

Starship: Excelsior
"Trust But Verify"
(Season 3, Episode 5)
by James Heaney

Transcribed by Peter Stine

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

THEME SONG

JOSHUA UNDERWOOD: *Space, the final frontier. This crew will explore it. Space, the infinite wilderness. This crew will tame it. Space, storehouse of secrets. This crew will reveal them. These are the new voyages of the Starship Excelsior, and this crew will live up to her name: Ever Upward!*

(Pause)

Starring Gareth Bowley as Acting Captain Joshua Underwood.

NARRATOR: *The Sword of Damocles, Part Five: "Trust But Verify".*

305 RECAP**LOCATION: EMPTINESS**

NARRATOR: *Previously on Star Trek: Excelsior...*

(Pause.)

NARRATOR: *Four months ago, Starfleet received a distress call from a long-lost cargo ship, the S.S. Anbar. It's crew had survived an extraordinary ordeal and the void beyond our galaxy.*

LOCATION: ANBAR CORRIDOR (304-04)

COX: Hey, God! I'll make you a deal: you can kill me, infest me, send me to Hell. I don't care what you do to me. Just stop making the people I love pay for my mistakes!

NARRATOR: *The Starship Excelsior was re-staffed and relaunched on a secret rescue mission. Something went horribly wrong.*

LOCATION: ANBAR BUGBOMBED SECTION (304-04)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: I don't come in peace.

(He fires his phaser at the bugbomb, causing it to break open, releasing a swarm of parasites.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Toodles!

SIRESH: He missed?

COX: No, he didn't miss -- he's blown open the bugbomb!

NARRATOR: *The mission was covered up. Many have died to protect its secrets. Others, like General Isaac Brahms, have murdered.*

LOCATION: BRIDGE, U.S.S. RENEGADE (302-08)

BRAHMS: Operations, signal the pirate fleet. They are to set course for the New Victoria colony. They are ordered to destroy it.

TACTICAL: General, those are Federation civilians!

BRAHMS: I know.

NARRATOR: *The Excelsior has evaded General Brahms and arrived at the secret location of the derelict Anbar, far from friendly territory. But what they found there, is chilling.*

LOCATION: ANBAR CORRIDOR (303-05)

SIMON: Alecz! Lifesigns again!

LORHROK: How many?

SIMON: Thousands.

LOCATION: ANBAR – THE HOLD (303-07)

NEEVA: We're surrounded.

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE (303-07)

YUBARI: Sir, three unknown vessels just dropped out of warp!

(The ship is hit and a console explodes.)

UNDERWOOD: Return fire!

(Yubari does so with gusto.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR DEFLECTOR CONTROL ROOM (303-07)

DOVAN: So... I guess you're not Doctor Sharp, then?

PSEUDO: NO!

(Pseudo fires! Dovan is struck in the gut and goes down!)

DOVAN: Agggh!

SHARP: NOOOOOOO!

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE (303-07)

YUBARI: Sir, there's another ship dropping out of warp! Vessel identified... as the U.S.S. *Renegade*.

UNDERWOOD: General Brahms!

NARRATOR: *And now, the continuation...*

SCENE 305 – 01**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE****YUBARI: Retargeting the *Renegade*!****UNDERWOOD: Belay that! Keep shooting at the bandits!****YUBARI: Sir, Brahms has massive firepower! If we don't – [shoot first, we won't be able to stop him!]****UNDERWOOD: Hail the *Renegade*, Lieutenant!****(An alert sounds at Yubari's console)****YUBARI: They're... They're hailing us, sir!****UNDERWOOD: By all means, put them on screen!****YUBARI: All I have is audio!****UNDERWOOD: I might have known.****(Yubari activates the connection.)****BRAHMS: *Have you ever heard of Icarus, Dovan? Damn you and your stubborn – [pride!]*****UNDERWOOD: This is Captain Joshua Underwood of United Starship *Excelsior*. Are you friend or foe?****BRAHMS: Underwood? *Who is this? Where's – [Dovan?]*****UNDERWOOD: I told you who I am. Answer my question!**

BRAHMS: *Not before I know – [who you are and who you represent!]*

UNDERWOOD: I don't have time for this, Brahms – Hello, we're in combat! So start shooting at somebody or get the hell out of my way! *Excelsior* out! Lieutenant! Report on the enemy!

YUBARI: Three ships, sir, between us and the *Anbar*! Configuration totally unknown.

UNDERWOOD: Can we Pause them?

YUBARI: One-on-one, yes, three-on-one... ? We need to keep our distance. Focus their fire; stretch our shields.

UNDERWOOD: I agree. Unfortunately, we need to go straight through.

YUBARI: Sir, that idea is... tactically unsound.

UNDERWOOD: We've got to get through to the *Anbar*, Lieutenant. Those are our people over there.

YUBARI: This sounds familiar in the worst possible way. Sir, if we go in there alone, we're going to be cut to ribbons in a matter of – [minutes.]

UNDERWOOD: Who said anything about going in there alone? That'd be stupid. (He checks his sensor readouts.) Brahms is in position. Answer his hail.

YUBARI: He's... hailing?

(The comm panel sounds.)

YUBARI: ...right.

(She puts him back on speakers.)

BRAHMS: *Alright, Captain. What's your plan?*

UNDERWOOD: We have people trapped on the *Anbar*. I need you to take on one of those ships and draw him out of formation.

BRAHMS: *And you'll skate through the hole he leaves behind.*

UNDERWOOD: You learn fast. Can you do it?

BRAHMS: *The odds are against us and the situation is grim. Most fun I've had in years.*

UNDERWOOD: Thought you'd like it.

BRAHMS: *Renegade out!*

UNDERWOOD: Helm, cover the *Renegade's* approach.

YUBARI: Captain, how did you know he'd side with us?

UNDERWOOD: I had no idea.

YUBARI: That was a guess?

UNDERWOOD: Not a guess. I just picked the only scenario that ended in the possibility of our survival. Reality had no choice but to agree.

YUBARI: So your willpower forced Brahms to help us? That's... not exactly orthodox.

UNDERWOOD: On the contrary, Leftenant: it's ninety percent of the captain's job. Any word from deflector control? Is Doe — ... is the captain... dead?

YUBARI: Medical teams have arrived on the scene, sir. That's all I know.

UNDERWOOD: I see. As soon as Brahms opens that gap, Leftenant, take us in.

YUBARI: Aye, sir.

UNDERWOOD: Stiff upper lip, Major: just a few minutes more.

