

*Starship: Excelsior*  
**"What Happened On Gevinon Prime"**  
(Season 3, Episode 8)  
by James Heaney

Transcribed by Peter Stine

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

## **308 RECAP**

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

**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR TURBOLIFT (FROM 307-02)**

**UNDERWOOD:** The *Excelsior* must intercept and destroy two enemy battlecruisers before they return to base. Should we fail, the Federation will be caught up in a galactic war it cannot possibly survive.

**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CREW QUARTERS (FROM 307-25)**

**BRAHMS:** The scans were clean.

**DOVAN:** You're half-right. There was something else... (snip) those space stations.

**BRAHMS:** Then the Sword--

**DOVAN:** --was already falling.

**LOCATION: SICKBAY (FROM 100-13)**

**WESTLAKE:** I'm sick.

**SHARP:** He has a neurological condition called Elarin's Syndrome. Once it takes hold, it can cause a breakdown in the chemical chains which store memory.

**CORTEZ:** No wonder his father wanted to keep him away from Starfleet.

**SHARP:** Some sufferers have suffered complete memory breakdown. Their lives were, for all intents and purposes, over.

**CORTEZ:** So why would he run away?

SHARP: You heard him: he wanted adventure.

LOCATION: RENEGADE BRIDGE (FROM 307-23)

OPERATIONS: Abandon ship! Abandon ship!

COMPUTER: Warning: Core breach imminent.

(The *Renegade* explodes.)

LOCATION: USS EXCELSIOR BRIDGE (FROM 307-23)

(Sensor alert at Yubari's console.)

YUBARI: Sirs. The *Renegade* has been destroyed.

(snip)

UNDERWOOD: This isn't just some artifact.

BRAHMS: I'm surprised you recognize it.

UNDERWOOD: I don't know how it got to Pnakos, but this ansible was built by the Scions of the Stars.

BRAHMS: The Scions are here.

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE (FROM 307-20)

ROL: They've sent out a distress call.

UNDERWOOD: What?

BRAHMS: We didn't make it.

ROL: They've... they've successfully alerted the garrison on Gevinon.

LOCATION: GEVINON CRUISER – DRY ROOM (FROM 307-24)

LORHROK: Major, what do we know about this planet?

MAJOR: We believe there's a series of linked underwater habitat bubbles where the "landwalkers" like us maintain the military outpost.

(The ship rumbles)

LORHROK: What was that?

SIMON: We've hit atmo, sir. We're descending to the surface of Gevinon Prime.

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CREW QUARTERS (FROM 307-25)

BRAHMS: ...the *Renegade's* been lost with all hands. The whole Gevinon system knows we're here, knows we know about the Sword. As soon as the ion storm passes and it's safe to travel again, the whole bluegill fleet will know about it. The Federation is a few weeks from total annihilation, and we're trapped in a gas cloud surrounded by three hundred ships. (Pause) Where the hell were you, Dovan?

LOCATION: GEVINON CRUISER – DRY ROOM (FROM 307-24)

NEEVA: I've got something! ...alien starship...

SIMON: That must be the *Excelsior*.

NEEVA: The Federation ship... has been destroyed.

LORHROK: Maker.

SIMON: Then... we're stranded out here. Alone.

**LORHROK:** I'm not going to let us die out here, Simon. (Pause) That's a promise. (Pause) Get ready for landfall. Put on your best bluegill faces. We're going to have to blend in.

**SCENE 308-01****LOCATION: DAYTIME IN PARIS**

(The Anthem of the Federation plays as the flag is raised.)

**NARRATOR:** *Ten hours later. Le Palais de la Concorde. Paris. Earth.*

**LOCATION: PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE – PRESIDENT’S OFFICE**

(The Federation Anthem continues to play, but is now muffled by the glass windows. An informal briefing by some of the cabinet is in session.)

**MINISTER OF RESOURCES:** Yes, Minister: the industry is projecting a net yield three points lower than the Geological Survey.

**THE PRESIDENT:** Really? I had such high hopes for mineral development in the Fortassic sector.

**ADMIRAL JARRO:** Nice of Sha Na’Maqqa to let us know. In that case, Madam [President, I’ll have to withdraw my recommendation.]

(The comm interrupts the Admiral)

**BYNAR 1:** *Madam*

**BYNAR 2:** *President. We apologize*

**BYNAR 1:** *for the interruption.*

**BYNAR 2:** *Codename Clytemnestra*

**BYNAR 1:** *on a secure channel*

**BYNAR 2:** *for you.*

THE PRESIDENT: Ah. Good. I've been expecting her. Ministers, Delegates, Representatives, as this is a matter of the utmost sensitivity, I must ask you to clear the room. We'll resume in five minutes. Thank you.

(The delegates and their aides stand, collect their things, and exit.)

ADMIRAL JARRO & THE MINISTER OF RESOURCES

(*ad lib*: Polite, largely muttered salutations acknowledging their dismissal.)

AIDE: (in background) Chris! Do you think we can touch base later about the Tholian piracy issue in Sector Nine-Nine-Seven? I've been meaning to set up a meeting between your boss and mine.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Admiral Jarro: you may stay.

