

*Starship: Excelsior*

**"The Speech That Lies at the Center of His Soul"**

(Season 6, Episode 10)

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

**SCENE 0/990**

**NARRATOR:** *This episode of Starship Excelsior includes sensitive content consistent with a TV-14 rating. Discretion is advised.*

**SCENE 1****LOCATION: PRISON CELL – JAROS II STOCKADE**

(The morning wake-up klaxon blares lazily three times through the cell block.)

**COMPUTER:** *Zero six hundred hours. Awake. Awake. All prisoners to roll call positions.*

**L:** Computer, snooze.

(The computer beeps)

**COMPUTER:** *Snooze not available. Please assume roll call position.*

**L:** (Sigh) Right.

(He stands)

(The Warden approaches the cell door.)

**WARDEN:** Good morning! I'm Lieutenant Callie, making the morning rounds, and I just wanted to welcome you to my agricultural detail.

**L:** Uh-huh...

**WARDEN:** And, of course, you're... (she presses some buttons on her PADD) oh, I see you go by "L" now? Looking forward to hearing that story sometime. Anything I can do for you, L?

**L:** Yeah, move me to a Klingon prison. The guards there don't pretend to be your friends.

WARDEN: True, but they're not as pretty. See you outside, "L".

(She walks on.)

LOCATION: CAFETERIA - JAROS II STOCKADE

(The klaxon blares lazily through the cell block.)

COMPUTER: *Zero six-thirty hours. Bloc A prisoners to the cafeteria.*

(The replicator computer beeps)

COMPUTER-REPLICATOR: *Good morning, Charlie. There are forty days left in your sentence. What do you want today?*

RANDOM PRISONER ("CHARLIE"): Gimme a cheeseburger, Computer. Egg on top. And Fries.

COMPUTER-REPLICATOR: Replicating. (it beeps and replicates.) Have a good day, Charlie.

(The prisoner walks away with a breakfast tray.)

RANDOM PRISONER: Thanks, 'puter.

(Lraac Ovdan steps up.)

COMPUTER-REPLICATOR: *Good morning, L. There are three thousand five hundred and six days left in your sentence. What do you want today?*

(Silence.)

LORHROK (*From 6F-41*): *I don't want anything from someone with this much hate inside him. Just... stay away.*

(Computer beeps an error)

COMPUTER-REPLICATOR: *Please restate request. What would you like to eat, L?*

(Silence. Though we can hear the prisoners talking as they eat in the background.)

(Computer beeps an error)

COMPUTER-REPLICATOR: *Your most common request is oatmeal, cold. Should I replicate th—*

L: No. (pause) *Irinello*. Special occasion.

(It beeps and replicates.)

COMPUTER-REPLICATOR: *Replicating. Have a good day, L.*

LOCATION: FARMING FIELD - JAROS II STOCKADE

WARDEN: Yeah, Tom, go ahead, have an ear of the corn. But we still have a lot to harvest today! L? You doing okay?

L: Um. Yeah. Sure.

WARDEN: I just... Well, I know you have experience, but you're moving, like... well, have you used this brand of laser thresher before?

LORHROK (*From 6F-37*): *You'll till the fields, grow old, and die -- your greatest fear since the day you were born!*

WARDEN: L?

L: I'm just... a little tired.

WARDEN: So you hold the thresher to the grain like this, and then press the button.

(She presses the button with an audible click and a short laser bursts out and threshes some grain. It clicks again as she disengages it.)

WARDEN: You see?

L: Sure. Yeah. Gimme a day, Lieutenant. A day's all I need.

WARDEN: Okay, L. But, if you need anything...

L: I don't.

(He walks away)

(The klaxon lazily sounds)

LOCATION: PRISON CELL – JAROS II STOCKADE

COMPUTER: *Sixteen thirty. Thirty minutes remain for open recreation.*

LORHROK: (From 5J-26/4E-08) *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: (From 5J-26/4E-08) *I was? I mean — yes, I was, wasn't I?*

SHARP: (From 5J-26/4E-08) *But not for anyone wearing their pips. You understand.*

LORHROK: (From 5J-26/4E-08) *He understands.*

NEEVA: (From 5J-26/4E-08) *Drinks are only for beings, not for officers.*

(The computer beeps)

COMPUTER: *Commander, you have not engaged in recreation activities in over three days. Do you require a menu of recreation — ?*

L: *No. Close my cell door. Mark do not disturb.*

(The computer beeps an acknowledgement. An opaque forcefield snaps on.)

