

*Starship: Excelsior*  
**"The Witness"**  
(Season 6, Episode 9)  
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Transcribed by Peter Stine

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

**SCENE 6H-01****LOCATION: SPACE COURTROOM**

(Indistinct muttering)

**BAILIFF:** All rise for the honorable Judge Tejian Val!

(All do stand. Val enters and walks to his elevated seat in the center.)

(Judge Val strikes a bell)

**JUDGE VAL:** Be seated. Calling to order the case of The United Federation of Planets versus Cabinet Secretary Raynard Hobbs, on charges of corruption and collusion with the Orion Syndicate. Prosecution, are you ready to call your next witness?

**CH'KOLAS:** Yes, Your Honor. The Federation calls Yamada Ichiro to the stand.

**CAITLIN DOR:** Objection, Your Honor. The witness is eleven years old and surely has been coached on what to...

**ICHIRO:** (Simultaneous, mocking) ...and surely has been coached on what to say by the prosecution. Children are too susceptible to influence. (scoffs) Please. I'm twelve, and the Syndicate's treated me like an adult since they kidnapped me and turned me into their pet telepath!

**JUDGE VAL:** Mister Yamada, please do not address the Defense outside of your testimony. Counselor, overruled. We've been over this before. Bailiff, please escort the witness to the stand to be sworn in.

**ICHIRO:** I don't need any "escort."

(He stands up quickly, pushing the chair)

**ICHIRO:** Ready when you are, Bailiff!

**BAILIFF:** Do you swear solemnly, um...

(He fumbles with his robes)

**JUDGE VAL:** Bailiff, the local holy book, please.

**BAILIFF:** Yes, I know, it's... here in my robes somewhere. Do you swear solemnly [by the beliefs you hold most dear, to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?]

**ICHIRO:** Knife! Asuka, he's going for [a knife!]

**BAILIFF:** QUIET!

(A bolt of phaser fire! It strikes the Bailiff square in the chest.)

(Several people in the gallery scream! Others gasp! Panic is breaking out!)

(The Bailiff cries out and topples to the ground)

(Someone runs up to the witness stand)

JUDGE VAL: Deputy Yubari!

YUBARI: Are you okay, Ichiro?

ICHIRO: Y-- yeah. Thanks, Asuka.

JUDGE VAL: Deputy Yubari, explain yourself! Weapons are not to be present in my courtroom, much less discharged against officers of the court!

YUBARI: Yeah?

(She rolls over the Bailiff's unconscious body with her foot. The knife clatters to the ground.)

(More gasps from the crowd)

YUBARI: Did you tell your bailiff that, too? Because that sure looks like a knife to me, Your Honor. Tipped with enough voraxna venom to kill a rectyne monopod.

JUDGE VAL: Get your witness to my chambers, Deputy. I need a word with Security. Caitlin, is there a medic on the way?

CAITLIN DOR: (in background) Yes, Your Honor. I called right away.

YUBARI: Come on, Ichiro.

ICHIRO: (breathing heavy) He... he was so nice to me, earlier.

YUBARI: Ichiro. I know where Judge Val hides the chocolate.

ICHIRO: Yeah, because I told you where it was!

YUBARI: Keep up the sass and I won't share any.

ICHIRO: Yes, you will.

YUBARI: Try me.

**SCENE 6H-02****LOCATION: JUDGE'S CHAMBERS**

(We hear Ichiro is playing Tetris in the corner.)

JUDGE VAL: ...and if this were any other case, I'd be charging you for firing that phaser! As it stands, we still have no idea how the Syndicate turned our Bailiff. Which means we don't know what else in our security is compromised, which... Does he have to play that right now?

YUBARI: He does if you don't want him reading your mind.

ICHIRO: What? Did you say something to me, Your Honor?

YUBARI: He thought something to you, Ichiro. It was nothing.

ICHIRO: 'kay. Ooo! Special stage!

(The game's sounds change)

YUBARI: Like I said.

JUDGE VAL: Glad to see he's bounced back.

YUBARI: Unfortunately, people try and kill him a lot. You have to relocate the trial. Again.

JUDGE VAL: That's not easy, at this stage. There's only a day left, two at most. Moving the advocates, jury, a prominent defendant like Hobbs... there are very few precedents. The defense will appeal for mistrial.

YUBARI: New security means less time for the Orion Syndicate to get their hooks in. You have to do it, Your Honor.

JUDGE VAL: (sigh) I know. (pause) I presume you and Ichiro will make your own way there.

YUBARI: Three times I tried moving my witness using Justice Department transport...

JUDGE VAL: ...and three times he was almost killed when the route leaked. I know.

YUBARI: And what about you? Are you just going to keep hiring Trill clerks and hope for the best?

JUDGE VAL: (sigh) Noela is supposed to be undercover.

YUBARI: The makeup's good, but I saw her slam her finger in a drawer. Trill curses are pretty... distinctive. Probably because they can draw on all those lifetimes of memory. I take it Noela is unjoined?

JUDGE VAL: Deputy Yubari, when it comes to the Syndicate, certain... contingencies m[ust be planned.]

YUBARI: I just want to remind you that it's not an extra life. If the Syndicate kills you... sure, Noela might become Noela Val, get your memories, and close the case. But Teijan Val would be dead.

VAL: Thank you, Deputy. I won't be careless. Now, any suggestions for the new venue?

YUBARI: Maybe. I need to consider it.

(Ichiro pauses his game.)

ICHIRO: No you don't. It's a good idea.

YUBARI: How do you know it's a good idea? You don't know anything about deputy marshaling.

ICHIRO: Maybe not, but I can hear what your mind is saying: you know it's a good idea. You just don't want to admit it yet.

JUDGE VAL: If I may interpose on this telepathic meeting of the minds...?

YUBARI: Your honor, may I recommend Starbase Two-Sixteen.

JUDGE VAL: What's so special about that particular starbase?

YUBARI: Its commanding officer.

(Immediate cut to next scene)



**SCENE 6H-03****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - CORRIDOR**

(A door opens, and Neeva and her X.O. walk out of Station Ops.)

NEEVA: Okay, Number One, in a few hours, that whole court's going to be here, and our plan's going to go up in smoke, so run me through it one more time.

SYLVESTE: Sorry, Captain, if the plan is going up in smoke, why go over it?

NEEVA: So we're fully prepared to form the next plan, Lieutenant Commander. That's operations division. And operations is what this starbase does. That's why you wanted to be here.

SYLVESTE: I do miss flying, but I can't deny it's a good place to raise my kids. Right, then, well... every ship docking yesterday through next week gets an Omega-Ten security sweep. Anything even slightly suspicious, we invoke Reg. Eight-Eight-One Stroke Golf and reroute.

NEEVA: Double-check for coded signals first. The witness is coming on secret transport, and the Justice Bureau won't tell me his name, his ETA, or even the name of the marshal they've got protecting him.

SYLVESTE: Yes, ma'am, I'll be careful. The Major got here this morning with his detachment, and our sheriff is monitoring all the shady types up on the Mezzanine level.

NEEVA: Mazur up to anything?

SYLVESTE: Watching him as close as ever, but even Martus Mazur seems to have the sense to keep his head down where the Syndicate's concerned. Frankly, it sounds like the Sheriff's at the limit of what he can do legally. Maybe even... a bit beyond.

NEEVA: Not what I like to hear, but, with the Orion Syndicate, we can't err on the side of caution. We just can't err at all.

SYLVESTE: Have... you heard anything from that corner?

NEEVA: Not even a feeler. Given that I was the key witness against my father... well, I guess my mother realized there isn't just anyone they can leverage against me.

SYLVESTE: Is that good or bad?

NEEVA: Well, I don't like what it says about my personal life, but... all things considered, it's just as well the Syndicate isn't making this personal with me. How about Medical?

SYLVESTE: Right, uh, Doc Lee says they're ready for everything. They've got antidotes for most Orion poisons, and the staff is brushing up on Betazoid physiology, since that's all we know about the witness.

NEEVA: Not all Betazoid.

SYLVESTE: Right -- one-eighth human. He'll have a unique neurochemical, some allergies, but we're on it.

(They round a corner and nearly collide with two crewmen)

ISAAC: Sorry, ma'am. Excuse us.

NEEVA: Hopefully we won't need those precautions, but I'm glad -- Wait.

SYLVESTE: Ma'am?

NEEVA: That crewman... (she hits her combadge) Intruder alert! Security to Level One-Twelve!

(Intruder alert klaxon sounds)

NEEVA: Isaac Brahms, stop right there!

ISAAC: Janath, RUN!

(They break into a run. An instant later, so do Neeva and Sylveste.)

JANATH: (while running) Well, this is off to a promising start!

ISAAC: (while running) No worse than our last assignment! Beta Five, now!

(There is a sound like a transporter that ends abruptly)

SYLVESTE: Where'd they go?!

NEEVA: Agh, through the bulkhead. Kestra said he could do that. It's a straight shot from there to the Mezzanine. And Kestra says no way to track them. (she taps her combadge) Cancel security alert.

THE MAJOR: *Ma'am, Marine guard here. Are you safe, ma'am?*

NEEVA: Yes, Major, I'll explain later. Neeva out.

SYLVESTE: We could close the Mezzanine, do a manual search.

NEEVA: No... no. Isaac Brahms is a complication, but he's probably not here to help the Syndicate. Keep security focused on the trial. I'll have a word with Brahms.

SYLVESTE: Uh... how, ma'am?

**SCENE 6H-04****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - MEZZANINE**

(We hear a crowded plaza and then the cut off transporter sound as Janath and Brahm appear, unnoticed)

JANATH: (out of breath) You're right, Isaac, but we don't usually get caught quite that fast.

ISAAC: I've had run-ins with Commander... er, Captain Neeva before, even if we've never spoken much.

JANATH: It always gets complicated when we get recognized.

ISAAC: It always gets complicated. Period. Should I have Beta Five block telepaths in this shopping area, so they can't track us?

JANATH: (sigh) No, I'm always throwing up for days after she does that.

COMPUTER: (in background) *Commanding officer of U.S.S. Renegade, please report to Station Ops for debrief.*

JANATH: There was that one on Ceres.

ISAAC: Wait. What's that?

COMPUTER: *Repeat: Will the commanding officer of Starship Renegade please report to Station Ops.*

JANATH: Starship Renegade? Kind of a daring name.

ISAAC: I named her. Well... my sister did.

JANATH: (sigh) You're the one they're paging?

ISAAC: Yes.

JANATH: We're not going, are we?