SCENE 305 – 02**LOCATION: ANBAR HOLD****LORHROK: They're everywhere!****THE MAJOR: Stay calm! Keep firing! Marines: every shot counts!****LORHROK: Simon: How much longer on that sonic pulse?!****SIMON: Maybe ten more minutes, Alecz!****NEEVA: Sir, I don't know if we can hold out that long!****THE MAJOR: We absolutely cannot, ma'am!****NEEVA: What? Are you serious, Major?****THE MAJOR: Everyone: reset your phasers to widest possible beam!****(Neeva does this; Alecz does not.)****LORHROK: Major, if we widen the beam any more, it won't be focused enough to kill them!****MAJOR: Sir, we're not trying to kill them! At this point, we'll be lucky if we slow them down!**

SCENE 305 – 03**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR MEDICAL QUARANTINE LAB**

(Red alert in the background. Another alarm goes off in the lab)

COMPUTER: *Quarantine lab warning. Force-filters disabled. An unknown bioform has entered the lab through the air recirculation duct.*

(The Parasite crawls into Sickbay and then worms its way down Ermez's throat, causing Ermez to choke and gag.)

(Ermez then sits up, puts his feet on the floor, and stands up.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Ooo! Oooo! Old teeth. Even weirder. Hello, Ermez. Good to be back. Scions, though, you need a shower! Computer, cancel alert and erase entry log, authorization Ermez oh-oh-seven.

(The computer complies. The alarm stops. Ermez moves for the door.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Now, then... On to Phase Two!

(He exits.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Computer, remind me: where are my – [quarters?]

NURSE HENNESSY: (Interrupting, running down the hallway) Medical emergency! Code mauve total override!

(Another alert goes off)

NURSE HENNESSY: That means get out of the way, Ensign! Medical emergency! YES, YOU!

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Hey, wait! Wait!

(He runs after the gurney)

NURSE HENNESSY: Fine! Make yourself useful! Grab that end of the gurney and push!

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: I got it! What the hell happened? Who's under that blanket?

NURSE HENNESSY: It's Captain Dovan! He's been shot! And now we can't use the damn transporters!

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: What?! Dovan is alive?!

NURSE HENNESSY: He needs surgery or he'll be dead in ten minutes. HOLD THAT TURBOLIFT! MEDICAL EMERGENCY!

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: I got it, Nurse!

(He runs ahead and grabs the turbolift door as it starts closing; it reopens. He continues conversing.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: How can he be alive? He was shot at point-blank range!

(Hennessy reaches and enters the turbolift and fiddles with some buttons on the anti-grave sled.)

NURSE HENNESSY: He was lucky: it only grazed him. His vital organs are okay. But that won't save him if we can't stop the cell damage!

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: But... solar plexus shot!

NURSE HENNESSY: Looks worse than it is, Ensign. (pause) But not by much. Sickbay!

(The doors close in Ermez's face. The alarm stops and returns to normal red alert.)

(Pause.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: How can he be alive? How is that... ? ...possible.

(He enters the turbolift.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Doctor Sharp.

(The turbolift door closes.)

SCENE 305 – 04**LOCATION: *EXCELSIOR BRIDGE***

(The bridge rocks under a particularly harsh blast. A console explodes, like they do.)

YUBARI: That's it! The deflector dish just went offline!

UNDERWOOD: Distance to the *Anbar*!

YUBARI: Forty thousand kilometers! Not close enough to beam through the ion storm!

UNDERWOOD: Stay on target! Full speed ahead! Brahms, where's that hole you promised me!

BRAHMS: *Oh, you young captains. I tell you, if this was a formation of Breen battleships –*

UNDERWOOD: General, these aren't the Breen, my fusion drives are fissioning, and I... am thirty-seven years old!

BRAHMS: *Well, why didn't you say so? You're eligible for our senior citizens special! Tactical, another brace of torpedoes for Mr. Underwood! Target for maximum casualties!*

TACTICAL: *Yes, General!*

(The ships fight. A sensor alert goes off at Yubari's station.)

YUBARI: The third ship is pulling away! They're going after the *Renegade*!

(The barrage on the *Excelsior* lessens.)

UNDERWOOD: I don't want to make a habit of saying this, but thank you, General.

BRAHMS: *Don't let Dovan hear you say that. He'd confine you to quarters.*

UNDERWOOD: Don't think he hasn't tried. All ahead, Yubari.

(Another big hit.)

BRAHMS: *Just keep your shields up for another minute or two, Underwood.*

UNDERWOOD: Why? What happens then?

BRAHMS: *Uncoded message, open channel, you know the regs. Brahms out.*

UNDERWOOD: Distance to the *Anbar*, Leftenant!

YUBARI: Two thousand kilometers... and closing.

SCENE 305 – 05**LOCATION: ANBAR HOLD**

(Nothing but phaser fire for a few moments. Then one of the phasers jams.)

MAJOR: Florez! Florez, keep firing!

FLOREZ: I'm out of ammo, Sir!

MAJOR: Martinez! Cover him! Commander, check your toolkit!

NEEVA: I'm on it!

LORHROK: Florez, look out!

(A strangled cry and Mr. Florez has been overrun. He falls to the floor, gun firing wildly in all directions until he hits the floor and loses his grip.)

FLOREZ: (Screaming) Aggh! No! Get them off! Get them -- !

(He starts choking as a bugger forces his way into his throat.)

THE MAJOR: Florez!

(The Major reacts quickly – he raises his phaser and blasts a hole in Florez, who falls instantly silent.)

LORHROK: (simul. – right before and as he fires) Major, NO!

NEEVA: You killed him!

THE MAJOR: Respectfully, ma'am, I'd do it again.

NEEVA: You murdered Florez!

THE MAJOR: I murdered what he was about to become! Now please, Commander – !

NEEVA: How can you – [pretend to wear that uniform]?

LORHROK: Commander, let it go!

NEEVA: What?!

LORHROK: Let it go – hold the line.

SCENE 305 – 06

LOCATION: *EXCELSIOR BRIDGE*

YUBARI: Structural damage, deck seven. Casualties on deck eight. Dorsal shields down to – [eight percent.]

UNDERWOOD: (Interrupting) Spare the details, Lieutenant. I don't need a weather report to tell me how hard it's raining. Distance!

YUBARI: Four hundred kilometers to transporter range. But the big one is holding position between us and the *Anbar*.

UNDERWOOD: Penning us in. They know what we want. What about those hellfire torpedoes?

YUBARI: Partially dismantled in cold storage, sir. Two hours load time, minimum.

UNDERWOOD: Dammit Dovan: first the fighter squadron, now the hellfires! Signal the *Renegade!* Tell them we need another favor!

YUBARI: The *Renegade* is pulling a C-1 full evasive right now, sir. They're busy.

(A large explosion rocks the bridge.)

YUBARI: And... sir? We can't take much more of this "thunderstorm".

UNDERWOOD: What are the odds we can outmaneuver the bandit, get around to his other flank?