(The President now presses the comm button on her desk.)

THE PRESIDENT: Please put Clytemnestra through to my office. Thank you.

(Admiral Parker shimmers into existence out of a holo-emitter.)

PARKER: Madam President. Admiral Jarro.

ADMIRAL JARRO: Athos. I'm glad you're well.

THE PRESIDENT: Admiral Parker? I was expecting General Hanas.

PARKER: General Hanas was to contact you... if we had good news.

(Pause.)

THE PRESIDENT: What are you saying?

**PARKER:** Mister Rol's deadline expired this morning at oh-two-hundred Union time. We gave him an extra ten hours to contact us. Nothing, Madam President. We must assume the worst.

(Silence.)

**THE PRESIDENT:** I see.

**ADMIRAL JARRO:** Excuse me? Assume the worst about what? (Pause.) Madam President?

**THE PRESIDENT:** I understand.

**PARKER:** Is there anything else I can do, ma'am?

**THE PRESIDENT:** You've done enough, haven't you, Admiral? Stand by for new orders.

(Pause.)

**THE PRESIDENT:** Good-bye.

(She closes the comm channel.)

**ADMIRAL JARRO:** Madam President, what's [going on?]

**THE PRESIDENT:** Fleet Admiral Jarro, by the power vested in me as President of the United Federation of Planets, I hereby declare a state of galactic emergency. As of this moment, the Federation is at Defense Condition One. Please carry out [the appropriate procedures.]

**ADMIRAL JARRO:** DEFCON One? I believe you're mistaken, Madam President. DEFCON One is a state of war.

**THE PRESIDENT:** You're correct. I misspoke.

(Pause.)



THE PRESIDENT: The Federation is now at DEFCON Zero.

ADMIRAL JARRO: What? That's the retreat code, Madam President. That's for when we lose a war. That's when Starfleet's been destroyed and the Borg have assimilated Paris.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. You heard me correctly. DEFCON Zero, Admiral.

ADMIRAL JARRO: Madam President, what the hell is going on?

THE PRESIDENT: That information is on a need-to-know basis, Admiral.

ADMIRAL JARRO: I am commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and you just ordered me to close the borders, enact martial law, and begin evacuating the core worlds! I need to know!

THE PRESIDENT: No, Admiral. You do not. You are to rendezvous with the evacuation fleet and make for the Galactic Barrier, maximum warp.

ADMIRAL JARRO: And what then?

THE PRESIDENT: Get out of this galaxy, Admiral. You and anyone else who's left by the time you get there. Now, if you will excuse me...

(She stands up.)

ADMIRAL JARRO: Where are you going?

THE PRESIDENT: The War Room. I have to supervise the evacuation of two hundred prosperous worlds.

(She walks halfway across the room, then stops, looks out the window.)

THE PRESIDENT: Paris is beautiful this time of day. (Pause) Remember that horizon, Admiral. You may never see its like again.

(Pause.)

**THE PRESIDENT:** *Godspeed, Excelsior.*

**SCENE 308-02****LOCATION: GEVINON HABITAT BUBBLE – MEADOW**

**NARRATOR:** *Meanwhile, on bluegill-occupied Gevinon...*

**NEEVA:** You take me to the nicest places.

**LORHROK:** What? It's a lovely garden in a habitat bubble under the sea.

**NEEVA:** Right. With half the damn place searching for us. So much for 'blending in.'

**LORHROK:** Just keep your head down, and it's a great spot for a picnic. (Pause) Do you hear that?

(Simon comes crawling up on his belly, through the underbrush. Neeva and Lorhrok jerk pointing weapons in at him.)

**SIMON:** It's me! It's me!

(Lorhrok and Neeva sigh in relief)

**LORHROK:** (simultaneous) Did you -- ?

**SIMON:** (simultaneous) I found it.

**LORHROK:** (sighs in relief) Okay. Go ahead.

**SIMON:** The transporter pad is about fifty meters that way, through those trees.

**LORHROK:** If it's like the others we've used, it should activate automatically as soon as we're on it.

**NEEVA:** And give us all a terrific bout of nausea.

**LORHROK:** I know. This will have to be the last one. We've been running for so long... we need to rest. Major.

(The Major comes crawling up.)

THE MAJOR: Sir.

LORHROK: Pad is fifty that way. Can we make it?

THE MAJOR: The nearest search party is closing fast, sir. It's all open ground between here and the pad. Sorry, sir: they're going to have a clear shot at us.

NEEVA: Any other options?

THE MAJOR: No, sir.

LORHROK: We'll just have to risk it. Simon? Get ready to run.

SIMON: Yeah, boss.

(Everyone adjusts from laying down in the grass to a "runner's block" starting position.)

LORHROK: On four, everyone. One. Two. Three. FOUR!

GUARD 1: *There they are!*

GUARD 2: *Blast 'em!*

(The guards fire, but miss.)

(The four Starfleet members run through the vegetation, with the guards in hot pursuit.)

