

Starship Excelsior
"Tomorrow's Excelsior"
(Season 4, Episode D)
by James Heaney

Transcribed by Peter Stine

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

SCENE 4D-1001 - PRE-ROLL ANNOUNCEMENT

JAMES HEANEY: On September 8th, 1966, at 8:30 Eastern, the United States saw the first episode of Star Trek, and we began a voyage that has lasted fifty years – so far. We at Starship Excelsior started working on a special episode for the 50th anniversary because we wanted to give something special back to a show that has given us so much for so long. We owe a lot of thanks, from the people who came out last December to support a Kickstarter for this episode, to the talented cast and crew who came together through May to help us record it, and to the good people at CBS/Paramount, who have worked hard and taken some risks to keep non-commercial fan productions like ours alive, despite a tumultuous year in our community. Above all, we dedicate this episode to our friend and colleague Michael Liebmann. Michael co-starred as Alex “Bev” Rol on our show since we launched nine years ago. He died suddenly after surgery just a few weeks after recording his part for this episode. This one’s for you, Michael. It’s a new era for fan productions. There will never be another episode of Starship Excelsior like this one. But, after all, there’s only one 50th Anniversary. So happy birthday, Star Trek. Surely . . . the best of times.

SCENE 4D-00 – RECAP**LOCATION: EMPTINESS**

NARRATOR: *Last time on Star Trek: Excelsior.*

LOCATION: BRIEFING ROOM (FROM 4E-6)

DOVAN: Sooner or later – probably sooner – we and everyone else you’ve ever known or loved is going to die, violently, at the hands of an unstoppable enemy. They’re called the bluegills.

LORHROK: They’re a race of neural parasites who can burrow into your skull and take control of your body.

DOVAN: We’re looking for an artifact, called the Mapstone. If we find it, it will lead us to an Iconian treasure trove called Avalon.

J’NAYA: And if they find it instead?

LORHROK: How did Commander Underwood put it?

NEEVA: “Bye-bye Milky Way.”

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR MAIN BRIDGE (FROM 4E-09)

LORHROK: You think the Mapstone is down there, sir?

DOVAN: That's what my gut's telling me.

LOCATION: PLANET SURFACE (FROM 4E-10)

BRAHMS: You knew? You knew it was a trap, and you came anyway?

DOVAN: Of course we came anyway! The Mapstone is our one and only chance at stopping the enslavement of the galaxy, and this was our one and only chance at finding it.

BRAHMS: You still have two bluegill cruisers in orbit, ready to pounce. They outgun you.

DOVAN: But outrun us? We don't think so.

NEEVA: It'll be close. But we should be able to get back to the Dyson Gateway before they catch us.

DOVAN: Now give us the Mapstone.

BRAHMS: It's done.

(The *Excelsior* blasts past at high warp.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE (FROM 4E-13)

LORHROK: Time to intercept?

SYLVESTE: We'll still make the Gateway six seconds before they can disrupt our warp field.

NEEVA: Sir, I'm picking up a transmission from the bluegill ship. It's not directed at us, sir. They're transmitting to... the Gateway itself.

(The Gateway activates.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE (FROM 4E-14)

DOVAN: Yubari, hail the Starbase! Tell them company's coming!

YUBARI: I... I can't! Sir, I'm not detecting Starbase Nine-Eleven anywhere in the system!

SYLVESTE: Enemy ships coming through now!

DOVAN: All about!

YUBARI: They're returning fire!

(The *Excelsior* is hit by several heavy blows.)

LORHROK: Brahms wasn't kidding about their guns. Helm, evasive pattern Van Citters Three-One!

LORHROK: Then the bluegills have everything they need to conquer the galaxy.

DOVAN: And they're going to start by finishing us off.

(The *Excelsior* is hit again.)

NARRATOR: ...*and now the conclusion.*

SCENE 4D-01**LOCATION: SPACE**

(*Excelsior* flyby.)

UHURA: *Captain's Log, Stardate 9881.4, Captain Nyota Uhura recording. Excelsior is patrolling Romulan Neutral Zone in wake of disaster in the Tomed System. Although Command has recalled Excelsior to Earth, a malfunction has left us stranded here on the front line.*

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR NCC-2000 BRIEFING ROOM

(Doors hiss open. Lieutenant Commander Saavik walks in.)

SAAVIK: Captain. You're up early.

UHURA: Up late, actually. I couldn't sleep. I thought I might stare at the stars for a while.

SAAVIK: While the Romulan threat is serious, Captain, it is not logical for you to lose sleep over it.

UHURA: Why not? Command thinks an armada could cross the border any hour now. May as well be awake. (pause) But you're right, Commander Saavik. I'm not worried about the Romulans.

(Pause.)

SAAVIK: Captain — Nyota. It was not your fault. I thought Captain Chekov had made that clear.

UHURA: Saavik, Janice Rand was my first officer for ten years. It doesn't matter whose fault it was.

(The doors hiss open, and Captain Chekov of the *Enterprise* enters.)

CHEKOV: Be that as it may, I promise you she wouldn't want to be remembered with a lot of frowning out at the night sky. But I've already told you that, too, Nyota.

UHURA: Then how would she want to be remembered, Pavel?

CHEKOV: Less endings. More beginnings.

(Pause.)

SAAVIK: Then, if I may, sirs, I have always wondered: how did the three of you become friends?

UHURA: Ah, that was a little incident Janice and I liked to call the Pavel A. Chekov Memorial Safari.

SAAVIK: Oh. I believe I have heard... elements of this story.

CHEKOV: Whatever you've heard, you should know that Gertrude plant was trying to bite my arm off!

SAAVIK: Admiral McCoy told me that you were teasing her.

CHEKOV: That is a scurrilous invention! I was waving "hello." Twenty-three years old, how was I supposed to know that was plant-speak for "please eat me"?

UHURA: Twenty-three? By God, that was fifty years ago. We were so... so...

CHEKOV: Young?

UHURA: Hah! I was going to say "stupid." But what were you doing there? I don't remember you coming aboard until our trip to Vulcan.

CHEKOV: Don't dismiss my first year on the *Enterprise* just because I wasn't on the bridge! I spent six months scraping photoflea nests on Deck Eight. I still have more nightmares about Mister Spock's inspection tours than I do about the Romulan Navy. (pause) Speaking of the Romulan Navy, can we start the briefing a little early?

UHURA: I think so. In fact, I'd like to start by thanking you, Captain Chekov, for being willing to extend your visit aboard the *Excelsior*. I know the *Enterprise* will miss you.

CHEKOV: The *Enterprise* is spending two months in drydock thanks to the Tomed Incident. She doesn't need her captain that whole time. My first officer will hold down the fort.

UHURA: Still, I owe Miss Sulu a favor; I'll get you back as soon as I can.

SAAVIK: That is dependent upon the Romulans.

CHEKOV: Yes. The Romulans. (he presses a physical button; a map appears) As you can see, sensors this morning detected six Romulan warbirds in our patrol zone.

SAAVIK: Two more than yesterday. That places the majority of their fleet on the Neutral Zone.

UHURA: But they're not massed in any one system.

SAAVIK: If they plan to attack, it's not a formation we recognize.

CHEKOV: Personally, I don't think the Romulans know what to do next. The Tomed Incident left them stupefied. They haven't decided whether to come out guns blazing, or crawl back home to hide under the covers.

UHURA: The Legate won't violate the Zone. Not while she knows *Excelsior* is waiting for her.

SAAVIK: Then I regret to introduce a second agenda item. Another call from Starfleet Command.

UHURA: When?

SAAVIK: Forty-seven minutes ago.

CHEKOV: They're threatening to send a ship this time. Sorry — offering to send a ship this time. To help you with your "engine troubles."

UHURA: Starfleet's orders are the same?

SAAVIK: Yes, sir. *Excelsior* is to return to spacedock with all due speed so that it can be decommissioned, and dismantled.

UHURA: What are they thinking? We're sitting on a powder keg out here. One mis-step by a single Starfleet captain and we'll be in the middle of the biggest space war since the last Romulan invasion!

CHEKOV: I think that's exactly what the admirals are thinking. They don't trust us to follow the regulations.

SAAVIK: We have often treated them more like... guidelines.

CHEKOV: If that.

UHURA: We haven't had a choice! Out here on the frontier, months out of contact with Federation bases —

SAAVIK: That was once the reality. Today, however, admiralty can contact any captain in a matter of seconds. I believe they think of us as... "cowboys."

CHEKOV: What's so bad about cowboys? They ride in and save the day.

UHURA: The admirals don't want us saving the day. They want us to follow orders.

CHEKOV: So the question is, Captain: what do you plan to do about it?

(Pause.)

UHURA: Mister Saavik, contact Starfleet and tell them we're still having "engine troubles". Include the scare quotes if you like, but if they try to send a repair ship, stall. The moment *Excelsior* leaves the front line, we're replaced by the *Falcon* under Commander Mark Jameson.

SAAVIK: Jameson.

CHEKOV: The ignorant *korova** from the Veloz Prime mission? I read your reports.

*Russian for "cow"

SAAVIK: Indeed.

CHEKOV: He's just the kind of man Command looks for now – ambitious, career-minded, and straight as a razor blade.

SAAVIK: He merely lacks compassion, intelligence, and good judgement. Besides that, a fine officer.

CHEKOV: Besides that.

UHURA: Command will have to phaser me out of my chair before I give the Neutral Zone to Mark Jameson.

SAAVIK: I'll contact Starfleet Command, Captains. However, their patience is limited. We should -

(Intercom whistle.)

HELM: *Bridge to Conference Cabin.*

(Uhura hits a button on the table in front of her.)

UHURA: Uhura here. What is it, Ensign?

HELM: *A priority-one distress call, sir. It's coming from Union System.*

UHURA: Union? That's practically inside the Neutral Zone.

CHEKOV: Could be a trap.

UHURA: Can you make out who's sending it, helmsman?

HELM: *No, sir. Transmission is too garbled. They sound like they're under heavy attack.*

CHEKOV: Definitely a trap.

UHURA: Even so. We can't just ignore a distress call on our side of the border.

CHEKOV: What about your "engine troubles"?

SAAVIK: Captain, I am pleased to report that our engine troubles have suddenly resolved. However, they could fail again at any time.

CHEKOV: Bless you, Saavik. Mister Spock trained you well.

UHURA: Helm, lay in a course to Union and engage at maximum warp. Go to yellow alert and prepare combat drills.

HELM: *Aye, sir.*

UHURA: Uhura out.

(she switches off the viewing screen)

(Yellow alert sounds.)

UHURA: Well, my friends, it looks like these cowboys are going out for one last ride.

(They exit.)

MAIN CREDITS

UHURA: Space. The final frontier. These are the voyages of the *Starship Excelsior*.

CHEKOV: Our mission: to explore strange new worlds. To seek out new life - new civilizations.

UHURA: To boldly go where no one has gone before!

CHEKOV: *Star Trek...*

UHURA: *Excelsior*. (pause) Starring Nichelle Nichols as Captain Nyota Uhura.