DOVAN: (From 5J-26/4E-08) *...Alrrrrright. Let me just uh — (He removes his pips, putting them on the table) — there.*

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

DOVAN: (From 5J-26/4E-08) *Captain's Log, supplemental to the supplemental. Now it seems obvious. I'm afraid I might lose all this.*

(The klaxon lazily sounds)

LOCATION: PRISON CELL – JAROS II STOCKADE - THE NEXT MORNING

COMPUTER: *Zero six hundred hours. Awake. Awake. All prisoners to roll call positions.*

(From 309-25 We hear the red alert klaxon)

HARKLESS: (From 309-25) *In range of Gevinon Prime, sir.*

DOVAN: (From 309-25) *target all inhabited surfaces. Compute for total extermination with minimum time interval and ammunition expenditure. I'm fine, Doctor. Killing a planet isn't the soul-destroying horror it's cracked up to be.*

(The klaxon lazily sounds)

COMPUTER: *Repeat: Awake. Awake. All prisoners to roll call positions.*

(He gets up.)

L: Yeah. Fine. I can do it one last time. (pause) Computer, time to breakfast?

COMPUTER: (beep) *Cell doors will unlock in thirty minutes. Prisoners are welcome to perform hygiene rituals appropriate to their species. Would you like a list of recommended hygiene for Species: Bolian?*

L: No, we only have half an hour. Open a new letter instead. Dictation.

(The computer beeps in acknowledgment)

L: Dear Skipper, I'm sorry about the things I said to you on your last visit. Thank you for writing to me anyway. I'm a shabby excuse for a friend. You're it, you know. If it weren't for



you, I'd just be talking to myself. So, I threw it all in your face. And now, here I am... talking to myself. (pause) We spend so much of our lives unhappy, and we spend so much of the rest of our time trying not to think about it. When they write my obituary, it'll be all about the adventures and the first contacts. No one's gonna mention how I spent half a year after the *Centaur* in a sickbay drinking and learning to hate. Maybe they should. By this point, I've spent more of my life being that guy than the other one. Secretly, don't we all? (pause) The hard part about prison, though, is that they want to "help" you so bad. They've got Betazoids everywhere - we don't have a right to the privacy of our own minds. It took a long time to arrange, but I know what needs to happen. And I was able to filch a laser thresher that'll get the job done. I just wanted you to know that this isn't your fault. It's me. It's all me. It always has been all me. The last thing you asked -- well, shouted, but I deserved it -- was "What the hell is wrong with you?" And I don't know how to answer that. I never have. There was a man, though, once, a long time ago, who I think had an inkling. I think I owe it to you to tell you about him, so you know it really wasn't you -- you tried harder than anyone. When I'm done... well, I won't take up any more of your time. This was a few years ago, when Admiral Parker still had a few centimeters of faith in me and Melissa had managed to finagle me into that monastery. I still felt... almost like me...

**SCENE 2****LOCATION: CHAPEL**

(The monks are lined up on either side of the nave, singing in polyphony. The language is not Federation Standard. L is one of the prominent voices.)

**BROTHER DISMAS:** Good! A notable improvement since last week, especially you, Brother L.

**L:** Oh! Uh, thank you, Brother Dismas.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** This schola may yet be made fit for joint services. Thank you, gentlemen. You're excused to your works.

(Everyone files out, quietly, although with some pleasant murmuring. There's a big heavy church door that creaks gently on its old hinges as it swings open to release the choir into the corridor.)

**SISTER FAY:** Brother L? Brother L?

(She hurries to catch up with him. And they walk together.)

**L:** Sister Fay! What are you doin' over here with the brothers? I was heading to the garden, but maybe you could swing by the refectory with me and distract Father Paul so I can swipe a marsh pudding?

**SISTER FAY:** (mildly disgusted) Marsh pudding? Ugh! Just take mine next time. Tastes like swamp.

**L:** Still the closest thing to a dessert in this place.

SISTER FAY: We don't have time, Brother. Your porter told me you have the Tower Key this week.

L: Sure. What'd'ya need to get up there for? Bit of a long walk from your convent.

SISTER FAY: The Crystal Eye.

L: What about it? The Michaelmas lighting is still a month away.

SISTER FAY: By the old Rule, the sisters are responsible for maintaining it, so Mother Superior sent me to clean it.

L: Whoa, what'd you do to get your abbess mad?

SISTER FAY: What'd you do to get your Father Prior mad?

L: What do you mean?

SISTER FAY: The Keyholder can't leave the unlocked door unattended, which means...

(Pause)

L: ...which means I'm cleaning the Eye, too. Well, that explains why Father Paul was so nice when he gave it to me.

SISTER FAY: (Dramatic sigh) Brother, why do I keep finding myself in this position since I met you?

L: I could just as easily ask you the same thing, Fay.

SISTER FAY: My formation director thinks you're a threat to my vocation.

L: Well, my formation director thinks I'm a threat to everyone's vocation.

SISTER FAY: Father Paul?

L: Yeahhhhhh.

**SCENE 3****LOCATION: FATHER PRIOR'S CELL**

(A fire blazes in the fireplace. Then, we hear some knocking on the wooden door.)

**FATHER PRIOR:** Come!

(Brother Dismas opens the door and enters.)

**BROTHER DISMAS:** You sent for me, Father Prior?

**FATHER PRIOR:** I did, Brother Dismas. Have a seat. Warm yourself by the fire.

(He does so.)