ISAAC: Yes.

JANATH: 'Course we are.

**SCENE 6H-05**

**LOCATION: STARSHIP VISIONARY, MAIN ENGINEERING**

(Kestra walks to a wall panel and removes it, revealing a Jefferies Tube. She knocks one of the metal bulkheads.)

J'NAYA: Midshift watch rotation. Coast is clear.

(Silence)

J'NAYA: Guys? I said, the coast is... oh, right. Um. "The bird flies fastest at dawn."

ICHIRO: (Whispering) Does it fly to the eastern sky?

J'NAYA: No, it flies sky high.

ICHIRO: It's safe, Asuka!

(He and Yubari start climbing out.)

YUBARI: We knew it was safe, Ichiro. You already checked for other minds.

ICHIRO: Yeah, but that's boring.

J'NAYA: Yeah, Yubari, telepathy is boring.

YUBARI: If you say so. What's our status, Kestra?

J'NAYA: On-time arrival at Starbase Two-One-Six, and nobody knows I've smuggled you along. Again. You know the Starship Visionary isn't your clandestine cab.

YUBARI: Fine, next time I'll ask Adow.

ICHIRO: I like Lieutenant Adow. Her words match her thoughts. Usually.

J'NAYA: Hopefully there won't be a next time. Right?

YUBARI: Don't ask that kind of stuff in front of the kid.

ICHIRO: Don't worry. I'm used to you thinking of the worst-case scenarios. I like 'em! So much action! Can you try fretting about a kung-fu master assassin later?

YUBARI: Ichiro...

ICHIRO: Asuka wants you to distract me so you and her can talk.

J'NAYA: Well, that's easy enough. I'll bet Kinash doesn't share quite as much Delavian chocolate as your favorite aunt Kestra!

(Kestra pulls out and unwraps the end of a foil-wrapped chocolate bar)

ICHIRO: Delaviaaaaaaaaaan.

YUBARI: What do you say?

ICHIRO: Please Aunt Kestra thank you Aunt Kestra!



(He snatches the chocolate and runs off toward the warp core to eat it.)

YUBARI: If anyone gets within five meters of you, come right back! (pause) You're not exactly subtle.

J'NAYA: Subtlety never works on you anyway.

YUBARI: I swear, you need to recheck the medical database again to see if chocolate's addictive to Betazoids.

J'NAYA: I'm just the honorary aunt, and that sounds like a mom problem.

YUBARI: I'm not his mom.

J'NAYA: The trial's about to start, and your assignment to him is over after that. It's been, what, a year you've taken care of him?

YUBARI: Two.

J'NAYA: He needs you, Asuka.

YUBARI: He has parents, Kestra. Real ones.

J'NAYA: He can't remember them!

YUBARI: Because the Syndicate wiped his memory when they bought him.

J'NAYA: So? He still doesn't know them -- and -- and they're probably the ones who sold him to the Syndicate in the first place.

YUBARI: We don't know that.

J'NAYA: Stop using them as an excuse not to adopt Itchy.

YUBARI: I'm not stealing him from them! Besides, there's about a million people in Starfleet who'd make a better mother than me!

J'NAYA: You already are his moth — (Ichiro approaches) That was fast, Itchy.

ICHIRO: Do you have any more?

J'NAYA: Oh, I think I might know where to find some, if your... legal guardian approves.

ICHIRO: Aunt Kestra! Those words you're thinking! I'm not supposed to know those ones!

YUBARI: Stop mind-reading Kestra, Ichiro. I am going to give you a consequence...  
...if you do it again. Go, fine, one more candy bar.

**SCENE 6H-06****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE**

(The door chimes)

NEEVA: Come in.

(The door opens and to people walk in)

ELBRUN: Look who the cat dragged in, ma'am. Came right up to Ops like you said.

ISAAC: You're looking well, Captain Neeva.

NEEVA: Thank you, Mister Elbrun. You may go.

ELBRUN: Ma'am.

(Elbrun exits.)

NEEVA: Sit, Mister Brahms. Flattery will get you nowhere at this starport. First: who am I talking to?

ISAAC: Excuse me?

NEEVA: My intelligence says there's four life-forms with permanent or temporary residence in your body: the disgraced ex-General Isaac Brahms, the bluegill king sometimes called Psuedo that infested and murdered Ensign Ermez; Psuedo's queen parasite, which lives in your chest; and, to top it off, a Scion of the Stars named Triassa who occasionally pops in to chat.

PSEUDO: Ha! You're well-informed.

ISAAC: Be quiet, Pseudo. My body. In fact, Captain, we're only three, now. We had to move the queen parasite into the body of my friend, Janath. It's a long story.

NEEVA: Skip it. Why are you here? Now?

ISAAC: I don't know why I'm here. My... benefactors... are often rather vague.

NEEVA: Brahms... ...I was afraid you were going to say that.

ISAAC: I actually prefer Isaac.

NEEVA: Fine. I'll be more direct: I don't see how I can trust you... Isaac.

ISAAC: Of course not. Everyone who trusted me before I... changed... they're all dead. I did, however, save your life once.

NEEVA: Twice.

(pause)

(she drums her fingers on her desk)

NEEVA: I'm willing to let you stay here, unmolested... Isaac. I'll even tell you why I think you're here... provided that you keep me updated on your activities, keep a tight leash on Pseudo and anyone else you've got up there in your head, and you wear this combadge.

(She opens a desk drawer, pulls out a combadge, and sets it on the table.)

(Brahms comes over and takes it, activating it.)

ISAAC: That is... more lenient than I expected, given what I know of my past on your previous ship.

NEEVA:

It's pragmatic. I'm not exactly doing it for you. I'm doing it for Yubari (YOO-buh-ree).

ISAAC: Yubari (YOO-buh-ree)?

NEEVA: You don't even remember. Of course not. Wow.

ISAAC: You mean Asuka Yubari? (uh-SOO-ka yoo-BAH-ree)

NEEVA: You gave her that name.

ISAAC: I did?

NEEVA: She stopped using it. And then, five years ago, she disappeared. Not dead, or at least I couldn't find a body, just... gone. So consider this a favor. We have a Federation minister in the Orion Syndicate on trial. Sounds like the kind of thing you get involved in. So figure out your mission, stay out of our way, and don't get anyone killed. Do I make myself clear?

ISAAC: Yes, captain. But why would Lieutenant Yubari (yoo-BAH-ree) take [on a name I gave her?]

NEEVA: Dismissed, Mister Isaac.

(Pause)

ISAAC: Of course, Captain.

(He turns and exits.)

NEEVA: Computer, status of Yubari Asuka, Commander, Starfleet.

COMPUTER: *Information not available. Please try again later.*

NEEVA: Of course it's not. Five years and I'm still asking. Why am I still asking you about her, Computer?

COMPUTER: *Information not available. Please specify.*

NEEVA: Fine. Ops!

(Intercom boop.)

SYLVESTE: *Sylveste here, ma'am.*

NEEVA: Is the Visionary still coming in today?

SYLVESTE: Um, yes ma'am, picking up the Delavian delegation in, um, forty-three minutes. Should I divert them?

NEEVA: No, it's not urgent. But their X.O. has some prior experience with Isaac Brahms. I want to talk to Kestra as soon as she docks, Sly.

SYLVESTE: *Yes, ma'am.*

**SCENE 6H-99**

**NEEVA:** *Starship Excelsior: A Star Trek Fan Production.* Starring Kennedy as Captain Neeva.

**YUBARI:** Caitlin Stollenwerk as Deputy Yubari Asuka

**J'NAYA:** Jacqueline Lucca as Commander Kestra J'Naya

**SYLVESTE:** with Jon Baas as Jon Sylveste...

**ELBRUN:** ...and Adam Blanford as Jordyn Elbrun.

**SCENE 6H-07****LOCATION: U.S.S. VISIONARY – JEFFRIES TUBE**

**ICHIRO:** There it is! That's the starbase, right? It's huge! Why's it orange?

**YUBARI:** Built by Catullans. Neeva's done well for herself. We're cutting speed. Hold on tight.

**ICHIRO:** I've got it!

**YUBARI:** Humor me.

*(Kestra is climbing down a ladder toward Ichiro and Yubari.)*

**J'NAYA:** (from a distance) You two still good down here in the Jeffries Tube?

**ICHIRO:** Yep!

**YUBARI:** Aren't you the X.O.? Don't you have docking business?

**J'NAYA:** Just passing through. What's that face you're making, young man?

**ICHIRO:** It's... nothing.

**YUBARI:** Ichiro, stop that.

**J'NAYA:** What's he doing?

**YUBARI:** Ichiro, I mean it. Not this time.



ICHIRO: I can do it!

YUBARI: Ichiro. Stop. Now.

ICHIRO: ...Fine. (big sigh)

J'NAYA: Think I'm missing something.

ICHIRO: I was trying to scan the station.

YUBARI: Which not only exhausts you, it drops your shields so anyone else doing the same thing can scan you.

ICHIRO: It only takes a minute. What are the odds someone is scanning at the exact same time as me?

YUBARI: With the Syndicate around? Higher than you think.

J'NAYA: It also doesn't sound super, um, what's the word, legal?

YUBARI: Kestra, I promise, I will teach Ichiro about mental privacy rights just as soon as people stop trying to kill him. His scan saved our lives on Bolarus. But not this time.

ICHIRO: Yeah, yeah.

J'NAYA: I have to go dock. Back in a few!

(Kestra climbs down another ladder)

YUBARI: Did anyone scan you?

ICHIRO: Of course not. I barely even got started.

**SCENE 6H-08****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 – GUEST QUARTERS**

**SHAPE-SHIFTER "GRANT":** My sweet? Are you alright? Your face, suddenly...

**TELEPATH:** Quite alright, darling. Better than alright. I only sensed him for a moment, but...  
Darling, our quarry has arrived.

**SHAPE-SHIFTER "GRANT":** Good.

**TELEPATH:** Oh, darling, your thoughts! Such violence! Stop! It's making me blush!

**SCENE 6H-09**

[Scene 9 is omitted from this production draft, but the scene number is reserved.]

**SCENE 6H-10****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 – DOCKING BAY**

(We hear lots of activity and worker bees buzzing around)

(Crew are disembarking from a gangplank as footsteps approach from the docking bay entrance)

NEEVA: Hey, Kestra!

J'NAYA: Neeva!

(They run to one another.)

J'NAYA: Sorry, Captain Neeva, sir. Glad the promotion finally came through.

NEEVA: Didn't change the job, but the shiny pip is... well, it's nice.