YUBARI: If we target his engines? Fifty-fifty, sir.

UNDERWOOD: I've made worse bets than that in the last ten minutes. Do it!

SCENE 305 – 07**LOCATION: RENEGADE BRIDGE**

(An eminently calm and orderly place. There are no alert klaxons here. We can hear the battle going on outside.)

BRAHMS: Tactical, rear tube one. (pause) Fire.

(Quantum torpedo fires out the rear tube.)

TACTICAL: Direct hit! He's attempting to turn his starboard shield away.

BRAHMS: Don't let him. Tubes two and three, fire.

OPERATIONS: Torpedoes away!

TACTICAL: Hull breach: he is venting atmosphere.

BRAHMS: Good shot, Tactical.

TACTICAL: Noted.

OPERATIONS: General, if I may?

BRAHMS: Of course, Operations.

OPERATIONS: Why are we helping the *Excelsior*? We've spent weeks trying to destroy them. And all those people on New Victoria...

BRAHMS: The blood of New Victoria will always be on my hands, Operations. But the blood of the Federation is going to be on Dovan's. Our mission was to stop them from getting here. We failed. They're no longer a threat to the Federation. They're just a fellow Starfleet ship in trouble.

OPERATIONS: I thought you said that if we failed, every living being in the galaxy would be killed or enslaved.

BRAHMS: That's absolutely true.

OPERATIONS: But we failed.

BRAHMS: And every living being in the galaxy is going to be killed or enslaved because of it. Including us. But there's nothing we or the *Excelsior* can do about it now. Yesterday, we had a fighting chance, so we were pragmatists. Today, we are doomed. This is the hour of the idealist. (pause) But I have no intention of making this my blaze of glory. Bring us about!

OPERATIONS: Yes, General!

SCENE 305 – 08**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

(They are taking heavy fire.)

UNDERWOOD: Yubari!

YUBARI: It's no good, sir! They've closed the pen on us! We can't maneuver!

UNDERWOOD: Dammit! We'll have to come back for the away team! Can you get us out of here?

YUBARI: Only if you want to expose our antimatter pods to weapons fire, sir!

UNDERWOOD: Watch that lip, Lieutenant! What are our options?

YUBARI: We're... (external weapons fire stops) receiving a response to our hail, sir.

UNDERWOOD: Brahms?

YUBARI: No, the aliens.

UNDERWOOD: First contact. My favorite part of this job. What are they saying?

YUBARI: They're asking for our unconditional surrender.

UNDERWOOD: How predictable.

YUBARI: If it's all the same to you, sir, I'd like to answer them in my own way.

UNDERWOOD: By all means, Lieutenant!

YUBARI: Firing all batteries!

(She does so. The enemy ships respond by re-opening fire on the *Excelsior*.)

UNDERWOOD: Well, it's like I always say: never surrender while the shields are still up!

YUBARI: Then we have about twenty seconds! Detecting active transporter signals, sir! Boarding parties! Looking for gaps in our shields!

UNDERWOOD: We need help. Raise Brahms.

YUBARI: Aye, sir!

UNDERWOOD: General, hate to bother you again, but we've got ourselves in a bit of a pickle here.

BRAHMS: *I can see that.*

UNDERWOOD: Care to do something about it?

BRAHMS: *I can't.*

UNDERWOOD: Then we're dead.

BRAHMS: *Not necessarily. See, we've been carrying along some friends in the Renegade's warp trail. And they're due to arrive... now.*

(Warp flashes.)

YUBARI: Sir! Seven more ships dropping out of warp!

UNDERWOOD: More bandits?

YUBARI: Too small, sir! Can't get a clear reading in the storm. But it looks like —

ALEX ROL: *This is Lieutenant Junior Grade Alex Rol of the five-oh-seventh marine*

starfighter squadron! Did somebody say 'pickles'?

YUBARI: Rol!

ALEX ROL: *Good to see you, too, Yubari-san!*

UNDERWOOD: Lieutenant Rol...

(Pause.)

ALEX ROL: *That's me, sir, but I don't think we have time to get acquainted just now.*

UNDERWOOD: True. We have an away team trapped on that derelict freighter. Can you clear a path?

ALEX ROL: *Of course! I mean, if those were Breen warships —*

UNDERWOOD: Oh! Not you, too! Excelsior out!

(The connection terminates.)

YUBARI: Rol's fighters are coming in fast and hot. This'll work, sir.

(The explosions lessen as the enemy focuses on Rol's ships.)

UNDERWOOD: Do you trust him?

YUBARI: Not for a minute and with my life, sir.

UNDERWOOD: Sounds like our new CAG is an interesting guy.

YUBARI: He sure keeps us guessing, sir.

UNDERWOOD: Like just now.

YUBARI: Case in point.

(Console alert.)

YUBARI: Still no transporter lock on the Away Team, sir. There's some kind of interference onboard the *Anbar*.

UNDERWOOD: Bring us closer!

SCENE 305 - 09**LOCATION: ANBAR HOLD**

THE MAJOR: Tighten it up, Martinez! Close that gap!

(There is rapid phaser fire.)

NEEVA: (absolutely terrified) Lorhrok! They're on me! I can't get them off! I can't get them off!

LORHROK: Hold on, Neeva! We – I'll — Major!

THE MAJOR: I said any cost, ma'am! And I meant it! Yahh!

(He charges in front of her, guns blazing!)

LORHROK: Major, get back! You'll be overrun!

THE MAJOR: We are being overrun, sir!

SCENE 305 – 10**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE****UNDERWOOD: Yubari!****YUBARI: We're almost in transporter range, sir! But I still can't get a lock!****UNDERWOOD: Why not?!**

SCENE 305 – 11**LOCATION: ANBAR THE HOLD**

NEEVA: (screams)

(Suddenly, Simon Westlake's tricorder beeps that a task has been completed.)

SIMON: Alecz! I have it! The sonic pulse!

LORHROK: FIRE IT!

(He does so. A nasty whining noise sweeps out *rapidly* from Westlake's tricorder across the room and off into the bowels of the ship, a powerful and rapid pulse that silences the swarm as it sweeps over it.)

NEEVA: It worked!

THE MAJOR: We only have a few moments!

LORHROK: SIMON!

(More beeps from the tricorder!)

SIMON: It's done! The *Excelsior* has our location!

