

Star Trek: Excelsior

Season Two: Murder in the Blue Morgue

Episode S2EA: "The Line"

by James Heaney and Sam Gillis

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OUTLINE

14 JANUARY 2009

FIRST DRAFT

7 MAY 2009

PARTIAL PRODUCTION DRAFT:

NO LYRICS SCENE S2EA-01

17 MAY 2009

A DRAFT SOMEWHAT CLOSER TO A LEGITIMATE PRODUCTION DRAFT:
STILL NOTHING IN S2EA-01, BUT MOST EVERYTHING ELSE IS READY

SIGH

8 JULY 2009

FINAL DRAFT

(HOLY CATS!)

29 JULY 2009

SHOW NOTES

In most songs contained herein, lyrics are in italics; dialogue is straight. Emphasized words are **bolded** rather than italicized.

SCENE S2EA-01 [*formerly Act I*]

SILENCE

NARRATOR

[ominious; dramatic; sonorous]

In the darkest days of the Dominion War...

INT. ANTECHAMBER - JEM' HADAR GARRISON - VELOZ PRIME

JEM' HADAR #1

Hey.

JEM' HADAR #2

[annoyed]

Yes?

JEM' HADAR #1

Did you ever wonder why we're here?

JEM' HADAR #2

[suspiciously]

We are here because it furthers the glory of the Founders. Victory is life, Seventh!

JEM' HADAR #1

No, no -- I mean, why have we been posted right in front of this door?

JEM' HADAR #2

[after a moment]

I don't follow.

JEM' HADAR #1

I mean... let us suppose -- hypothetically -- that a Starfleet special operations team is about to attack this outpost.

JEM' HADAR #2

Impossible! Starfleet could never reach this far into their old Demilitarized Zone. Not after our victory at Tyra. They are in full retreat.

JEM' HADAR #1

Of course, of course. But, supposing.

JEM' HADAR #2

Yes...

JEM' HADAR #1

Supposing they did attack. A three-man team comes right through this door and we're standing in front of it. What happens?

JEM' HADAR #2

We would fight until victorious or dead!

JEM' HADAR #1

Wouldn't take very long, would it?

JEM' HADAR #2

[after a moment]
...what do you mean?

JEM' HADAR #1

Well, what sort of explosive would you use to get through this door?

JEM' HADAR #2

You mean, if I were a Starfleet soldier?

JEM' HADAR #1

Yes.

JEM' HADAR #2

[after a moment, assessing the door]
I believe the appropriate tool would be an M-2240 (read: em-two-two-forty) high-yield photon grenade.

JEM' HADAR #1

Just what I'd use. What would happen when it explodes?

JEM' HADAR #2

Total vaporization of the door; fragmentation of the surrounding area, resulting in severe shrapnel; and a superheated wave of plasma-heated air instantly destroying all organic life within three meters.

JEM' HADAR #1

About how close to this door would you say we're standing?

JEM' HADAR #2

Perhaps... one point five meters?

Jem'Hadar #1 says nothing, but stares back at his partner until the second Jem'Hadar understands the point:

JEM' HADAR #2

Ah.

I shall raise the matter with the Vorta as soon as --

The door explodes. The Jem'Hadar are vaporized. Rol, Brahms, and Faith dive into the room, guns blazing.

*****[BEGIN SONG: "The Good Work"]*****

Their sweep of the room lasts only a moment before the smoke from the explosion clears and they see that no suppressing fire is necessary, as both Jem'Hadar in this antechamber are on the ground.

ROL

Okay, we're in. Lieutenant, Major, check that they're dead.

FAITH

This Jem'Hadar soldier is dead, sir.

BRAHMS

Colonel, same with this cur.

They approach the next door, and return to normal speech as the music plays tensely underneath.

ROL [spoken]

Hah, another door!

BRAHMS [spoken]

Not for long.

Brahms sets up another photon grenade at the base of the door (it functions a bit like C-4 in this context). This takes several seconds, at the end of which he says:

BRAHMS [spoken]

Stand clear.

The photon grenade detonates. Simultaneously, the background music (which has been playing a tense interlude for about ten seconds; measures 26-39) strikes a timpani, and we return to the musical A-theme.

INT. MAIN CHAMBER - JEM'HADAR GARRISON - VELOZ PRIME

As the team dives through the new door, they're already shooting, because they know what they're going into: a big room full of computer consoles, cargo containers, and Jem'Hadar troops!

Federation and Jem'Hadar energy weapons should be blazing pretty much throughout the song from here on out. Along with grunts, shouts, stomps, the occasional shouted order, damage sparks, and explosions -- you know, the works. It's ground combat. But this segment is the explosive moment where that combat begins, so it should be so much the more dramatic. Thank God Jim Smagata has this scene.

Meanwhile, our team is operating like a team: calling out positions and commands in short, sharp, business-mannered song as they shoot with deadly accuracy and speed.

ROL

*Alright, team, it's time to fight.
Remember, they can cloak to hide.
Lieutenant, take them on the right,
Major take the other side!*

FAITH

There's one right there behind that station!

ROL

Cover me while I reload.

BRAHMS

Be careful, Faith; stick to formation.

FAITH

Smoke grenade's gonna [spoken/shouted] explode!

As the music cuts out abruptly, a smoke grenade thrown from the Jem'Hadar ranks does indeed detonate, letting out a hiss and causing Rol, Brahms, and Faith to hunker down behind various bits of cover and start coughing. Despite this, they keep up the shooting as best they can.

ROL [simultaneous]
[~10 seconds of coughing]

FAITH [simultaneous]
[~10 seconds of coughing]

BRAHMS [simultaneous]
[through coughing]
I'm cleaning it up!

The Jem'Hadar keep shooting, of course. Meanwhile, Brahms pulls out a futuristic device from his utility belt. Once activated, this device clears the air up in moments, sucking up all the smoke. Once the smoke clears, the team's coughing clears.

Nonetheless, the team is aware that a Founder may have taken that moment to disable and replace one of the team members, so Rol calls for a "changeling check." This is our chance to introduce the leads.

Oh, and, yes, everyone does keep shooting through all this.

ROL [spoken; commanding voice]
Alright, Shapeshifter Check. Let's make sure nobody got replaced while we were trapped in that smoke. Sound off! Name, rank, and something about you that a Founder wouldn't know! I'll start!