LORHROK: Major! Covering fire!

THE MAJOR: Sir, covering fire!

(The Major stops, spins, drops to one knee, and fires three shots with his handheld phaser. Two enemy soldiers in pursuit are hit; one yells and falls.)

SIMON: Almost there, boss!

(More disruptor fire from the baddies.)

LORHROK: Is everyone ready! No disorientation this time! We move!

THE MAJOR: Sir, yes, sir!

(Disruptor fire strikes a tree, which bursts into flames and begins to creak unhappily...)

NEEVA: Sir, the tree!

LORHROK: I see it!

(The tree crashes to the ground.)

SIMON: Ten meters!

LORHROK: Everybody, readyyyyyyy!

SIMON: Annnnnnd NOW!

(They hit a teleport pad. There is a quick alien transport effect. A disrupter is cut off as the team dematerializes.)

LOCATION: GEVINON HABITAT BUBBLE – BOG

(The team re-materializes)

NEEVA: *Ahhhhh.*

LORHROK: Come on. We need to — Is everyone alright?

(The Major catches his breath.)

(Simon, groaning in pain falls over on the plastic teleport pad, clutching his head.)

(Lorhrok runs to his side.)

LORHROK: Simon! What's wrong? Neeva, you have a field medic certificate?

NEEVA: Yes, sir.

(She cracks out her tricorder and takes a quick medical scan of the boy.)

LORHROK: Simon, you're clutching your head. Is that where it hurts?

SIMON: ...uh, um — Yeah. Just... just the teleportation sickness, like the other times. I'm fine, boss. I'm fine.

(Pause.)

LORHROK: Okay. We need to keep moving. The family on this side will already know we're here; they'll have more after us in a matter of minutes.

NEEVA: Just like the last five jumps.

(Lorhrok steps off the plastic platform and his boots hit the mucky dirt of the swampland.)

SIMON: Hold on a minute, sir.

LORHROK: Simon?

SIMON: Did you see the way this teleport is powered?

NEEVA: The rest of us didn't fall down right on top of it.

SIMON: I think that's a small dilithium crystal housing right there.

(Simon stands up, bends over, and grabs a big metal latch, which he pushes. The metal maintenance hatch next to the transporter slides open.)

LORHROK: Simon, we don't have time to study the inner mechanics of bluegill teleport platforms. Those troops are barely a minute behind us. This... this swamp we've discovered might *finally* give us a place to hide and rest. We've been running without a break for almost ten hours; we can't waste this chance.

SIMON: Boss, I can do this. (short pause) There it is. Uhhh!

(He pulls a cable out of its socket. Some sparks fly. Part of the pad deactivates.)

LORHROK: We tried that the first time, remember? It didn't keep them from 'porting in. Just kept us from 'porting out again.

SIMON: Yeah, but we didn't try this.

(He reconnects the cable to another socket. Power returns. Simon swings the hatch shut again.)

SIMON: There. Everybody back on the teleport!

NEEVA: What?

SIMON: Follow my lead!

(Simon jumps back on the teleport and he's gone.)

LORHROK: SIMON!

**THE MAJOR: GET DOWN!**

**(Disruptor fire! They all dive down just in time.)**

**NEEVA: They've found us.**

**(Lorhrok fires his phaser back in the general direction of the baddies, but the shot is wide.)**

**LORHROK: I'm pinned down! I can't get to the teleport!**

**NEEVA: Same here!**

**THE MAJOR: I'll cover you, sirs!**

**(The Major lets loose a few shots, one of which takes out a bluegill trooper.)**

**THE MAJOR: Go! I'm thirty seconds behind you!**

**LORHROK: I'll hold you to that, Major. Neeva, go!**

**NEEVA: Yes, sir!**

**(Lorhrok and the Major fire covering shots. Neeva gets up and reaches the teleport pad in one or two bounds, and she's gone too.)**

**LORHROK: Thirty seconds, Major.**

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

**LORHROK: Spast.**

**(He runs for it and, as with the teleport to the bog, we follow him through the inside of the transporter effect to...)**



LOCATION: GEVINON PRIME – ANCIENT TUNNELS

(We hear distant heel clicks and voices echoing in the background.)

LORHROK: Ow! Ow! (he pants painfully)

SIMON: Alecz!

LORHROK: The transporter sickness just gets worse every time. (Pause) Wait. Where's the teleport platform? Simon?

SIMON: There isn't one. I used the dilithium bleedoff to supercharge the targeting sensors.

LORHROK: ...meaning?

SIMON: The pad can't lock on, anywhere. It'll try one set of coordinates for thirty seconds or so, then try another random set of coordinates – and none of it will be logged. We beamed out at random.

LORHROK: Are you saying we're untraceable?

SIMON: Yeah, we are! After ten hours, I thought we'd earned a rest.

LORHROK: Where's Neeva?

SIMON: She didn't follow you through?

LORHROK: No, she came through before –

(From out the door and a little ways down the corridor, we hear Neeva scream.)

LORHROK: NEEVA! Come on!