**BROTHER DISMAS:** Oh thank you, Father. The Mausoleum gets cold this time of year.

**FATHER PRIOR:** Oh? What brought you there?

**BROTHER DISMAS:** Oh, memories. Once, when I was wandering there as a boy, I... I felt a profound... connection to the race that built this place. They never knew Our Lord, yet they left behind such beautiful things. The eternal searchlight there, for example -- They didn't need to know His face to strive for Him -- to be loved by Him.

**FATHER PRIOR:** The inheritance the people of this world left us is indeed beyond counting.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** When my own prayers run dry, I sometimes go there to ask for their... intercession.

FATHER PRIOR: I'm sorry, Dizzy, I didn't mean to pry.

BROTHER DISMAS: Oh you've never pried, Father, and you never would.

FATHER PRIOR: Well, I don't want to keep you from your prayer. It's just, this, uh... Dizzy, I saw you've petitioned once again for Brother L to be admitted to the novitiate.

BROTHER DISMAS: Why, yes, Father. Despite the, ah, incident last year with the fire, he has grown a great deal. He would have the support of the brothers, I'm sure.

FATHER PRIOR: Even Father Paul?

BROTHER DISMAS: Fortunately for Brother L, (pause) Father Paul is not the only vote.

FATHER PRIOR: Don't you think this would be a little... premature? Brother L has never actually petitioned for the novitiate himself.

BROTHER DISMAS: Oh, he's been a postulant for so long, Father. I think he's just being modest.

FATHER PRIOR: (chuckles) Modest? Brother L?

BROTHER DISMAS: I take your point, but he works hard. Surely even you see that.

FATHER PRIOR: I am aware of everything that goes on in our house, Brother. Be thankful that you are not.

BROTHER DISMAS: Of course, Father.

FATHER PRIOR: He has worked wonders in the singing gardens... (pause) It speaks well of you, Dismas, to have befriended L -- and it speaks well of him, too. But there is more to the novitiate than dedication, or even goodness.

BROTHER DISMAS: What's more important to our work than goodness?

FATHER PRIOR: Most who come to us are lifelong members of the Faith. Would it surprise you to learn that Brother L is not?

BROTHER DISMAS: The fire of a convert burns hot, Father.

FATHER PRIOR: And fast.

BROTHER DISMAS: How long since he received the rites of initiation?

FATHER PRIOR: Would you be quite shocked if I told you he hasn't?

BROTHER DISMAS: He -- he isn't even a...?

FATHER PRIOR: You see the difficulty in naming such a man to the novitiate.

BROTHER DISMAS: Father, what is he doing here, if he isn't discerning...?

FATHER PRIOR: Healing, I hope.

BROTHER DISMAS: But he wears the habit —!

FATHER PRIOR: You understand, Dizzy, that I would no more expose Brother L's life to you than I would yours to him. That is all there is to say.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** Of course, Father.

**FATHER PRIOR:** But even if Brother L possessed immaculate faith and impregnable understanding, there would still be the matter of his heart.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** His heart? I know him well, Brother Prior. It's a good heart.

**FATHER PRIOR:** All men have good hearts, Brother. Not all are ready to hear them.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** What?

**FATHER PRIOR:** (sigh) You came to us as a child. You've been here even longer than I, and there are things beyond our walls you have only glimpsed. You may understand in time. Until then, (pause) you'll have to trust me--and let Brother L walk his own path, without your help.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** Respectfully, Father, I don't think we should give up on him.

**FATHER PRIOR:** Nor have I asked you to. You are his best hope. Good night, Brother Dismas.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** Good night, Father.



**SCENE 4****LOCATION: THE BELL TOWER**

(Fay and L are finishing polishing the gem. They both have bottles of space windex, which they spray on various faces of the gem at intervals.)

L: (Sigh) When I signed up to be a monk, I thought it was going to be all staring into campfires until I had visions of Kahless.

SISTER FAY: (laughing slightly) Wrong monks, Brother.

L: Yeah... I get that a lot. (Pause) Just what exactly is this giant crystal supposed to be worth to everybody around here anyway? Is it meant to be like the eye of a God or something?

SISTER FAY: Well, it's not really our crystal.

L: What?

SISTER FAY: Our order didn't build the monastery. The Jarosians built it two thousand years ago, before they went extinct. Come on, you know this. Everyboso knows this.

L: No, keep going.

SISTER FAY: Our charism is to preserve and understand what they built, who they were, and how they knew God.

L: Then why am I always mopping?

SISTER FAY: Because two weeks after you got here, you burned down half the cloister!

L: Look, a modern building like that, you know nobody thought it would burn that fast. And I was provoked!

SISTER FAY: Besides, well... is it true what the brothers say about you? What you did before you came here?

L: Ugh, finished.

(He drops a rag in a bucket with a splash.)

L: Why? What did the brothers tell you?