SCENE 305 – 12**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE****YUBARI: Sir, I have them! But I won't for long!****UNDERWOOD: Full impulse! Get us in range now!**

SCENE 305-14**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE****YUBARI: The big one still isn't backing down!****UNDERWOOD: He'll blink.****YUBARI: What if he doesn't?****UNDERWOOD: Then he's going to be rammed at one-quarter light speed. That's. Why. He'll. Blink.****YUBARI: He's powering engines!****UNDERWOOD: We have him!****YUBARI: ...and turning to starboard.****UNDERWOOD: What? He'll hit the *Anbar!*****YUBARI: He doesn't have another way out, sir! Rol's fighters are blocking his escapes!****UNDERWOOD: Rol!****ROL: *We see it! We're trying to open another hole!*****YUBARI: Too late! IMPACT!**

SCENE 305 - 15**LOCATION: ANBAR HOLD**

(The ship is rocked by a massive impact! The Away Team yells and is thrown to the ground on top of the dormant parasites. Simon his grip on his tricorder, which falls under a piece of falling debris and is destroyed with a crunch, a whine, and some sparks.)

WESTLAKE: NO!

LORHROK: Simon, are you — [alright!?!]

WESTLAKE: My tricorder! Alecz, we've lost the pulse!

(The parasites begin waking up.)

NEEVA: The swarm's awake!

NEEVA: They're everywhere! They're every — ag(choke)gggh(choke)!

LORHROK: (overlapping) Neeva, they're all over you!

And Neeva's taken. Before she's even begun her final sentence, though, the Major has already interrupted her:

THE MAJOR: Get off the floor! Sirs, get off the — (choke)!

LORHROK: MAJOR! Aggkkk!

MARTINEZ: (Choking as a parasite takes him as well.)

SCENE 305 - 16**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE****ROL: *The Anbar reactor is going super-critical!*****UNDERWOOD: Helm, get us there NOW!****YUBARI: Sir, the interference is back! We've lost their lifesigns!****UNDERWOOD: GET THEM BACK!****ROL: Excelsior, BRACE YOURSELVES!****(All weapons fire stops. The red alert repeater stops.)****(The *Anbar* explodes.)****(Pause. The explosion rolls outward from its initial detonation point. It quiets at first as it loses its initial force, then grows again as it rolls toward (and then over) the *Excelsior*.)****(Sensor alerts scream.)****YUBARI: Shockwave!****(The shockwave passes over the ship, rocking it but doing no serious damage, then blows away. A second, light shockwave of dust and particulates passes in its wake, pebbles pinging against the hull.)****(The red alert repeater resumes.)****UNDERWOOD: Yubari... What just... ?****YUBARI: The *Anbar* has... The *Anbar* has been vaporized, captain.**

(Long pause.)

UNDERWOOD: Report.

YUBARI: No lifesigns. (pause) Some damage to us, but the bandit took the brunt of the impact. He's in bad shape.

(More alerts.)

YUBARI: ...and Mister Rol's fighters are giving chase for all they're worth.

UNDERWOOD: God bless 'em. Superlative.

YUBARI: Sir, what are your orders?

UNDERWOOD: Note a commendation for each member of the away team, Lieutenant and mark them Killed In Action. After that... K.B.O.

YUBARI: What?

UNDERWOOD: Keep bugging on, Lieutenant.

Back us out of here. And raise General Brahms.

YUBARI: Aye, sir.

(She presses some buttons.)

BRAHMS: *This is Brahms. I'm sorry, Captain. Lorhrok was an idealist worthy of the name. And your marine commander... truly, a great man.*

UNDERWOOD: We're pulling back, Brahms. The *Excelsior's* a capital ship.

BRAHMS: Not designed for close-quarters combat.

UNDERWOOD: Especially not with support ships at its disposal.

BRAHMS: You've taken heavy damage. Get to a safe distance and support us from long range.

UNDERWOOD: My thoughts exactly. Underwood out. Yubari, do it.

(Turbolift doors open. Ermez emerges onto the bridge.)

YUBARI: Yes, sir.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Commander Underwood —

UNDERWOOD: Who are you? Why aren't you at your post?

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: I'm Ensign Phillipe Ermez, sir. I need to speak with you — in private!

UNDERWOOD: You want a private conference during combat? Fat chance!

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Sir, this is an emergency!

UNDERWOOD: I cannot overemphasize how absolutely correct you are, Ensign!

YUBARI: Commander... Ermez was the first parasite host on the *Excelsior*.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: The first known host. Sir, I know what they're planning.

YUBARI: They?

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: They.

UNDERWOOD: ...step into my ready room, Ensign. (He starts walking) Yubari? KBO.

YUBARI: KBO, sir.

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR READY ROOM

UNDERWOOD: I wasn't aware you'd recovered, Ensign.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Just this morning, sir. My memory's been coming back in pieces. I just remembered this.

(He hands Underwood a padd, which Underwood clicks through.)

UNDERWOOD: Names. It's a list of names.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Eighty-five names, sir. Every person on the *Excelsior* under the control of a neural parasite. Half of them at key posts around the ship. They're about to do something big, Captain. That's all I remember. But if you act quickly and quietly, you might be able to stop them before they know what's happening.

UNDERWOOD: Dovan's name is on this list.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Dovan was their primary target. From what I've gathered, they've succeeded in infesting him.

UNDERWOOD: What makes you say that?

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: How else do you explain him surviving a point-blank phaser to the solar plexus?

(Pause.)

UNDERWOOD: Thank you, Ensign. Let me know if you remember anything else.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Of course.

UNDERWOOD: Dismissed. (Ermez exits) Brig, this is Underwood. I want you to go get Captain DOE-ven out of sickbay and lock him up.

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: I love it when a plan comes together.

SCENE 305 - 17

NARRATOR: *Three months ago. Five hours after the bugbomb exploded.*

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR TRANSPORTER ROOM (FLASHBACK)

(Skipper Sam Cox materializes on the *Excelsior* platform.)

BRADY WINTERS: Skipper! You're alive!

ALEX ROL: Welcome back to the *Excelsior*, Captain Cox.

SAM COX: Brady. (Pause) Yes, I'm alive. (Pause) (To Rol) What about the *Excelsior's* captain... Sireh?

ROL: Dead. Commander Cortez and I... He was infested.

COX: I was afraid of that. (Pause.) I'm glad you're okay, Brady. (turning to Rol) And you – what's your name?

ROL: Lieutenant Junior Grade Alexander Rol, Starfleet Special Operations. At your service.

WINTERS: C'mon, Skip, we have to get you out of here.

COX: Where's my crew?

ROL: The *Anbar* survivors are safe, ma'am, but we need to get you to the bridge; the bluegills have taken control of this part of the *Excelsior*.

COX: And they let you just stroll in here to use the transporter?

ROL: There were four of us when we left the bridge, ma'am.

WINTERS: You would've been proud, Skipper. They went down fighting. A graceful end for them.

COX: A graceful end? You think any of this is a graceful end, Doctor?! I led my crew into its own worst nightmare! Don't baby-talk me!

WINTERS: You didn't think it was 'baby-talk' when we were gonna die at the Galactic Barrier.