J'NAYA: I was about to come looking for you. I have to show you something. Come on.

NEEVA: Hang on, I need to talk to you about [something urgent.]

J'NAYA: Whatever it is, it'll wait five minutes. I've been waiting ages to tell you.

(They start moving up the gangplank)

NEEVA: But [we have Isaac Brahms running around the station!]

J'NAYA: Neeva, I promise, you'll agree with me as soon as you see.

NEEVA: You don't have my witness, do you?

J'NAYA: That's not all I have.

(They head up the gangplank, against heavy traffic.)

**SCENE 6H-11****LOCATION: U.S.S. VISIONARY – TURBOLIFT**

ICHIRO: You're nervous.

YUBARI: No, I'm not.

ICHIRO: Asuka, you know I can tell. It's rude to lie.

YUBARI: And it's rude to look into my head without permission. I'm not nervous.

ICHIRO: You're usually nervous for good reason. Remember that bounty hunter on Beta Togalok?

YUBARI: Neeva – Captain Neeva – isn't a threat. She runs a tight ship, and she knows what the Syndicate is capable of. The fact that she hates me won't affect her judgment. (pause)  
And I'm not nervous.

(Silence)

ICHIRO: Nope. Just checked. Still nervous.

YUBARI: Ichiro, when this is over [I'm going to give you something to be nervous about.]

(The door opens. Yubari and Ichiro step out.)

**LOCATION: USS VISIONARY – CONFERENCE ROOM**

J'NAYA: Neeva, if you'll turn toward the turbolift.

NEEVA: I'm Captain Neeva. I'm proud to meet-- YUBARI?

YUBARI: Captain Neeva. Deputy Marshal Yubari, reporting wi[th her duly sworn charge, Ichiro Yamada.]

NEEVA: Asuka!

(Neeva hugs Yubari)

YUBARI: Oof!

NEEVA: You're alright! Thank the stars! Do you — Do you have any idea how worried I've been?

YUBARI: What?

NEEVA: We were the last ones alive aboard Excelsior, we passed out together, and, when I woke up, you'd vanished without a trace! The computer's been lying about you for five y[ears now, and all I wanted was to know you were safe!]

ICHIRO: Oh, that's why you were nervous! She's your friend!

NEEVA: What? Hello. Who...?

YUBARI: Captain Neeva, this is my witness Ichiro Yamada.

NEEVA: This is the witness? You're, you're... what are you, thirteen?

ICHIRO: Twelve!



NEEVA: That's not better! The Orion Syndicate [will do things you can't even imagine if they get their hands on him!]

YUBARI: Hasn't laid a finger on him in two years, no matter how many times they try to catch us.

NEEVA: Wait, so you're the marshal?

YUBARI: Yes, I said that.

J'NAYA: Too many reveals in too short a time, Asuka. Let's get them to secure quarters, ey, Neeva?

**SCENE 6H-12****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 – GUEST QUARTERS**

JUDGE VAL: [I just wanted to confirm this room has] been thoroughly swept. I don't need a bomb in my replicator going off when I order breakfast.

NEEVA: *Yes, your honor, thoroughly swept by Lieutenant Grant. Your quarters were randomly chosen by fair dice roll barely an hour ago, and we aren't advertising that you've moved in. I didn't meet you in person for fear of calling attention to your arrival.*

JUDGE VAL: Quite correct, Captain Neeva. Very good. And this escort you've assigned me. He's sound?

NEEVA: *That's the very same Lieutenant Grant. He's been assigned to this base longer than I have. Admiral Henry once told him he was too much of a stickler for protocol.*

JUDGE VAL: Admiral Henry said that?

NEEVA: *Mister Grant, you care to answer that?*

SHAPE-SHIFTER "GRANT": Proudest moment of my life, ma'am.

NEEVA: *Can I get you anything else before you come down here for check-in, Your Honor?*

JUDGE VAL: No, captain, thank you.

NEEVA: *Ops out.*

(Doorbell chimes)

JUDGE VAL: Who in the wake of Acheron could that be?

(They both start walking to the door.)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "GRANT": You'd better let me get that, sir.

JUDGE VAL: Nonsense. You just stand behind me and make sure whoever it is isn't armed.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "GRANT": Sir.

(Judge Val presses the button to unlock, and it slides open.)

JUDGE VAL: Good afternoon...?

TELEPATH: I'm afraid not. Darling?

SHAPE-SHIFTER "GRANT": Of course, my sweet.

JUDGE VAL: Wait, do you – [know each other]

(Grant uses a hypospray on Val)

JUDGE VAL: hey, what are you – [doing] uhhhhhhh

(Val passes out, collapses to floor)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "GRANT": Oh, I want him proper dead.

TELEPATH: Not yet, darling, not yet. Let's become him first. Won't he be a much more satisfying morsel of collateral damage then?

SHAPE-SHIFTER "GRANT": Mmm... yes, sweet.

TELEPATH: Are you ready?

(We hear "Grant" shapeshift. His voice shifts as he does)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "GRANT" / SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": I'm more than ready. Let's bring this court to order.

TELEPATH: Aw, darling, that was so corny.

(She lifts Val's face and then we hear inside his head)

TELEPATH: *I've established the connection. I'm inside the judge's mind. Do you hear me, darling?*

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": I do, my sweet.

TELEPATH: Good. We'll stash the judge close enough that I can mask your mind with his. As long as the brat isn't actively reading you, it should trick him. Ichiro the traitor will be dead before the gavel falls today.

**SCENE 6H-13****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 – CORRIDOR**

(Ichiro and Yubari are walking)

ICHIRO: (whispering) Why didn't you tell me that Captain Neeva was your friend?

YUBARI: We aren't friends. We were coworkers. That's it.

ICHIRO: No way. She was way too happy to see you. And angry. Both. She's totally your friend.

YUBARI: She isn't. That's been made perfectly clear to me. And don't try it.

ICHIRO: I had more fun before you could tell when I was gonna read your mind.

YUBARI: The others are just up ahead, why not read theirs?

ICHIRO: You told me that was rude.

YUBARI: Yeah, well, I have mixed feelings.

(We move bit up the corridor)

NEEVA: You knew about this. Where she was?

J'NAYA: I know, I'm sorry! You know how she is, and Witness Protection was on her side. The only reason she even came to me was to keep her kid safe, and she never would have trusted me if I'd told you.

NEEVA: How, exactly, did he become her kid?

J'NAYA: Not sure. He changes the story every time I ask, and she, well, is Yubari.

NEEVA: And Yubari is Yubari.

J'NAYA: That's our girl.

NEEVA: She used to tell stories, though.

J'NAYA: Funny ones. Not these. Isn't this your quarters?

(They stop walking.)

NEEVA: I've got guards posted in front of some empty V.I.P. quarters while the witness stays here, in the safest bedroom on the base.

YUBARI: I go first. Ichiro?

ICHIRO: Behind Aunt Kestra, I know.

NEEVA: Do you need anything from me before I enter... my own quarters?

YUBARI: Arm yourself. Be ready to defend Ichiro and Kestra.

NEEVA: Okay...

(She unholsters and powers up her phaser.)

YUBARI: Making entry.

(Door opens, slowly. She enters. It closes behind her.)

(Pause)

ICHIRO: She's not being paranoid.

NEEVA: I didn't say she was.

ICHIRO: No. You were just thinking it. You're wrong. She's not being paranoid.

NEEVA: That just worries me in a whole new way.

ICHIRO: I can tell. It's so weird that Asuka doesn't know you're her friend.

NEEVA: What?

J'NAYA: Ooof!

(Door opens again.)

YUBARI: It's clear. Get inside.

(Ichiro darts inside. They others follow and the door closes.)

ICHIRO: Thank you for having us, Ms. Neeva.

J'NAYA: You need help setting up the entertainment console, kiddo?

ICHIRO: Yes, please! Thanks, Aunt Kestra!

(He scampers off to another room)

YUBARI: I want the security on that console double-checked!

J'NAYA: Don't worry, I can verify the security. I'll let you two talk.

(Kestra starts to exit, following Ichiro)

YUBARI: What about?

J'NAYA: Oh boy.

(The door shuts)

YUBARI: Captain Neeva. Thank you for your hospitality. Is there something you needed to discuss?

NEEVA: Something to discuss?! Yes! What happened to you, Asuka?!

YUBARI: Starfleet Intelligence recruited me from the hospital after I destroyed the Excelsior. I didn't have anywhere else left. They sent me into the Orion Syndicate.

(Pause)

NEEVA: And?

YUBARI: And... the Witness Protection Service is... grateful for your assistance?



NEEVA: I don't want a thank-you, I just want an explanation!

YUBARI: I'm very sorry, we didn't have anywhere else to go. We won't be in your hair any longer than strictly necessary.

NEEVA: That's not... Yubari, don't you get it? I spent five years not knowing whether you were dead or alive. I missed you.

YUBARI: Why?

NEEVA: What?

YUBARI: Why would you miss someone who forced you to be friends?

NEEVA: What?

YUBARI: That's what you told me on First Light. Now you're saying you missed me. I know I misunderstood our relationship, God knows it's happened before, but now you're making it sound like I did the wrong thing by re-establishing a professional distance.

NEEVA: Yubs, we were in an awful situation, we were at each other's throats, but, in the end, you and I proved it couldn't beat us.

YUBARI: I lost you, I lost the captain, and then I lost the Excelsior.

NEEVA: You and me -- we did good at the end. We got them home alive. And then -- you were gone. And I missed you!

YUBARI: I... need to go check on Ichiro.

NEEVA: You're angry.

YUBARI: Yes!

NEEVA: Why?

YUBARI: I don't know! Alright?

NEEVA: Alright, fine. I'm not exactly up for a hug myself. Tell me about the boy. You found him in the Syndicate? They use him as a runner or something?

(Yubari clenches her fists and releases them.)

YUBARI: (deep, irritated breath) I'd been undercover for a couple years before the local operator started to suspect a mole. I don't know if I slipped up or if he was just getting paranoid from all those chemicals he liked. Either way, he had the big boss -- a nasty customer named Melani -- send in a telepath.

NEEVA: Not that child!

YUBARI: I don't know why that, of all things, made me snap. I'd seen a lot by then, including too many dead kids. But when they wheeled in Ichiro, clearly whacked out of his mind on some drug they were using to keep him pliant, I don't know, I was so angry it didn't even occur to me the kid was about to rat me out... until he didn't. He looked right in my head, right at me. He knew I was the spy. (pause) But he pointed at the guy next to me instead.

