, so that's what he meant! There's nothing people hate more than accurate prophecy, Triassa!

(A monk approaches.)

PRIOR: Brother L? There you are.

DOVAN: Father Prior. Look: the trefoil is out tonight, near Jaros Prime. I'm getting the hang of your constellations.

PRIOR: I'm pleased, Brother L, but perhaps you had better explain it to Father Paul in the refectory?

DOVAN: Why would...? It's my night for dishes again, isn't it? Sorry.

PRIOR: I am not certain that you are, Brother L. *Ora et labora*, pray and work. It is at the heart of our order. Of all order. I sense your heart remains in great disorder.

(Dovan stands.)

DOVAN: Aren't you supposed to at least grab my ear first?

PRIOR: Wrong monks. Besides, my mother was Betazoid. Now scram, Brother L. You don't want Father Paul grumpy at compline any more than I do.

("Brother L" leaves.)