CHEKOV: With Walter Koenig as Pavel Chekov.

SAAVIK: And Robin Curtis as Commander Saavik.

SAMUEL GILLIS: Co-produced by Samuel Gillis

DAVID ALLENDER: David Allender

JUSTIN CLUTTER: Justin Clutter

LARRY PHELAN: and Larry Phelan

[Alan French should also have been credited here, but was omitted due to a production oversight.]

Composer Sam Gillis provided a "retro" mix of the *Excelsior* theme song, which pays homage to the work of James Horner and Cliff Eidelman from the "classic movies" era of *Star Trek*.

SCENE 4D-02**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR – MAIN BRIDGE**

(Bridge doors hiss open. Uhura walks onto the bridge and takes her place in the center seat.)

UHURA: What's our status, Captain Chekov?

CHEKOV: Combat efficiency rating is one hundred percent. Approaching Union System. Three planets, one M-class, explored only by probe.

UHURA: Mister Saavik, have we got anything else?

SAAVIK: We detect a weak Federation transponder, but the registry is... garbled. I read it as "N.C.C. Two Thousand".

CHEKOV: Well, that can't be right. N.C.C. Two Thousand means *Excelsior*, and that's us.

UHURA: They must be saying N.C.C. Two Thousand Something.

SAAVIK: Perhaps the *Challenger*? Or the *Stargazer*?

CHEKOV: I was in a top-brass briefing on Earth two days ago. No ships with a Two Thousand registration are on patrol in this quadrant, much less the Neutral Zone.

HELM: Approaching coordinates! I'm picking up weapons fire!

UHURA: Red alert. All hands to battle stations.

(Red alert klaxons!)

CHEKOV: Drop to impulse on my mark... mark!

(Engines cut. Two wavy, shadowy cruisers are firing on a huge Federation dreadnought.)

UHURA: My God.

SAAVIK: Two alien spacecraft, configuration unknown, attacking one Starfleet vessel.

CHEKOV: That's no Starfleet vessel I've ever seen!

UHURA: It's even bigger than *Vengeance!*

CHEKOV: I can't make out a name — too much smoke.

UHURA: Her running lights are flickering.

CHEKOV: Can anyone see a name?

SAAVIK: Attacking ships are not responding to hails. Starfleet vessel is losing main power. It is transmitting a valid Federation transponder. What are my orders?

(Short pause.)

UHURA: Whoever they are, they're flying our flag under fire. Let's lend a hand. Captain Chekov, can you take tactical?

CHEKOV: My thoughts exactly.

(He does so.)

UHURA: Target the attacking vessels and fire at will.

CHEKOV: Firing phaser one!

(He fires. The phaser lances out... but reflects back and almost instantly hits *Excelsior*.)

UHURA: What was that?

CHEKOV: Phaser fire was... reflected. We scored a direct hit and it came right back at us!

UHURA: Could they be using some kind of new shield? Hold phasers and fire torpedoes.

(Torpedo launch.)

CHEKOV: A perfect shot!

(Same thing happens: *Excelsior* takes the hit instead. A console explodes.)

SAAVIK: Torpedo also reflected back!

CHEKOV: This just isn't fair.

UHURA: Cease fire! Helm, move us between the unknowns and the Starfleet ship!

HELM: Aye, sir!

(More weapons impacts.)

CHEKOV: Now they're shooting at us instead!

UHURA: Any ideas on stopping a ship that's immune to particle weapons?

SAAVIK: Perhaps! Captains, observe the Starfleet vessel.

CHEKOV: Their main power's nearly down. Look: all the running lights are flickering!

UHURA: Hold on, Captain. They're not just flickering - it's Morse code. They're trying to get a message to us! Mister Saavik, run the last three minutes of tape through the computer and translate.

SAAVIK: "One, three-five"... These are spatial coordinates. One three five by five two by six, subgrid G.

CHEKOV: Those coordinates would take us straight into the Starfleet ship's firing arc.

UHURA: ...Which would pull the bad guys into their sights behind us. Helm! One three five by five two by six-G, full impulse!

HELM: Aye, sir!

CHEKOV: Enemy ships are following!

UHURA: Now we find out if this was a Romulan trap after all, eh, Captain?

CHEKOV: Thank you for that warm thought!

HELM: We've arrived at coordinates, Captain!

UHURA: Enemy ships entering target zone!

CHEKOV: Starfleet vessel firing!

(Two quantum torpedoes fire from the *Sovereign*-class cruiser!)

CHEKOV: Oh, my.

UHURA: What is that torpedo?

SAAVIK: It is... blue.

(Impact! Both shots land true! Both targets take serious damage!)

CHEKOV: And it's big. Both enemy craft are badly damaged! Their engine cores are destabilizing!

UHURA: Helm, full reverse.

HELM: Full reverse, aye!

(First one enemy craft, then the other, explodes.)

SAAVIK: Alien vessels destroyed.

CHEKOV: If those were Romulan ships, then we just went to war.

UHURA: If the Romulans had ships like that, they would have gone to war a long time ago.

SAAVIK: And they would have won.

UHURA: True enough. Cancel red alert. Saavik, that was brilliant.

SAAVIK: I only suspected a pattern in their running lights, Captain. You were the one to identify it.

CHEKOV: Can anyone tell me who we just rescued?

SAAVIK: Transponder registry coming through now. (pause) N.C.C. ... Two Thousand... C. (pause) Captains, that ship is identifying as the *Starship Excelsior*.

SCENE 4D-03

LOCATION: MAIN BRIDGE, EXCELSIOR NCC-2000-C

(Red alert still sounding.)

DOVAN: This is Captain Dovan. All stations, stand down to yellow alert and relay damage reports through Lieutenant Yubari. (he turns off the intercom) Everyone okay?

(Yellow alert sounds. Red alert ends.)

LORHROK: A few bruises, sir.

NEEVA: Yours to command, Captain.

DOVAN: The Mapstone? Yubari?

YUBARI: The bluegills beamed it out of our containment unit when the shields were down. It's somewhere in that debris field, sir.

DOVAN: Find it. The fate of the entire galaxy depends on us bringing that little stone back to H.Q.

ROL: Captain? The navigational sensors —

DOVAN: Just a moment, Bev. Did anyone get a good look at our rescuers' registry number? I'd really like to know what a rustbucket like that is doing in this system, instead of, you know, the entire Third Fleet.

LORHROK: And the Starbase. And the colony.

DOVAN: Good point. It's like some great hand completely erased Starfleet's presence in Union System. Helm, we did go through the right Gateway, didn't we?

ROL: Yes, sir, we did take the correct wormhole. This is Union System. It's just not our Union System.

YUBARI: What's that supposed to mean? It either is Union or it isn't.

ROL: Sir, when we entered the Gateway vortex, it was Stardate six-oh-six-eight-five, correct?

DOVAN: That's today's date, yes.

ROL: No, it's not. Navigational sensors just checked the pulsar maps: today's date is Stardate Nine-nine-eight-eight.

YUBARI: Nine-nine-eight-eight-what?

ROL: That's it, ma'am. Nine-nine-eight-eight.

LORHROK: But that's the old stardate system.

DOVAN: Never could make heads or tails of it. What's today in metric, Bev?

ROL: In Gregorian, sir, it's January Thirteenth, Twenty-Three Eleven *anno domini* — we're seventy-three years in the past.

(Pause.)

YUBARI: Well, that explains where the starbase went.

LORHROK: It won't be built for another sixty years. The bluegills must have tampered with the Gateway — pulled us back in time.

DOVAN: Where they could pick us off slowly, with no hope of reinforcement. Then that ship out there...

ROL: Was on Neutral Zone patrol and heard our distress call. She may not have quantum torpedoes, sir, but she's top-of-the-line for this era. I'm still getting her registry.

YUBARI: We should have hailing frequencies in a minute, sir.

LORHROK: If we've travelled through time, it's all the more important we get to the Mapstone fast.

DOVAN: Imagine what would happen to history if they discovered it here and now!

YUBARI: Sir, we're being hailed!

DOVAN: Can we answer them?

NEEVA: Rerouting battery power to the transceiver array.

DOVAN: On screen.

(The viewscreen activates.)

SAAVIK: *...repeat, calling Federation Starship. Please respond and identify. Federation Starsh — Captains? I have them.*

UHURA: *I can see that.*

DOVAN: It's... Jehosephat.

YUBARI: God in Heaven.

UHURA: *This is Captain Nyota Uhura calling the other Starship Excelsior. Wherever you came from, I think you got a little lost.*

DOVAN: Jehosephat.

LORHROK: Captain Uhura, this is First Officer Alecz Lorhrok of the U.S.S. *Excelsior-C*, and you're quite right. We were pulled here from the future by enemy action, and the moment we retrieve what they stole from us, we'll be heading home.

CHEKOV: *And how do you intend to do that?*

LORHROK: There's a sort of wormhole orbiting the third planet of this system. Your scans won't pick it up, but it's there, and it's what brought us here.

DOVAN: Jehosephat.

UHURA: *Your captain seems to be at a loss for words, Mister Lorhrok.*

LORHROK: You'll have to forgive him, sir. He's just met his all-time greatest heroes.

DOVAN: This is the most amazing thing that's ever happened to me. I think I love time travel.

CHEKOV: *(chuckles)* You won't be saying that when you see how much paperwork you have to fill out.

DOVAN: Don't ruin this for me, Chekov.

CHEKOV: *He knows my name, too!*

DOVAN: We know all your names. You're legends. Where's Commander Rand? (pause) Oh, no. The Tomed Incident.

UHURA: *It's... it's okay, Captain. She died as she lived.*

DOVAN: A hero. (pause) I wish we could stay and chat.

NEEVA: That would break even more laws than you usually do, sir.

DOVAN: There is that. We have an item to collect, and then we'll be on our WHOA!

(The Excelsior-C trembles, as if struck amidships!)

DOVAN: Report! What was that?

SAAVIK: *Excelsior-C, we detect a vortex opening over Union Three. Readings are consistent with the "gateway" you describe.*

ROL: It is the Gateway, sir! And its guidance array has locked on! We're being pulled in!

DOVAN: We can't leave yet! We don't have the Mapstone!

CHEKOV: *Excelsior-C, can you deactivate it?*

DOVAN: Alecz?

LORHROK: No. It's a remote lock. Admiral Parker's trying to save us. Ready or not, we're going home, right now.

DOVAN: That is... amazingly typical of him. Helm, full reverse — buy us as much time as you can.

ROL: Aye, sir!

(As the engines power up, the ship begins to rumble.)

DOVAN: Yubari, we need that stone, now!

UHURA: *Can we help? Just tell us where to point our sensors.*

DOVAN: The Mapstone was aboard one of the enemy ships when they were destroyed. It's in the debris field. It's a pyramid, about a meter in each dimension.

SAAVIK: *Is it not likely, then, that your Mapstone was destroyed, as well?*

DOVAN: The Mapstone's an Iconian artifact made of solid neutronium, Admiral Saavik. Not even our torpedoes can hurt that.