SISTER FAY: That's why you know every star in the sky: you were a space pirate captain.

(Pause)

L: Sorry. That's not something I want to get into.

SISTER FAY: Well, okay... I've really got to be getting back.

L: Oh, please, Sister? We just spent hours wiping the grime off this ancient crystal.

SISTER FAY: And... now we're done. The chapel will glitter with a hundred rainbows when the sun rises again. And I will be hiding under my cot sleeping when they summon the sisters to dawn choir.

L: Just a little stargazing? Still a few minutes to vespers.

(Pause)

SISTER FAY: You'll show me the comet?

L: The Remilak? Alright, Fay, deal. Now, turn toward the west.

(Dismas emerges from the stairwell.)

BROTHER DISMAS: Ah, there you are, Brother L. Father Paul expected you'd be finished with the Eye an hour ago.

BROTHER L: Father Paul is not a talented liar.

BROTHER DISMAS: And one of the sisters graces our order with her presence! Sister, uh, Fay, was it?

SISTER FAY: That's right.

BROTHER L: It's a strange name, isn't it?

SISTER FAY: In what way?

BROTHER L: It just sounds so... human. You know?

SISTER FAY: No. What's a "human"?

BROTHER L: You're kidding me.

BROTHER DISMAS: To be fair, Brother, there aren't any humans in this hemisphere.

SISTER FAY: Ooo! There! I think I see it!

BROTHER L: Huh? The Remilak? Not over that way you don't.

SISTER FAY: Look!

BROTHER L: I know, I see it, I just... That's not a comet. That's a starship. (pause) Entering geosynchronous orbit, looks like. (pause) Hey, Dizzy, you got those good binoculars on you?

BROTHER DISMAS: Of course. (pause) I always do.

BROTHER L: Give 'em over here a minute, okay?

(Dismas fishes the binoculars out of his robe and hands over the binoculars to L.)

SISTER FAY: What would a ship be doing on this side of the planet?

BROTHER DISMAS: Perhaps they got lost on the way to the Starfleet stockade?

(L starts fiddling with buttons.)

BROTHER L: Or they're hiding in the stockade's sensor shadow. They're running a scan of some sort... (the binoculars beep) Aw, Jehosephat.

BROTHER DISMAS: Not him again.

SISTER FAY: Right? Who's he praying to? It's not one of our saints, is it?

BROTHER DISMAS: No, it's a Jewis—

BROTHER L: Uh, guys? That ship? It's a Tet Goreoff Harvester.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** What does it harvest?

**BROTHER L:** Us. The Tet Goreoff are slavers, Dizzy. They harvest us.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** What? Oh they can't be. Why would anyone...? Oh no... Oh no... (He mumbles in consternation)

(Pause)

**BROTHER L:** Ohhhkay, I can see you need a minute, I'll come back to you. Sister Fay!

**SISTER FAY:** Yes?

**BROTHER L:** The good news is there's no beaming through this atmosphere. That's why Starfleet put a stockade on Jaros Two. They'll have to get down to the troposphere before they can start beaming us into their slave pens.

**SISTER FAY:** And that's the good news?

**BROTHER L:** It'll buy you some time to find cover -- ten, maybe fifteen minutes for evac protocol. I need you to get back and start moving everyone as quickly as you can into the Cave of Melora. Keep quiet. Stay hidden. Oh, and take this glass cleaner with you.

(He hands her a bottle of space Windex.)

**SISTER FAY:** This? Why?

**BROTHER L:** The Tet Goreoff are allergic to ammonia. Makes their tentacles go necrotic. You come across anything looks like a squid in big metal boots, you point. You shoot.

(Sister Fay squirts the space Windex a few times)

**BROTHER DISMAS:** We don't use weapons, Brother.

**BROTHER L:** It's not a phaser; it's Windex. Sister, GO!

(Fay starts running towards and down the steps leading up to the tower, squirting the bottle a few more times.)

**SISTER FAY:** I won't let you down, Mister Space Pirate Captain sir!

**BROTHER L:** Alright, Dismas, you're with me. Hey! You okay? (he snaps his fingers) Snap out of it, we gotta move.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** We... have a distress beacon?

**BROTHER L:** I know. I've seen it. The patrol lanes are at least two hours away. Unless the *Akira* is miraculously close by... nope. By the time Starfleet got here, we'd be gone, as good as fish food.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** Then... are they going to destroy our home?

**BROTHER L:** Not if we have anything to say about it, buddy. Let's get to work.

(Pause)

**BROTHER DISMAS:** I repeat: It's a monastery. We don't keep weapons.

**BROTHER L:** Yeaaaah, still working on that.

**SCENE 5****LOCATION: CHAPEL**

Father is leading vespers for the monks gathered. It's a big chapel, so there's reverb:

(Father Prior is singing, but not in Federation Standard. He breaks off.)