COX: Better if we had died! Bunch a' simple plain-Jane heroes, we'd've been! This... this is hell, Brady. Not grace: damnation!

(Tense silence.)

ROL: With all due respect, ma'ams, we do need to get going.

COX: To my crew.

ROL: To the bridge.

WINTERS: To the turbolift! Come on!

(They exit the Transporter Room)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR (FLASHBACK)

ROL: The turbolift is — [just down this corridor.]

WINTERS: Look out!

(A Marine rifle discharges two shots.)

ROL: (While firing his phaser) Got him!

(The marine falls to the floor.)

ROL: Let's go! There's a turbolift ninety meters from here!

(They start walking.)

COX: Your containment protocols weren't good enough, Rol. This battle is over. What's the range of your escape pods? How far to the Federation border?

ROL: Pretty far, actually. But this fight's a long way from over.

COX: You're wrong. You lost.

ROL: Maybe not. We have Beetlejuice on our side.

COX: Brady, am I supposed to know what that means?

WINTERS: It's a weapon, Skipper.

ROL: A shield, really. Beetlejuice is an injection that immunizes the user against infestation.

COX: That's impossible. That's fantasy.

ROL: For our science? Yes. But we didn't invent Beetlejuice. We stole it. There's only twenty doses in the entire Federation. Nineteen of them were on board the *Excelsior* today. We have immunized search-and-annihilate teams throughout the ship cleaning up this mess.

COX: Then... If you're not lying, Rol...

ROL: Be a dumb thing to lie about, Captain.

COX: Then maybe we've got a chance after all.

WINTERS: Damn straight, Skipper.

COX: Get back!

(An enemy fires his phaser pulses just an instant before Cox counters with her phaser. The enemy falls to the ground. But now, we can hear a bugger swarm coming down the hallway.)

WINTERS: Skipper, it's a swarm!

COX: Rol, you immunized?

ROL: Nope!

COX: Go go! Into the lift!

(They run for the lift and get in.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR TURBOLIFT

ROL: Bridge!

(The lift starts moving.)

COX: Rol, we're going to see my crew.

ROL: There's... something Acting Captain Cortez needs to explain to you. Immediately.

COX: I need to see them, Rol. [To] Make sure the children are safe.

ROL: They are, I – [assure you, Skipper!]

COX: Rol! At your rank, I guess you've never been in command, but once you have

you'll understand — [why I need to do this.]

ROL: You guess wrong. (Pause) Computer Core!

(The computer acknowledges the command, and the lift stops and redirects itself toward the computer core.)

COX: Thank you. Now, what is it Rachel Cortez needs to explain to me?

ROL: We...

COX: Spit it out!

ROL: We need you to go back.

COX: Back?

ROL: Back to the *Anbar*.

COX: (near-simultaneous) Out of the question.

WINTERS: (near-simultaneous) How dare you, Mister Rol?!

ROL: I'm sorry, Skipper. If there were any other way... We've picked up three more bluegill vessels on their way, Gevinon-class. We need the *Anbar* to cover our escape.

COX: Well to hell with you!

ROL: It's not just the *Excelsior* at stake, Captain. Otherwise we'd fight to the death to get you home to Earth. I swear it.

COX: Then send your own damn people! I'm not suicidally attached to the *Anbar*, you know!

ROL: I wish it were that easy. By the Great Bird, I wish I could go instead of you. But it

has to be your crew, Skipper. I'll explain the whole Sword of Damocles on the way, but we have to start now or it'll be too late, Skipper. Too late for all of us.

COX: Tell me, Rol: do you really think I'm going to send one single person back over there to be infested? Do you think I was kidding when I said we'd be better off dead? 'cause if so you're crazier'n Siresh, and look what happened to him.

ROL: If I held a gun to the head of one of the *Anbar* children, I don't think you'd hesitate.

COX: Is that a threat, Mister Rol?

ROL: Am I right, Captain?

COX: Mr. Rol, take it from someone who knows: survival is not enough reason for surviving.

(Turbolift doors open.)

LOCATION: COMPUTER CORE (FLASHBACK)

SCHMITTY: Hey, hey! It's the Skipper!

(The *Anbar* crew cheers in the background.)

(The turbolift doors close. Footsteps run toward Cox, Rol, and Brady.)

GWENDOLYN JENSEN-WOODARD: Skipper! You're alright!

MRS CHEN: (further away) Sam!

SCHMITTY: When you didn't come back from the *Anbar*... and then the bugbomb went off... we thought...

GWENDOLYN JENSEN-WOODARD: We didn't think anything, Skipper. We just... we were

worried.

SCHMITTY: She's okay, ain't she, Doc?

WINTERS: Sam... She's got no cuts and bruises. The rest, she'll have to speak her piece.

GWENDOLYN JENSEN-WOODARD: The buggers are coming, Skipper. What do we do?

COX: We... (exhales) I don't know. Survival is not enough reason for — [surviving.]

JAMIE SANDERS (ANBAR CHILD): Skipper?

GWENDOLYN JENSEN-WOODARD: She's busy right now, Jamie.

COX: No. Let him come.

(A young eight-year-old approaches. Cox sighs and bends down to the child's level.)

COX: Jamie Sanders. How you holdin' up, young man?

JAMIE SANDERS: I'm fine. But what about Buzz?

COX: Who's Buzz?

JAMIE SANDERS: My pet turtle. Is there gonna be food for him when we get to Earth?

(Pause.)

JAMIE SANDERS: Skipper?

COX: (Quietly) Run along, Jamie.

JAMIE SANDERS: But —

WINTERS: You'd better do as she says, Jamie.

(Pause.)

COX: I'm going to need some volunteers. And you, Rol: we're gonna want the rest of that Beetlejuice stuff.

SCENE 305 - 18**LOCATION: *EXCELSIOR BRIG***

(Flashback sound)

NARRATOR: *The present day.*

(We can hear the battle and klaxons distantly.)

DOVAN: (soft groan, moan)

SHARP: Don't try to move, Alcar.

DOVAN: Doctor... Sharp.

SHARP: Please... Call me Melissa.

DOVAN: (weakly) Melissa. You're back.

SHARP: Yes I am.

DOVAN: That explains why you're grinning like a lematya. (Pause) Melissa, can I ask a personal question?

SHARP: I owe you that much, don't I?

DOVAN: True. (Pause) Why aren't I dead?

SHARP: (laughs bitterly) You were lucky. The shot grazed you. I'm so sorry, Alcar. I wasn't strong enough. I'm just... the same woman I've always been.

DOVAN: A sharp young surgeon?

SHARP: That pun wasn't funny before She used it.

DOVAN: Sorry. I actually thought it was pretty good. You were saying.