SAAVIK: *I am only a commander, Captain.*

DOVAN: Damn. Then please don't tell Temporal Investigations I said that.

CHEKOV: *Temporal who?*

DOVAN: Damn again! Yubari! How long to finish your sensor sweep?

YUBARI: Three hours. Two, minimum.

NEEVA: We have about ten seconds to vortex!

DOVAN: Captains, please...

UHURA: *It's that important?*

DOVAN: If we don't bring home the Mapstone, the galaxy will be destroyed. I don't have time to tell the whole story, but that's how it ends!

CHEKOV: *Then we'll find it, and send it in after you.*

DOVAN: Thank you, Captains.

ROL: Impulse engines overheating!

NEEVA: We're going in!

DOVAN: All hands, brace for impact!

(There's a tremendous flash-bang conflagration as the *Excelsior* travels not just through space, but through time. It whites out everything.)

SCENE 4D-04**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

UHURA: So. History never forgets the name... "*Excelsior*."

CHEKOV: Or the name... "Chekov."

SAAVIK: I advise you, sirs, not to let it go to your heads.

CHEKOV: Oh, yes, sir, Admiral Saavik.

SAAVIK: Ah. Humor. (she checks her instruments) Finding the so-called "Mapstone" with our scanners will take up to a day.

UHURA: Then we'd better start looking. We are way out of position, barely six billion clicks from the Romulan border, and both Starfleet and Romulan High Command are going to notice. I want that artifact out of this timeline before anyone starts asking questions we can't answer.

CHEKOV: Did they say the artifact was Iconian?

UHURA: I thought so.

HELM: Sirs, I thought the Iconians were a myth.

UHURA: So did everyone.

CHEKOV: The Romulans don't. They've been probing the Neutral Zone for years, searching for Iconian technology.

UHURA: How do you —?

CHEKOV: This is what you get for skipping all those captains' briefings at H.Q.. The point is, we need to secure this artifact fast.

UHURA: Transmit to Starfleet Command: *Excelsior* responding to distress call in Union System. Upon arrival, no sign of distress, signal may have been *Excelsior* malfunction. Encode and transmit with Cipher Eleven.

SAAVIK: Sir, Intelligence believes the Romulans have broken Cipher Eleven.

UHURA: Exactly. I want them to think that there's nothing worth looking for out here.

CHEKOV: Should we follow up with an accurate report under a stronger code?

UHURA: Then the Romulans would know our first message was a trick.

CHEKOV: Good point. Besides, Command would probably just send Mark Jameson to take over. Perhaps it's best they don't know?

UHURA: Decidedly a fringe benefit.

SAAVIK: I am receiving a response.

UHURA: Read it out.

SAAVIK: It's real-time video, Captain.

CHEKOV: Out here? I didn't even think Cipher Eleven worked at real-time. Haven't these kids heard of long-distance charges?

SAAVIK: He is not using Cipher Eleven. This is Cipher Eighty-One.

CHEKOV: But the Romulans haven't cracked Eighty-One.

UHURA: Apparently, we aren't dealing with a genius. It's Admiral Styles, isn't it?

SAAVIK: Yes, sir.

CHEKOV: Of course it is. I was sure some bright young Federation councilman would have got rid of him by now.

UHURA: No such luck. The Council eats out of his hand. I'll take him privately, in the conference cabin.

SAAVIK: Rerouting.

(Uhura stands and heads for the door. Chekov stands and follows. Uhura notices and stops.)

UHURA: And just where do you think you're going, Captain?

CHEKOV: With you. Against Styles, you'll need the moral support.

UHURA: Just don't pull a Chekov on him.

CHEKOV: Me? I would never do such a thing, Captain.

UHURA: Mmm.

CHEKOV: Well, not on your ship.

UHURA: Better.

(Uhura and Chekov exit.)

LOCATION: CONFERENCE CABIN

UHURA: Screen on.

(The viewer activates.)

STYLES: Uhura! What the hell do you think you're doing?

UHURA: Cleaning up the mess you made at Tomed, Admiral. As usual.

STYLES: We all saw you go to warp, Uhura. You're ordered to return to Starbase immediately.

CHEKOV: I'm sorry, Admiral, but we're experiencing more engine problems.

STYLES: Captain Chekov, the only trouble on the *Excelsior* is this mutiny. The moment we tow you into Spacedock, your logs will prove it. I've waited a lot of years for this, "Captain" Uhura, but this is the end of the road for you!

UHURA: We'll see. If your calling me to gloat sets off a war with the Romulans, I doubt you'll be around to court-martial me.

STYLES: What are you talking about, Uhura?

UHURA: You contacted me on an encrypted channel, moments after I told Command on a public frequency that there's nothing of interest in this star system. The Romulans will be suspicious. Sooner or later, they'll investigate.

STYLES: So what? Union has no strategic value. Let them look all they want.

UHURA: Admiral, we contacted you with a broken code for a reason. We needed to misdirect the Romulans. When they learn what we've actually found here...

STYLES: Yes, I'm sure. You've probably made some incredible discovery that will change the galaxy forever. I've had enough "misdirection" from the *Excelsior*. The U.S.S. *Falcon* has been dispatched to escort you home under tow – and they've been advised to ignore your hails. Styles out!

(Pause.)

UHURA: For ten years, the biggest threats to galactic peace have been the Romulan Empire and Admiral John Andrew Lawrence H. Styles. We've held them off a dozen times each. But now they're practically working together, and I'm missing my right arm.

CHEKOV: Janice. (sigh) Do you remember how the three of us used to argue in here? Trying to convince Captain Sulu who was right?

UHURA: She always said, *Excelsior* means "ever upward." She never let me give up.

CHEKOV: She pushed us – all of us – to make the right decisions. Which were never the easy ones.

UHURA: And now? I have a few clever ideas, Pavel, but I don't have her grace. If I get it wrong today...

CHEKOV: Romulans to the left of them, Admirals to the right of them! Into the valley of death rode the *Excelsior!*

(The ship suddenly shakes. Red alert begins automatically!)

UHURA: What in the world?

(They make their way out to the bridge.)

SCENE 4D-05**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

(The energy wave passes.)

UHURA: Damage report!

SAAVIK: A spatial disruption. Cause unknown.

HELM: Shields holding!

CHEKOV: Send a damage control team to Deck Six life support.

HELM: But the computer reports no damage.

CHEKOV: Ensign, I was first officer of this starship ten years before that computer was a gleam in Montgomery Scott's eye.

HELM: Are you saying you know better, sir? Than a computer?

UHURA: He knows better than anybody. Send the team. Then run an intensive scan; I want to know where that wave came from — and how far it's going to reach.

HELM: Ma'am?

CHEKOV: Ensign, a warp in the space-time continuum just showed up less than a light-year from the Romulan border. You want a match to light that powder keg we're sitting on? Tell me if the Romulans felt that.

HELM: Yes, sir!

SAAVIK: Captains... We are being hailed.

UHURA: By whom?

SAAVIK: According to my instruments... the Lonka Pulsar.

CHEKOV: What?

SAAVIK: I have no explanation.

UHURA: On screen.

CHEKOV: Yellow Alert.

(Red alert stops. Yellow alert sounds. Screen on.)

DOVAN: *Captains, it's good to see you.*

UHURA: Captain Dovan, wasn't it? I'm sorry, but we can't talk right now.

DOVAN: *The spatial distortion wave, right?*

CHEKOV: That was you?

DOVAN: *No. The Mapstone. In my timeline, it's been two weeks since my Excelsior met yours. We've had time to run simulations. We took over the MIDAS Array and punched through a pulsar so we could talk with you.*

UHURA: So what is happening?

DOVAN: *Neeva? You're on.*

NEEVA: *The Mapstone knows it's in the wrong timezone. It can't fulfill its function as long as it's in the past. So it's trying to get back to when it belongs.*

SAAVIK: That seems logical.

NEEVA: *Not quite: the only way it knows how to get home, to our time, is by ripping open a hole in the fabric of space-time. That's what it's doing. In a few days, it will succeed.*

CHEKOV: A few days?! The Romulans will certainly notice. They'll suspect a new Federation superweapon! It will be war!

DOVAN: *No such luck.*

NEEVA: *The Mapstone's "rips" are going to get bigger and bigger as it struggles to get home. By the end of a few days, it will be wreaking major destruction throughout the sector — perhaps the quadrant.*

DOVAN: *You have to send it back to us before then.*

LORHROK: *Sir! Our communications are being jam[med at the source.]*

(The communique abruptly cuts off.)

CHEKOV: Where'd they go?

UHURA: Jammed. Saavik, source.

SAAVIK: Computing... (pause) Ten kilometers aft.

CHEKOV: Right behind us!

UHURA: Red Alert! Shields up! All hands to battle stations!

CHEKOV: Romulan *Ivarix*-class warbird decloaking! (pause) Correction: three warbirds decloaking! We're surrounded!

SCENE 4D-06**LOCATION: ROMULAN BRIDGE**

SUBCOMMANDER: Legate, the Federation Starship is surrounded and helpless. They are hailing.

LEGATE: Subcommander, the *Starship Excelsior* has been often surrounded, but never helpless. Be on your guard. Establish two-way visual link with their commander.

SUBCOMMANDER: Yes, Legate.

(Captain Uhura and the *Excelsior* bridge appear on screen.)

UHURA: *Legate, you have me at a disadvantage.*

LEGATE: That's how I prefer you, Captain Uhura. Compromised.

CHEKOV: *This is Captain Chekov. You have violated the Neutral Zone, Legate. You've threatened a starship.*

UHURA: *It's not like you to commit an act of war, Legate.*

LEGATE: We are on a mission of mercy, on behalf of the Romulan Star Empire. We detected a distress signal and investigated, confident that the Federation would forgive a small breach of treaty if it could save innocent lives. No doubt the same distress call brought you here, Captains.

UHURA: *We're grateful, Legate. But your assistance is not required.*

LEGATE: It appears not. The debris field near the third planet suggests you already destroyed the source of the distress call.

CHEKOV: *It was a Starfleet medical frigate. Her engine was overloading. Unfortunately, we didn't get here in time.*

LEGATE: Really? And why didn't you mention that in your call to Starfleet Command?

UHURA: *That message was encrypted!*

LEGATE: Oh, please, Uhura, if you believed for a second that that code was secure, you'd never have transmitted. The Tal Shiar will be very unhappy to know we've lost Cipher Eleven. Now. What is this debris, really? What are you doing here? What caused the spatial disruption we just encountered?

UHURA: *Spatial disruption? We've detected nothing like that here, Legate.*

LEGATE: No lies, Captain! Subcommander, target their bridge!

SUBCOMMANDER: Disruptors locked, Legate.

LEGATE: I am willing to tolerate a great deal from you, Nyota – but I will not tolerate another lie!

(Pause.)

UHURA: *In that case, Legate, I cannot answer your question.*

LEGATE: Uhura!

UHURA: *I'm sorry.*

LEGATE: Screen off!

(The screen is turned off.)

SUBCOMMANDER: Frequency closed, Legate.