(They dash through the tunnel into a wider and higher main passage.)

LORHROK: Neeva!

NEEVA: Sir!

(Lorhrok runs up to her.)

LORHROK: Come on. We're off their sensors, but we still don't know where we are. We need to get out of the main passage.

NEEVA: I... I can't, sir.

LORHROK: What? That's an order, Commander. Stop leaning against the wall and double time it.

NEEVA: Sir, I'm not leaning. My arm... it's...

LORHROK: Oh, Maker. It's fused! Fused with the stone wall of the tunnel! (short pause)  
Commander, are you in pain?

NEEVA: Just a little.

LORHROK: I'll get you out of there.

(He pulls his phaser and starts cutting into the rock around her arm.)

NEEVA: I don't suppose I need to add, "Be careful?"

LORHROK: I'm going to cut this as close to your skin as possible. The beam may burn.

NEEVA: Just get me out of this wall, sir.

(He finishes with the phaser. She jerks her arm away from the wall.)

NEEVA: Thank you, Lieutenant.

**LORHROK:** You need bandages.

**NEEVA:** I'll be fine. Where's the Major?

(Pause.)

**LORHROK:** Simon?

**SIMON:** Alecz... it's been over a minute. The random coordinates will have changed. (Pause)  
He's gone, boss.

**MAIN CREDITS**

**NARRATOR:** *The Sword of Damocles, Part Eight: "What Happened on Gevinon Prime"*

**SCENE 308-03**

**LOCATION: GEVINON PRIME – ANCIENT TUNNELS**

**LORHROK: Were there any safety protocols active at all?**

**SIMON: I didn't have... time.**

**LORHROK: So you ran onto a teleport platform without checking the risks, without waiting for orders, without relaying critical information to your team...**

**SIMON: I'm sorry, boss.**

**LORHROK: And Neeva ended up beamed into a wall! What if the beam had picked coordinates a meter to the left? She'd have materialized inside the wall! And that is not a very tenable position for a woman who wants to continue being alive, is it?**

**SIMON: I'm sorry, boss. I didn't think [this would happen.]**

**LORHROK: That's right you didn't think! And you may have just cost the Major his life.**

**SIMON: (on the verge of tears) Sir...**

**LORHROK: Commander Neeva, I need a word with you, in private.**

**NEEVA: Yes, sir.**

**(They walk off to the far side of the room.)**

**SIMON: (in background) (Chokes back tears)**

**NEEVA: Sir, I have to add to that. Simon acted rashly, but it may not have been his fault.**

**LORHROK: Explain.**

NEEVA: As an Orion woman, my body produces a powerful natural pheromone which can... affect me and those around me. I usually take a suppressant every twenty hours...

LORHROK: ...but it's been a lot longer than twenty hours since we left the *Excelsior*. (pause) What symptoms should we expect?

NEEVA: Rashness, adrenaline, competitiveness, rage, and... physical excitement, sir.

(Pause.)

LORHROK: ...I see. When?

NEEVA: We're already feeling the effects. You included, sir. It's not just the chase that's pumping you full of adrenaline.

LORHROK: Spast. (Pause) It might be easier to resist if we'd had any real sleep in the past two days. (Pause) There's one other thing. Simon's medical scan. I know the transporter sickness is a natural consequence of using the bluegill teleports without insects in our heads, but Simon seems more affected than the rest of us. Why?

NEEVA: That's something else I wanted to talk to you about. The medical tricorder has to be broken.

LORHROK: Why's that?

NEEVA: When I scanned Simon, it came up blinking a diagnosis in bright red. But it's impossible. He can't be suffering from Elarin's Syndrome.

LORHROK: Oh no. How? He's been doing so well. How can he have a relapse now?

NEEVA: A relapse? Sir, you don't relapse with Elarin's Syndrome. You can't, because it never goes into remission.

LORHROK: Simon's did.

NEEVA: You're saying that boy — Simon Westlake — has had a degenerative brain disease, from birth, that has left him with degraded intelligence, hobbled mobility, and permanent imprisonment in calming, peaceful settings? The boy who just rewired an alien transporter you couldn't make heads or tails of, in thirty seconds, under enemy fire? (Pause) I had a friend, on KoH't. His older cousin had Elarin's and, brother, that boy couldn't spell his name by the time he was Simon's age.

LORHROK: Like I said, Simon is in remission.

NEEVA: You put a teenager with Elarin's Syndrome on an Away Team?

LORHROK: He's nineteen. And you didn't object when you thought he was healthy.

NEEVA: He could have died! He might still die!

LORHROK: Yeah, and if we'd left him on the *Excelsior* he'd be dead already! Just like everybody else!

(Silence.)

LORHROK: Believe what you want. What could have triggered the relapse? The teleports? Your pheromones?

NEEVA: You mean, other than the fact that Elarin's sufferers can't be put under pressure, because that exponentially accelerates the disease's growth? (Pause) We did just dike an alien parasite out of his brain stem. That was after it burrowed into the back of his head and punched a breathing hole in his neck. Infestation might not have been entirely safe for Simon's brain chemistry.