SHARP: Nothing you don't already know. That I couldn't even hold a phaser steady when the Breen invaded San Francisco. That I spent my whole career hiding on starbases and planetside. That I'm a coward.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: You're not a coward, Melissa. You're a moron. I was shot in the guts with a phaser set to kill. I survived, and you think you had nothing to do with it? I don't know what "She" told you, but listen to what I'm sayin': you're a woman of rare strength, Melissa Sharp, and that's the reason I'm still alive today.

SHARP: You weren't in there. You weren't inside my head when I pulled that trigger. She was happy, Alcar. I remember it as if I felt it. I shot you and it felt great.

DOVAN: And you missed. (Pause. He groans and stands up.) Now let's see about gettin' out of here. I got a purple heart to apply for.

SHARP: How many's that?

DOVAN: Six.

SHARP: I'll throw you a party.

DOVAN: Computer, drop forcefield, authorization Dovan-quattuor-septem.

(Computer makes a "request denied" noise.)

DOVAN: Guess the computer disabled my command codes when I lost command.

SHARP: Or Underwood revoked them when he threw you in the brig.

DOVAN: That's a fair point.

(The Brig doors open and footsteps approach.)

DOVAN: Come to think of it, why did they throw me in the brig? You I understand – no offense, Melissa – but what'd I do?

SHARP: I don't know.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: I do.

SHARP: Phillipe!

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Doctor. It's good to see you survived Him, too.

SHARP: Him? Oh you mean Her.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Yeah. Don't worry; we'll get our revenge.

SHARP: I hope so.

DOVAN: Yeah, about that –

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Captain, you were taken into custody because Commander Underwood has been infested. He's co-opted some of our security forces and is attempting to sabotage key areas of the ship. Here's a list.

(The forcefield sparks.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Forcefield, right. Guard, would you please -- ?

(He fires a cricket phaser at the guard who screams and collapses.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: There's a good man. Dropping the forcefield, here's the list, don't worry, set to stun.

(As he says it, he drops the forcefield and hands over the padd to Dovan, who scans through it.)

DOVAN: Well... thank you, Ensign. We'll stop him.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Don't you worry about it, Captain. I suggest you make for the bridge. And fast: the alarm'll go off in a minute.

DOVAN: He's right. Come on, Melissa!

(Dovan and Sharp run for it, exiting the brig.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Toodles! (Pause) You know, I think Phase Two is going to work even better with Dovan alive. (Pause) Computer, which way to auxiliary control?

SCENE 305 – 19**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR**

(Sharp and Dovan are running away down the corridor, seconds after leaving the brig.)

SHARP: Which way to the turbolift?

DOVAN: Can't take a turbolift; they'd just cut power and we'd be stuck.

SHARP: Maintenance tunnels?

DOVAN: Jefferies Tube access to the bridge is sealed off during a Red Alert. We'll have to disable forcefields. I'll get down to the EPS power juncture on deck twenty and shut it down. You head for transporter room twelve and wait for my signal.

(They stop running.)

SHARP: Signal for what?

DOVAN: We're beaming onto the bridge.

(Dovan goes through the door.)

SCENE 305 - 20**LOCATION: STARFIGHTER SOJOURN**

ROL: YEE-ha! That'll do it for his starboard weapons array! Good job, Vesant! And thanks for the assist, Isaac!

VESANT: *Thank you, sir!*

BRAHMS: *We do the good work, after all.*

ROL: With a *Timberwolf*-class starfighter and a cheerful smirk.

BRAHMS: *And, on days like today, I do still love this job. Lieutenant... are you alright?*

ROL: Alec Lorhrok was my best friend in the world, and I never had the chance to tell him. So, no. Not alright. But the one thing that'll make me feel better is a little healthy revenge.

BRAHMS: *Just be careful.*

ROL: Vesant! Tighten it back up!

VESANT: *I'm trying, sir! I'm not getting enough suppressing fire from the Excelsior! Can't maneuver!*

ROL: You're right. Their shots are going all over the place. Rol to *Excelsior*! Where's our cover fire?

UNDERWOOD: *Standby, Rol. Excelsior out.*

BRAHMS: *That's it? "Stand by"?*

ROL: What is going on over there?

SCENE 305 – 21**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR**

(Sharp is running, breathing hard.)

UNDERWOOD: *All hands, this is the Captain. Doctor Sharp and Captain DOE-ven are under the control of a hostile alien. They are armed and extremely dangerous. Apprehend them at all costs!*

SHARP: Well there's a man with no sense of irony.

DOVAN: *All hands, this is the Captain! Underwood's the one under alien control!*

UNDERWOOD: *DOE-ven, you know you just gave away your position.*

DOVAN: *Oh, bollocks.*

(The comm line is closed.)

(Sharp enters the Transporter Room.)

SHARP: Marel Lorth.

LORTH: Oh, bollocks.

SHARP: You got that right. Look, Lorth, I know that Bajoran loyalty of yours is gonna make it hard for you to make an informed choice, so I'm going to make it real easy for you. Back away from the transporter console or I'll shoot.

LORTH: You don't have a gun.

SHARP: Pretend that I do.

LORTH: Umm...

SHARP: Look, if we both pretend I have a gun, then you were under duress, and you get off scot-free under the Starfleet Code of Military Justice.

LORTH: (chuckles) That's something only the real Melissa Sharp would think of. It's all yours, ma'am.

SCENE 305 - 22**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR JEFFRIES TUBE**

(Dovan is breathing hard as he crawls through the Jeffries Tube.)

DOVAN: Computer, seal tube Nineteen-Beta-Gamma.

COMPUTER: *Access denied. Your security clearance is invalid.*

(In the distance, we can hear a security team looking for Dovan.)

SECURITY OFFICER: (Muffled) I think I found (inaudible).

DOVAN: Oh, boy. They're onto me. I'm never going to make it to Deck Twenty. Time for plan B.

(Dovan runs out the main door at this intersection into a corridor.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR

DOVAN: Perfect. Computer, reload holodeck program *Ronec Vex and the Burning of the Black Spots*. Enable privacy protocol Lorhrok-One.

(The computer whirrs, then beeps.)

COMPUTER: Program complete. Enter when ready.

(The holodeck doors open; Dovan runs in.)

LOCATION: TROPICAL ISLAND (HOLODECK)

HOLO-LORHROK: (talking like a pirate) And when that fortress falls, mi'laddies, we'll be so deep in precious iron ye can buy yourself ye own fortress! This is what we signed on for, swabs! In the name of Captain Ronec Vex, Terror of the Symbiotic Seas: ATTACK!

PIRATE 1: The Black Spot fights!

(The boat runs ashore onto a sandy beach. The pirates start shouting and begin fighting with the soldiers on the beach. Swords clash, and the battle is on! Lots of "Yarr"s and "Arrr"s in the background.)