LEGATE: Sensor sweep of that debris field! The *Excelsior* is looking for something in there – I want to know what it is.

SUBCOMMANDER: At once, Legate.

SCENE 4D-07**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

UHURA: Well, that's done it. I don't suppose they dropped their target lock, Captain?

CHEKOV: All three warbirds still locked on our bridge. Shall I return targeting, Captain?

UHURA: We'd just provoke her.

CHEKOV: She seems pretty provoked already.

UHURA: I've known the Legate for twenty years. I only saw her get really angry once. It wasn't today.

SAAVIK: Incoming message over subspace.

CHEKOV: The Legate?

SAAVIK: The pulsar, sir. The other *Excelsior* is cutting through the interference.

CHEKOV: They have time to figure that out on their end.

UHURA: On screen. (the screen activates) Captain Dovan, I'm sorry we were cut off last time.

CORTEZ: Captain Dovan? Who told you that?

UHURA: I'm sorry, ma'am? Have we met?

CORTEZ: Captain Uhura? Captain Chekov? I'm Rachel Cortez, captain of the Excelsior-C. We spoke a few minutes ago? Lieutenant Commander Dovan is my first officer.

UHURA: Respectfully, ma'am, we've spoken to Mister Dovan twice, but this is the first time we've ever seen you.

LORHROK: Uh-oh.

DOVAN: Alec? What's going on?

CHEKOV: Time travel.

LORHROK: The timeline is in flux – Captains, what your Excelsior is doing, today, has started rewriting your future... and our present. What you do next will change our lives, and the face of the galaxy, for centuries to come.

DOVAN: Then... you hold our future in your hands, Excelsior.

UHURA: We'll try not to drop it.

CORTEZ: Thank you. I'm transmitting instructions for returning the Mapstone through the Gateway. Destroy them at the end of your mission.

(The computer boops.)

SAAVIK: Message received.

CORTEZ: We'll be in touch. Excelsior out.

(The comm closes.)

CHEKOV: No more time travel, I said - not after the nuclear vessels. Never again.

UHURA: Our time travels have always taken us to the past. This is the first time we've seen the future.

CHEKOV: Yes, and it's changing before our eyes. Who knows who they'll be next time?

(Sensor alert at Saavik's station.)

SAAVIK: Captain Uhura, I need your assistance at science station.

(Uhura steps up to her station. Both speak in slightly lowered voices.)

UHURA: This sounds like good news.

SAAVIK: Scanners just detected this. (she shows her her viewer) A one-meter pyramid, neutronium alloy. We were fortunate to find it so quickly.

UHURA: That's our Mapstone. But it's in a decaying orbit. How long until it burns up in the atmosphere?

SAAVIK: As a neutronium alloy, the atmosphere will hardly even slow it down. Given its vector, I predict surface impact in two hundred three seconds. Then we must simply beam down and secure it.

UHURA: I'm afraid it won't be that easy, Saavik.

SAAVIK: Why? The Romulans cannot block our transporter beam from orbit.

UHURA: You said it yourself: it's neutronium. Practically the densest matter in the universe. Even a little neutronium will make a big impact when it hits.

SAAVIK: Of course. An inexcusable oversight. Let me re-compute... (she does some math) Impact will create a crater approximately two thousand kilometers wide. The Mapstone will be buried under at least thirty meters of lava.

UHURA: That sounds like the asteroid that killed the dinosaurs!

SAAVIK: The Mapstone's impact force will be substantially larger, captain.

UHURA: Then we have to catch the Mapstone before impact.

SAAVIK: I concur. Do you have any suggestions?

UHURA: Without letting the Romulans know we found it?

SAAVIK: That would seem to be ideal. But time is of the essence.

UHURA: I know. (pause) I'll wing it. Follow my lead, Mister Saavik.

SAAVIK: Sir.

(Uhura walks back to the center. She does not sit down.)

UHURA: Helm, disengage orbital autopilot, but do not assume manual control.

HELM: Captain, with no control, we'll spiral into the atmosphere!

UHURA: Helm, disengage autopilot.

HELM: Aye, sir.

(Something on the *Excelsior* powers down.)

CHEKOV: We are drifting into the atmosphere. Acceleration low but increasing.

UHURA: Captain, when we hit one-thirty-four-mark-four, fire a one-second burst of all starboard thrusters, at three hundred percent normal power.

CHEKOV: Ah, good thinking.

HELM: But, sirs, that will burn them out! We'd lose attitude control!

SAAVIK: One-thirty-four-mark-two. One-thirty-four-mark-three.

CHEKOV: Firing thrusters.

(Uhura hits the shipwide intercom.)

UHURA: All hands, brace for turbulence!

(The thruster burst is brief and loud. They burn out a moment later, a few consoles around the bridge explode.)

UHURA: Commander Saavik, signal commander, Romulan vessel. Engine malfunction becoming critical. Recommend you move to a safe distance in case of *Excelsior's* destruction.

CHEKOV: Will they see evidence of this "engine malfunction" on their scanners?

UHURA: Saavik?

(Saavik hard at work putting in new code at her station.)

SAAVIK: I have falsified our sensor readings. Other ships will consider remaining in the area an extreme risk.

UHURA: Sound red alert, bring up emergency lighting, and let Science station smolder like that for a while. We need to make ourselves look hurt.

SAAVIK: Sir, we are already at red alert.

CHEKOV: She wants you to play the klaxon again, Commander.

SAAVIK: Fascinating. Drama: a difficult concept. Condition red, (klaxons sound!) condition red, all hands to battle stations. Repeat: condition red. The Legate's flagship is hailing.

CHEKOV: On screen.

(The viewscreen activates.)

LEGATE: *Captain, do you require assistance? The evacuation of your ship? We stand ready to prevent the tragic loss of life.*

UHURA: That won't be necessary, Legate. When we get this under control, I'll be sure to note your generosity in my log. But you should get out of here, just in case.

LEGATE: *Acknowledged. Out.*

(The comm closes.)

HELM: Captain, our orbit is rapidly decaying!

CHEKOV: Let it ride, Ensign.

SAAVIK: The Romulans are moving off... engaging cloaking devices.

CHEKOV: We are drifting into the same orbit as the Mapstone. Transporter range in thirty seconds.

HELM: One thirty four mark four... of course. I should have realized that was an intercept course.

UHURA: Yes, Ensign, you should have. But you're young. And I'll bet you don't play much poker. Mister Chekov, lock on transporters.

CHEKOV: It's moving too fast for transporters. We'll have to use the tractor beam.

UHURA: Make it so. Helm, plot a new course. Once we have the Mapstone, I want be far away when the Romulans realize we tricked them.

HELM: Aye, sir.

SAAVIK: Now entering dark side of orbit. Assuming the Romulans moved off as we advised, we are now invisible to their sensors.

CHEKOV: Tractor Beam ready.

UHURA: Engage port thrusters and regain stable attitude.

HELM: Aye.

CHEKOV: Engaging tractor.

(Tractor beam engages.)

(A warbird decloaks on the main viewscreen.)

CHEKOV: Captain! Warbird decloaking dead ahead!

UHURA: Shields to maximum!

SAAVIK: They are hailing.

CHEKOV: On screen.

(The viewscreen activates.)

LEGATE: *I wondered what you were looking for, Captain. I don't think I expected it to be so small. Stable neutronium, though? Very impressive. I had no idea Federation science had advanced so far. What is it, Uhura?*

UHURA: We have nothing to say.

LEGATE: *Come now, Captains, I just caught the two of you in the middle of some kind of secret experiment two minutes from the Neutral Zone. Surely you have some explanation.*

UHURA: You said no lies.

LEGATE: *Yes, and then you lied to me about your so-called "engine malfunction."*

UHURA: I'm sorry about that.

LEGATE: *Do you want to hear my theory?*

CHEKOV: This should be good.

LEGATE: *I think you're testing a superweapon. You warped into this system to test it on an inert target, which you did, then a planet, which we interrupted.*

UHURA: We're two minutes from the Romulan border. Why would we run a weapons test this close?

LEGATE: *To intimidate the Romulan people! A weapon so small would slip right past the orbital defenses of any Romulan colony within a hundred light-years. You'd end this crisis with the threat of mass destruction, just like the Genesis Device – just like the Universe metaweapon. (pause) But this one... this one is ours now. Subcommander? Engage tractor beam.*

UHURA: No! Chekov! Increase power to tractor beam!

CHEKOV: Aye!

SAAVIK: Mapstone is holding position.

LEGATE: *Captain, you will disengage your tractor or I will open fire. You're well aware there are at least two more cloaked warbirds behind you.*

CHEKOV: We have reinforcements on the way!

LEGATE: *Ha! The Starship Falcon won't even respond to your hails!*

UHURA: What makes you say that?

LEGATE: *The Empire broke your Cipher Eighty-One two weeks ago. I watched your entire conversation with John Lawrence Styles.*

UHURA: Then you know we weren't testing a weapon!

LEGATE: *I know Admiral Styles hasn't been told about it. Which doesn't surprise me – have you read his classified file? The man can't keep a secret. You're outgunned, Nyota. Disengage your tractor beam.*

UHURA: Mister Chekov, you've been following this conversation?

CHEKOV: I've made all appropriate preparations to carry out your orders.

UHURA: Good. (pause) Fire.

CHEKOV: Phaser two, fire!

(Phasers fire!)

LEGATE: *You want war, Captain, we'll give you a war! Subcommander, launch torpedo! Screen off!*

(The viewscreen deactivates. Two more Romulan warbirds decloak on the viewer.)

SAAVIK: Two more Romulan warbirds decloaking aft.

CHEKOV: Damage to their tractor beam, captain! They've disengaged!

(The *Excelsior* is hit!)

SAAVIK: Plasma torpedo impact, minor damage to all decks! Tractor beam offline.

CHEKOV: Get it back!

SAAVIK: The Mapstone is entering terminal descent! Detonation imminent!

UHURA: Tractor beam, NOW!

SAAVIK: Impossible, captain!

CHEKOV: Another torpedo!

UHURA: Brace for impact!

SAAVIK: All hands, brace -

(The ship shudders from weapons fire.)

CHEKOV: Mapstone impact in five seconds! Four!

UHURA: Helm, all ahead full! Get us out of the blast radius!

HELM: All ahead full, aye!

(The *Excelsior* lunges to life.)

SAAVIK: Romulan warbirds are also withdrawing to a safe distance.

CHEKOV: Mapstone impact... now!

(KABOOM! The planet is hit with an impact bigger than the asteroid that killed the dinosaurs.)

UHURA: Oh, my.

(Stunned silence.)

CHEKOV: Impact has... ripped much of the atmosphere clean off of Union Three.

SAAVIK: Projections indicate all multicellular life on the planet surface will be made extinct within two hundred years.

UHURA: No, no, no.

SAAVIK: The Legate's flagship is hailing.

(Pause.)

UHURA: On screen.

(The viewscreen activates.)

LEGATE: *Captain Uhura, by the terms of the Seldonis Conventions, you are hereby charged with the war crimes of planetary sterilization and illegal weapons testing, as is your co-conspirator, Captain Chekov. You are under arrest and your ship is impounded.*

CHEKOV: Have you forgotten which side of the Neutral Zone you're on?!