LORHROK: I want you to look into it further.

(He begins to walk away.)

LORHROK: Confirm the diagnosis.

NEEVA: And where are you going?

LORHROK: We haven't eaten since breakfast three days ago. We need food!

(He continues to walk away.)

NEEVA: We can't stay here forever. These tunnels are artificially lit.

(Lorhrok turns the corner into the tunnel beyond, and Neeva has to call after him.)

NEEVA: They'll find us eventually!

(The echos of Lorhrok's footsteps fade.)

(Pause.)

NEEVA: Mister Westlake, a word.

(Neeva starts walking.)

NEEVA: Simon?

(She stops.)

(Simon answers from a far corner of the room.)

SIMON: Over here.

(Neeva hustles over to him.)

NEEVA: What are you doing curled up in a corner? Simon?

(Simon bursts into tears.)



SIMON: (through tears) I killed him. I killed the Major.

NEEVAL: Oh, blimey.

SIMON: (still through choking tears) The *Excelsior's* gone, all our friends are dead, we're counting on each other to stay alive, and then your arm, and I... (his words trails off into tears)

NEEVA: Hey... Hey. (Pause) You made a mistake, Westlake. And, yeah, it was a stupid one. But we don't know what happened to the Major. What we do know is that we all would have been pinned down back there, with no way of escaping, if you hadn't figured out the teleporter when you did. That was brilliant.

SIMON: (angrily, though still tearful-eyed) No! It was stupid! Safety is always Lieutenant Lohrok's top priority. It was my fault!

NEEVA: Yes, it was.

SIMON: I just... I feel so foggy. My brain just isn't... quite...

NEEVA: You're tired, Simon. It's been a long day. I'd offer you a sedative, but our medkit went up with the *Anbar*. So I'll make it an order instead: take that shirt off, use it for a pillow, and get some shuteye.

SIMON: ...Yes, Neeva. I'm sorry.

(Neeva pulls out her medical tricorder and carefully runs it over Simon.)

NEEVA: Don't mention it. Starfleet could use a few more men who cry.

SIMON: Commander? (Pause) Don't tell Alecz.

NEEVA: Sleep, Simon.

**SCENE 308 – 04**

**LOCATION: U.S.S. EXCELSIOR – MAIN ENGINEERING**

**DOVAN:** I'm only in the mood for good news, Yubari.

**YUBARI:** It's not a matter of your mood, sir. It's a matter of my talent. ...Fortunately for you, I am enormously talented.

(Some computer beeps on the pool table, then a series of quick blips as targets appear on a 3D electronic globe representing Gevinon Prime.)

**YUBARI:** Here are my firing solutions. We've calibrated it to achieve one hundred percent effect with a forty-seven percent safety margin. If you can stay alive long enough to deliver the complement, you will accomplish the objective.

**DOVAN:** Excellent work, Lieutenant. All we need is a complement to deliver. Adow? Where's Adow?

**ROL:** She'll be by in a moment, sir. My pilots and I have been working with her on the torpedoes. It's been a gruelling eight hours, but they're assembled, and we've imprinted half of them with the magnetic resonance signature you asked for.

**BRAHMS:** Will you have the rest done on schedule?

**ROL:** Ahead of schedule, Isaac. By several hours.

(Adow enters.)

**ADOW:** Good. Then you can help me install these damn holographic emitters on the hull. My people alone can't do that many EVAs between now and zero hour.

**ROL:** Captain?

**DOVAN:** Agreed. Those emitters are nearly as important as the resonance signatures.

ROL: I'd like to give my pilots some rest before zero hour, sir. They've been working hard, and you're asking a lot of them.

DOVAN: No more of them than anyone else on this ship. Request denied. I'm sorry.

ROL: We'll make it work, sir.

DOVAN: Good. Lieutenant [Yubari, let's talk about the weather.]

ADOW: One more thing. The power draw on the holo-emitters is bigger'n we thought. It's gonna drain shield power when we turn 'em on.

DOVAN: Not acceptable. We need full shields come zero hour.

ADOW: You're asking these emitters to project the image of a ship three times our length and ten thousand times our volume. It's going to draw extra power. You want it from shields or life support?

DOVAN:  
Life support. Do it.

ADOW: Uh-uh-understood!

(Underwood comes in through a side door.)

UNDERWOOD: I'm sorry. Sorry.

DOVAN: Underwood. You're late.

UNDERWOOD: Sorry, Dovon, I was [asleep in my quarters.]

DOVAN: Sleeping. Yes, I know. (tense pause) Not your fault. I turned off your alarm clock. You'd just come off a thirty-hour shift, and you're going to be up for the next forty-eight, too; you needed a break. I'll brief you in a moment. Anything else, people?

ROL: Me, captain. I think everyone will want to hear this.

DOVAN: You have the floor, Mister Rol.

ROL: (exhales) When I was ordered to retrieve General Brahms — and the *Excelsior* — I was given a deadline. If we failed to report back in three weeks, Starfleet would assume I had failed and that the bluegills were now aware of our existence.