(We hear someone running into the chapel courtyard outside)

(The fire alarm klaxon starts sounding)

**SISTER FAY:** *The squid people are coming! The squid people are coming! Run!*

**FATHER PRIOR:** I'm sorry, but does anyone else hear that?

**FATHER PRIOR:** Fire alarm! Everyone please proceed to fire stations.

(Fay bursts into the chapel!)

**SISTER FAY:** Everybody run! The squid people are coming! We've got to get to the caves!

**FATHER PRIOR:** Squid people? Sister Fay...

**SISTER FAY:** That's what Brother L said! We have to hide in the caves!

**FATHER PRIOR:** Ahhh. Brother L. Father Paul?

(A monk approaches)

**RANDOM MONK #1 ("FATHER PAUL"):** Yes, Father.



**FATHER PRIOR:** Take the brothers, find the sisters, and get everyone into the caves. Sister Fay, you go with them.

**SISTER FAY:** But he--

**FATHER PRIOR:** And tell me where I can find Brother L right. this. moment.

**SCENE 6****LOCATION: ANCIENT MAUSOLEUM**

(As Brother L and Brother Dismas run up the path, we hear a perpetual energy beam radiating into the sky, which has a distinctive, rather lovely, tonal hum it generates.)

**BROTHER DISMAS:** Exactly what are we doing in the Mausoleum, L?

**L:** Get up here on the platform. I need your help.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** With what?!

**L:** With this! This eternal searchlight thing is basically just a dilithium powered energy beam pointed up at the sky, isn't it?

**BROTHER DISMAS:** How do you know how it's powered?

(L is moving furniture around)

**L:** (grunts) I'd know that hum with a — one ear tied behind my back. The light show this makes, there's got to be a big hunk of dilithium in here somewhere. And I just disabled the power limiter.

**BROTHER DISMAS:** L, this is one of the relics in our order's protection. Saint Palandine herself —

(L is still moving heavy objects around)

L: I'm not gonna break it, Dizzy. I'm just gonna (grunt) aim it away from the sky. Come over here and help me pry this wooden bench off the wall.

BROTHER DISMAS: The prayer sedilia? This is where I first ex —

L: Yeah, sure. I just need a slab of wood to use as a lever.

BROTHER DISMAS: Brother...

L: Step to. The Tet Goreoff will be here in five.

BROTHER DISMAS: If we must.

(Grunting, they tear the bench loose from the wall.)

BROTHER DISMAS: Wait, a lever, to leverage what?

L: This restraining ring containing the energy beam.

BROTHER DISMAS: Are you insane? You'll blow us up! And the whole mausoleum!

L: Hey, I'm not trying to remove it! I just wanna... nudge it. Maybe, uh... two and a half degrees starboard.

BROTHER DISMAS: Starboard?

L: To the right, Dizzy, to the right. Sorry, old habit.

BROTHER DISMAS: Brother L...

L: Dizzy, they're coming to take you away from here forever.

BROTHER DISMAS: It won't harm the relics?

L: What does it...!? Of course it won't. Now c'mon!

BROTHER DISMAS: Alright...

BROTHER L: Heave!

(As they groan with enormous effort, the restraining ring begins to strain and groan.)

**SCENE 7****LOCATION: TET GOREOFF BRIDGE****EVIL SQUID CAPTAIN: Time to harvesting distance!****EVIL SQUID HELMSMAN: Four minutes, Master!****EVIL SQUID CAPTAIN: Assemble the collection teams in transporter bays!****(A computer notification sounds)****EVIL SQUID HELMSMAN: Master, we're being hailed!****EVIL SQUID CAPTAIN: Let me hear their pathetic mewling!****(The helmsman presses a button)****(There is a hiss of static)****FATHER PRIOR: *In the name of God, I greet you and offer the simple hospitality of our monastery to you weary travelers.*****EVIL SQUID CAPTAIN: Hah! Heh. Pray to your God, fool! For we are the Tet Goreoff, and we are now your owners!****FATHER PRIOR: *Then it is as I feared. I must warn you, Sir Captain, to withdraw to a high orbit.*****EVIL SQUID CAPTAIN: "Warn" me? Ah! Pah! Will you pray my men out of the sky?**

**FATHER PRIOR:** *There is one who defends this world, Sir Captain -- and I fear I will not be in time to protect you from him. Please, withdraw.*

**EVIL SQUID CAPTAIN:** Who? One of your gods? Then let them try to save you from our torturers! You're monks! There are no weapons worthy of the name in twenty million meters -- except ours! Close channel!

**FATHER PRIOR:** *But sir capt—!*

(The Tet Goreoff ops officer closes the commlink with a hiss of static.)

**SCENE 8****LOCATION: ANCIENT MAUSOLEUM**

(Brother Dismas and L groan as they keep pushing)

(The restraining ring goes *ka-chunk*, a half a degree.)

BROTHER DISMAS: (Groaning) I can't hold this!

(*Ka-chunk*, another degree.)

L: (Groaning) Just a couple more steps! The slavers' ship is getting closer!

(*Ka-chunk*, another degree.)