UHURA: Captain... Legate, you know me better than anyone. You know I wouldn't destroy a planet.

LEGATE: Do not test me, Captain.

UHURA: Do you want a war, Legate?

LEGATE: I wanted nothing more than peace. But you fired on me, Captain. If that means war, so be it.

CHEKOV: Our weapons are locked on their bridge.

UHURA: Power down all weapons.

CHEKOV: But—

UHURA: We surrender.

SAAVIK: Captain!

UHURA: Legate, we surrender! I'll beam over to your ship immediately to discuss terms.

LEGATE: *There are no terms. We shall spare your crew, but you, Captain, will spend the voyage back to Romulus in our brig.*

UHURA: Okay. I'm beaming over now. I expect you to break weapons lock by the time we drop our shields.

LEGATE: *It will be done. Screen off.*

(The viewscreen deactivates.)

CHEKOV: Nyota, we didn't destroy that planet!

UHURA: No, but there's no way we can convince her without telling her the truth.

SAAVIK: Then why not tell her the truth?

UHURA: Aside from the risk to the timeline? I don't think she'd believe me.

CHEKOV: So you're giving up?

UHURA: Not just yet. Let's discuss in the lift.

(Uhura is already heading for the turbolift, and Chekov and Saavik follow.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR TURBOLIFT

UHURA: Transporter room. (the lift starts to move) Chekov, the shuttle you brought from the *Enterprise* – did you bring that volcano-snuffing equipment we talked about?

CHEKOV: The cold fusion generators? From Nibiru? Yes, but I don't think you and Saavik have time to take them apart like you wanted.

UHURA: We're not going to. Saavik, can you bounce a transporter beam off the Romulans' communication array?

SAAVIK: Yes, but I cannot guarantee the safety of anyone in the beam. Why?

UHURA: We have a new plan.

CHEKOV: How desperate is it?

UHURA: Very. Also extremely dangerous.

CHEKOV: I like it already.

SCENE 4D-08**LOCATION: ROMULAN STARSHIP – TRANSPORTER ROOM**

(Uhura beams onto the Romulan transporter pad (using a Federation beam).)

LEGATE: Captain Uhura, welcome aboard my vessel.

SUBCOMMANDER: Place your wrists in these manacles, Cap—

LEGATE : That won't be necessary, Subcommander. You and the guard are dismissed.

SUBCOMMANDER: But, Legate — !

LEGATE: I do not trust her any more than you do, Subcommander. I made that mistake once, a long time ago, and I am a good pupil of my mistakes.

UHURA: That wasn't me.

LEGATE: Silence, Captain, or I'll cut out your tongue. Dismissed, Subcommander.

SUBCOMMANDER: Yes, Legate.

(He and the guard exit.)

LEGATE: Captain, you will accompany me to my cabin.

UHURA: There's no one watching us. You can call me Nyota here, Liv—

LEGATE: If you dare use my name today, Captain, I truly will cut out your tongue.

UHURA: I'm... I'm sorry. I presumed -

LEGATE: Yes, you did, Captain. You should know that, while I beamed you aboard, we bounced a transporter signal off our communication array to send a landing party of Romulan soldiers down to the planet.

UHURA: Legate – why would you do that?

LEGATE: Because I thought you might do the same thing. (breath) My officers have orders to shoot on sight. If you sent troops down there to secure your superweapon, those troops will be dead in a few minutes.

(Pause.)

UHURA: Then it's a good thing I didn't try. When did you become so cunning, Legate?

(Pause.)

LEGATE: Accompany me to my cabin. I want you to see what you've done.

UHURA: I saw.

LEGATE: You saw a computer projection on your main viewscreen. You couldn't bear to look out a window. And my cabin has the biggest windows in the Imperial Navy. Come.

(Uhura steps down from the pad. They exit.)

SCENE 4D-09**LOCATION: UNION III – SURFACE**

(Howling wind, wildfires, intense heat, geologic instability.)

(Chekov and Saavik materialize. They are wearing life-support belts which hum very faintly.)

SAAVIK: Where are we, sir?

CHEKOV: I'm not sure. This isn't the landing site. Tricorder?

(Saavik pulls out a tricorder.)

SAAVIK: We are at least two kilometers out of position.

CHEKOV: Maybe you bounced us off the Romulans wrong?

SAAVIK: Not possible, Captain!

CHEKOV: If you weren't Vulcan, I wouldn't believe you. Then what did happen, Mister Saavik?

SAAVIK: Hypothesis: at the exact moment our transporter beam hit the Romulan deflector, the Romulans did the same thing. Transporter refraction causes both teams to rematerialize outside landing coordinates.

CHEKOV: Well, at least we ended up here, in the garden spot of Union III!

SAAVIK: To what positive qualities are you referring, sir? The smoke? The vast clouds of ash choking out the sun? The fact that we now require life-support belts to survive on a planet that was Min'shara-class ten minutes ago?

CHEKOV: All of the above! The alternative was the thousand-kilometer crater full of molten lava down the hill to our left, or the continent-spanning forest on our right, which you'll notice is now entirely on fire. A spot does not win the Pavel Chekov Garden Award without due consideration of the competition!

SAAVIK: I believe I shall file a complaint with the judging panel. Sir, can you help me with this equipment? Our anti-grav units likely materialized in that forest.

CHEKOV: So we get to carry all this down to the crater by hand?

SAAVIK: Unfortunately, sir, I need to program the detonation sequence.

CHEKOV: So we aren't carrying it?

SAAVIK: No, sir, I am afraid you are carrying it.

CHEKOV: Oh joy. Well, let's get on with it, Commander.

SCENE 4D-10**LOCATION: U.S.S. FALCON – MAIN BRIDGE**

FALCON LIEUTENANT: Still no acknowledgement from the *Excelsior*, Captain.

JAMESON: Is there any possibility our own equipment is malfunctioning, Lieutenant?

FALCON LIEUTENANT: None, sir. We're still in contact with the rest of the fleet.

STYLES: We know this already, Captain Jameson. No need to reinvent the wheel.

JAMESON: Sorry, Admiral Styles. I was just trying to follow standard procedure.

STYLES: Yes, well, as you please. I'm not here to tell you how to run your ship. Quite the contrary: thank you for troubling yourself to rendezvous and bring me aboard. Whatever Uhura and Chekov think they're up to, I'm afraid it will take the firm hand of an Admiral to pull their necks in.

FALCON LIEUTENANT: What if the *Excelsior* really is in trouble, Admiral?

STYLES: Captain Jameson, do you make it a policy to allow helmsmen to ask impertinent questions?

JAMESON: No, sir! Lieutenant, call your relief. You can expect [a formal reprimand.]

(The ship is shaken by a spatial distortion! Some panels spark! Shields go up automatically! Everyone yells in surprise!)

STYLES: What was that?

FALCON LIEUTENANT: Spatial distortion wave, sir! Unknown configuration, but very powerful – and it came out of nowhere!

JAMESON: Origin?

FALCON LIEUTENANT: The Union System. Where the *Excelsior* is, sir.

JAMESON: I'm well aware of that, Lieutenant.

STYLES: Our wayward starship is a greater threat than I realized. Helm, increase speed by two warp factors.

FALCON LIEUTENANT: Sir, she'll fly apart!

STYLES: Oh, well, then. Maintain prudent velocity.

SCENE 4D-11**LOCATION: ROMULAN SHIP – LEGATE’S OFFICE**

LEGATE: Send additional damage-control teams to that compartment.

SUBCOMMANDER: *How many, Legate?*

LEGATE: All of them!

SUBCOMMANDER: *Legate, respectfully, we must repair the damage to combat systems -*

LEGATE: All of them, Subcommander! Close channel! (The comm channel closes.) Three of my men are trapped behind emergency bulkheads. The entire compartment is on fire.

UHURA: Are they alright?

LEGATE: For now? Yes. In a minute? Two minutes?

UHURA: I’m sorry.

LEGATE: They’re good soldiers of the Empire, all three. Their loyalty, unimpeachable. But your spatial distortion wave will probably be the death of them.

UHURA: Legate, you have sensors; you know that distortion wave damaged my ship as badly as it did yours. You know the *Excelsior* didn’t fire it.

LEGATE: No, it didn’t come from the *Excelsior*. It came from your superweapon.

UHURA: It’s not... It’s not a weapon.

LEGATE: Then what is it, Captain?

UHURA: I can't tell you.

LEGATE:; What are you hiding? What could possibly be worse than what I already believe?

UHURA: Legate. I'm asking you to trust me.

LEGATE: Trust you.

UHURA: Like I trusted you at Galorndon Core.

LEGATE: I repaid that debt. Twice over!

UHURA: I'm not asking you to trust a debt. I'm asking you to trust me. Trust Nyota Uhura. Please.

(Pause.)

LEGATE: It was when we met you.

UHURA: I'm sorry?

LEGATE: You asked when I became so cunning. (pause) When our peoples first started encountering each other face-to-face, fifty years ago, the Romulan people were proud warriors. Above all else, we prized honor, nobility, gallantry in arms. No enemy could stand before us on a fair battlefield! (pause) And then we met you.

UHURA: Me?

LEGATE: All of you: humans, Vulcans, Starfleet captains. But especially you, Nyota Uhura. You took a hundred advantages and turned them against us. You tricked us, lied, cheated us out of victory. Humiliated me, time and again. The Romulan people are not stupid, Captain. We learn from our enemies. So behold! The modern Romulan! We have become a sneaking, skulking people, prizing cunning, promoting the treacherous. And I, their leader, the "Hero" of Tomed, master of the New Romulan Way. (pause) You say you'd never destroy a world, Nyota, but you destroyed mine long ago. (pause) And now you ask me to trust you. I've put men to death for lesser impudence.

(Uhura steps over to the window.)

UHURA: Janice Rand always told me: tricks will win a battle, but they'll never win a friend. She was right. (pause) We should have been friends, Legate. Instead we're watching the last sunset of a world on fire.

LEGATE: Your subcommander told you how to lose friends. Did she tell you how to win them?

UHURA: Somehow... I never asked.

(Silence.)

(The comm at the Legate's desk beeps. The Legate steps over and presses the comm button.)

LEGATE: Yes, Subcommander, what is it?

SUBCOMMANDER: *We're receiving a transmission, Legate, encoded imperial-ultra.*

LEGATE: From the High Command? They survived?

SUBCOMMANDER: *No, Legate. The code is verified, but, according to our instruments, the transmission originates at a pulsar.*

LEGATE: Federation subterfuge, Captain?

UHURA: I don't think so.

LEGATE: Put it through here, Subcommander. Activate screen.

(A screen begins to lower from the ceiling with a humming noise.)

SUBCOMMANDER: *Yes, Legate.*

(The screen stops lowering.)

LEGATE: Channel open.

(The channel opens.)

DOVAN: *Legate! Report! Have you retrieved the Mapstone?*

UHURA: Dovan?