DOVAN: And when does that deadline expire?

ROL: Eleven hours ago. (Pause) If procedure was followed — and I'm sure it was — then Admiral Parker has contacted the President of the Federation. She has declared a state of emergency and... and begun evacuating the core worlds.

(Stunned silence.)

DOVAN: What?

(Pause.)

ADOW: The core worlds? What about the colonies? I have family on Coloscren.

ROL: I don't know all the details.

UNDERWOOD: Where in the stars will they send all those refugees?

YUBARI: Have they mobilized the reserve fleet?

DOVAN: (interrupting) Folks — he said he doesn't know. And, frankly, we don't need to be thinking about it. Keep your eyes on the mission, keep the rest of the bluegills from finding out we were ever here, and everything will be back to normal by the time we get home. (Pause) Good work today. Keep it up. Adow, Yubari, Rol: you're dismissed. Brahms, Underwood: with me.

ROL: Sir.

YUBARI: Sir.

(Adow is already walking away.)

ADOW: (in background) Harkless, either get a cup of coffee or toss yourself out an airlock! Stay awake, people! Keep working!

UNDERWOOD: It's good to see you out of your quarters, Dovan. You had us worried there.

DOVAN: Thanks for minding the store, Underwood.

UNDERWOOD: I failed, Dovan. The bluegills made it back to their outlying base, and now we're facing hundreds of ships instead of two.

DOVAN: I'm in no position to gloat. Let's move on. Brahms, fill him in.

BRAHMS: Commander, at oh-six-seventeen hours this morning, Captain Dovan, with my support, formally authorized implementation of Starfleet General Order Twenty-Four in this star system.

UNDERWOOD: General Order Twenty-Four... that one isn't... Wait. Twenty-four? The extermination of all life on an entire planet? That's still on the books?

DOVAN: Captain Kirk used it once or twice to bluff his way out of a couple sticky wickets a century ago, and Command wanted to preserve the option.

UNDERWOOD: Well... yes. But you're not supposed to actually use it. Glassing an entire planet... it's practically xenocide.

BRAHMS: It's war, Commander. That planet is a military base, we are a military vessel, end of line.

UNDERWOOD: Well...

DOVAN: Underwood, if you choose to recuse yourself from this mission on moral grounds, I won't stop you.

UNDERWOOD: No... (sigh) No. I'm with you, Dovan.

DOVAN: Good. Three officers have already taken me up on that offer, and I can't afford to lose someone with your experience.

UNDERWOOD: Something else. On my way down here, I stopped by Astrometrics.

DOVAN: If you took the fastest route from your quarters to Engineering, Astrometrics is in the opposite direction.

UNDERWOOD: I was looking for evidence of the Scions of the Stars, since we recovered that damaged Ansible from the *Renegade*. I may have found them.

(Everyone stops walking.)

BRAHMS: Impossible. We can't trace the signal the ansibles are picking up. We know there must be another ansible somewhere in this system, but...

UNDERWOOD: True, a direct trace is impossible. But the ion storm out there is still getting stronger. Too strong even for the Scions, maybe.

DOVAN: You found something in the storm?

UNDERWOOD: You know how, when it's dark outside and pouring rain, when the lightning flashes, you can sometimes just barely make out the outline of a person -- only it's so faint you can't tell if it's a person or you're just too knackered to see straight?

DOVAN: Finally, a science metaphor I can understand. Is it definitely the Scions?

BRAHMS: Sounds more like a sensor ghost.

UNDERWOOD: It could be. Still, my sensor ghost is right out at the edge of the system. I'd like to investigate further, if I have the chance.

BRAHMS: There's too much to do. We can't [spare you.]

DOVAN: Actually, there may an opportunity for you to do exactly that, Commander. I'll fill you in later. Speaking of which, while you were in Astrometrics, did you happen to see a weather report?

UNDERWOOD: The ion storm is stronger and larger than anything I've ever seen. It should peak in fifteen hours.

DOVAN: Zero hour.

BRAHMS: As planned.

UNDERWOOD: Targeting sensors are getting to be a problem even within the heliopause. If a ship were to leave the safe harbor of a star system, it'd be destroyed in a matter of hours — I don't care if you're a one-man fighter or a Borg Tactical Cube. Frankly, I'm having trouble accepting this is a natural phenomenon, dark matter or no.

BRAHMS: I don't think it is natural. My chief of operations on the *Renegade* seemed to think that this ion storm was somehow being generated by the Scions of the Stars.

UNDERWOOD: Why?

BRAHMS: I don't know. Operations was dead before I had the chance to debrief him.

DOVAN: Could be the Scions are looking out for us.

UNDERWOOD: Doubtful.

DOVAN: Well, that brings you up to speed, Underwood.

BRAHMS: I'll meet you in sickbay, Dovan.

(Brahms walks away.)

UNDERWOOD: Dovan, I just wanted to say... I'm glad you're out of your quarters and back in command. You're doing a hell of a job here.

DOVAN: Thank you, Underwood, but no. All I've done is remind the crew that the *Excelsior* can't lose as long as they fight for her. They believe that, because they are the best crew in the fleet.