LORHROK: Glad you could join us 'ere, First Matey O'Mallic!

DOVAN: Aye, Cap'n Vex! The Pirate in the Pink Pants wouldn't miss a buccaneers' raid for a boat made o' iron! Arrr!

(And they charge into the battle, too, swords swinging.)

SCENE 305 - 23**LOCATION: BRIDGE**

UNDERWOOD: What the hell is stopping you, Yubari?

YUBARI: Lorhrok was the best engineer on this ship, sir, and he took his holonovels very seriously! I can't break his privacy settings!

UNDERWOOD: Then order your teams to get in there and find DOE-ven manually!

SCENE 305 – 24**LOCATION: FORTRESS SCULLERY (HOLODECK)**

(A battle rages with swords and improvised culinary weapons.)

(Dovan is hunched over a hologrid panel embedded in the cast-iron stove, moving isolinear chips around while Lorhrok/Vex defends his first mate with his cutlass.)

LORHROK: Ye've led us to our doom, Matey O'Mallic! They've got us hemmed in on every side, and a scullery is no place for a last stand!

DOVAN: We're not doomed, Captain! I'm using a... a powerful magic totem that will end this battle in an instant! With a little pirate know-how, I can turn off every forcefield on the *Excelsior* from here!

LORHROK: Keepin' magical powers inside a stove? What kind of place be that fer a totem?

DOVAN: Arrrrr? Annnnd... I have it!

(He finishes the sequence and swings the cast-iron stove door shut.)

(Power fluctuates momentarily shipwide, and, suddenly, the holoprogram deactivates.)

RANDOM CREWMEMBER #1: There he is!

RANDOM CREWMEMBER #2: Captain Dovan, you're under arrest!

DOVAN: Stupid! Holograms are made of forcefields, too! Alright, you got me. I'm not going to fire on my own officers. What's your name, Ensign?

RANDOM CREWMEMBER #1: Ensign Karash, sir.

DOVAN: Remind me to put you in for a commendation when this is – [all over].

(A transporter beam engages, whisking Dovan away.)

SCENE 305 – 25**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

YUBARI: Targeting sensors are still offline.

UNDERWOOD: Still no explanation?

YUBARI: None!

(Two transporter beams.)

UNDERWOOD: Security to the bridge! (To Dovan) Don't move!

(Dovan and Underwood both charge their phasers.)

YUBARI: Same goes for you! ...Doctor Sharp.

SHARP: Asuka, I'm so – [sorry!]

YUBARI: Not a word out of you, "Doctor"!

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Well, I see you found the hiding place where I keep my extra phaser.

UNDERWOOD: I'm not sure "under your chair" qualifies as a "hiding place", DOE-ven. Or shall I address myself to the parasite masquerading as our captain?

DOVAN: My phasers are easy. My Romulan Ale? Not even Starfleet Security will find those compartments. Stand down, Underwood. I'm the faster shot; you don't stand a chance.

UNDERWOOD: Have you seen me on the phaser range? Or is that just bravado?

YUBARI: We just lost one of the fighters! Two more in serious distress! We need to get back in this fight.

DOVAN: Tell them we'll be there! Just as soon as we get this parasite off the bridge.

UNDERWOOD: Me, the parasite?! (scoffs audibly) Hardly makes sense. Why would they want me when they can get the Captain of the *Excelsior*?

DOVAN: As I recall the chain of events, I got shot in the guts. And that made you the Captain of the *Excelsior*.

UNDERWOOD: Are you suggesting I was behind your assassination attempt?

DOVAN: I'd've suggested that even if there weren't mind-controlling cockroaches involved.

YUBARI: Firefights beginning to break out below decks! Parasite suspects clashing with security teams!

DOVAN: Another firefight's about to break out on the bridge! Prove it, Underwood! Prove you are who you say you are!

UNDERWOOD: You know that's impossible! We don't know how to detect these monsters – immune to sensors, able to hide their gills... Prove it yourself!

DOVAN: I know who I am. Last warning, Under – [wood].

SHARP: No! No! This isn't right! None of this is right!

UNDERWOOD: What?

DOVAN: Melissa?

SHARP: This isn't how She works! Taking over dozens of officers, gunning people down

in the corridors... the idea would never cross Her mind!

UNDERWOOD: Whose mind?

DOVAN: The parasite that shot me. Keep up, Underwood.

UNDERWOOD: Ah. Then what would 'She' do?

SHARP: This. She preys on trust. On faith. On friendship. Turns it on itself so nobody believes in anybody else. Gets them to point phasers at one another. Then She doesn't need to take over dozens of officers; they're doing all the work for Her.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: She has a point.

UNDERWOOD: I know.

DOVAN: Then why haven't you lowered your phaser?

UNDERWOOD: Same reason you haven't: because I can't give up this ship on a hunch.

DOVAN: Because there's a chance, just a chance —

UNDERWOOD: That Ensign Ermez was right.

DOVAN: Exactly. (Pause) Wait, Ensign Ermez? Ensign Phillipe Ermez?

UNDERWOOD: He's the one who tipped us off that you'd been taken.

DOVAN: Ermez was the one who tipped us off, too. And broke us out of jail.

SHARP: It's Her.

UNDERWOOD: Has to be. (Pause.) ...assuming you're telling the truth.

DOVAN: Alright, let's settle this. Yubari, do you trust Mister Underwood?

YUBARI: He's a lot better at fighting battles than you are, Captain.

DOVAN: I will try not to take that personally. Alright, Underwood, here's your proof: This ship is yours. Until this is over, I am giving you full command of the *Excelsior*. For the good of the ship.

(Pause.)

UNDERWOOD: Well, now I know you're not Dovan.

DOVAN: Ha ha.

UNDERWOOD: Sorry I doubted you.

DOVAN: You did the right thing.

UNDERWOOD: Computer, locate Ensign Ermez!

COMPUTER: *Phillipe Ermez is in Auxiliary Control.*

DOVAN: Let's finish this.

(He steps toward the turbolift, and gets far enough that it slides open.)

SHARP: I'm coming with you.

DOVAN: Melissa —

SHARP: I'm coming with you.

(They exit on the lift.)

SCENE 305 - 26**LOCATION: ANBAR HOLD (FLASHBACK)**

(Flashback noise.)

NARRATOR: *Three months ago. Six hours after the bugbomb exploded.*

(Everyone is working. Cox sits down in the center seat.)

SAM COX: Never thought I'd sit in the *Anbar's* center seat again. Everybody ready?

SCHMITTY: Yeah.

WINTERS: I'm all set.

MRS CHEN: Buckled in, Skipper.