BROTHER DISMAS: If we keep going, the beam from the searchlight's going to miss the ship!

L: We're not aiming for the ship!

BROTHER DISMAS: What?

L: We just need to get it to go through the focusing lens at the right angle!

BROTHER DISMAS: What "focusing lens", L?!

(*Ka-chunk*, another degree.)

L: Okay, hold right there!

*(Ka-chunk, another degree.)*

L: I'm taking the firing lever!

BROTHER DISMAS: I can't!

*(We hear an energy build-up)*

L: Just hold it! That's an order!

BROTHER DISMAS: Wait! You're aiming at the Crystal Eye! You ca[n't!]

*(Father Prior has just arrived, at a run!)*

FATHER PRIOR: *(panting)* BROTHER L, STOP!

L: NOW! GET BACK!

BROTHER DISMAS: NOOOOO!

*(L howls as he pulls the lever)*

*(The beam of light, previously making just a dim hum, suddenly goes to full power with the force of an explosion, blasting outward into the Crystal Eye. The Eye focuses the beam and its low ambient pitch changes to that of a piercing high energy wave—something very much like a phaser. The Eye shatters.)*

*(High in the sky, there's an explosion!)*



(The dull hum has returned to normal, but it now begins to rapidly increase in pitch and volume.)

L: There it is! Direct hit! Ha ha, ha HA! Take that, slimebags!

FATHER PRIOR: Brother L!

L: Padre? Actually, hold that thought. Father Prior, Brother Dismas: RUN!

BROTHER DISMAS: What?

L: Can't you hear it? The dilithium core is overloading! It's gonna blow! RUN!

(They all run across the large cobblestone courtyard in front of the mausoleum.)

(They clear the courtyard and jump behind a low wall just in time — the "eternal searchlight" in the mausoleum explodes.)

(We hear stone crashing to the ground, rubble collapsing, and a fire in the distance)

FATHER PRIOR: My God... (pause) what have you done?

L: I'm sorry, Father, I know it must look like I've lost my mind.

(We hear Brother Dismas groan in the distance)

L: Where's Dizzy? DISMAS!

BROTHER DISMAS: *Over here!*

L: Oh, thank the Lords. (pause) Um, if you'll pardon the expression, Father.

FATHER PRIOR: Wait a moment, Brother.

L: Dizzy could be hurt.

FATHER PRIOR: How many people were on that ship?

L: Oh, good, you saw the ship. It was a Tet Goreoff Harvester, Father. They were slavers. Too many for us to handle down here.

FATHER PRIOR: They were children of the Image, Brother L. Did you contact them? Warn them off?

L: Well, uh... there wasn't a lot of time, Father Prior. I had to protect you. Trust me, those soggy suckers don't negotiate.

BROTHER DISMAS: (at a distance) Ohh. Ohh! I can't move my leg and I... I think I see the bone!

FATHER PRIOR: Go. I'm an old man. A little winded.

BROTHER L: Right!

(L runs across the courtyard to where Dismas is laying in some rubble.)

BROTHER DISMAS: Ah! I'm down here.

(L scrambles over some debris to crouch next to Dismas.)

BROTHER L: Got ya! Okay, yeah. Buddy, that leg's pretty broken. Nothing the infirmary can't fix, don't worry. But I gotta stop the bleeding and I'm gonna need to raise your legs a little so you don't go into shock. Don't move, just lay there. This is gonna hurt like hell for a second, okay?

(L rips some material off of his habit, then raises Dismas's legs and places them back down on some slightly elevated debris.)

(Brother Dismas cries out in agony)

L: Okay, that's it! Great job, Diz. I'm just gonna finish with this bandage -- hey hey hey don't cry. You're gonna be fine.

BROTHER DISMAS:  
(sobbing) Oh! Oh  
No! No....

(Dismas has indeed, started to cry)

BROTHER DISMAS: It's all gone. The relics. The mausoleum. The fire's already spreading. There'll be nothing left by morning.

L: But we're all still alive.

BROTHER DISMAS: Oh ya'... Y-you just can't understand. This, this place mattered, I-it was... our home, L.

L: It's okay, buddy, it's okay. We'll rebuild it. It'll take time, but...

BROTHER DISMAS: You promised me.

L: I, uh... look, there was no time. I had one shot to stop them before it was too late, and (pause) Hey. I'm really sorry.

BROTHER DISMAS: Uh-Ho. You knew this we going to happen, didn't you?

L: I hoped it wouldn't. It was... it was an accident. But a little surface damage is a small price to pay, right?

BROTHER DISMAS: I... I see it now.

L: What?

BROTHER DISMAS: What Father Prior was trying to tell me about you.

L: Which is what?

FATHER PRIOR: That it is time for you to return to the world outside these walls, Brother L.

L: What?! You want me to leave?!

FATHER PRIOR: The *Starship Akira* will make orbit in ten minutes. You will leave with her. I am sorry. (pause) Truly.