ROL
*Lieutenant Colonel Alex Rol is me -
Leader of your team
Of your team.
I like reading poetry.
Robert Frost is supreme.*

FAITH
Lieutenant Faith Natukov here, sir.

*First Lieutenant, sir, that is.
I'm really good at Paressee's Squares, sir,
One of the best ones in the biz.*

BRAHMS

*I, of course, am Isaac Brahms,
A Major, and your good friend.
Recall the time we placed the bombs
In the outpost at Beta Kirel's Bend?*

Satisfied with their answers, Rol says:

ROL

*You all check out. Last question: [grinning] is
everyone having fun?*

He asks this because he *loves* his job. Most of the soldiers shown in *Star Trek* are reluctant ones. Not this team. Rol loves the Federation, loves what she stands for, and loves protecting it in a way that only a special operations unit can. His enthusiasm is infectious. (This is the titular "Good Work".)

ROL

Through danger, we toil and risk our lives.

BRAHMS

Adrenaline rushes --

FAITH

-- your heartbeat drives.

ROL

But whatever the threats that here may lurk,

FAITH, BRAHMS, AND ROL [unison]

We all love this job, for we do the good work!

A small computer alert goes off on Rol's gun. The built-in scanner has a lock on their target: a shipment of ketracel-white bound for the front lines. Rol resolves to go after it.

ROL

*I've got a lock on the ketracel-white
Under that hatch
Far side of the room*

*Cover me, and get ready to fight
When I plant charges to make it go boom.*

BRAHMS

Ketracel-white is how each one thrives.

FAITH

So blow this shipment before it arrives!

ROL

It may not be like Captain Kirk,

FAITH, BRAHMS, AND ROL [unison]

But we know for sure that we do the good work!

*We do the good work, we do the good work,
With a phaser in hand, and a cheerful smirk,
We do the good work, we do the good work,
We all love this job, for we do the good--!*

The music cuts off!

The sound of a Jem'Hadar unshrouding in front of Rol! A knife being drawn! A low growl from the hostile Jem'Hadar! Alex Rol is suddenly cornered, and immediately disarmed of his phaser! They grapple! (We have about 15 seconds worth of combat music for this, which was cut from the score but is in the TGW mp3 file.)

ROL

[surprised]
Ahhh!

[reproachful]
Isaac!

BRAHMS

[in his own defense]
He was shrouded! I couldn't see him!

ROL

Shoot him! Before he stabs me!

BRAHMS

I can't get a clear shot!

ROL [simultaneous]

Can't... hold him... going to...!

...and then, at the last moment, Faith is at Rol's side, seemingly out of nowhere, as she triumphantly stabs into the Jem'Hadar's side with a knife of her own.

FAITH [spoken]

Hi-yaaaaah!

The soldier keels over, dying.

FAITH [spoken]

Take that!

ROL [spoken]

Where did you come from?

Beat. No answer. (In fact, Faith is a shapeshifter; she shot across the room at superhuman speeds to save Rol's life. But she can't admit that, obviously.)

Rol is satisfied enough with the no answer.

ROL [continued] [spoken]

Thanks for saving my -

FAITH [shouted]

Get down!

Another Jem'Hadar has taken aim at Rol from behind. They duck down just in time for the shot to pass harmlessly over their heads, and they return fire. And resume singing.

BRAHMS

Disruptors and phaser, blades and knives,

FAITH

Each one of us somehow survives

ROL

With enemies 'round us, going berserk,

FAITH, ROL, AND BRAHMS [unison]

We fight to live to do the good work!

*We do the good work, we do the good work,
With a phaser in hand, and a cheerful smirk,*

*We do the good work, we do the good work,
We all love this job, for we do the good work!*
With much better phaser coverage from his friends, Rol is able to easily reach the hatch where they're keeping the ketracel-white (no surprises this time). He plants the charges (or drops them into the hatch, if that sounds better).

ROL [spoken]
There! Charges planted..

Unfortunately, as the team tries to fight their way back out of the garrison, they find that they're pinned down, and so they just have to keep fighting, undiscouraged, singling on boldly.

FAITH [spoken]
We're still pinned down, sir!

ROL [spoken]
Just keep shooting, Lieutenant! And **keep smiling!**

Final refrain!

FAITH, BRAHMS, AND ROL [unison]
*We do the good work, we do the good work,
With a phaser in hand, and a cheerful smirk,
We do the good work, we do the good work,
We all love this job, for we do the good work!*

[END SONG: "The Good Work"]

As the music terminates, the last Jem'Hadar guns have been silenced. An awkward silence descends, which lasts a short time before Rol notices it.

ROL
Why'd they stop shooting, Isaac?

BRAHMS
I believe that would be because we killed them all, sir.

ROL
Really?

Excuse me a moment.

Rol stands, poking his head out from behind cover. After gazing around the room for a moment, he crouches back down. Since their cover is a big metal thing, it might slide a little bit as he stands and crouches, thus generating sound for the sound engineers to put in.

ROL [cont.]

Ah. So we did.

Nicely done, Major Brahms.

BRAHMS

You as well, sir.

ROL

[to Faith]

Are those charges I set still online?

NATUKOV

[consulting her tricorder]

Yes, sir, we have a connection. The explosion should destroy the entire shipment of ketracel-white.

ROL

[savoring the words]

Good. Blow 'em.

NATUKOV

Gladly, sir.

Fire in the hole!

She presses a button on her tricorder as the others cover their ears. An explosion underground (actually a series of explosions) erupts as an enormous amount of off-screen ketracel-white goes up in smoke and flames.

ROL

I'm sure the boys on the front line will be grateful. After the massacre of the Seventh Fleet, we could all use a break.

BRAHMS

I'm sure they'd be overjoyed, if the troops knew we existed.

ROL

[wry]
There is that.

[beat]

Alright. We're done here. Major Brahms, break out the holo-communicator.

Rol stands up. Brahms begins to unpack something from a pack, assembling it slowly in the background. It's the holo-comm (last seen in "For The Uniform").

ROL [continued]

As for you, Lieutenant: well-fought. You saved my life back there.

BRAHMS

[interjecting]
Part of the job, isn't it?

NATUKOV

What Major Brahms said, sir. All I did was what you trained me to do.