NEEVA: He saved your life.

YUBARI: And I had to get him out before they realized what he'd done. So I did. I figured Witness Protection was his best shot at any kind of life, and he'd witnessed plenty. Two years later, here we are, trying to put Secretary Hobbs on trial for the fourth time.

NEEVA: Family?

YUBARI: Maybe. They wiped his memory when they acquired him. All he remembers before me is the Syndicate.

NEEVA: Maybe that's what's got Brahms interested.

YUBARI: Brahms? Isaac Brahms is here?!

ELBRUN: *Ops to the captain.*

(Neeva hits her combadge.)

NEEVA: Here.

ELBRUN: *Sheriff's reporting something you might want to look into. One of the Secretary's defense team, guy named Spender. Well, someone outside Mazur's apparently overheard him using a different name in a shouting match over dom-jot. Does the name "Jamar" mean anything to you?*

YUBARI: Arrest him.

NEEVA: Jamar was in one of the security files we got. Syndicate.

ELBRUN: *That's what Sheriff Riftie thought.*

YUBARI: Arrest him, Neeva.

ELBRUN: *He hasn't actually done anything, other than win some dom-jot.*

YUBARI: Neeva, that's him. Jamar was the local boss who brought in Ichiro to find me.

NEEVA: Understood. Jordyn, do we have anything on him?

ELBRUN: *Sorry, ma'am, clean as a whistle. And the defense team would not appreciate having one of its members arrested.*

YUBARI: If I swear an affidavit that he's a murderer with the death penalty on ten systems, would that be enough?

NEEVA: Jordyn's right; we can't arrest him and it turns out he's just a Dopterian named Jamal that we misheard. But if you can give me a visual confirmation first... That would do it.

YUBARI: Ichiro!

NEEVA: Elbrun, have the Sheriff and a squad meet us on the Mezzanine.

ELBRUN: *Yes, ma'am. Ops out.*

(The door opens and Ichiro and Kestra come into the room)

ICHIRO: Did you call me?

YUBARI: We're going to the Mezzanine.

NEEVA: Hang on, Asuka. Should he really leave my quarters?

YUBARI: Ichiro doesn't leave my side.

NEEVA: And I'll bet the Syndicate knows that. Suppose they have a sniper on the Mezzanine right now, watching for Ichiro. Maybe Jamar's just the bait.

ICHIRO: Jamar? He's here?!

YUBARI: He's not getting near you, Ichiro. Fine, Neeva. What do you suggest?

NEEVA: My quarters are the safest place on the station right now, which is why Ichiro's here. I even told the Judge he'd have to come down here to check Ichiro into the trial roster, because Ichiro isn't going anywhere near the defense's quarters on my watch. Kestra will stay here and keep an eye on him.

J'NAYA: I will? I mean, I will!

(Pause)

YUBARI: I can't leave him.

ICHIRO: (whimpers) No, you have to get Jamar. He'll kill me. You have to go.

YUBARI: You're going to be... Okay. Alright, Ichiro, I'll get him. But, Kestra, here's a phaser.

(She charges a phaser and puts it in Kestra's outstretched palm)

YUBARI: It's set to kill. Protect him with your life.

J'NAYA: I swear.

NEEVA: Let's go.

(They exit.)

J'NAYA: You okay, Itchy?

ICHIRO: Yeah.

J'NAYA: So not really?

ICHIRO: No. (pause) When he hurt me, Jamar used to scream that he was the closest thing I deserved to a mom or a dad.

J'NAYA: I know you know this, and I know it's hard to believe it when you're scared, but that's not true. Asuka will never stop looking for your mom and dad.

ICHIRO: I hope she never finds them.

J'NAYA: What? Why?

ICHIRO: Because the mom I deserve would always fight for me. There's only one person I know who's ever done that.

**SCENE 6H-14****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - MEZZANINE**

(We hear the crowded Mezzanine)

(The turbolift opens and Yubari and Yubari exit)

YUBARI: Where?

(Some Starfleet security officers approach.)

NEEVA: Ah, Sheriff.

SHERIFF RIFTIE: Captain. You must be Yubari.

YUBARI: Where. Is. He.

(They all start walking)

SHERIFF RIFTIE: Just over there, at the Azna stand. We've been following discreetly since his kerfuffle at Mazur's.

YUBARI: Where?

SHERIFF RIFTIE: The man in black with yellow ruffles.

YUBARI: With the antennae?

SHERIFF RIFTIE: Yes. I thought you knew him?

(They stop walking.)

YUBARI: I do. That's not Jamar.

SHERIFF RIFTIE: Is that not the right color eyes?

YUBARI: It's not the right species. Jamar's humanoid. This was a waste of time.

SHERIFF RIFTIE: The security file from the court identified Jamar as a Xillian, an insect race.

YUBARI: Then somebody made a big mistake.

NEEVA: Or maybe not.

YUBARI: What?

NEEVA: What if someone altered Jamar's security file on purpose?

YUBARI: But they must have known I'd be-- Ichiro.

(Yubari turns and sprints back to the turbolift).



**NEEVA: It was a distraction! Sheriff, with me! Marines to my quarters on the double! Neeva to Kestra!**

**(She slaps her commbadge, but it emits a denial sound)**

**MEEVA: Neeva to Kestra!**

**(Another slap, another denial)**

**NEEVA: Jammed!**

**SCENE 6H-15****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS**

(Ichiro playing another game on his game console, now with Kestra.)

J'NAYA: Don't you have to shoot the yellow enemies, too?

ICHIRO: No, we get a bonus stage if we make the checkpoint without attacking the goblins.

(Doorbell chimes.)

J'NAYA: Oh, that's the judge. Can you pause?

(He pauses the game with a ding-a-ling, and all video game sounds stop. Kestra gets up and crosses the room to the door, which she opens by entering a PIN number into the control pad and then pressing the open control.)

J'NAYA: Your honor. Right on time and surveillance shows you weren't followed. Come in!

(The judge steps in and the door closes.)

ICHIRO: Hey, judge!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": I'm glad you made it, young Ichiro. Just a few more hours and you can finally testify. And who might you be? I'm concerned to see this witness unaccompanied by his marshal.

J'NAYA: Commander Kestra J'Naya, first officer of the Starship Visionary. Deputy Yubari had an urgent concern, but she'll be back right qu... Itchy? Is something wrong?

ICHIRO: Judge Val, are you... sleepwalking?

J'NAYA: What?

ICHIRO: He's not... You're not Judge Val!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": (sigh) You know it's rude to read people without permission, little brat.

J'NAYA: Ichiro, run!

(Ichiro bolts for the door, enters the PIN lightning quick. It opens.)

(We hear a disrupter power up)

TELEPATH: I'm afraid no one leaves these quarters just now, little turncoat. Back inside or I shoot.

(Ichiro steps back, the Telepath steps in, the door closes.)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": Too bad we don't have time to make a real example of him.

J'NAYA: You won't make an example of Itchy at all!

(She grabs an engineering tool from her belt and activates it. Gas erupts from a breach in the floor)

TELEPATH: Ugh!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": (coughing) Where is he?! I can't see!

(Kestra scrabbles away to a different part of the room.)

J'NAYA: (coughing) Ichiro!

ICHIRO: (coughing) *I'm right behind you! You can think what you need to say at me!*

J'NAYA: *Then quick! In here! The environment chute!*

(Kestra presses a button on a wall near her and a narrow shaft opens.)

ICHIRO: *But you won't fit in there!*

J'NAYA: *They're not after me! Go!*

TELEPATH: (coughing) I can sense him! Over there!

ICHIRO: *Aunt Kes[tra, I can't just leave you!]*

J'NAYA: GO! NOW! (she coughs a bunch)

(Ichiro quickly climbs in and starts crawling away at top speed; Kestra seals the vent)

(Shape-Shifter Val tackles her. They both hit the floor.)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": Oof!

TELEPATH: Gotcha! You worthless felyaerdë.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": (coughing) Come out, brat! Or we do to her what I wanted to do to you!

(The gas starts to clear.)

TELEPATH: It's no good. I can sense it. We're the only ones in the room. And security's coming.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": We need to regroup.

J'NAYA: I'll bet it's The Major, too. You've got even less time than you think.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": Silence!

(He punches her in the face, hard.)

J'NAYA: Uhn!

(Shape-Shifter Val unholsters and powers up his own disruptor.)

TELEPATH: Wait! Don't kill her.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL": You have an idea?

TELEPATH: The turncoat will run straight back to that deputy. And the deputy trusts this woman. You see?

---

"Felyaerdë," in Orion, is your basic sexually-demeaning R-rated curse word.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "JUDGE VAL" / SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": Oh, clever as always, my beloved. So I become her.

TELEPATH: And you're a charmer in every form.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": I aim to please. The original's unconscious. What should I do with her?

TELEPATH: Distract security outside long enough for me to drag her out.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": Excellent. Well, then, time for me to put on a show!

(She steps calmly over to the door, enters the code, and it opens.)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": He-- HELP! (coughing) PLEASE!

TELEPATH: *Always so wonderful to see you perform, darling.*

**SCENE 6H-16****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 – POWER BAY 4**

JANATH: Got the last scanner hooked up. You sure Starfleet won't detect these?

ISAAC: They may, but I think I can beg the station commander's indulgence. We need to better understand what's happening here, and I can't very well walk up to a Federation Minister and ask him if he's corrupt, can I?

JANATH: Can't you?

ISAAC: Mmm, come to think of it, that does sound like the sort of thing we-- Wait. Do you hear that?

JANATH: What? (pause) Oh!

ISAAC: Where is it coming from?

JANATH: The vents. That vent. Something's inside it.

ISAAC: Or someone.

JANATH: Have to be a pretty tiny someone. How about we find out?

(She walks over and presses a control to open a panel)

(Then she calls into the ventilation shaft)

JANATH: Hello? Someone in there? You okay? Need help?

(Silence)

JANATH: See? Must have just been [some trash that got sucked in.]

ICHIRO: Yes please.

JANATH: What?

ICHIRO: Please help me.

JANATH: Scions!

ISAAC: Get him out of there.

JANATH: I am!

(Ichiro crawls out of the vent, assisted by Janath. They both grunt)

ISAAC: A child!

ICHIRO: Are you... General Brahms? I've heard of you.

JANATH: (gasp) Isaac? He's in my head.

ICHIRO: I'm just checking!

ISAAC: It's alright, child. I know that look well: you're running from someone.

ICHIRO: Yeah.