UNDERWOOD: No. They are the best crew in the fleet, but they believe they're going to succeed because you do. And that's amazing... (Pause) because you know it isn't true. You know every single person on this ship is going to be dead by tomorrow morning.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Jehosephat. It's that obvious?

UNDERWOOD: Only to me.

DOVAN: The plan might work.

UNDERWOOD: Yes, it might. A thousand-to-one against, but it might. But this crew, these people...

(Tense pause.)

DOVAN: ...aren't going to be alive to find out. I know.

UNDERWOOD: And you're not letting them see one inch of that. They believe. That's one hell of a thing. (Pause) I misjudged you, Dovan. You're a bad captain, by any standard... but I'm



starting to think this ship has a taste for bad captains. (pause) Now, what about the possibility of investigating the Scion shadow I saw?

DOVAN: Later. I need to get to sickbay, and this part of the plan may take a little while. Here's a padd with the rest of the details on our attack. See that the preparations continue on schedule. Anyone who doesn't know what we're up against, tell them.

UNDERWOOD: Even the Sword of Damocles?

DOVAN: Especially the Sword of Damocles. They deserve to know what they're dying for.

UNDERWOOD: Will do. And those scans of Yubari's I keep hearing about?

(Dovan is already walking away.)

DOVAN: Later! Dismissed.

(Underwood exits.)

**SCENE 308-05****LOCATION: GEVINON PRIME – ANCIENT TUNNELS**

(Simon bolts upright from a nightmare gasps.)

**SIMON:** The square root of twenty-two hundred and nine!

**NEEVA:** Wha--?

**SIMON:** (interrupting) Quick! The square root of twenty-two hundred and nine! (Pause) No! No! Don't tell me! Don't. Say, anything. The square root of twenty-two hundred and nine is... (long pause) forty-seven.

**NEEVA:** Simon? Are you awake?

(Simeon takes a couple of slow, shuddering, post-panic breaths)

**NEEVA:** Simon.

(She's pulled out the medical tricorder and is about to turn it on.)

**SIMON:** I'm... fine, Neeva. I mean, Commander. Ma'am. Just a bad dream. (Pause) I'm hungry. Is Alecz back?

**NEEVA:** Not yet. How's your head?

**SIMON:** Fine! It's fine...

(Very faintly in the background, we hear some indistinct chatter and some footsteps approaching. Neeva and Simon do not notice.)

---

In case you are curious what the actors were saying:  
**BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ:** (In background) Hey, wallah wallah watermelon. Wallah wallah blah di dah.

**BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER:** (In background) Pineapple! Wallah wallah wallah wallah wallah

NEEVA: I'm just going to run a scan —

SIMON: I'm o-[kay]!

NEEVA: Sh!

(The Bluegill guards get louder as they approach.)

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: It's fine, Visser. Nobody's coming down here again until low tide harvest. You have the book?

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: You're sure? And we can trust the others?

They turn the corner and walk into this room, still quite absorbed in their own conversation.

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: Of course I'm sure. You have the [book]— Scion's eyeteeth!

(Bluegill 2 has her military-grade assault rifle unholstered, charged, and trained on them.)

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: You two! Hands in the air if you want your hosts intact!

NEEVA: Whoa! Whoa! My hands are up! My hands are up! Simon, you too.

SIMON: Yes, ma'am.

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: He called her "ma'am."

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: What in Arcadia are you doing here? Which family are you with?

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: Shaz, I think they're Internal Affairs.

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: Is that true? Are you from Internal Affairs?

(Pause.)

NEEVA: Yes, sir. We were sent to test your family's security perimeter, and, I must say, it's looking mighty secure. Well done.

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: Sure. Just coincidence you were in here to crash our ceremony. What, your invisi-fields fail? Your dukes too busy putting you in those silly uniforms to train you on battery use?

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: Easy, Shaz.

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: I know. Just mad. How'd they find out?

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: It doesn't matter. They knew enough to send investigators.

NEEVA: Hold on. Are you two engaged in criminal activity of some kind?

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: Nice try. But they don't have evidence to arrest, or they wouldn't have sent spies. We kill them, consecrate a new meeting place, plug the leak.

NEEVA: Look, whatever you're up to, I'm sure we can work something out.

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: I'll bet it was Vork. Had to be.

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: Doesn't matter.

NEEVA: A few, uh... A little money greases a lot of palms in my family.

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: Shut up. So, I shoot them?

(He charges his gun.)

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: No, wait. The sacrifice. We can save the woman for the sacrifice. It will please the Scions.

NEEVA: Scions? Did you say Scions?

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: Don't answer that. She just wants to get us on record as worshippers.

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: I'm not an idiot, Shaz. What about the boy?

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: (sniffs) His blood... it smells wrong. (Pause) Execute him.

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: You sure?

(A Phaser charges.)

LORHROK: (from the hallway) Get the hell away from Simon.

BLUEGILL 2 - VISSER: What the --?

LORHROK: No sudden movements. I'm armed.