ROL

[amused]
Lieutenant, you will accept my compliments every bit as graciously as you've always accepted my criticisms. That's an order.

NATUKOV

Yes, sir. You're welcome, sir.

But when I'm a solo operative—

ROL

The only way you're going to go solo is if I clear your report at debrief next month, Lieutenant.

NATUKOV

[enjoying the banter]
Should I be worried, sir?

ROL

No, not really. You did just my life.

BRAHMS

The holocomm is ready for you, Colonel.

ROL

Thank you, Isaac.

I hate these things. You think they'll ever get installed fleet-wide?

BRAHMS

Maybe for a week.

NATUKOV

Two, tops.

ROL

I hope you're right.

[clears his throat]

Syme to Sunday. This is Thursday. Come in, Sunday.

Sunday is Captain Siresh aboard the *Akagi*. He answers promptly, fading into existence as a holographic projection from his bridge several light-years away. (The codenames are from *The Man Who Was Thursday* by G.K. Chesterton, incidentally.)

Note that Siresh's voice should not be filtered during the holo-comm sequence, because the holo-projector makes him appear as if "in the flesh." (He is filtered in all his other appearances during this episode.)

SIRESH

Hello, Thursday. Glad to see you're in one piece.

You're ten hours early. Does that mean the mission went horribly wrong or wonderfully right?

ROL

Wonderfully, wonderfully right, Sunday. The garrison on Veloz Prime has been cleared and the ketracel-white shipment destroyed. We're ready for our next assignment.

SIRESH

Congratulations on another job well done. And, lucky for you, your new mission came in a few minutes ago. I think I have it... somewhere...

NATUKOV

On your desk there, sir.

SIRESH

Ah. Thank you.

He picks up the padd and scans through it loosely, summarizing from it as he goes:

SIRESH

It looks as if we're taking you deeper into Cardassian space. You're going to be infiltrating a facility on Loval...

This says you're bringing back a weapon, but I presume they mean a weapon design.

Doesn't tell me what the weapon is, but it seems to be something the Cardies cooked up back when they were still fighting against the Dominion.

ROL

[sincere]
Sounds like fun!

SIRESH

[rolling his eyes amusedly]
What worries me is that you're being completely sincere.

[back to business]
Turns out the Loval facility is still a Cardassian state secret. Not even the Founders know about this base. I guess Starfleet Intelligence is keeping better tabs on the

Spoonheads than their own allies. Whatever they've got, we want it, so we're sending you in to get it.

Try not to let the Dominion know we're there. Makes it more of a surprise when we use their weapon on them.

I'll be by to pick you up as soon as the next scheduled D.M.Z. patrol passes. Should be three, four hours.

ROL

We'll be waiting for you, sir. Thursday out.

The holo-comm switches off; Sires's projection terminates.

ROL [cont.]

Well, lady and gentleman, what are we going to do to keep ourselves occupied for the next three hours?

BRAHMS

We could always plan our victory meal aboard the *Akagi* tonight.

ROL

Oh, no, we can't do that.

NATUKOV

[thinking Brahms has the right idea for once]
What? Why not?

*****[BEGIN SONG: "A Toast"]*****

ROL

Well, I already have it planned out.

[fading out as music rises]
We'll have a nice, quiet evening, sipping champagne - only the finest vintage, of course - thinking deep thoughts...

Rol's voice is fading out amid the rising music, and finally is cut off abruptly by the first stanza of "A Toast," a rather rambunctious song that stands in sharp contrast to the evening Rol had first planned.

INT. USS AKAGI - BRAHMS'S QUARTERS

Glasses and silverware clink and jangle as the team enjoys some post-mission intoxication. (At various points in the scene - namely during the titular toasting - their glasses come together in toast. Those moments should be fairly obvious from the surrounding context.)

BRAHMS [spoken]

You know the old Starfleet Special Operations Unit tradition, Rol!

ROL [spoken]

Ah, but of course!
Faith, you go first!

NATUKOV [spoken]

What do you mean?

ROL [sung]

A toast!

*A toast by each one of us,
Likely to each one of us,
To the Federation,
To freedom,
To love.*

*Beginning with you,
Because you're the newest member of our crew!*

NATUKOV

[spoken]

I see. Then how about this?

[sung]

To us!

BRAHMS [spoken]

[thinking she's referring to only herself and Rol]
Excuse me, Lieutenant?

NATUKOV [spoken]

To **all** of us!

ROL [spoken]
Of course!

BRAHMS [spoken]
Of course.

NATUKOV [sung]
*Here's to our team!
On a job well done!
We'll send the Dominion on the run!*

*They may have beat
The Seventh Fleet,*

*But they're no match for us,
So here's to us!*

BRAHMS [spoken]
To him!

ROL [spoken]
Oh Isaac, no.

NATUKOV [spoken]
No, it's true!

ROL [spoken]
Well, if you must.

NATUKOV [spoken]
He must!

BRAHMS [sung]
*Here's to the leader,
Of our successful team!
He makes the cursed Vorta all but scream!*

*They may have pointed ears,
But now we're drinking beers!*

*And they're no match for him,
So here's to him!*

ROL [spoken]
To you!

NATUKOV [spoken]
I'm honoured, Alex!

BRAHMS [spoken]
Isn't anyone going to toast to me?

NATUKOV [spoken]
Really, I'm honoured!

ROL
[spoken]
Hellooooo...?

[sung]
*To the newest member of our team!
She wields her phaser well;
Blasts the Jem'Hadar to Hell!*

*She smoked all their K-White,
And she'll carry on the fight!*

*They're sure as hell no match for you,
Why, here's to you!*

NATUKOV [sung]
Here's to us!

BRAHMS [sung]
Here's to him!

ROL [sung]
Here's to you!

BRAHMS, NATUKOV, AND ROL [sung] [harmony]
*Here's to us!
Here's to him!
Here's to you!*

*We'll keep fighting the good fight,
To defend the Federation,
From this situation,
Until there's liberation!*

ROL [spoken]
To us!

BRAHMS [spoken]

To us!

NATUKOV [spoken]

To us!

ROL [spoken]

To you!

NATUKOV [spoken]

To me!

The glasses crash together climactically, no doubt spilling beer on the table with the team's enthusiasm.

