

Starship: Excelsior

"Excelsior Biographies: Doctor Sharp"

(Season 3, Episode 12)

by James Heaney

Transcribed by Peter Stine

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

SCENE 312-01**LOCATION: GENERIC STARFLEET QUARTERS**

NARRATOR: Name?

SHARP: Melissa Sharp. Uh, M.D.

NARRATOR: Rank?

SHARP: ...Ensign.

NARRATOR: Date of birth.

SHARP: Stardate eighteen nine six three point four. (pause) So... what is that? December Eighteenth, Twenty-Three Forty-One?

NARRATOR: Height and weight.

SHARP: Short and stumpy, respectively.

NARRATOR: Please be more specific, Ensign --

SHARP: -- Doctor --

NARRATOR: -- or this interview will take a great deal longer than it needs to.

SHARP: (sigh) One hundred fifty-seven centimeters. Give or take. And about eleven stone.

NARRATOR: In metric please, Ensign Sharp.

SHARP: Seventy-one. Kilograms.

NARRATOR: Hair and eyes?

SHARP: Sort of a dark red...

NARRATOR: I think it's black.

SHARP: Well, you're an idiot. Eyes are grey.

NARRATOR: That will be all, Ensign.

SHARP: That's it?

NARRATOR: From me, yes. You still have the written portion to fill out.

SHARP: Oh. I see now. Thank you.

NARRATOR: Oh thank you, Ensign.

SHARP: Doctor.

(The Narrator exits. The door hisses behind him.)

SHARP: Let's see what we have here. Personality profile? Service history? They can look that up themselves. Physical profile. That sounds easy. (clears throat) Computer, record.

(The computer boops.)

SHARP: Melissa Sharp is in good health. She does a water aerobics workout routine three times a week, and surfs whenever she gets the chance. Also, she is a doctor of medicine. End recording.

(The computer boops.)

SHARP: Idiots. Let's give them a personality to stick it to. Computer?

(The computer boops.)

SHARP: Personality profile. Doctor Sharp is widely known for her bubbly personality. She makes people around her smile just because of her sunny outlook on life. Live life to the fullest. Enjoy things wherever you are. Celebrate, because you aren't in the morgue yet. Etcetera, etcetera, end recording.

(The computer boops.)

SHARP: And so on and so forth. (pause) Biography. Okay. Let's get this over with. Biography. I was born — Oh, computer, begin recording.

(The computer boops.)

SHARP: I was born into a family of doctors. Human, mostly. A little Andorian way up the maternal side of the tree. That's an interesting story for another day. I loved medicine. Patients? I did not have much use for patients. There's nothing rewarding about knitting bones and sinew back together and hoping you don't kill the person on the table in the process. I watched what medical practice did to my father, and decided to become a researcher. I was good at research.

And if you're going to do research, you either do it with Starfleet Medical, or you go home and talk about how you almost made it into Starfleet Medical. I went through the Academy like anyone else, then spent eight years earning my doctorate — doing whatever I could to stay away from patients, although oftentimes I didn't have a choice. When I was finished, and they finally gave me my baby blue lab coat, I got myself assigned to a xenobiology lab on Dauntilus, working on the multi-generational genetic impact of cross-species fertility. Published an important paper, actually, on ribosomes, which no one who reads this file will have ever heard of.

Soon enough, the Federation provoked the Dominion into declaring war on us. Billions of people died. Only a fraction were military. Captain Sisko and Starfleet did everything in their

power to prevent the Federation Council from forging a negotiated peace. I hope they can live with that. God knows a lot of them died for it.

I did everything I could to avoid transfer to the front lines during the War. I found and fostered cutting-edge research on metaphasic radiation and biomimetic limb regeneration. I transferred back to San Francisco, and our lab saved a lot of lives – a lot more than we would have as combat medics or starship doctors.

But then, one day in the third year of the War, San Francisco became the front line. The Breen bombarded Earth, there were Jem'Hadar in the streets, and I was dying on the Presidio grass before I knew what was happening.

What can you do after that? My lab had burned down, half my colleagues were dead, and the outside world wasn't staying away. After I recovered, I transferred to Starbase One-Three-Three. Real patients. And I was very, very good. To my chagrin, I realized I was better in practice than I was in research.

By that time, though, the War was over. My record showed a long pattern of avoiding service on the front lines. Half of Starfleet, meanwhile, held their current positions by virtue of battlefield promotion. They knew I was a great doctor. I didn't give them much choice about that. But they thought I was a coward. As far as Command was concerned, I could stay a medical ensign at a deep-space outpost until Vulcan froze over.

Six years passed. Nothing changed.

Then the *Mercury* came back into port, after a two-year deep-space assign[ment]. We were their first port of call, and I handled the routine post-mission medical checks – quarantines, physicals, and so forth. The *Mercury's* exec was a young Commander named Rachel Cortez. Came up the ranks through tactical branch: another battlefield promotion story. As first officer, she worked with me extensively during the medical comprehensive. And... she liked me. Admired my skill, enjoyed my bedside manner, and even listened to some of my ideas about how things ought to be.

On her last day on the Base, Rachel took me aside and told me all that. And then she said that none of it mattered. I was never going to advance in rank, nor redeem myself in the eyes of my fellow officers, until I'd served on a deep-space ship, put myself in harm's way, and sacrificed for my fellow officers. She told me to look for a starship posting.

I thought about it. (pause) When Rachel was promoted to Captain and given the *Excelsior*, I decided. I applied there, and she was happy to get me.

Life on a starship has been ugly. Painful. The things I've seen, the things that have been done to me... I'm not sure they were worth it.

But I'm here. And I will be here. I am Melissa Sharp, Doctor of Medicine – and I am not a coward.

End Recording.

(The computer boops.)