LEGATE: You're not — This is a military channel! Whoever you are, *Vorta Vor* spare you if the Imperial Command finds -

DOVAN: *Oh, Jehosephat. Centurion!*

CORTEZ: *Yes, Subcommander?*

DOVAN: *The Legate's forgotten. Again.*

CORTEZ: *History shifts, Subcommander. It is to be expected. Legate, this is Centurion Cortez of the Romulan High Command.*

LEGATE: You're no Romulan! You're Vulcan!

CORTEZ: *You speak of a difference that has been erased by my time. On the Day of Reunification, all Vulcans were given the choice to stand with Surak, and die, or stand with Romulus, and conquer. My parents chose to conquer, and we were reborn citizens of the Empire.*

LEGATE: Your time... You claim to be from the future?

CORTEZ: *Yes, and you can confirm it by checking the quantum signature of the pulsar waves.*

LEGATE: How did you know I'd demand confirmation?

CORTEZ: *Aside from the fact that you're the greatest tactician in history? The soldier who conquered Earth? We've had this conversation twice already. Next, you'll want me to tell you the name of your daughter.*

LEGATE: My what?

UHURA: Her daughter?

CORTEZ: *Your daughter: Liviana Dhivael [dee-VAHL]. Same as her grandmother.*

(Pause.)

LEGATE: I am satisfied as to your credentials, Centurion.

CORTEZ: *Good. Subcommander, you remind the Legate of her duty to the Eternal Romulan Empire.*

DOVAN: *Legate, your mission is simple. An artifact from our time period, an Iconian device called the Mapstone, has been stolen. It is critical that you retrieve it. We have warned you to be wary of the Federation Starship Excelsior, but it appears history is unfolding as it should: I see the infamous Captain Uhura has already surrendered to you. No doubt her accomplice Captain Chekov is close behind.*

LEGATE: This Mapstone: is it a neutronium pyramid, about one meter in each dimension?

DOVAN: So you have located it.

LEGATE: It will be secured within the hour.

DOVAN: *Excellent. You are an admirable warrior in any time period, Legate. High Command, out.*

(The screen rolls back up into the ceiling.)

UHURA: Legate, I know this seems strange -

LEGATE: Silence. (pause) If your superweapon is from the future... You've spoken to Subcommander Dovan before, haven't you?

UHURA: He sent the distress call. He asked us to retrieve the Mapstone. But he was a Starfleet captain when we met him, not a member of the Romulan Guard.

LEGATE: Ah. The last piece of the puzzle. (pause) History shifts, the Centurion said. I suppose your surrender to me has tipped the balance of history in favor of Romulan triumph.

UHURA: Now you know my secret. Will you help us?

LEGATE: You still want the Mapstone, even after seeing that future?

UHURA: I can't predict the next few hours. Maybe we can stop the Romulans from taking over the galaxy. Maybe not. But Dovan told me that, without the Mapstone, the galaxy will be destroyed – humans and Romulans alike. I can't let that happen, not to any timeline.

(Pause.)

(The Legate presses a button.)

LEGATE: Subcommander, prepare a quantum analysis of the pulsar message. (pause) And adjust orbital eccentricity thirty-three marks.

SUBCOMMANDER: *Legate?*

LEGATE: Just see to it, Subcommander.

(She closes communications with the bridge.)

LEGATE: Before I send you back to *Excelsior*, I want to show you something.

UHURA: You're moving your ship.

LEGATE: Just to the other side of the hemisphere.

UHURA: *Why?*

LEGATE: Look. The sun is rising.

SCENE 4D-12**LOCATION: UNION SURFACE**

CHEKOV: Is this going to take much longer?

SAAVIK: Each time you ask, sir, I must add ten seconds to my estimate.

CHEKOV: And there's nothing I can do to help?

SAAVIK: Have you received a master's degree in subspace wave harmonics from an accredited institution?

CHEKOV: At this rate, I can probably write and defend my thesis before these cold fusion generators are online.

SAAVIK: These nullifiers are designed to freeze the lava in a volcano. We are using them to freeze all the lava in a continent-sized crater.

CHEKOV: Doesn't sound like rocket science.

SAAVIK: No. It is significantly more complex.

(She makes one final adjustment.)

SAAVIK: However... it is also complete. We may activate the nullifiers at your order. (pause) Sir? (pause) Captain Chekov?!

(A Romulan disruptor beam sings out of the horizon.)

SAAVIK: Disruptor beam!

ROMULAN #2: You missed!

ROMULAN #1: The Starfleet minx won't live to gloat about it!

(He fires again!)

(Saavik flips open her communicator.)

SAAVIK: *Excelsior*, I am under attack by Romulans! (pause) My communicator's dead!

ROMULAN #1: We disabled your primitive equipment with our suppression field! Prepare to pay for your crimes, traitor!

CHEKOV: How's your field handle big rocks, cossack?

(Chekov, who has appeared directly behind Romulan #1, whacks him in the head with a big rock.)

ROMULAN #1: Argh! (goes unconscious)

CHEKOV: Not well, then. You won't need your sidearm, I trust.

(Chekov picks up the gun.)

ROMULAN #2: Torvek! I will avenge you!

(Romulan #2 fires at Chekov, but Chekov rolls out of the way.)

CHEKOV: Maybe in another reality, friend.

(Chekov fires back and connects! Romulan #2 goes down.)

ROMULAN #2: Argh! (goes unconscious)

SAAVIK: Captain! Where did you go?

CHEKOV: I've been captain of the *Enterprise* for fifteen years. I can hear a couple of Romulan greenhorns sneaking up on me.

SAAVIK: So you snuck around behind them instead, leaving me to bait the trap.

CHEKOV: "Bait" is such an ugly word. You were... an enticement.

SAAVIK: Yes, that is what I said: "bait." Are they dead?

CHEKOV: No, just unconscious, and I don't know how long stun lasts on a Romulan disruptor. Let's finish the job and beam out of here. Thirty-four thousand square meters of frozen lava, coming up.

SAAVIK: Activating the nullifiers.

(She flips a switch and a thousand kilometers of lava turn to stone.)

SCENE 4D-13**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

(Uhura enters.)

HELM: Captain on the bridge!

UHURA: Report?

HELM: Sensors report the crater is petrified, Captain.

UHURA: Good work, Chekov. Tell the Away Team they may beam up in the clear, whenever they're ready.

HELM: We're being hailed, sir. The Romulan flagship.

UHURA: I hope she recalled her troops in time.

HELM: Are you worried they might have hurt the Captain and the Commander?

UHURA: No, I'm afraid the Captain might have hurt them. On screen.

(The viewscreen activates.)

LEGATE: *My soldiers are unconscious, Captain.*

UHURA: We'll beam them directly to your medical center.

LEGATE: *You'll do no such thing, Captain. Romulans rescue Romulans.*

UHURA: We've completed the first step as promised, Legate: the crater is frozen. If you wish, I'll leave the next stage to you.

LEGATE: *Now that the lava is neutralized, all we have to do is dig out the Mapstone and transport it.*

UHURA: We're preparing our equipment now.

LEGATE: *I've already sent a mining team and fifty soldiers to secure the site.*

UHURA: Then you hardly need my permission to take command of the operation, do you?

LEGATE: No, I don't. Screen off.

(The viewscreen deactivates.)

(Chekov and Saavik step out of the turbolift.)

CHEKOV: I hear we're working with the Romulans now?

UHURA: Welcome back, Captain. The rumor mill already knows?

CHEKOV: Possibly before you did. So much for my plan to go out in a blaze of glory!

HELM: Captain? New contact on sensors.

SAAVIK: Unknown vessel, please identify. (pause) *Starship Falcon*, sir. Mark Jameson commanding.

STYLES: *Not exactly, Excelsior.*

CHEKOV: Admiral Styles!

STYLES: *You know the saying: if you want something done right... Now how about I clean up one of your messes, Uhura?*

UHURA: Admiral — we have a détente with the Romulans. If you do anything to jeopardize it...

STYLES: *I'm not talking about the Romulans! I'm talking about these distortion waves! The last one hit as far as Starbase Two-Thirty-Four! Two people died! Now Commander Jameson's science people are telling me the waves are coming from some kind of artifact on the surface of that planet you destroyed. I don't know what you and your pointy-eared pals have been playing with out here, but I'm going to fix it before anyone else dies.*

CHEKOV: How?

STYLES: *I'm going to blow it up! We've got a tricobalt device aboard for interphase testing, with a subspace displacement of sixteen thousand teracochranes. I don't care what that rock is made of; we'll blow this space menace halfway into the next universe!*

UHURA: Admiral —

STYLES: *Falcon out!*

(Viewscreen off.)

SAAVIK: Sirs, a tricobalt device with that yield would destroy the Mapstone.

CHEKOV: Raise him again.

SAAVIK: The *Falcon* is refusing all hails.

UHURA: Of all the pigheaded... Force us onto his viewer if you have to!

SAAVIK: I cannot. The *Falcon* has changed its prefix code.

UHURA: I suppose he learned from that little incident with the *Enterprise* last year.

CHEKOV: Oh, so you heard about that?

UHURA: Laughed 'til I was sick, Captain.

HELM: Sirs, I'm reading an energy buildup in the *Falcon's* torpedo bay.

CHEKOV: They're about to fire!

UHURA: Helm, move us between the *Falcon* and the planet! We have to block that shot!

HELM: Aye, sir!

(He complies.)

SAAVIK: Commander U.S.S. *Falcon* is demanding we move to a safe distance. Text only, one-way.

UHURA: Request ship-to-ship visual.

SAAVIK: Request denied.

CHEKOV: Then Styles can eat static. Helm, report.

HELM: We are between the *Falcon* and the Mapstone. But, sir, the *Falcon's* an *Ambassador-class* starship. The *Excelsior* can't keep up with her.

UHURA: Don't let the old girl hear you say that!

CHEKOV: How long until the *Falcon* outmaneuvers us?

HELM: They'll have a clear shot at the Mapstone in seven minutes, five seconds. Maybe less.

UHURA: Then we don't have much time to come up with a plan.

SAAVIK: The Legate's flagship is hailing, but using a code I don't recognize.

CHEKOV: That's because she and Captain Uhura have their own little secret language.

UHURA: We both used to be communications officers. We share a love of codes. Plugging in the decryption chip...

(She plugs in a computer chip.)

SAAVIK: Coming through clear now, Captain. Putting her up on speakers.

UHURA: Legate, we have a problem.

LEGATE: *We've been listening.*

CHEKOV: The *Ambassador*-class is the queen of the fleet. She can fly circles around any of us. Given enough time, the *Falcon* will get that shot.

LEGATE: *He can outrun us. Can he outgun us?*

CHEKOV: We are not opening fire on a Federation vessel.

LEGATE: *Perhaps you aren't. But someone just told me the future of the entire galaxy depends on that stone.*

UHURA: Do you want to stake the whole future on winning a battle against *Falcon* and *Excelsior*? Because that's what you'd have to do.

LEGATE: *Do you have a better suggestion?*

UHURA: Help me find one.