Abrupt transition, without break in the music:

INT. CORRIDOR - U.S.S. AKAGI

It is some time later. Rol has walked Faith home (and the background sound has changed appropriately). The door to her quarters slides open as she presses the button.

NATUKOV [sung]

*Call it a suspicion,
But somehow I doubt it's a tradition,
For the CO to escort a new member to her room.*

*Am I right?
Or do you want to come in and help me turn out the
light?*

ROL [sung]

Call it a suspicion,

[spoken-sung]

No. **More** - a supposition,

[sung]

*That if I wore one pip fewer you'd welcome me in.
Am I right?
Or would you prefer to be alone at night?*

A pause.

ROL [spoken]

[sighs]

The chain of command.

NATUKOV [spoken]
[also sighing]
The chain of command.

A pause.

NATUKOV [sung]
Are you proposing a new mission?

ROL [sung]
Not yet.

A pause.

NATUKOV [sung]
Not yet.

ROL AND NATUKOV [unison] [sung]
*But in three weeks you'll / I'll be done your / my
tour,
With your / my Special Operations core,*

ROL [sung]
And then at last,

ROL AND NATUKOV [unison] [sung]
You / I can let me / you in.

ROL [spoken]
Three weeks.

NATUKOV [spoken]
Three weeks.

A pause.

ROL [sung]
*Dinner.
Tomorrow.
On the fair ship Akagi.
The finest dining in the depths of enemy space.*

To us?

NATUKOV [sung]
To us.

ROL AND NATUKOV [unison] [sung]

To us.

The doors close behind Faith as she enters her own quarters.

INT. NATUKOV'S QUARTERS - U.S.S. AKAGI

Natukov morphs quickly, lapsing into a more comfortable form and immediately alerting the listeners that something about her is amiss.

NATUKOV

[sung]

*I have a date with a human.
What would the other Founders think?
I have a date with a human.*

My victory's on the brink...

*No Founder has ever harmed another,
The Alpha Quadrant is a threat,
No Founder has ever harmed another,
I'm close to my target.*

*I have a date with a human,
I'm in the perfect place,
I have a date with a human,
I've pulled off this disguise with grace.*

*A toast to me!
My cleverness,*

[spoken]
My charm!

[sung]
And now to do some harm!

*No Founder has every harmed another,
I'll wipe out this Starfleet team--*

An abrupt pause.

NATUKOV [continued]

*I have a date with a human,
The Alpha Quadrant is a threat.*

*I have a date with a human,
Do I feel no regret...?*

The song ends with Faith's sudden twinge of regret. Is she developing feelings for these Starfleet officers she has been sent to kill? Or perhaps for just one of them, named Rol?

*****[END SONG: "A Toast"]*****

End of scene.

SCENE S2EA-02 [*formerly start of Act II*]

SILENCE

Despite the brightness of Act I, the Narrator is every bit as dark and ominous as he was at the start of Act I when he introduces Act II.

NARRATOR

[clearly, firmly, fully enunciated, as slow as need be]

The Starfleet Oath of Service:

I, (name here), do swear solemnly:

To defend the Federation and all her members
against any who would do her harm

To protect and serve the natural rights of
all sapient beings

And to conduct myself according to the laws
of my homeworld and the directives of
Starfleet.

May the Great Bird of the Galaxy be my witness
and my guide.

PAUSE

INT. AKAGI CORRIDOR

Rol and Natukov, laughing together at an unheard joke, walk the last two steps to the door of Natukov's quarters, which open.

ROL [simul.]
[laughter]

NATUKOV [simul.]
[laughter]

Her door opens here.

ROL [cont.]
Well, here's your door.

NATUKOV
Yeah.

[beat]

I never knew the hydroponics bay could be so much fun.

ROL

It isn't. After a week, I've just run out of places to take you.

But you... you're pretty fun.

NATUKOV

[smiling warmly]

Aren't you being a little obvious, sir?

ROL

A little. But not too obvious. You are still under my command, after all.

But tommorow's the end of our tour. In three weeks, you'll be a solo operative.

NATUKOV

And then?

ROL

And then I'm going to be very obvious.

Natukov just looks at him for a part of a moment, then decides.

NATUKOV

You're cute.

She leans up on her toes, grabs Rol's head, and kisses him on the lips. The kiss is passionate, but brief - perhaps three seconds. I am not at all convinced that any sound effect here will do the job. Kissing sound effects are often obnoxious and jarring, and I don't want that. Silence is preferable. However, if an astute sound engineer can find something that fits well here, I would be very grateful.

ROL

[stunned]

You... you kissed...

NATUKOV

[quickly; confidently]

If that's how you feel about it, I don't see any reason to wait three weeks to get started.

Good night. [smile] Sir.

Rol takes a beat to recover his wits. But Faith, having made her declaration, has already disappeared into her quarters.

ROL

Good night!

Between "good" and "night," the doors swoosh closed in front of Rol. Yet it hardly matters. He's just kissed a girl (well, been kissed by one). That's never happened before.

ROL

She kissed me.

*****[BEGIN SONG: "Never Kissed A Girl"]*****

During this song (I dare not attempt to time it), Rol is more or less running through the empty, late-night corridors of the *Akagi*. He spends some time in a turbolift, which takes him to the deck where he lives (no voice command is required or given, because that would interrupt the song), runs down some more corridors, and, as the song begins to wind down, he enters his quarters, locks the door, replicates a glass of water (which he does not drink), and gradually moves into his bedroom.

ROL

*We're flying through space
Finding things we've never known
I was finding its the case
That a guy could still end up alone
Until I found out
That textbooks don't explain
That a supernova seems so tame
Compared to the feeling*

*[When you're together
And you've never kissed a girl before*

And its better than you ever thought
And you don't know what's in store
Nothing can contain the glow
Nothing ever bring you low
When you kiss her
And you've never kissed a girl]

I thought it was audacious
To think I'd ever win her
But now I have a basis
And now I can be sure
That there's something there
No one else can see
That out there someone's
Waiting for me
And now I get the feeling

[When you're together
And you've never kissed a girl before
And its better than you ever thought
But you don't know what's in store
Nothing can contain the glow
Nothing ever bring you low
When you kiss her
And you've never kissed a girl]

(Optional: Ooooh...)