ISAAC: Then do what you must to feel safe.

ICHIRO: Your mind is... crowded, General.

ISAAC: Call us Isaac. None of us mean you harm.

PSEUDO: Speak for yourself, Isaac. I have a reputation to protect.

ISAAC: Pseudo... None of us mean you harm.

ICHIRO: I know. I wouldn't have come out otherwise.

ISAAC: Who are you running from?

ICHIRO: I don't know! Its mind -- I couldn't see inside. It was wearing Judge Val's face, but Judge Val wasn't there. And Aunt Kestra... she got me out, she's still there, can you help her?!

ISAAC: Kestra is here?

JANATH: The boring one?

**SCENE 6H-17****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - CORRIDOR**

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": (coughing, hacking)

(Yubari, Neeva, and a marine detachment run up.)

THE MAJOR: Marines! Secure the room!

YUBARI: Kestra! Where's Ichiro? Where is he?!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": (through heavy coughing) Tr-trap. Got him out -- don't -- don't know where.

(Neeva hits her combadge.)

YUBARI: Who was it? What did they look like? Kestra, answer me!NEEVA: Security, this is Neeva.  
Interplanetary amber alert.  
Missing child, Betazoid, male, pre-adolescent.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": (through heavy coughing) Didn't... didn't get a good look.

YUBARI: That's useless!

NEEVA: Yubari! That's not helping! Take a breath.

J'NAYA: (still coughing) I'll bet you had a plan for this. You always do. SO think: where's he going?

ISAAC: *Comman-- er, Captain Neeva, please come in.*

(Neeva hits her combadge.)

NEEVA: Mister Brahms, we have an emergency here, so please [do not take the fact that I gave you a combadge as blanket permission to call].

ISAAC: *Yes, a missing child. I found him. He wants to know if Kestra is alright. As do I.*

(Yubari hits her combadge)

YUBARI: General, it's me! He's Betazoid? He's alright? Where are you?!

ISAAC: *Power Bay Four, but who [are you, ma'am?]*

YUBARI: We're on our way. And if he's not alright when I get there, I swear, I will never forgive you again. Yubari out.

(Yubari storms down the corridor with Neeva and the Shape-Shifter pretending to be Kestra in tow.)

**SCENE 6H-18 & 6H-19**

[These scenes have been omitted from the current production draft.]

**SCENE 6H-20****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - POWER BAY 4**

JANATH: That went well.

ISAAC: I have never been threatened with a lack of forgiveness before. Do you think I know her?

ICHIRO: You better! Asuka thinks about you all the time.

ISAAC: That woman... is Asuka Yubari? [ah-SOO-ka yoo-BAH-ree] (pause) And everything I did to her... it cut so deep? She still dwells on it?

ICHIRO: Yeah, that's why I trusted [you. And, hey, no, not like that! She loves you!]

(The door swishes open. Yubari, Neeva, and Shape-Shifter enter, running.)

YUBARI: Ichiro!

ICHIRO: Asuka!

(Yubari runs to Ichiro and immediately crouches to check him over for injuries / to touch his face.)

YUBARI: Are you hurt? What happened?!

ICHIRO: I'm okay! Aunt Kestra got me into a vent. Thank you! I can't believe you got away!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": Oh, another minute and I had 'em on the run.

ISAAC: Kestra, what a wonderful surprise. You've healed well. (pause) Kestra?

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": Oh, uh, yes! Yes, I suppose I have. Thank you, um... Isaac.

ISAAC: And, Yubari [yoo-BAH-ree]. Um.

YUBARI: General.

ISAAC: I go by Isaac now.

YUBARI: I've heard. Too bad, General.

ISAAC: I... understand. I'm sorry.

YUBARI: You're what?

NEEVA: Brahms, I don't suppose you found an Trill judge down here, too? About yay high?

JANATH: No one like that.

NEEVA: And you are...?

JANATH: Janath. Isaac is my travel buddy. And... warden.

NEEVA: Alright, so Judge Val is still missing. Yubari, you want to head up the search?

YUBARI: No.

NEEVA: No?

YUBARI: I can't both lead a search and protect Ichiro, and he's my first priority. As a deputy marshal, I mean.

NEEVA: Right, of course. Seems like you've found your calling, Yubs.

YUBARI: That's -- that's not what I said.

NEEVA: Your actions have always spoken louder than your words. I'll call Sheriff Riftie. He'll find the judge.

ICHIRO: What about the fake judge?

YUBARI: The what.

ICHIRO: Kestra, did you tell them about the shapeshif[ter?]

("Kestra" points a phaser at them and charges it up.)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": You've got a real big mouth, kid.

NEEVA: Fake judge.

YUBARI: Fake Kestra.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": I guess that's why we have to kill you.

YUBARI: Ichiro! Down!

(Yubari leaps onto Ichiro, knocking him to the floor, just as "Kestra" fires the phaser. The beam just misses them both.)

NEEVA: You're under arrest!

(Neeva fires back.)

ICHIRO: They have the real Kestra! She's still alive!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": I said to stop reading my mind, kid! Fine. I can see this is a tough room. Good thing I'm a shape-shifter!

(She transforms her arms into long tentacles, which reach toward Ichiro! Yubari runs at her!)

YUBARI: Ichiro! Get back!

(She blocks the way to Ichiro, but is grabbed by the tentacles instead!)

ICHIRO: Asuka! NO! Put her down!

YUBARI: Ahhhhhhh!

\*Neeva fires again, at the tentacles, but misses.)

NEEVA: She's taking Yubari!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": Correction: I have dear Yubari, and I'll pull this trigger if anyone gets any closer. I don't suppose you'll trade me the kid for her.



(Yubari is struggling against the tentacles)

ICHIRO: Asuka! NO!

YUBARI: General, swear to me you'll protect him!

ISAAC: What? Me?!

YUBARI: GENERAL!

ISAAC: Yes, I swear!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": Now that's quite enough of that, Asuka. Do we have a deal?

YUBARI: Never!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": I wasn't talking to you.

(She shoots Yubari with a phaser!)

YUBARI: Ahhhgh!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": Don't worry, everyone! Just stunned! But she'll be dead the instant I see any of you coming after me. Until we meet again! Adieu.

(She backs out the door.)

(Neeva hits her combadge.)

NEEVA: Ops, give me stationwide. This is Captain Neeva. Intruder alert. Hostage situation. Dominion Protocol Three. All starship traffic suspended, all shops closed, all personnel subject to blood screenings. Marines to Green Sector, Section Four.

ISAAC: Does that protocol ever work?

NEEVA: No. The only protocol that ever worked against shape-shifters was mining the wormhole. But we might get lucky.

ICHIRO: Neeva!

NEEVA: What is it, Ichiro?

ICHIRO: I saw something in her mind. A long tube. The number twenty-three.

NEEVA: A green ladder?

ICHIRO: Yes.

NEEVA: Maintenance Twenty-Three. I know the place.

ICHIRO: Let's go!

NEEVA: Not you, child. Major, I have a location! I need units to cordon and breach at Mike Nagus Tango Two Three.

THE MAJOR: *Ma'am, they're on their way. E.T.A. six minutes.*

NEEVA: I also need a bodyguard unit for a young boy.

THE MAJOR: *Where?*

NEEVA: Wherever Regulation Forty-Six-A says is safe. Fort Knox, if available.

THE MAJOR: *That's easy: we'll meet him at your brig. That's still in Level Eight-Sixty, Section One-Two-Five?*

NEEVA: No! Brown Sector, Section Three.

THE MAJOR: *Yes, ma'am. We'll start fortifying. I'll send an escort. Marines out.*

JANATH: Uh, doesn't the brig only have one exit?

NEEVA: Yes, which is why you're not going there. The Major just sent us to his personal quarters -- room code eight-six-zero-one-two-five.

ISAAC: Regulation Forty-Six-A. You thought someone might be listening.

NEEVA: Weird you remember that but not Asuka.

ISAAC: It was in the file. She... wasn't.

NEEVA: Well, I have to go rescue her. Here, take my sidearm, until your escort gets here.

ISAAC: I'm not allowed weapons.

NEEVA: Oh, of course. How spasting precious. You!

JANATH: Me?

NEEVA: Here's a phaser. If Ichiro is hurt, if that phaser does anything it's not supposed to do, Yubari kills him, but I kill you.

ICHIRO: Neeva, let me [help you save them!]

NEEVA: And if you try to follow me, Ichiro, she will stun you down and I will bake her a cake for her trouble. Back in a few.

(She runs out.)

**SCENE 6H-21****LOCATION: MAINTENANCE TWENTY-THREE**

**NEEVA:** *Wherever Regulation Forty-Six-A says is safe. Fort Knox, if available.*

**THE MAJOR:** *That's easy: we'll meet him at your brig. That's still in Level Eight-Sixty, Section One-Two-Five?*

**TELEPATH:** Regulation Forty-Six A? Darling, I'm not sure they've realized yet that they're dealing with a telepath!

**SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA":** Whose mind do you need?  
The judge, the deputy, or the Kestra?

**NEEVA:** *No! Brown Sector, Section Three.*

**TELEPATH:** Oh, no need to wake anyone for full contact. This is surface knowledge. I'll just skim it off the deputy and send you on your way.

**THE MAJOR:** *Yes, ma'am. We'll start fortifying. I'll send an escort. Marines out.*

(We hear her use telepathy)

**TELEPATH:** Ah! A code! Such a simple one, too. They really don't know about me! Still, it seems our little gathering here in Maintenance Twenty-Three does need to move to the first backup site.

**SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA":** I can carry Kestra, my sweet. The deputy's lighter.

**TELEPATH:** Thank you, darling. Unfortunately, that does leave our favorite judge without a dance partner, which means we won't get the time to kill him properly.

(She shoots Judge Val, which wakes him up just long enough to scream.)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": And I was so looking forward to pulling his reproductive glands out through his gills, one by one.

TELEPATH: They're called "lungs," darling, and that always kills them nearly as quickly anyway.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": I know, I just can't help it. The screams they make... (sigh) This way?

TELEPATH: Yes, the backup site first. Then... I think I know where our little traitor is hiding.

**SCENE 6H-22****LOCATION: GUEST QUARTERS**

(Ichiro is pacing. Isaac is standing nearby. Janath is sitting on the couch, phaser in hand.)

ICHIRO: If she dies, I'll kill her. I'll... I don't know! I'll kill her!

ISAAC: If you're very lucky, you'd live to regret that.

ICHIRO: What?

PSEUDO: Nope, that's enough of that.