LEGATE: *There's no time!*

CHEKOV: Couldn't we confuse their targeting sensors somehow? They only have one torpedo; we'd just have to fool them once.

SAAVIK: We could use a hologram projector, to make it appear the Mapstone is in a different part of the crater.

CHEKOV: Like a fun-house mirror.

SAAVIK: Precisely.

CHEKOV: Hm. That might work on a normal day, but *Falcon's* sensors are actively sweeping us; they'd instantly see what we were doing.

UHURA: And compensate. He came ready for us.

LEGATE: *Not all of us, captain.*

CHEKOV: What do you mean?

LEGATE: *You may have forgotten: I have two other cloaked warbirds in orbit that Styles knows nothing about. They could send a holographic interference signal with no one the wiser.*

CHEKOV: The warbirds! Of course!

UHURA: Legate, get them in position. We'll buy you a few minutes while your officers figure out how to build that "fun-house mirror".

LEGATE: *Acceptable. Screen off.*

HELM: Four minutes 'til *Falcon* acquires target.

SAAVIK: Captain, another signal. It's coming from the pulsar.

CHEKOV: Dovan.

UHURA: I'll take it in my office. Alone, this time.

(Uhura has already stood and started moving.)

SAAVIK: Aye, Captain.

(Uhura exits to her office.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CAPTAIN'S OFFICE

(Uhura takes a seat.)

UHURA: Accept transmission.

(The computer boops, and Dovan appears on the little desk screen.)

DOVAN: *Captain Uhura. Glad to see you one last time.*

UHURA: You too, Captain Dovan.

DOVAN: *Captain?!*

UHURA: Yes, the first time we talked, you were commanding the *Excelsior*. The new one.

DOVAN: *Lords of Kobol, what crazy parallel timelines have you been seeing? I'm a Junior Lieutenant. Or, I was. Before I got kicked out. These are my friends, Melissa —*

SHARP: *Nyota.*

DOVAN: *Isaac —*

BRAHMS: *An honor, as always.*

DOVAN: *and Yubari.*

YUBARI: *Alcar, we don't have a lot of time here.*

UHURA: *Where are you?*

DOVAN: *We're in my shuttlecraft, hiding in the corona of Union Star. Unfortunately, this transmission lights up on sensors like a lighthouse – they're sure to find us this time.*

UHURA: *Who's looking for you? The Romulans?*

SHARP: *(guffaws) The Romulans?*

DOVAN: *The Romulans are all dead. We're hiding from the bad guys. The ones who destroyed the galaxy. Do you have the Mapstone?*

UHURA: *We just need a few more minutes.*

DOVAN: *Ah.*

UHURA: *Problem?*

DOVAN: *We... don't actually have that long.*

BRAHMS: *Three Myriad blobships just broke off the Hawkeye patrol line. They're heading straight for us.*

SHARP: *Take us deeper into the sun!*

YUBARI: *This is a shuttlecraft! We don't have metaphasic shields! And we definitely don't have a few minutes!*

DOVAN: *Guess my math was a little off.*

UHURA: *Can't you call for reinforcements?*

DOVAN: *Reinforcements? From where?*

UHURA: *The Federation? Our allies? Anyone?*

DOVAN: *The last free person we heard from was five weeks ago. A civilian cargo captain called, name of Yates, offered to let us join her convoy of refugees escaping the galaxy. I turned her down; we still had a Mapstone to find. Six hours later, a hunter/killer group caught up with her. No survivors.*

YUBARI: *Blobships are dropping out of transwarp!*

BRAHMS: *Evasive pattern.*

UHURA: *Well, if the galaxy's already been wiped out, why do you still need the Mapstone?*

DOVAN: *I thought you knew.*

UHURA: *Well, I don't.*

DOVAN: *I don't like to say it aloud.*

UHURA: Say what aloud, Mister?

DOVAN: *Revenge. (pause) Those monsters killed and enslaved everyone from here to the Dominion. They won't get to enjoy it for long. We need the Mapstone so we can burn down what's left of the galaxy around them.*

UHURA: You're telling me it's a doomsday weapon.

DOVAN: *That's not its true purpose. If we'd met a few months earlier, a few weeks, even —*

UHURA: Like when we first spoke.

DOVAN: *When I was captain of the Excelsior?*

SHARP: *They're entering the corona! Weapons lock in thirty!*

UHURA: The first time we met, you needed the Mapstone to save the galaxy, not destroy it.

DOVAN: Well... in a universe where I was captain of the Federation flagship, yeah, maybe we would have had a chance. Could have slowed things down, used the Mapstone the right way. But the Starfleet in that universe would have to be a lot bolder than this one. More tolerant of officers who bend the rules.

UHURA: More open to... cowboys?

DOVAN: *But that would have been a Starfleet with a lot more admirals like you and a lot fewer named Styles.*

SHARP: *They've locked on!*

DOVAN: *Countermeasures!*

BRAHMS: *Launching countermeasures!*

UHURA: You said before that my actions today are changing your future. So whatever changed things – made everything so much worse in your time – that’s because of something I did, today.

DOVAN: *Or something you’re planning to do.*

UHURA: Then maybe we can still fix it.

DOVAN: *Maybe you can still fix it. I hope so, because the Alcar Dovan of this timeline has about ten seconds to live.*

BRAHMS: *Three more angling in from port! They flanked us!*

DOVAN: *...or, more like five.*

YUBARI: *Firing all torpedoes!*

SHARP: *Too late! Impact in -- !*

(There’s an explosion, and the transmission cuts off abruptly.)

(Silence.)

(Door chime.)

UHURA: Come in, Pavel.

(Chekov enters and approaches the desk.)

CHEKOV: Nyota? Are you okay?

UHURA: We made it all worse, Pavel. Everything we did today – everything I did – only made it worse. (pause) I just saw the world end.

CHEKOV: That can't have been easy.

UHURA: That's the strange part: it was. (pause) Or maybe not strange. My world has been ending for some time now, hasn't it? That planet is burnt up. My mission – thirty years the *Excelsior* has kept the peace! – has failed. My career is doomed. And Janice Rand, my Janice, is dead.

CHEKOV: You know the last thing she'd let you do right now is start crying about her.

UHURA: Then what would she do, Pavel? Right now? I'm fresh out of plans.

CHEKOV: Same thing she always did. She'd propose something. I'd say, "It's a beautiful principle, Janice, but it isn't a plan." Then she'd say it's the right thing to do, but I'd say, "That doesn't get us past the facts on the ground!" She turns my own words back on me, then you weigh in with some entirely different idea. Finally Captain Sulu steps in and thanks us for giving him an idea, and we all say, "Captain?!" in very surprised voices. Then we go out and save the day. (pause) I know my side of that argument. I wish I'd listened more closely to hers.

(Pause.)

UHURA: What are the facts on the ground?

CHEKOV: Right now, there's only one that matters: as long as Admiral Styles is trying to blow up the Mapstone, we're going to have to do something to make sure he can't.

(Pause.)

UHURA: You listened better than you realized, Pavel.

CHEKOV: I did?

UHURA: That's exactly what Janice would say.

(Uhura rises and walks out to the bridge. Chekov follows.)

CHEKOV: Captain?!

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE

UHURA: Mister Saavik, transmit to the Romulans. Text only. "Tricks will win a battle, but we need some friends."

SAAVIK: Sir?

UHURA: No questions. Transmit.

CHEKOV: And where do you think you're going, Captain?

UHURA: I'm beaming down.

CHEKOV: I don't think that's wise!

UHURA: When I give the order, I want you to move the *Excelsior* out of the way. Give the *Falcon* a clear shot on the Mapstone.

SAAVIK: Sir —!

UHURA: That's an order. Possibly the last order I ever give.

CHEKOV: You can pull rank on her, but I have two weeks seniority on you. Don't make me use it.

UHURA: Pavel. Listen to me. This time, it's not enough for us to stand up to Styles, so that he can't blow up the Mapstone. This time, we need somebody else to stand up to Styles, so he stops trying. My bridge is yours, Captain.

(Uhura exits.)

(A shocked pause.)

CHEKOV: You heard the lady! Let's move! Helm, lay in a new course!

SCENE 4D-14**LOCATION: UNION III - SURFACE**

(There is a plasma drill whirring away a few meters from here.)

ROMULAN #3: Twenty-five meters!

LEGATE: *Centurion, you must hurry.*

ROMULAN #2: We will extract the Artifact in time, Centurion.

LEGATE: *The Empire depends upon it.*

ROMULAN #1: Therefore we will not fail, Legate.

(A Federation transporter beam!)

(Romulan #2 immediately draws his sidearm.)

ROMULAN #2: It's Captain Uhura! Stop her!

UHURA: Wait! I'm here to help you!

ROMULAN #1: *Uhlan*, replace your sidearm at once! The *Excelsior* is working alongside us!

ROMULAN #3: But sir, we can't trust —!

LEGATE: *The entire dig team is to give Captains Uhura and Chekov their full cooperation! That is an order! Captain, be aware that all my weapons are locked on your ship, should you betray this trust.*

UHURA: Thank you, Legate. You've deployed pattern enhancers.

ROMULAN #2: To help our transporters lock onto the Artifact.

UHURA: And make it impossible for anyone else's transporters to steal it out from under you. Activate them, please. We don't have much time.

ROMULAN #1: *Uhlan!* Step to!

ROMULAN #3: Yes, Centurion!

(The uhlan goes around and activates the pattern enhancers.)

UHURA: Centurion, that plasma drill – it's digging toward the Mapstone? Is it automatic?

ROMULAN #1: Yes.

UHURA: Then get your men away from here. I'm about to do something very dangerous, and there's no need for them to share in it.

ROMULAN #1: Legate?

LEGATE: *Because of Galorndon Core, Nyota?*

UHURA: Because it's me, Legate.

(Pause.)

LEGATE: *Do as she says, Centurion.*

ROMULAN #1: All personnel! Evacuate the dig site!

(Romulan #3 flips open a Romulan communicator.)

ROMULAN #3: Transporter chamber: begin extraction!

(The Romulans beam up in several waves, which last a few seconds.)

(Uhura flips open his communicator.)

UHURA: Uhura to *Excelsior*. Do it now.

CHEKOV: Captain —

UHURA: Hit it, *Excelsior*. Out.

(She closes her communicator.)

UHURA: Alright, Mister Styles. No weapons, no backup, and no escape. Just you and me. Let's see who blinks first.

SCENE 4D-15**LOCATION: FALCON BRIDGE****FALCON LIEUTENANT: Captain.****JAMESON: What is it, Ensign?****FALCON LIEUTENANT: The *Excelsior*, sir. She's moving out of the way.****STYLES: They've seen reason, then. Target the impact site. Load the tricobalt device.****JAMESON: How many Romulans still on the surface, Lieutenant?****FALCON LIEUTENANT: None, sir. (he runs another scan) But, sir, there's a human lifesign.****STYLES: What's that?****FALCON LIEUTENANT: It's Captain Uhura, sir!****JAMESON: Put her on screen!****STYLES: Is she inside the blast radius?****FALCON LIEUTENANT: Admiral, Captain Uhura is literally standing on top of the neutronium artifact. We can't destroy it without killing her.****JAMESON: ...And everything else within a hundred kilometers.****STYLES: Call transporter room. Beam her out of there.**

FALCON LIEUTENANT: We can't, sir. Romulan pattern enhancers are scrambling her signal.