This wasn't just an accident
This was my happy due
I didn't know what her kiss meant
But now I know its true

(Optional: Ooooh...)

[When you're together
And you've never kissed a girl before
And its better than you ever thought
But you don't know what's in store
Nothing can contain the glow
Nothing ever bring you low
When you kiss her
And you've never kissed a girl]

He lies down on his bed, still glowing.

ROL

[deeply satisfied]
Computer? Lights.

The lights dim, and Alex Rol is asleep.

*****[END SONG: "Never Kissed A Girl"]*****

SCENE S2EA-03

INT. CARDASSIAN STORAGE CHAMBER - LOVAL

Rol, Brahms, and Natukov beam down to a rather dingy room: the disused storage chamber where the weapon they're supposed to retrieve is being stored. The room has a low ceiling, but it's wide, circular, and, in that sense, fairly roomy. Since it's constructed mostly out of metal (or, in places, carved directly from the planet's rock), voices tend to carry a hint of reverb in here. Built into the near wall is a great bank of fifty or sixty metal storage drawers, all of the same uniform size and rectangular shape.

As soon as the rematerialization is over--almost before, in fact--Rol is giving orders.

ROL

[serious; tense]
Major Brahms, report.

Brahms has already whipped out a tricorder at ludicrous speed and is scanning the facility.

BRAHMS

No perimeter alarms triggered, no internal sensor alerts active. As expected, the bulk of the Loval facility's security force is stationed on the upper levels, protecting the scientists.

NATUKOV

Or getting ready to shoot them the moment they become an official liability.

BRAHMS

[annoyed by the interruption]
Quite probably. In any case, there are no guards within two levels of us, and no indication that any are headed in our direction. Even if we do have to fight our way out, I'm only picking up forty-seven lifesigns. And Intelligence believes that thirty of them are scientists.

At worst, the *Akagi* is holding position just outside the detection perimeter and is transmitting and receiving the keystream as

planned. If we signal, they can beam us out in under a minute.

[summing up]
Status green, Colonel.

ROL
Hardly seems fair. How many layers of base security software did you have to break through to get those readings, Isaac?

BRAHMS
Eight, sir.

ROL
And that's why you're the best infiltration specialist in the Corps.

BRAHMS
Only because you've never tried out the job, sir.

ROL
[wry]
I'll take that as a challenge, Major.

If the Cardassians picked secrecy over strength as their security, I see no reason to disabuse them of that notion. Let's get this weapon schematic and get out before they notice we've been here.

Faith?

NATUKOV
Right away, sir.

She walks a few steps over to a nearby Cardassian computer console and scans the directory while Rol and Brahms keep watch. It only takes a moment for her to locate the correct serial number.

NATUKOV [cont.]
Cross-checking with the requisition code Tempest gave us...

Got it. Drawer CX-zero-one-five.

ROL

Right.

Uh... which one is that?

BRAHMS

[pointing]
That one, sir.

ROL

Oh, of course. Need to brush up on my
Cardassian.

Rol inputs a key code, a force field drops, and the metal
drawer slides out of its own accord. Rol peers in.

ROL

[surprised]
This isn't a design schematic. It's...

He lifts it out of the drawer so the others can see.

NATUKOV

It's a petri dish?

*****[BEGIN SONG: "There's Still A Line"]*****

ROL

[sung] *What is this?*

BRAHMS

[spoken; curiously] It's a viral culture.

ROL

[sung] *Now is this
what we came here for?*

*What is this?
Is this dish the weapon?
And if so does that mean what I think it—
["means?", which he intended as his last word, is
cut off by Brahms interrupting]*

Spoken section.

BRAHMS

[spoken]

Sir, we have what we came for. We should prepare for transport.

ROL

Isaac, run a scan on this.

BRAHMS

Sir, the *Akagi* will be here in a--

ROL

[cold]

The *Akagi* will wait. Run the scan.

Brahms pulls out his tricorder and begins the scan quietly, in BG.

BRAHMS

Aye, sir.

Rol's communicator chirps.

SIRESH [over the comm; staticky]
Sunday to Syme. Come in, Syme!

ROL

Syme reads you, Sunday. Thursday speaking.
We're not quite finished here. We need--

Sires'h's words are punctuated by the rumble of weapons impact over the comm and subsequent exploding consoles.

SIRESH

[interrupting]

Negative, Thursday. We've been sighted by a Jem'Hadar patrol. We've gotten away from Loyal, made it look like we were just doing recon. It looks like they haven't noticed you, but they're chasing us.

Hopefully, we can lose them in the Hennessy Particle Fountain a couple light-years from here. We'll be back to extract you in a few hours.

ROL

Acknowledged. Godspeed, Sunday.

SIRESH

Over and out.

Beat.

ROL

[spoken]
Major?

Singing section again as Brahms completes his scan.

BRAHMS

*I'm reading signs of morphogenic structures.
They follow Founder paradigms.*

ROL

Are you saying what I think?

BRAHMS

Well, the readings are in sync.

ROL

Then has the Federation crossed the line?

FAITH

*What do you mean?
What are these "structures?"
It sounds like they might be of use.*

ROL

*It means-- I think--
I dare not say it!*

BRAHMS

Starfleet has turned to arms of ill repute!

Spoken section.

FAITH

What do you mean?

ROL

He means biological weapons.

FAITH

Biological--? To--?

BRAHMS

Yes, I mean weapons designed to wipe out the Founders.

ROL

[intense]

Weapons banned under every law we've ever made!

Beat.

ROL

We have to make sure this... thing... is never deployed. Not by my Federation.

Singing section:

BRAHMS

[spoken] What? [sung] *Do you mean we must destroy this weapon?*

This blessing that could win the war?

We cannot now I would think

be put off by moral stink

Moral lines can't be our guideposts anymore.

ROL

[spoken]

Isaac, what?

[sung]

Laws exist for a reason.

We can't throw them out when things get hard.

That's why we're not Dominion.

Because we know there's still a line, though times are dark.

Spoken section:

ROL

Isn't that what we're fighting for?

FAITH

Sirs, you're talking past me. What exactly are you saying this... thing does? It's just a dish with some bacteria in it, isn't it?

ROL

That's all it takes.

Singing section.