L: I just saved all your lives!

FATHER PRIOR: By a violence which our order forswears, with a lie told to an innocent.

L: Look, I know all these monuments and artifacts mean a lot to you and I know a lot of it can't be replaced, but I almost died stopping those Tet Goreoff, too!

**FATHER PRIOR:** I know. As usual, it is not your fault. (pause) I have great hope for you, Commander, but you need something we cannot offer you.

**SCENE 9****LOCATION: PRISON CELL – JAROS II STOCKADE**

L: He said something, I don't know what, I was already shouting again. Truth is, (pause) I was never going to hear his answer, not then. Maybe not even now. So what the hell is wrong with me, Skipper? I-I don... I'm sorry, this was a ridiculous story, never mind. G'Bye. Computer, transmit.

(The computer boops.)

L: Alright. Let's get this done with. Where's the...?

(L picks up his mattress, which squeaks, to pull out the laser thresher)

L: ...laser thresher. There. Hold it up to my forehead, one button to activate the beam... just need to get the angle right... and then... Hit it.

(He does so, with an audible klik.)

**LORHROK:** *(From 6F-37) There it is. The seething anger. You hide it pretty well, "Ovdan," but I've watched you. It's always there, isn't it, like magma, just waiting for an excuse to erupt.*

(L kliks again.)

(And again.)

(And again, repeatedly)

L: It doesn't work! (pause, exhales) Well, what the spast am I supposed to do I with that?

(He throws the thresher across the cell)

(The doorbell chimes.)

L: Go away!

(The opaque forcefield drops anyway, and the Warden steps in.)

L: Oh, it's you.

WARDEN: Yep, it's me.

(Pause)

L: How did you know?

WARDEN: Even if I weren't a telepath, even if Skipper Cox hadn't warned us after she talked to you last? (sigh) You tripped every red flag in the system. You aren't subtle.

L: You didn't lift a finger to stop me.

WARDEN: I mean, I could have had thirty doctors charge in here, cart you off to Psych, and pump you full of prescriptions. Sure. Still can, if you're mad I robbed you of the drama.

L: That... won't be necessary.

WARDEN: You know, a lot of the time, if we let it play out, the patient talks himself out of it before he pulls the trigger. A recovery the patient starts himself is usually more resilient than anything we can impose. So, we disabled the thresher and let you decide.

L: Well, I decided. What good did it do? Still breathin'.

WARDEN: Lucky for you, this is a Starfleet stockade. The Klingons would have handed you a knife and cheered. We help instead.

L: You mean meddle.

WARDEN: You prefer the thirty-doctor stampede?

L: No.

WARDEN: Alright.

(The Warden beings to walk out)

WARDEN: Skipper? The prisoner would like to speak with you.

(Warden exits, Cox enters.)

COX: Hey.

L: I expected a shrink.

COX: You kinda got one. They've kept me up in the office for hours telling me how talk to you.

L: Sorry. My fault again.

COX: I told 'em I'd been your friend nearly ten years and knew perfectly well how to talk to you.



L: Probably thought they could fix me by getting me to talk about my "feelings." After everything I've done...

COX: Which is what, exactly?

L: Sam, I lost the Excelsior. You know how many of the crew went down with the ship.

COX: What, you think you should have been one of them?

L: I deserved i[t]—look, why aren't you yelling at me? I knew suicide would hurt you and I did it anyway!

COX: So what is it that you think you did to lose the Excelsior?

L: I'm her captain. I'm responsible for everything that happens under my comm[and!]

COX: Sorry, didn't you make Yubari captain?

L: Well, sure.

COX: What did you do?

L: Tried to help her. Didn't work out.

COX: How'd you help?

L: Research, ideas. Moral support. Had to hold what was left of the crew together. Keep their hopes up.

COX: Their hopes of going home.

L: Right.

COX: Nothin' wrong with that, is there? (pause) So what happened?

L: It almost worked. If we had stuck together, if we'd all believed in what we were doing...

COX: Who didn't believe?

L: Lorhrok! My own XO. My fault.

COX: You didn't pick him, though, did you? Captain Cortez chose him.

L: How could she have known what he was? Even I didn't see it coming 'til the knife was buried in my back. What are you playing at, Sam? I know you think I was wrong about everything.

COX: We both know what I think because I screamed it at you on my last few visits. But look how that worked out. So now, I'm trying to understand what you think.

L: I'm not going to be interrogated.

COX: Alright, I'll cut to the chase: what's keeping you from killing Alec Lorhrok?

L: What?

COX: What's stopping you from spending the rest of your prison sentence plotting ways to murder your old first officer? You don't even have to get away with it; you're already suicidal.

L: Are you serious?

COX: If Lorhrok is responsible for the deaths of a hundred of your crew, and Starfleet won't hold him accountable... out in the Big Empty, we dealt with people like that. But instead of figuring out how to put a gun to his head, you've got one up against yours.

L: I guess you can add stupidity to my list of sins.