JAMESON: I could take a shuttlecraft, remove her with a security team.

STYLES: There's no time. In a few minutes, she'll dig out the artifact and hand it over to the Romulans. I don't care to imagine what devilry they have planned for it.

JAMESON: Lieutenant, contact Captain Uhura on the surface.

STYLES: Belay that! Dialogue is exactly what she wants. That's how she and Chekov always win. No: decisive action is what today's Starfleet needs. (pause; then Styles clicks his tongue) Transmit a warning message. Tell her to get clear of the artifact – and that this is her only warning.

SCENE 4D-16**LOCATION: UNION III - SURFACE**

UHURA: (chuckling) Fat chance, Admiral. How much longer, Computer?

ROMULAN COMPUTER: *Three minutes, seven seconds.*

UHURA: If I know Styles, he'll wait until about the thirty-second mark to make his decision.

SAAVIK: Sixty. Admiral Styles always overestimates his margin of error.

UHURA: Chekov! Saavik! Where did you come from?

CHEKOV: If Styles nukes you, we didn't want you to hog all the glory.

UHURA: But the pattern enhancers —

LEGATE: I transported your officers. I had already decided to join in your plan when they called.

CHEKOV: Can I ask about that plan? As far as I can see, the plan is "stand in front of the Mapstone while Styles orbits with a weapon of mass destruction he wants to use on the Mapstone".

UHURA: That's about the size of it.

CHEKOV: And, uh... where's the trick?

UHURA: What trick?

CHEKOV: The trick that makes it so Styles doesn't just shoot us and blow up the Mapstone along with four of his least favorite people.

UHURA: Oh, that trick. (pause) There's no trick.

CHEKOV: I thought you said you were getting "somebody else" to stand up to Styles.

UHURA: I am. With any luck, I'm getting Styles to stand up to Styles. He hides it well, but, at bottom, he's a Starfleet officer.

SAAVIK: You don't believe he'll fire.

UHURA: On fellow officers? Without hearing them out? He wears this uniform. He's not capable of it.

CHEKOV: Captain, I'm not sure you realize how much he hates you. And me. And the Legate.

LEGATE: Appealing to the honor of a man who has none. Invigorating. I am proud to stand beside you, as Ki Baratan [kee bair-ah-tan] stood beside Jolan Tru [JO-lan TRUE] of old.

UHURA: Where do you think I got the idea?

CHEKOV: Question: what happens to the heroes at the end of this particular legend? (pause) I ask only for information.

SCENE 4D-17**LOCATION: FALCON BRIDGE**

STYLES: Lieutenant, load tricobalt device into torpedo tube one. Lock on target.

FALCON LIEUTENANT: Umm... yes, sir.

JAMESON: Admiral, may I remind you that Uhura doesn't have sensors down there? She can't see you locking on, so it won't make your bluff any more convincing.

STYLES: Captain... I'm not bluffing. Lieutenant... fire.

SCENE 4D-18**LOCATION: UNION III – SURFACE**

UHURA: I think the worst part is that, if this doesn't work, we'll never know. The detonation will kill us before we ever see it coming.

CHEKOV: I've sometimes daydreamed about "Chekov's Last Stand," but I must admit the climax has never been me standing still in front of an old rock hoping I don't get blown up.

SAAVIK: Indeed. To die with a phaser in both hands, surrounded by nothing but the fallen bodies of one's enemies... (pause) Fantasies are a natural and healthy part of any psyche. They are rarely logical.

UHURA: I just don't feel like much of a cowboy right now.

CHEKOV: That's because we're not cowboys, Nyota. We're a lot more dangerous than that. We're idealists. Which makes us a threat to every bureaucrat and admiral in the galaxy.

LEGATE: And – perhaps more pertinently at the moment – makes them a threat to you.

SCENE 4D-19**LOCATION: U.S.S. FALCON BRIDGE**

STYLES: That was not a suggestion. *Fire*, Lieutenant!

FALCON LIEUTENANT: Sir, I... I need Commander Jameson's authorization codes.

STYLES: What's this?

FALCON LIEUTENANT: Well, tricobalt's a restricted substance, sir, so Regulation One-Six-Stroke-Ten requires command authorization before the computer will fire.

STYLES: Is this true?

FALCON LIEUTENANT: It's pretty obscure, sir, but Commander Jameson was fully briefed during ordinance -

JAMESON: Yes, yes, Lieutenant, thank you. I'll release the codes at once, sir.

FALCON LIEUTENANT: Of course, under the Starfleet Code of Justice, command authorization will make Captain Jameson materially responsible for the decision to fire on Captains Uhura and Chekov.

STYLES: Of course, of course. The codes, Captain?

JAMESON: I... think perhaps we should hear what the Captains have to say first.

STYLES: Perhaps we should have. The responsibility for that error is mine, if error it was. But there's no time left. They have been warned; they've made their choice. The codes, Captain.

JAMESON: But if they're right, and we kill them...

STYLES: They violated orders, not you. No court-martial in the sector would charge you.

JAMESON: What about the media? What about the promotion board? You're an admiral, sir — I don't need to be charged to be destroyed.

STYLES: If Uhura and Chekov are wrong, and you fail to stop them, hundreds of people could die. Maybe more. We know that. That would end your career just as fast.

JAMESON: True.

STYLES: So the question you have to ask yourself, Commander, is: who do you trust? Those people down there? Two captains who despise you, who hold you beneath contempt? Who have humiliated you on half a dozen occasions, who are trying to disgrace you once again at this very moment? Or me? (short pause) Time's up. I need those codes, either now or never. Your future is in your hands, Commander.

(Silence.)

JAMESON: Damn it to Hell. (pause; exhales) I'm sorry, Admiral.

SCENE 4D-20**LOCATION: SURFACE**

SAAVIK: Thirty seconds!

(Legate flips open her communicator.)

LEGATE: *Ivarix*, prepare transporter. Lock on four lifesigns and the Mapstone, as soon as it is unearthed.

SUBCOMMANDER: *Yes, Legate.*

UHURA: I almost can't believe this actually worked.

CHEKOV: No, you were right. By the end, I almost couldn't believe it wouldn't.

SAAVIK: Ten seconds!

LEGATE: Captain Uhura, I thank you.

UHURA: Legate, thank you.

LEGATE: When next we meet, Nyota? You have my permission to call me by my given name.

UHURA: I wish I knew when that would be.

LEGATE: Oh, it will be sooner than you think.

UHURA: What makes you say that?

LEGATE: I'm not planning an invasion, if that's what you're thinking, Captain. I just have a... what's the word? A hunch.

ROMULAN COMPUTER: *Objective complete.*

SAAVIK: We have obtained the Mapstone.

LEGATE: Ivarix, commence transport!

SCENE 4D-21**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR NCC-2000-C – BRIDGE**

NEEVA: Captain Dovan? Something coming through the Gateway.

DOVAN: On screen.

(Screen on, just as the Gateway disgorges...)

YUBARI: It's the Mapstone, sir.

LORHROK: Stars, they did it. Uhura and Chekov pulled it off.

DOVAN: Of course they did. They're Pavel Chekov and Nyota Uhura. It's an honor to sit in her old chair.

YUBARI: Well, not literally her old chair.

NEEVA: Actually, Lieutenant, we do have Captain Uhura's chair.

LORHROK: Nobody ever had the heart to throw it away, so they've just installed it in each new *Excelsior* ever since. I always wondered, sir, how does it feel?

DOVAN: Like sitting on the shoulders of giants. (short pause) Also lumpy. (short pause) Don't look at me like that; it's a hundred years old! Miss Yubari, signal Admiral Parker. Tell him that we have the Mapstone. (short pause) Tell him that, for the first time... we have a fighting chance.

SCENE 4D-22**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

CHEKOV: So we came a lot closer to getting killed than we realized. Thank you, Lieutenant...

FALCON LIEUTENANT: *Janeway, sir. Edward Janeway. And, there is one other thing. The safety regulation I mentioned? Requiring command codes to fire a tricobalt weapon?*

CHEKOV: Regulation one-six-stroke-ten, you said.

FALCON LIEUTENANT: *It... doesn't actually exist. I made it up.*

CHEKOV: I know that.

FALCON LIEUTENANT: *You do?*

CHEKOV: I wasn't sure you'd cop to it. I just don't understand why Jameson went along with it.

FALCON LIEUTENANT: *He'd rather die than be caught getting regulations wrong in front of an admiral. Easier to just agree with me. But, as soon as he has a chance to check the rulebook...*

CHEKOV: You'll be in need of a quick transfer to... warmer climes.

FALCON LIEUTENANT: *Ha. Something like that.*

CHEKOV: I'm pretty sure I could find a place on the *Enterprise* for an officer of your caliber. We'll be in touch, Mister Janeway.

FALCON LIEUTENANT: *Thank you, sir. Falcon out.*

(As the channel closes, the turbolift doors open, and Saavik and Uhuar emerge, moving toward their stations.)

CHEKOV: Captain on the bridge! The Legate has sent the Mapstone back... wherever it came from.

UHURA: And she's taking herself and her warbirds back to wherever they came from.

SAAVIK: Now we must wait to learn how history unfolds.

CHEKOV: The long way around, this time. That just leaves us and the Admiral.

SAAVIK: Have you decided what you are going to do about Admiral Styles, ma'am?

UHURA: You know, I think I have. (short pause) I'm going to fire him.

(Pause.)

CHEKOV: Well, it has the virtue of being unexpected. But, you are just a captain.

UHURA: Not for long, I'm not. Styles has me dead to rights on a half-dozen court-martial offenses. They'll give me a chance to resign, to spare the Fleet the disgrace - but, if I don't take it, they'll drum me out.

CHEKOV: And then what?

UHURA: It's recently come to my attention what Starfleet needs most is a change at the top.

CHEKOV: You're not.

UHURA: I am. Effective next week, I'm going to run for the Federation Council.

CHEKOV: You know, Nyota, you're not as young as you used to be.

UHURA: But no one's ever too old to do some good.

CHEKOV: I hope this doesn't mean I have to stop being such a Renegade.

UHURA: If you keep it up, Captain, I'll make you an admiral. And that's a promise.

CHEKOV: Like Janice always said... "Ever upward."

SAAVIK: Captain, the *Falcon* is hailing. They order us to come about and prepare to be tractoried back to spacedock.

CHEKOV: I would think the *Excelsior's* earned a more dignified send-off than that!

UHURA: Helm, lay in a course for spacedock.

HELM: Aye, sir.

CHEKOV: You're not going to let Styles tow you home!

UHURA: No. But I'm going to let him try. (laughs) Depends on whether his pretty new starship can catch us. Helm: maximum warp! Engage!

LOCATION: SPACE

(The *Excelsior* jumps to warp.)