BRAHMS

*If we can introduce this to the Great Link,
The Founders, soon, would all just die.
And then we would win the war*

ROL

*But Starfleet would be no more
For our founding principles are on the line.*

BRAHMS

*I do not understand what you're suggesting.
I guess you haven't checked the score:
We just lost the Seventh Fleet
We are cruising towards defeat
And without this germ, we'll surely lose the war.*

Spoken.

ROL

You're talking about genocide, Isaac.

BRAHMS

I'm talking about saving the only free
civilization this galaxy has ever seen. That's
worth any cost.

Beat.

ROL

[suddenly]
Lieutenant, what do you think?

A long silence.

FAITH

[slowly, deliberately]
A just society must go to any lengths to defend
itself.

*****[END SONG: "There's Still A Line"]*****

ROL

[betrayed]
Faith...

[again]
Faith... what about...?

Excuse me.

With that, Rol walks away, heading for the far side of the room.

Natukov can't decide whether to follow him or not.

NATUKOV

[almost apologetic]
Colonel...

Colonel!

[pleading?]
Alex.

Brahms puts a hand on her shoulder.

BRAHMS

Lieutenant, you need to give him some--

NATUKOV

[revolted; recoiling]
Don't touch me.

[recovering; punctuated]
Please. Sir.

BRAHMS

Excuse me, Lieutenant?

NATUKOV

With all due respect: you just endorsed a genocide, sir.

BRAHMS

You just agreed with me.

Natukov covers her disgust well. The true reason for her reaction is that Brahms just endorsed a genocide *against*

her people, the Founders. She has few problems with genocide in the abstract, but against her own race it's a bit different.

NATUKOV

That doesn't make it something to be so damn eager about.

BRAHMS

[annoyed verging on angry]
Look, Lieutenant, I know you and the Colonel have--

NATUKOV

Wait: I hear something.

Those words cause them both to drop what they were talking about and focus back on the mission.

BRAHMS

What? I don't hear anything.

NATUKOV

There's definitely something.

Brahms draws his phaser. It makes a charge-up noise.

BRAHMS

Where?

NATUKOV

Coming from...

She trails off as she charges her phaser as well.

BRAHMS

Talk to me, Lieutenant. What do you hear?

NATUKOV

Shhh!

A long silence. Milk the suspense of this moment, within reason.

NATUKOV

There!

But the Cardassian-style door at the far side of the room is already rolling open as she says it. Before Brahms can react, an armed Cardassian is standing there.

CARDASSIAN SOLDIER

[surprised; alarmed; shouting]
Intruders!

...and he fires his disruptor. Rol shouts:

ROL

Faith!

...but there's nothing he can do. Faith is able to twist out of the direct line of the blast, but it still strikes her square in the shoulder.

NATUKOV

[in agony]
Ahhggh!

BRAHMS

Spoonhead!

...and Brahms fires back, vaporizing the Cardassian in one shot.

CARDASSIAN SOLDIER

[death-shriek]
Ahhh!

As Brahms runs to secure the door, Rol, who has a smattering of medical experience, runs to Faith and begins sweeping her with a medical tricorder. The vital signs are bad. Once Brahms closes the door, he quick-walks back to Rol and their downed comrade.

BRAHMS

The door is secure. No alarms. We should be safe... for a while, at any rate. I hope at least until the *Akagi* returns.

How is she?

A beat as Rol takes in Faith's badly injured form.

ROL

[terse]

Bad.

SCENE S2EA-04 [*formerly Act III*]

SILENCE

ROL

When my family died on Setlik III, it could have changed me in a lot of different ways. I realize that now. I was rescued by a junior tactical officer aboard the *Rutledge* -- a good man, a very good one -- who had lost a lot of friends trying to save the colonists.

He hated the Cardassians. Hated them for what they'd done, for what they'd made him do. His shipmates made sure that the whole Federation called him a hero, but he hated himself for a long time -- and the Cardassians forever.

It never occurred to me to hate them. If it had, I could not have become the man who stands before you today. The Setlik III massacre just proved the difference between the Cardassian Union and the United Federation of Planets: we're greater than them.

I don't just mean that we're bigger or stronger than they are, or even that the Federation does a better job ensuring that its citizens live safe, happy lives -- although all those are true. I mean that the Federation stands for ideals -- for freedom, for life, for doing the right thing, for the rights of the individual -- and the Cardassian Union does not.

How could I hate Cardassia for killing my family? They were just an empire doing what an empire does.

And how could I live my life except by giving it up in service to the United Federation of Planets?

I couldn't.

NARRATOR

Excerpted from the Starfleet Academy Entrance Essay of Cadet Alex Bevoney Rol.

PAUSE

INT. CARDASSIAN STORAGE CHAMBER - LOVAL

It is some hours later. Faith is still in a bad way and getting worse. Indeed, to all appearances she is on the verge of death. Rol continues to minister to her with tricorder and drugs while Brahms stands guard in silence. They await the return of the *Akagi* without discussing what they are going to do with the biological weapon.

Rol applies an injection, and Faith's eyes flutter open.

ROL

Faith!

NATUKOV

[very weak]
Alex-- Colonel.

How bad is it?

Rol takes her hand. A pause.

NATUKOV

That bad, huh?

*****[BEGIN SONG: "Please Don't Die"]*****

Natukov inexplicably recovers her singing voice for the duration of this song. Hey, it's a musical.

ROL

*Please don't die
Don't let that final breath
Escape and fade away
Please just stay
Hold my hand until the lights
Have gone away*

*Nothing beyond the planets and the stars
Could take you now
Because I'd fight through the darkest night
To save you now
But only if you hear my voice*

*And see that I am on my knees
Begging please don't die*

*Please don't die
There is nothing that's so strong
As the air you're breathing
Open your eyes
Take me by surprise*

FAITH

*Because you know that if I can
I'll choose to stay with you
Because there's something deep inside
That makes me need to prove
That I love you more than you understand
So I promise
I promise
I won't die*

ROL AND FAITH

*We won't die
There's nothing more
Than what we're saying
We're alive
And in your arms
Is where I'm staying*

FAITH

*I'll survive
If it means that I'll
Be near you every night*

ROL

Just hold on tight

Cause for this moment

In this moment

FAITH

Hold on tight

For this moment

ROL AND FAITH

*For a breathless, ageless moment
We're alive*

*****[END SONG: "Please Don't Die"]*****

After that thrilling singing bit, Natukov is fading fast again. Her voice is weak.