SAM COX: Just so this is clear to everyone: this is a suicide mission. If we're lucky, we die. If we're less lucky, the buggers'll have us. And then we have to hope this Beetlejuice stuff works as advertised. Then we fight 'til we die. Either way, there's no going back. We clear?

SCHMITTY: I understand, Skipper.

MRS CHEN: That's why I volunteered.

WINTERS: Sam? I follow where you lead.

SAM COX: Alright. Hail the *Excelsior*.

SCHMITTY: Hailing frequencies open.

CORTEZ: *This is Commander Rachel Cortez of the U.S.S. Excelsior.*

SAM COX: Skipper Sam Cox, *Anbar* actual. Glad to finally meet you, Rach. Never guessed I'd have a Vulcan cousin out there.

CORTEZ: *The sentiment is mutual, Captain. Are you prepared for your mission?*

SAM COX: You mean, 've we said our prayers?

CORTEZ: *I was referring to the Anbar's deflector array.*

COX: Oh, that too. Schmitty?

SCHMITTY: Workin'.

COX: It's all set, Rachel. We'll hide your warp trail. Just make yourselves scarce. They'll never guess you were here. Your blasted "Sword of Damocles" survives another day. And this old girl'll give the buggers a fight they won't soon forget.

CORTEZ: *You have our gratitude, Captain Cox.*

COX: Not doing it for you. Doing it for my crew. Promise me you'll get them back to Earth, Rachel Cortez. Every one of 'em. Get them out of here alive.

CORTEZ: *You have my word.*

COX: Good. And, Rach...

CORTEZ: *Captain?*

COX: Remember us.

(Pause.)

CORTEZ: *Always.*

(Transmission ends.)

MRS CHEN: The *Excelsior* is moving off. Going to warp.

(Warp flash.)

COX: Charge the deflector dish and get that ion trail scrubbed.

WINTERS: Got it.

(A hum as the deflector dish starts firing charged particles.)

COX: Hurry. Buggers'll be here any moment.

(Warp flashes.)

SCHMITTY: They're here now!

WINTERS: That's a little early!

COX: One thing I loved about King Mab: he was always fashionably late. Can you finish the job, Brady?

WINTERS: Need a bit more time!

COX: We'll give it to you! Schmitt, turn our ship around and show 'em we still have teeth!

SCHMITTY: Firing all batteries!

(The ships exchange fire; the bugger ships doing a lot of damage to the *Anbar*.)

MRS CHEN: Problem is, they have more batteries'n we do!

WINTERS: I got it! The *Excelsior's* clear!

SCHMITTY: Our shields are down! Intruders on E Deck!

COX: Infestation squads. Missus Chen! Draw that phaser and prepare to repel boarders!

(Mrs. Chen jumps to her feet.)

MRS CHEN: Gladly, Skipper!

(Brady comes close.)

WINTERS: Well, Skipper, there you go. It's a Graceful End after all.

COX: Or the answer to a prayer. Somewhere in this big wide universe, Tawny and Tom are laughing right now.

SCENE 305 – 27**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR AUXILIARY CONTROL**

(Ermez is working at a console.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Come on, Ensign. Just a few more minutes. Just a few more minutes. Just a few more – Talking to yourself. Inefficient. Focus on the shield grid.

(Pause. He continues working.)

(Sharp and Dovan enter.)

DOVAN: Busted!

(Ermez keeps typing.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: No. Not yet. Just a little more –

SHARP: Turn around. (Pause) Stop now, hands up, and Turn. Around.

(The typing stops instantly. Pause.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Old Mole. I didn't expect to see you again.

SHARP: I guess most of your victims don't get that chance.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: I made the right choice.

SHARP: Phillippe is dead, isn't he... Old Mole?

(Pause.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Do you want me to beg for my life, Sharp? Beg like an ape? I won't.

SHARP: I don't want you to.

(She charges the phaser.)

DOVAN: Melissa.

(Pause.)

SHARP: Alcar, that thing wormed her way into my head. She laughed as she tried to wring the life out.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: I never laughed.

SHARP: Alcar... She deserves this.

(Pause.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Yes. (Pause) And I never pretended otherwise.

(He begins to walk forward slowly.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: You don't need to wrap it up in a cute moral bow, Old Mole. You said you'd enjoy killing me. I'm weak now. You think you're strong? Prove it.

SHARP: With pleasure.

(Long pause.)

SHARP: Alcar? ...Cover the prisoner.

(She uncharges her phaser.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: I was right.

(Dovan recharges his phaser.)

DOVAN: Nope. I'd say you're just about as wrong as wrong can be.

SHARP: Strength.

DOVAN: Hey, Melissa?

SHARP: Alcar?

(Pause.)

DOVAN: I told you so.

SCENE 305 – 28**LOCATION: STARFIGHTER SOJOURN**

VESANT: *What the...? Sir, I have covering fire again!*

BRAHMS: *Lieutenant! The Excelsior's targeting sensors are back up!*

ROL: Then this is our lucky moment! All craft, assume attack vectors for the assault!
Fire when ready!

SCENE 305 – 29**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

(Dovan emerges from the turbolift.)

UNDERWOOD: We just got targeting sensors back. I assume that means you took care of Mister Ermez?

DOVAN: I didn't. Report.

UNDERWOOD: We've got the bandits on the run.

YUBARI: Sirs, they're going to warp!

UNDERWOOD: Pursuit course?

DOVAN: Agreed.

UNDERWOOD: Do it, helm.

YUBARI: The *Renegade* is hailing!

DOVAN: The *Renegade*?! Target their warp core and fire at will!

UNDERWOOD: Belay that! They're on our side now, Dovan.

DOVAN: I... would be cautious about a claim like that, Underwood. Cancel my order. But hold off on answering for a moment. What about casualties?

UNDERWOOD: Ten confirmed dead.

DOVAN: Alright. Alright, ten's not so bad.

UNDERWOOD: ...including the entire away team.

DOVAN: What? (Pause) The Major? Neeva? ...Alec?

(Pause.)

YUBARI: There wasn't anything more we could have done.

DOVAN: I... hope that's true.

(Pause.)

UNDERWOOD: Answer the hail.

BRAHMS: *Underwood, we need to follow those ships. It's our last hope, and a slim one. But we have to go now.*

UNDERWOOD: We'd already reached the same conclusion. But, Mister Brahms, I think you'd better beam over here first. I believe you have some information for us.

BRAHMS: *We also reached the same conclusion: it's time you learned the true story of the Sword of Damocles. Prepare for immediate transport.*

(Comm channel closes.)

UNDERWOOD: Yubari?

YUBARI: Got him. And our pursuit course is laid in, sirs.

UNDERWOOD: Captain Dovan? I leave it to you.

DOVAN: Thanks... Captain Underwood. Helm... Hit it.

(The *Excelsior* jumps to warp.)