COX: I don't believe that. (pause) I don't think you do, either. (pause) Have you read the Starfleet Corps of Engineers report on the *Excelsior*?

L: They're already finished? I-I thought... another year, maybe two.

COX: You wanna copy? I've got it here.

L: Somehow I'm not feeling up to a technical dissection of the worst day of my life here on my Suicide Day, Skip.

COX: Then would you like to know what they concluded, about your plan to time travel home?

L: No.

COX: Why not? This report could vindicate you. It could prove your stunt would have worked, if only Neeva hadn't shot the warp core.

L: I already know it would've worked. I don't need it nitpicked by some bureaucrat's committee.

COX: Then you've got nothin' to be afraid of:

(She clicks a couple buttons to open the file)

COX: "Executive summary: (the screen beeps on) the total loss of the *U.S.S. Excelsior-C* on—"

L: No!

(L leaps up and swats the PADD out of her hands! It clatters to the floor.)

COX: Oh, I thought you already knew what this said?

L: We're done.

COX: Why did you do that?

L: It was real nice seeing you, Skipper.

COX: Were you surprised you did that?

L: Send in the thirty doctors, please!

COX: Were you afraid of what's on it?

L: Don't you get it, Skipper? Don't you get it? It doesn't matter what that PADD says. I was right! I'm the hero of Chin'toka! Protector of that rinky-dink monastery! The savior of the whole damn galaxy, and I am owed, Skipper! I'm owed! They stole my ship from me because I did what I had to do to save my people, and then I was supposed to farm some hopeless field 'til my teeth fall out and I shrivel up and die in the mud?! NO, lords damn it! Never!

COX: And what about your crew?

L: I saved them all at Gevinon! I saved everyone at Gevinon!

COX: So you kill your crew, no harm, no foul, is that it?!

L: Then it'd be their privilege to die for me!

(Silence)

(L slowly steps back to his bed and sits heavily down)

L: Jehosephat....

(Silence)

L: Skipper... Why did I... That's not...

COX: So I guess Lieutenant Callie was right.

L: Who?

(L stands up)

COX: Your warden, the telepath. She's the one who held off the doctors. Brought me here instead.

L: Oh yeah? And how'd she want you to talk to me?

COX: "Don't try to make him listen to you. He won't. Make him listen to himself." (pause)

I'll leave you to mull that for a while.

L: You're leaving?

L: Skipper, I'm sorry. I didn't mean [it.]

COX: Don't give me that bullshit, Dovan! You meant every word!

L: You're right.

(Silence)

(Cox steps close to Dovan)

COX: Damn. (pause) Straight.

L: And I'm really sorry. (pause) Please.

(Pause)

COX: Okay.

L: I couldn't see it.

COX: Alcar, if you ever want to be a person again, you've gotta stop lying.

L: Okay, yes, I could have. I knew. It's why I was gonna... well, y'know. But I never said it. Not in words.

COX: The lies that really kill you... they're the ones you tell yourself.

L: Melissa once told me... that my legacy was Gevinon. It was like she'd put a knife through me, and here I was, patting myself on the back for it all along.

COX: Did she know?

L: I couldn't say. Melissa stopped talking to me a couple years ago. Just... stopped. I don't know why. She had a dozen good reasons and I thought up half a dozen bad ones, but what really drives me crazy is I don't know which one it was. I thought, in the end, she'd forgiven me for Gevinon, but...

(Pause)

COX: Were you ever sorry?

L: No.

(Silence)

COX: There's a question about Gevinon, Alcar, a question you never asked me.

L: What... are you talking about?

COX: You knew I was marooned on Gevinon for months, but you always changed the subject.

L: Skipper, you clearly want to tell me something, so why don't you just spit it out?

COX: No.

L: No?

COX: You know the question. You have to ask it. (pause) It can't be me.

L: I don't uh...

(Silence)

L: Skipper... did we... were there any children on Gevinon Prime?

COX: Oh, L...

L: We always said it was a garrison world. No civilians. Wasn't that true?

COX: The buggers couldn't infest the babies. Not until they were born.

L: How many?

(Pause)

L: Dammit, Sam. Tell me.

(Silence)



**COX: About sixty million.**

**(L gasps)**

**L: No.... (He chokes a sob) No, no, no... (He takes a breath)**

**SCENE "10"/990 (post-roll)**

JAMES HEANEY: Hi, I'm James Heaney, showrunner. Alcar Dovan's story is his own. It is not representative and isn't meant to be. But his failure to seek help is all too common. If you're thinking of killing yourself, you might be able to talk to a Skipper Cox in your life or you could pick up a phone and dial 988 in the U.S. or Canada (or 116 123 in much of Europe). There are also resources at AFSP dot org. If Alcar had managed to kill himself, the consequences for the galaxy would have been... well, you'll find out in our next episodes. But if you kill yourself, the consequences for the galaxy will be much worse. I've seen that for myself. Thanks for listening.