NATUKOV

Alex...

ROL

What is it? Tell me.

NATUKOV

Alex... I hear something in the corridor.

ROL

[instantly looking to Brahms]
Isaac--

BRAHMS

I heard her, sir. I'll look into it.

ROL

Thank you. Be safe.

NATUKOV

[weak but firm]
No!

Brahms stops in his tracks at the protest and looks at Rol, who looks at Faith.

ROL

What?

NATUKOV

No, I...

I want you to do it. I... trust you.

ROL

I... [looks to Brahms for advice]

BRAHMS

Go ahead, Colonel. I'll keep her safe.

ROL

Thank you.

Rol gets up and hastens to the door, presses the keypad, opens it, and exits to the corridor.

Almost as soon as it closes again and reseals, Faith begins convulsing and coughing violently.

NATUKOV

[coughing, moaning, groaning]

Brahms rushes to her side. Running a tricorder over her:

BRAHMS

[sternly]

Lieutenant, I have not given you permission to die.

NATUKOV

[belabored]

Sir, I have... I have to tell you something.

Brahms continues the scan.

BRAHMS

Go ahead.

NATUKOV

[rasping, desperate]

Lean in... closer!

Brahms closes the tricorder and leans in.

BRAHMS

What is it, Lieutenant?

Suddenly, the coughing all stops, and Natukov's voice is clear as a bell in Brahms's ear.

NATUKOV

Major, I must report that I am a Founder spy sent to kill Colonel Rol and your ignominious self. And that I intend to fulfill exactly half that order.

With that, she punches him full in the gut. He stumbles backwards. She begins morphing into a Palamarian razorbeast.

BRAHMS

[being punched in the gut]
Oooahl!

The Natukov-Razorbeast roars monstrosly. The Beast is about man-sized, walking on two legs (with help from a tail), and is very spiky.

They grapple. Brahms manages to punch the Beast in its vulnerable face before it slashes him in the gut with a sound like a sword being drawn...

BRAHMS

Ahg!

...the Beast gets a firm hold on him and throws him against a metal wall...

BRAHMS

Wah!

...and beats him senseless.

Just as she finishes, the door begins to roll open, and Rol begins speaking before seeing the scene.

ROL

I've checked the whole corridor, but I didn't find--

Just as Faith-Beast begins to morph back to her form as Faith Natukov, Rol walks in, and sees a Founder mid-morph standing over the unconscious form of his friend, Isaac Brahms.

He draws and charges his phaser.

ROL

[seeing -- NOTE: OVERLAP WITH MORPH]
Founder! Get down on the floor and make no sudden moves!

NATUKOV

Alex, I--

ROL

[verging on frantic]

Who are you and what have you done with
Lieutenant Natukov?

NATUKOV

Alex...

Alex, there is no Lieutenant Natukov. All she
is--all you ever knew her to be--is me.

ROL

Then--

NATUKOV

Yes, Colonel, I've always been a Founder. I
killed the real Natukov more than a year ago,
when she was en route to take her training
position with your team.

ROL

[emotional]

So this has all been... one gigantic ruse.
Everything was just a trick.

Rol is considering pulling the trigger right now.

NATUKOV

No! I mean--

Yes, my mission was to find somewhere secluded,
kill you, and take your place. Do you have any
idea how much damage you and Isaac Brahms have
done to our war effort in the Alpha Quadrant?

I've had a dozen opportunities to kill you and
the major, but I didn't. I could have let you
die on Veloz Prime, didn't even have to get my
hands dirty, but I didn't.

ROL

Why not?

NATUKOV

Because it turned out to be a lot more
complicated than just figuring out where to bury
the knife in your back.

ROL

You expect me to believe that anything that happened between us was real? You murdered a Starfleet officer.

NATUKOV

Oh, like you've never carried out an assassination? Like I haven't helped you murder Cardassian politicians in cold blood? Pot, meet kettle.

Obviously, Alex, I have to destroy this virus. I can't allow my people to be wiped out by the Solids. But everything between us...

I've never felt the way I did when I kissed you.

ROL

Neither have I, Faith.

NATUKOV

I don't want to kill you.

ROL

Good!

NATUKOV

You're a good man, Alex. You had the chance today to make yourself an accomplice to genocide, and you said no. You don't deserve to die like this.

My mission ends whenever I decide it does. I could bring you back to the Great Link with me. There is great trust between our people. They would accept it.

We could be together, Alex. I want us to be together. I... I do love you.

ROL

[pained]
Me, too.

Rol is roiling. He diverts the subject.

ROL [cont.]

What about Isaac?

Beat.

NATUKOV

Major Brahms is a soldier. It's what he is, what he'll always be. You know he'd never willingly come with us, never stop fighting to destroy us. And you know that he's a good enough soldier that he'd eventually succeed.

I'm sorry, Alex. He's too dangerous.

ROL

So you have to kill him.

NATUKOV

I'm sorry.

ROL

And me? If I refuse?

NATUKOV

Please don't refuse, Alex. Even though you're the one with the phaser, even though I'm wounded, you know I could still overpower you.

You're a spy, too, Alex. You understand the position I'm in.

ROL

I do.

But I'm a spy for the Federation, not the Dominion.

NATUKOV

Great Bird, Alex, don't give up your life for the Federation! Whatever happens here, you and I both know who's going to win the war. Don't throw away your life for nothing.

Beat.

Then Rol, apparently satisfied, smiles.

ROL

[almost chipper]

Well, you haven't given me much of a choice, have you? Much as it hurts, I guess this is what it has to be. And I do love you.

He lowers his phaser and holsters it.

Faith is overcome.

NATUKOV

[emotional]

Thank you, Alex. Thank you. You'll always be happy with us, I promise. I promise.

Staring gratefully at him for a moment, she takes a breath, turns to the computer terminal near her, and begins pressing keys.

NATUKOV [cont.]

[takes a breath]

Now we just have to destroy this virus. Then we can call the Vorta and--

A phaser blast rings out from the muzzle of Rol's recharged phaser and bores into Faith's back.

NATUKOV [cont.]

[agonized yell]

ROL

[painfully]

No, you haven't given me much of a choice, Faith. And, much as it hurts -- this is what it has to be.