ICHIRO: Pseudo?

PSEUDO: My old mole's been alone and stuck in one room for almost twenty minutes, so he's getting maudlin, and neither of us needs that. I say a little blood vengeance never hurt anyone. The apple didn't fall far from the tree with you, did it?

JANATH: He's right. More power to the kid, Isaac.

ISAAC: Fine, you've both made your point. Now stop barging into my frontal lobe.

PSEUDO: Our frontal lobe, and you never listen to me in the cerebellum!

(Janath flops backward on the couch.)

JANATH: Auuuugh, now they're going to start bickering. Kill me now.

ICHIRO: I can't read your thoughts very clearly.

PSEUDO: I know. Two minds, one brain. Neither can he. Wouldn't be any fun if he could.

THE MAJOR: *Mister Isaac, this is the Major. Perimeter is nearly set. I'll be back with you presently. I've deactivated the replicator, but there is some chocolate in the desk.*

ICHIRO: CHOCOLATE!

(Ichiro scrabbles for the cabinet)

LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - CORRIDOR

(The Major is walking from one end back toward his quarters.)

THE MAJOR: Well, I suppose that's the chocolate accounted for. Mister Isaac, keep an eye out for gas, drones, sounds of drilling...

ISAAC: *Major, I may not remember the specifics, but I did spend the majority of my life in the intelligence service.*

THE MAJOR: Of course, sir. I'll be with you in a moment. Major out.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": Help! I need help here!

THE MAJOR: Deputy Yubari! You escaped!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": Yeah, barely. Kestra got shot.



THE MAJOR: Your arms are bleeding.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": Superficial. I repeat: Kestra got shot.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": (groaning) Oh, it's not... ow, it's not that bad. Really. Ow. I'll be fine.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": No, you won't. Major, I need to lay her down somewhere while we call medics.

THE MAJOR: Take her to Sickbay.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": She won't make it--

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": Yes I will.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": --She won't make it; Protocol Three keeps us from getting there; and, frankly, do you know that sickbay isn't full of shape-shifters right now?

THE MAJOR: I suppose I agree, ma'am. However, on that very subject, I have to ask... does it fly to the eastern sky?

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": What?

THE MAJOR: The bird, ma'am. Does the bird fly to the eastern sky?

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": Major, we don't have time for this. Kestra is [bleeding out in front of our eyes.]

(The Major draws and charges his phaser. Two marines who have quietly fallen in behind Yubari do the same.)

THE MAJOR: I'm afraid, ma'am, that now is precisely the time for this.

**SCENE 6H-23****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - JEFFRIES TUBE**

J'NAYA: Ow... what... what hit me?

(Yubari is trying to shout through a gag)

TELEPATH: Oh, do shut up, "Deputy." I'm speaking with your wannabe now. She doesn't seem to have any training resisting telepathy.

(Yuabri shouts some more into the gag)

J'NAYA: That's Commander Kestra J'naya, first off[icer of the *Starship Visionary*].

TELEPATH: Yes, yes. You see, my counterpart is impersonating the two of you at the moment, and I need something from your mind.

J'NAYA: What--?!

TELEPATH: Won't take a moment. This will hurt.

(J'naya gasps)

**FLASHBACK**

*J'NAYA: (6F-02) Well, we'd have to invent a battery that lasts seven billion years.*

(Flash!)

J'NAYA: Jack Meyers, are you asking me to marry you?

(Flash!)

J'NAYA: Grandmother, of course not! I'm the daughter of two worlds! You think a girl gets an accent like this by choosing between them? Honestly!

(Flash!)

J'NAYA: Commander Kestra J'Naya, reporting as ordered. Where do you need me, Emily?

END FLASHBACK

(J'naya groans)

TELEPATH: There, there, I'm hating this as much as you are. What an insufferably inane life you lead. Now where...? Ah, there.

FLASHBACK

*J'NAYA: (from 6H-05) "The bird flies fastest at dawn."*

*ICHIRO: (from 6H-05) Does it fly to the eastern sky?*

*J'NAYA: (from 6H-05) No, it flies sky high.*

TELEPATH: No, it flies sky high.

SHAPE-SHIFTER "J'NAYA": No, it flies sky high.

**SCENE 6H-24****LOCATION: STARBASE 216 - CORRIDOR**

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": See? "Sky-high." Are we good, Major, or do you want our old friend to die right here in the hallway?

THE MAJOR: Apologies, ma'am. Come in, of course.

(He opens the door and they enter)

THE MAJOR: I'm coming in with a couple guests!

ISAAC: Guests?

ICHIRO: Asuka!

(He jumps out of a chair, crumpling a candy wrapper and throwing it on the ground)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": How 'bout a hug?

ICHIRO: Asuka!

(He runs toward her.)

PSUEDO: No! Kid!

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": Cm'ere!

PSEUDO: JANATH, FIRE!

(Janath does.)

SHAPE-SHIFTER "YUBARI": Agh!

("Yubari" falls to the floor, taking "Kestra" with her.)

(The Major ineffectually raises his gun and charges it.)

THE MAJOR: Janath! Stand down!

(Ichiro spins on Janath and charges.)

ICHIRO: YOU KILLED MY MOTHER!

(Psuedo (in Isaac's body) intercepts him. They struggle.)

ICHIRO: Uhn! Ooof! Let me GO!

PSEUDO: Kid! It wasn't her! Look at me, kid! It isn't Asuka Yubari! See her arm bleeding?! Her leg?! Lieutenant Yubari's arms are cybernetic prosthetics! This isn't her!

ICHIRO: It's-- It's-- You're right. You're right. So: What has she done with Asuka?

PSEUDO: We'll be able to answer that in a few minutes, when she recovers. We'll need a stasis field.

THE MAJOR: Corporal!

RANDOM CREW: Sir!

THE MAJOR: You heard him! On the double!

RANDOM CREW: Sir, yes, sir!

(The corporal runs off down the corridor.)

THE MAJOR: Sir, what I don't understand is, how did this... thing know the passphrase? She had it perfectly, in only a moment.

JANATH: Gotta be a telepath, right?

ISAAC: Agreed.

THE MAJOR: I thought shape-shifters couldn't be telepaths.

JANATH: They can't. So this one's working with someone else on the station.

ISAAC: That must be who's holding the real Kestra and Yubari captive.

PSEUDO: If they're not dead already.

ICHIRO: They're not.

ISAAC: Ichiro, it's not [a question of what he hope for, but we must prepare for every possibility.]

ICHIRO: No, they're alive. I'm inside its mind right now.

ISAAC: Is that safe?

(Janath pulls out a tricorder)

JANATH: Ichiro and the shifter both have stable life-signs.

ICHIRO: Shut up. There's someone else here.

TELEPATH: *This is no longer amusing, boy. Surrender and I won't kill everyone you love.*

ICHIRO: *Tell me where Mom | Asuka is, and I won't kill the shape-shifter. The one you love.*

TELEPATH: *You'd do it, too. Hm. Not the coward we were told to expect. Why leave the Syndicate at all, if you have this kind of strength | evil inside you?*

ISAAC: Ichiro, I promised [your mother...]

ICHIRO: Shut up! Tell me where Mom | Asuka is.

TELEPATH: *Surrender and I won't kill her.*

(Pause)

ICHIRO: Let me think.

ISAAC: [in background] That's enough.  
Beta Five, run Plan Ten.

TELEPATH: *You know it's the right thing to do, brat. You can't save yourself, but you can save her. Surrender now, or my offer's off the table.*



BETA FIVE: *Working.*

ICHIRO: *I wasn't thinking about your offer. I was thinking about your shape-shifter's thoughts, "my sweet." She knows too much. You're in Pink Sector, Section Fifty. One more minute and I'll know the rest.*

TELEPATH: *For what you're making me do, I will hurt you more than anyone has ever been hurt before, boy. Goodbye, my darling.*

(The shapeshifter gasps through both bodies)

(Janath's tricorder starts beeping wildly with all kinds of dire medical alerts.)

JANATH: *It's the shape-shifter! Something's tearing apart her brain tissue! She's dying!*

ISAAC: *Beta Five, now or never!*

BETA FIVE: *Plan Ten executing.*

(The shape-shifter stops gasping!)

ICHIRO: *Ow! What happened to my head? It's all-- You're all...*

JANATH: *Our Beta Five just turned this room into a telepathic dead zone.*

ICHIRO: *The telepath was ripping apart her own love's brain, just to stop me from getting inside. It was... murder.*

**THE MAJOR:** No one in the Syndicate can put anything or anyone ahead of the Syndicate, Master Ichiro. Not even a lover. I'll call the doctor to get her conscious, then interrogate her in good old marine style.

**JANATH:** Isaac, we need to step out of here, too, or our bluegills will start dying next.

**ISAAC:** I propose Pink Sector, Section Fifty. Major, I trust you'll do a more competent job guarding Ichiro now that you're aware of the telepathic accomplice?

**THE MAJOR:** Sir... yes, sir.

**ISAAC:** Janath.

(He starts to exit, she follows.)

**JANATH:** Right behind you.

**PSEUDO:** Toodles!

**ICHIRO:** Wait.

**ISAAC:** Yes?

**ICHIRO:** She knows you're coming.

**ISAAC:** Yes. I'll try not to let it go to her head.

(They exit.)

**SCENE 6H-25****LOCATION: PINK SECTOR, SECTION 50**

(Kestra is laying on the ground. There's a phaser on overload strapped to her chest, slowly building up a whine.)

(Neeva enters through a door, followed by two marines)

NEEVA: Breach!

J'NAYA: (unintelligibly) *Run! Neeva, Run! There's a bomb! get out of here! The phaser's on overload! Neeva, It'll kill you! Run! Leave me! You have to stop her, Neeva! Run! Run!>*

NEEVA: Clear! Private, check the corners! Kestra!

(One of the marines manuevers around some corners, while Neeva runs to Kestra and crouches down).

NEEVA: Kestra! Are you [okay?]

(Neeva removes the gag)

J'NAYA: Neeva, get out! There's a phaser on overload! Go!

NEEVA: I'll just get these handcuffs off...

J'NAYA: NO! That'll set it off!

NEEVA: Then how'm I supposed to get you out of here?

J'NAYA: Neeva, it's strapped to my chest. Run.

NEEVA: You don't give orders on this station, Commander.

(Brahms and Janath enter.)

BRAHMS: Captain Neeva. Kestra. Something's wrong?

(Neeva slaps her combadge.)

NEEVA: All hands. phaser on overload. Evacuate pink sector. Red alert.

(The red alert klaxons go off)

NEEVA: Marines, you too. Evacuate.

(The marines do indeed run for it.)

(Brahms and Janath draw closer)

J'NAYA: Isaac, run.

ISAAC: What's the solution?

J'NAYA: The solution to what?

ISAAC: How you get out alive.

J'NAYA: I don't know! How could I know that?

ISAAC: You're a brilliant engineer. Improvised a transporter in a junkyard, right?

J'NAYA: Can you just tell me the answer?

ISAAC: I don't know the answer yet! You're still coming up with it.

NEEVA: Brahms...

J'NAYA: Fine. What do we have to work with? Three combadges, handcuffs, some really sensitive wires around my hips, your wristband that lets you jump through walls, a hyperspanner that Maintenance left behind, naturally the exploding phaser strapped to my chest, that's a [plasma flow main behind me...]

JANATH: Got it. Isaac, give me the wristband.

ISAAC: What?

JANATH: Now, please. Ms. Kestra, I want you to turn and face the bulkhead. Then lean forward and project your chest so the phaser's almost touching.

J'NAYA: O...kay.

ISAAC: Here. Beta Five's wristband.

JANATH: Great. Now, the rest of you, give me some distance in case this doesn't work.

NEEVA: No cha[nce of that, bucko.]

ISAAC: Actually, Captain, in my experience, when Janath suggests backing up, she is to be heeded.

(They all back off)

JANATH: Kestra, I've attached the Beta Five wristband to you and activated her. You can pass through walls now.

J'NAYA: That doesn't get me out of these handcuffs!

JANATH:

That's fine. All I want you to do is lean forward just far enough that the phaser is halfway inside the wall. Nothing else. No part of your body.

J'NAYA: Okay.

(The phaser passes through the wall)

J'NAYA: There. Phaser on overload halfway inside a wall. Not something I ever expected to see.

JANATH: Do you know what happens if I turn off the wristband while something's still partway inside a bulkhead?

J'NAYA: No, what?

JANATH: Neither do I. Let's find out.

She shuts off the wristband. The phaser whining immediately stops. We hear a muffled clatter through the bulkhead and a louder clatter on this side)

J'NAYA: It worked! You sliced the phaser in half! Do you have engineering training?

JANATH: Some. And I've traveled with Isaac for a lot longer than you did.

J'NAYA: He must be very proud.

JANATH: With the Scions... who ever knows?

(Isaac and Neeva re-approach.)

ISAAC: Bravo, Janath! Bravo, Kestra!

J'NAYA: Phew. By the way, hi, Isaac. Good to see you.

ISAAC: And you, Kestra.

(Sylveste enters at a run)

J'NAYA

It was really all Janath's idea, though.

SYLVESTE: Captain Neeva.

NEEVA: Sly?

SYLVESTE: The Major sent me, cap. He still doesn't trust comms. Messages on foot only.

NEEVA: What's he got?

SYLVESTE: The prisoner isn't in good shape. She... it... they?... the prisoner is clearly brain damaged. But keeps raving about the final failsafe, how it's going to solve "all our problems at once."

J'NAYA: What's that supposed to mean?

SYLVESTE: It's a bomb, Commander. That's what Ichiro thought, anyway. A bomb big enough to destroy the entire station.

J'NAYA: The ravings of a lunatic aren't much to go on, Sly.

NEEVA: They're enough. Order station evac, now.

SYLVESTE: That's actually what convinced us, ma'am. I did order evacuation. That's when we discovered escape pods are frozen and docking clamps locked. Engineering says two hours to repair.

NEEVA: Spast. Yeah, that convinces me, too. So where's the bomb?

SYLVESTE: We don't know. Nothing's showing on internal sensors.

ISAAC: I may be able to help there. We installed certain... enhancements... to your sensors. Beta Five?

BETA FIVE: *Work-ing.*

NEEVA: You're spying on my starbase?

JANATH: If Beta finds the bomb, I don't think you're allowed to be mad about it.



**BETA FIVE:** *Energy fluctuations in Ice Bore Mining consistent with fissile material.*

**NEEVA:** Spast.

**J'NAYA:** Strange place for a bomb.

**SYLVESTE:** No, Ice Mining is small, right next to the power core, you have to climb stairs to the central bore so it's easy to defend, and the whole rig is offline and deserted until we orbit the moon next month.

**NEEVA:** Let's go. Sly, get the Sheriff and all the marines you find. Have them follow us in as soon as you can.

**SYLVESTE:** Yes, ma'am!

(He's already heading out.)

**J'NAYA:** Bomb squad might be nice, too!

**SCENE 6H-26****LOCATION: STARBASE CORRIDOR**

(Our heroes are walking quick to Ice Bore Mining.)

ISSAC: We should catch up with the others.

J'NAYA

No, Isaac, let Neeva and Janath chat. You're gonna vanish out of here the moment we stop the assassins, and I want a couple minutes with you first.

ISAAC: It is really good to see you, Kestra.

J'NAYA: You too, Isaac. Looks like you filled my spot after all.

ISAAC: One thing led to another.

J'NAYA: Well, you picked up a smart one in Janath. How is she doing?

ISAAC: Thriving. Four years and she's defending the innocent more recklessly than I am! I couldn't be prouder.

J'NAYA: Does she know that?

ISSAC: I... try to keep a certain distance.

J'NAYA: Why?

ISAAC: Well, take Asuka Yubari.

J'NAYA: You remember her, don't you?

ISAAC :No, it's more like... I remember remembering her. When I was the Beacon, and I went inside her mind -- you know, when The Beast attacked the Excelsior --

J'NAYA: Oh, I'm not forgetting that.

ISAAC: I remembered... everything. Through Asuka, I became General Brahms again. I don't remember what that felt like, but I remember that I didn't like it. I remember that we were close, and that he -- that I -- hurt her. Badly. Janath deserves better.

J'NAYA: Isaac... (pause) When we found out you were alive, most of the ship wasn't exactly thrilled. I wasn't around for whatever you did to scramble everyone's warp plots, but they haven't forgiven you.

ISAAC: Nor should they.

J'NAYA: Except Yubari Asuka. She waited a week, bided her time, tried to make it look casual when she finally pinned me down in a quiet corner of the Delta Lounge. (pause) And then she asked me whether you were okay.

ISAAC: What?

J'NAYA: Whether you'd recovered. Whether you seemed... happy.

ISAAC: She asked you that?

J'NAYA: Yeah, and I told her you'd be dropping by for darts one of these days. She joined my league the next week. (pause) Eleven years, Isaac. Eleven years since I saw you and you have never. once. made it 'round for darts.

ISAAC: It's... difficult finding the time. Among other [concerns.]

J'NAYA: Make the time. I know you're out there saving billions of faceless innocents--

ISAAC: Trillions. Technically.

J'NAYA: --but if you don't pour yourself out for the people around you, your friends, you go sour, like old milk.

JANATH: Hey, you two, thick as thieves: we're here!

(Everyone comes to a stop around a big cargo-bay-style door.)

J'NAYA: Just tell her, Isaac.

JANATH: Tell me what?

ISAAC: Janath, I'm proud of you.

J'NAYA: Not now.

NEEVA: Excuse me? Through this door is a hostage situation and a bomb. Heads in the game, please.

J'NAYA: Sorry, my fault.

**NEEVA: Four. Three. Two. One. Breach!**

**(She opens the cargo bay door)**

**SCENE 6H-27****LOCATION: ICE MINING CONTROL**

(There is a big bomb at the top of the stairs, beeping as it approaches detonation.)

NEEVA: Hello? Asuka?

(The Telepath takes a couple steps to the top of the stairs.)

TELEPATH: That was foolish. If Ichiro had come alone, everyone but him could have lived. Now we'll all die, including him, when this bomb goes off.

NEEVA: There's four of us. Marines on the way.

TELEPATH: If you set foot on the stairs, my autoturrets [will open fire and destroy you all.]

(Yubari appears behind her)

YUBARI: NO ONE hurts my Itchy.

(Yubari punches the telepath, who loses her footing and falls, screaming.)

(The telepath falls off the stairs to the ground)

NEEVA: Yubs!

(Yubari runs to the left to turn off one autoturret, then runs to the right to switch off the other.)

YUBARI: She wasn't as good as her "darling" at tying people up, and she couldn't focus on reading my mind while she was threatening you. Isaac, you left Ichiro.

NEEVA: Safe with the Major.

YUBARI: We'll discuss it later. Now come on! Turrets are off, and this bomb of hers could go off any second.

NEEVA: Isaac, Asuka, get the ice borer online and into ejection mode. Kestra, Janath, you're my engineers. We're going to disable the bomb's gyros, and anything else that might make it go off, when we shoot this whole section into space.

J'NAYA: Ah, clarification: whole section?

NEEVA: We'll have to run for it. Asuka the controls are over there!

(Yubari and Isaac jog to the back of the control area, while Kestra, Janath, and Neeva stay in the front of the control area, where they use engineering tools and working on disarming the bomb.)

YUBARI: You do still know how to use a Starfleet computer.

ISAAC: Not well, actually.

YUBARI: That's a relief. The red button next to the two greens.

ISAAC: Thanks. What do you mean, a relief?

YUBARI: Because then it's not just me you forgot about. You've been back a long time and never visited. Not even a letter.

ISAAC: Cycling the plasma interlocks.

YUBARI: Raising the plasma flow.

ISAAC: We... mattered to each other, didn't we?

YUBARI: You're making it sound weird.

ISAAC: But we did.

YUBARI: If you'd ever visited, I could have told you. If you'd wanted a past, I could have given yours back. Ejector splines reticulated.

ISAAC: Blowing the coupler bolts. I didn't think you wanted me. I don't even remember how I hurt you, just how much it hurt to watch.

YUBARI: Too damn bad. That's how it works. You were my mentor. You made every mistake in the mentorship handbook, and a bunch the handbook couldn't imagine. You betrayed me. But you think just because something hurts you cut it out of your life? (pause) The last time General Brahms ever spoke to me, he said that he wanted me to be the one thing he didn't poison. I've been waiting for you to come find out he didn't.

ISAAC: I'm... Asuka...

YUBARI: Ejection armed! How you girls doing back there?!



NEEVA: Kestra?

J'NAYA: Ready as we're gonna be!

NEEVA: Then hit it and RUN!

(Yubari hits it, the ejection system starts. A series of bolts being blow in a semicircle around the control area and EVERYONE RUNS! DOWN the stairs! INTO the corridor!)