He continues firing, and she continues yelling, for five long seconds. Finally, her voice vanishes as she demorphs to her gelatinous form and--as Rol continues firing--turns black, then melts away to a pile of ash. Faith is dead.

ROL

And I do love you.

Rol holsters the phaser and steps up to her body.

*****[BEGIN SONG: "Never Kissed A Girl (Reprise)"]*****

ROL

*This is just an accident
A passion that was just too strong
I didn't know that her kiss meant
That everything would go so wrong*

*When she leaves you
And you've never kissed a girl before
And she's gone before you knew her
And you're shaken to the core
There's nothing that could stop the blow
And all you think of is that glow
From when you kissed her
And you'd never kissed a girl...*

*****[END SONG: "Never Kissed A Girl (Reprise)"]*****

That's all. Rol walks away from Faith's "body" without ceremony and over to Brahms, whom he revives with a hypospray.

BRAHMS

[groan]

ROL

Isaac. Are you alright?

BRAHMS

Colonel. Yes. I'll live. I think my legs are broken.

ROL

I think you're right. You'll be okay until the Akagi gets back?

BRAHMS

Yes, sir. But if you have any painkillers in that first aid kit...

ROL

Of course.

He rekeys the hypo and injects Brahms.

BRAHMS

Thank you, sir.

ROL

You're very welcome. Now, then, if you'll give me a moment, I need to make certain the weapon is secure.

BRAHMS

[confused]

Sir? I thought you were going to destroy it.

A shadow crosses Rol's face.

ROL

It did seem brutal, on the face of it. But we don't have a choice. The Federation must end this war--must win this war--any way it can. If that means we have to wipe out all the Founders...

After all, a just society must go to any lengths to defend itself.

BRAHMS

I'm glad you've come to see that, sir.

[grimmer]

Lieutenant Natukov. Is she...

Silence. Rol lowers his eyes.

BRAHMS [cont.]

I see.

I'm... I'm sorry, Alex.

ROL

No, Isaac, it wasn't your fault. I'm sorry.

BRAHMS

Don't be. Love is...

Brahms thinks for a moment, and when he finishes, he's talking about some unspoken incident in his past as much as he is to Mr. Rol.

BRAHMS [cont.]

Love does strange things to us.

ROL
[with a tinge of sarcasm]
Sure it does.

SIRESH [over the comm]
Sunday to Syme.

Beat. Rol and Brahms look at each other for a moment longer. Then it's back to business.

Rol taps his commbadge.

ROL
Syme here. Thursday speaking. Welcome back,
Sunday.

SIRESH
Good to be back. We managed to make it look like we blew up in the particle fountain. The Dominion'll be looking for our debris for hours before they realize we just slingshotted around and came back here.

What's your status?

ROL
We've secured the weapon. It wasn't a design; it's the genuine article.

SIRESH
I look forward to seeing it. Your team?

ROL
Tuesday's dead. Wednesday and I are still here, but Wednesday's wounded.

SIRESH
Understood.

We can only get close enough for a transporter window once every two and a half minutes without tripping the Cardassian sensor grid. Protocol says that I beam up the weapon first, then the two of you. Will Wednesday be alright for another three minutes or so?

Brahms, now sitting up, hits his combdage.

BRAHMS

Wednesday here. I'll be fine, Captain. Just--
let's get the hell out of here.

SIRESH

Will do. Energizing.

The sample is beamed away.

SIRESH

Got it. We'll be back for you in a couple
minutes. Sunday out.

A moment, then Rol begins to mull what he's just done.

*****[BEGIN SONG: "In The Pale Moonlight"]*****

ROL

*I just murdered a race.
Same if I'd pulled the trigger.
Tell me, Isaac,
why did I just commit a genocide?*

*Thought I'd found her at last
A girl who loved what we stood for
Who'd die for Starfleet
But live for our ideals -- not a spy!*

*It's all a lie.
I was the only who knew
Ethics must not be broke.
(But) were they a joke?
And I, the sap who bought it?*

BRAHMS

*It was no crime
You did just what you had to do
You saved the human race
It's no disgrace.
Indeed, you've made a hero out of you.*

ROL

"Hero" is the last thing on my mind.

BRAHMS

[interrupting; singing over Rol's last two words]
*Nine-point-eight trillion lives
(A) hundred fifty-one planets
Are these worthless
Because you think we've crossed some moral line?*

*A bit of grime
Is a fair bargain, don't you think?
Your rules would not be read
If we were dead
Our ethics had to bend out on the brink.*

ROL

*It was sublime.
My solitary
Moral view*

ROL [harmony]
*Now I'd do anything;
Country and King
They have made a
monster out of me.*

BRAHMS [harmony]
*I would do anything;
Country and King
They will make a hero out
of me.*

BRAHMS

We crossed no line.

ROL

[agreeing]
We crossed no line.

BRAHMS

So we agree?

ROL

Yes, we agree.

BRAHMS

How can this be?

ROL

[spoken]
I'll tell you, Isaac:

[sung]
*There **is** no line.*

SIRESH [over comm]

END CREDITS

Sixty seconds or so of quiet music back the Narrator's (subdued) reading of cast and crew:

In that episode of *Star Trek: Excelsior*:

Colonel Alex Rol: Michael Liebmann
Major Isaac Brahms: Julian Bane
Lieutenant Faith Natukov: Kennedy
Captain Sharvah Siresh: Jim Smagata
Cardassian Soldier: Gareth Bowley
Jem'Hadar #1: Samuel Gillis
Jem'Hadar #2: James Heaney
Narrator: Mike Hennessy

Executive Produced by James Heaney.

[music credits are back in flux]

Post-Production:
Mike Hennessy
Jim Smagata
Garry Cobbum

Special thanks to Michael Hudson, David Allender, the *Excelsior* roleplaying game, and Gene Roddenberry.

No infringement is intended against Star Trek, which remains the property of CBS Paramount Television.

Star Trek: Excelsior will return next month with the penultimate episode of season two.

With that, the Narration gives way to Rol's voice and the final song:

*****[BEGIN SONG: "Nothing Gold Can Stay"]*****

ROL
*Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day,*

*So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing, nothing gold can stay.*

*****[END SONG: "Nothing Gold Can Stay"]*****