LOCATION: STARBASE CORRIDOR

(There is an explosion. The entire bore system shoots into space just as they tumble through the door, which is ripped off its hinges into space! The emergency forcefield kicks into place before too much air gets sucked out.)

YUBARI: (through heavy breathing) Come on. I have to get back to Ichiro. He still has a trial today.

**SCENE 6H-28****LOCATION: CAPTAIN NEEVA'S QUARTERS**

(Neeva is taking snacks out of the replicator and putting them on a table.)

ICHIRO: Did you see the look on his face when I started listing all the codes he gave the Syndicate?

JANATH: That was pretty funny.

J'NAYA: Secretary Hobbs' only hope of ever leaving that penal colony is because he finally agreed to turn state's evidence. The jury gave him the fastest guilty verdict in thirty years.

YUBARI: Murdering the judge will do that. Good luck to whoever has to "rehabilitate" that one.

NEEVA: We're just lucky Doctor Lee was able to get the Val symbiont into a new host so quickly.

J'NAYA: And that Noela Val was okay with keeping the trial on track. Yubs? What's wrong?

YUBARI: Nothing. Forget it.

NEEVA: This is a real blow to the Syndicate. On behalf of all Orions... thank you, Ichiro.

ICHIRO: It wasn't just me.

YUBARI: Yeah it was. You're a kid. The rest of us were just doing our jobs.

J'NAYA: Well, not just our jobs. Right, Neeva?

NEEVA: Right.

J'NAYA: C'mon, Itchy. Major heroes get unlimited screen time. I've got a four-player split-screen set up for Smash, if Janath and Isaac want to play.

ISAAC: I think we'd better [be moving on to our next mission.]

J'NAYA: Isaac.

(Isaac now follows them toward the door.)

ISAAC: --join you for a few rounds, that is.

(They exit.)

YUBARI: Why do I have the sense I've just been cornered?

NEEVA: Because you're a good security officer. So, do you want to know why you're mad at me? I mean, besides the usual.

YUBARI: Oh, this should be good.

NEEVA: You thought you had to stay away for all these years because I blamed you for what happened. Today you found out I didn't, that you could have reached out at any time, and now you're realizing that you stayed away because you blamed me, too. If I'd just, well, hated you the way you wanted, [you would have had your excuse.]

YUBARI: Damn it, Neeva, it's not just... I mean, I also... I don't understand why you wouldn't hate me. I hate me. I was the captain of the Excelsior and I failed her.

NEEVA: We all failed her. Some more than others, but... Besides, I did hate you. There are things that happened at First Light that I don't know how to forgive. If you had reached out three, four years ago... I don't know. I did look for you, but part of me was relieved I never found you. It was a lot easier being friends with a memory.

YUBARI: But if you can't forgive...

NEEVA: I think I can forget, if you're willing to do the same.

(Silence)

YUBARI: Yeah. I'm in.

NEEVA: (sigh) Good. Because you're going to need my help cutting through all the red tape for the adoption.

YUBARI: Oh, not you, too.

NEEVA: Hear me out.

YUBARI: Neeva, I understand why Kestra has romanticized the whole thing in her head, but you know better. I can keep Ichiro safe, but even I know there's more to being a parent than that.

NEEVA: You're right.

YUBARI: Finally, someone sees sense. I can't be Ichiro's mother.

NEEVA: No, I mean you're right there's more to parenting. But you already are his mother, as far as he's concerned.

YUBARI: He needs someone better than me!

NEEVA: Then be better.

YUBARI: Neeva!

NEEVA: Didn't you ever wonder how a single man ended up adopting a pre-teen Orion girl?

YUBARI: He got you off that pirate ship.

NEEVA: Yeah, and then he turned me over to Social Services the moment we docked. He didn't know how to look after an Orion kid about to hit puberty! And Child Protection fully agreed with him there.

YUBARI: So how'd you end up with him?

NEEVA: I had more thief skills than Child Protection knew how to handle, and I needed someone I trusted. The fourth or fifth time I showed up at his front door, he started to realize that was him.

YUBARI: Ichiro has parents, Neeva.

NEEVA: So did I. They failed us both. You shouldn't stop looking for them, but, today, Ichiro needs you, just like I needed my dad. (laughs) Trust me, you are already way more ready than he was. And I didn't turn out so bad.

YUBARI: No... you didn't.

(Isaac re-enters.)

ISAAC: May I rejoin you? I once saved a floating civilization from plummeting into the Chasm of Despair, yet I was oddly unable to prevent my avatar from falling to its death repeatedly.

YUBARI: You lost the video game?

ISAAC: It would seem rather decisively.

NEEVA: I've said what I wanted to say. I'm gonna go cheer on Kestra.

(Neeva exits.)

(Pause)

YUBARI: I suppose you're here to tell me to adopt Ichiro, too.

ISAAC: Is that... a possibility?

YUBARI: General, I can't raise a child!

(Pause)

ISAAC: I agree. You'd make every mistake in the parenting handbook.

YUBARI: I'll hurt him!

**ISAAC:** I certainly did. And yet... I was thirty-six when I died. In all that time, there seems to have been one thing in my life that I managed not to poison. Now, I can't imagine regretting that one thing. But the question is, can you?

**SCENE 6H-29****LOCATION: THE OTHER ROOM IN NEEVA'S QUARTERS**

(They're playing a violent video game.)

ICHIRO: Watch those wrist rockets, Aunt Kestra!

J'NAYA: I'm trying, but someone keeps needing to respawn.

NEEVA: Hey, you've played this one before!

(Yubari enters.)

YUBARI: Ichiro, I'd-- Wait. Hey, that looks pretty violent.

ICHIRO: Pause!

(He pauses.)

J'NAYA: Well, we figured, since Itchy's the big hero today, he deserves a little treat.

YUBARI: Sure, alright. Except I know Captain Neeva doesn't have a console, so how did Ichiro get a copy of The Dire Galaxy Three, a game I specifically banned?

ICHIRO: Uh-oh.

J'NAYA: Oh, is that my combadge? I think Jack's calling me.

YUBARI: Nice try.



(J'Naya stands and steps outside.)

J'NAYA: Sorry, honey? What was that? It's so loud in here, let me just [step outside.]

(The door closes)

NEEVA: Don't look at me. If I'd known the rule...

YUBARI: I know. I always knew you'd be a better influence than her. Can I have a word with Ichiro?

NEEVA: Sure.

(She exits.)

ICHIRO: Am I in trouble?

YUBARI: Nooo, no. May I sit?

ICHIRO: Of course, M — Asuka. (pause) What's wrong?

YUBARI: Nothing. Nothing's wrong. Your part in this trial is over. The Syndicate won't be coming after you anymore. You're not going to need a deputy protecting you now.

ICHIRO: But... where will...?

YUBARI: Well, I haven't made much progress finding your parents. Not yet. (pause) Until I do... would you be willing to stay with me, as my adopted, um... son?

**(Pause)**

**ICHIRO: I love you... mom.**

**SCENE 6H-30 [POST-CREDITS or MID-CREDITS]****LOCATION: PSUEDO'S MINDSCAPE**

PSEUDO: Alright, that's enough for tonight. The old mole can deal with the rest. (deep sigh)  
Nothing like a moment alone with your thoughts at the end of a long d[ay.]

ICHIRO: Pseudo?

PSEUDO: Gah! What are you doing here? I'm enjoying the privacy of my own mind, and you're supposed to be in bed -- in the real world! Now get out!

ICHIRO: Technically, I am in bed. Just, also here. I need to talk to you.

PSEUDO: I think you have the wrong mind. Go bother one of my roommates.

ICHIRO: I want you to give Mister Isaac his memories back.

PSEUDO: I have no idea what you're talking about. His memories were shredded when he died at Gevinon.

ICHIRO: No, I know I'm right. I saw you! You realized that the fake Asuka was a shape-shifter because she was bleeding from her limbs, but they should have been cybernetic. Why would you know that, and not Isaac?

PSEUDO: It was in the files.

ICHIRO: I'm a telepath! I was in your head! You remembered the first time she lost a limb. You remembered the pride you felt when she mastered her prosthetic. You remember Yubari! But they aren't your memories -- they're his!

PSEUDO: Stop pushing, kid.

ICHIRO: I'm giving you a chance, Pseudo. Before I tell them.

PSUEDO: You'll do no such thing.

ICHIRO: He deserves his memories!

PSEUDO: He doesn't want them, kid! He despises the man he was. I refuse to share a head with that amount of self-loathing again. Right now, those memories are in the only place where they won't hurt anyone: with me. Trust me on this.

ICHIRO: You're just telling yourself that because you want the memories for yourself!

PSEUDO: Maybe... maybe. I wouldn't put it past me. But sometimes, when you do the right thing, it works out well for you. I think you know something about that, Astrin.

(Pause)

ICHIRO: Wha -- what did you just call me?

PSEUDO: Astrin? That's your name, isn't it? Astrin Benya?

ICHIRO: N-- no, it's not!

PSEUDO: Yeah, it is. My telepathy doesn't usually go outside my own species... unless, of course, a snot-nosed kid goes digging around in there first. Then it goes both ways. So I know you might not remember much before the Syndicate, but you remember your name. And you remember the night you were taken.

ICHIRO: No! I don't!

PSEUDO: (scoffs) Tch

ICHIRO: I don't! Not... not really. Just pieces... nightmares... I started getting them after a few months with Asuka.

PSEUDO: Uh-huh. So remind me, why are you hiding it from her?

ICHIRO: You know, don't you?

PSEUDO: I want to hear you say it.

ICHIRO: If she knew my old name... Someone sold me to the Syndicate. I don't think it was my parents. The nightmares... I think they're dead. But some things Jamar said... whoever sold me in my old life could take me again, hurt me -- and maybe hurt Asuka. I can't risk that. (pause) Hey, that's not the same thing!

PSUEDO: Isn't it? Let me tell you something about my old mole. Isaac is a man defined by guilt. Every day he works to atone for the crimes of a life he can't remember. If I give him those memories... do you think your new mom wants him going into a frenzy trying to fix it all and get himself killed?

ICHIRO: No, but...

PSEUDO: Yeah, me neither.

ICHIRO: ...but it's not fair.

**PSUEDO:** Fair is fake. No one deserves anything. Now come on over here. Cressida won't be down for a while. I'm going to tolerate your intrusion long enough for you to look out the window and enjoy the asphodels with me.

**ICHIRO:** They're... they're pretty.

**PSEUDO:** Loveliest thing my mind has to offer.