BLUEGILL 1 - SHAZ: Visser, now!

(Lorhrok fires at the armed one (Bluegill 2), who drops to the floor, stunned.)

NEEVA: Yaagh!

(She delivers two swift punches and Bluegill 1 groans and falls to the ground, unconscious.)

LORHROK: They're down?

NEEVA: They're down.

(Lorhrok de-charges and holsters his gun.)

LORHROK: What happened? How'd they get to you? Didn't you post a guard?

NEEVA: I did have guard duty, sir, but then Simon... Never mind, sir. It was my fault.

LORHROK: See that it doesn't happen again. We can't afford that kind of sloppiness.

NEEVA: Well, alright then. Sir.

SIMON: We have to get out of here.

LORHROK: Simon's right. I found a place. Food and shelter.

NEEVA: I'm sold. What about these two?

SIMON: They won't wake up for a while.

NEEVA: True, they're unconscious, but they said they had friends coming. If they're discovered before we get away...

LORHROK: And the big hairy one said he could smell Simon's blood. They could track us. Do you recognize the species?

NEEVA: No. The other one might be a Malon, but most of the species on this planet are new to me. Even those big whales we keep seeing outside the habitat bubbles.

LORHROK: Those "whales" were once the free people that ruled this planet. Remember that.

SIMON: Do you think we can remove these bluegills? The hosts could make good allies.

NEEVA: It's too late. According to the Major's briefing, the parasite completely obliterates the personality of the host within a few weeks of infestation. These hosts have probably been infested since birth.

SIMON: That's... horrible. (Pause) We have to get out of here.

(Pause.)

LORHROK: Simon, I want you to wait outside in the vestibule. I'll be along in a moment.

SIMON: The... vesti... what?

NEEVA: The vestibule. (pause) Outside.

SIMON: Oh. Right, boss.

(Simon exits.)

LORHROK: His diagnosis?

NEEVA: Right the first time. It's Elarin's Syndrome. Back with a vengeance.

LORHROK: My fault. One more lost teammate to my name. (Pause) How long does he have?

NEEVA: It's already started. He's beginning to notice himself forgetting things he used to know – "vestibule", for example, the square of forty-seven – but I don't think he's put the pieces together yet.

LORHROK: Commander, I'd like to ask you to wait outside, too.

(Pause.)

NEEVA

Couldn't we just take them prisoner?

LORHROK: Prisoner? Sure. Guard duty went so well before we had two physically enhanced enemy soldiers to keep an eye on.

NEEVA: I was asking a question, as your mission X.O.

LORHROK: And I answered it.

NEEVA: Why are you being so hard on us, sir? I couldn't care less, but Simon?

**LORHROK:** Because I want you both coming back from this alive. Dismissed.

**NEEVA:** Yes, sir.

(Neeva exits. Lorchrok begins to step forward.)

**LORHROK:** Okay, you two. A friend of mine has a saying. "A just society must go to any lengths to defend itself."

**LOCATION: NARRATOR'S SILENCE**

**NARRATOR:** The sound of their necks shattering would stay with Aleczahnder Lorchrok until the end of his days.



**SCENE 308 – 06**

LOCATION: GEVINON – COMM TOWER – CONFERENCE ROOM

(Footsteps approach, click-clacking on the lacquer floor. They stop just behind the major.)

COX: You can stop pretending to be unconscious, Major. You can fool my medic, but you can't fool me.

(Pause.)

THE MAJOR: Alright. Now, if [I might ask a few questions...]

COX: DON'T... turn around. We broke you out of Parallax Hospital. Every security officer in the city knows your face, and this building has lots of security. Just keep staring out the window, don't make eye contact with the hovercars, and anyone'll think we're just having a pleasant conversation with a view.

THE MAJOR: Okay. (Pause) This city. The bluegills built it?

COX: Yes, they did. Why?

THE MAJOR: Well... it's magnificent. Here we are, so far underwater the pressure would crack a whale wide open, surrounded by the uttermost black... so they've lit it up from beneath, from the sidewalks and the bases of their apartments and the roofs of their skyscrapers...

COX: Locals call it the City of the Deep, but its official name is *neb tirid ta'mil net makit'tem gamos'e*: "Behold: the metal city, shimmering in blue and white." This habitat bubble is more than a kilometer wide and a kilometer high.

THE MAJOR: I had no idea they were capable of such...

COX: Beauty? (Pause) Long ago, before the Zeero called themselves the Zeero, they left a very beautiful place, called Triassa, that had been their home. (Pause) But... now they're a race of psychopathic parasites, and it's best not to forget that. Which brings us to you, Major.

THE MAJOR: Don't I know you from somewhere? Your voice...

COX: I don't know where the rest of your team is, but you stepped on a faulty teleporter. You materialized in a commuter garden... two stories above the ground. The fall left you with a broken leg, a concussion, two fractured ribs, and, if we hadn't intervened, a round of torture at the hands of the bugger authorities.

THE MAJOR: "Buggers..." I know who you are!

COX: Sure: I'm Skipper Sam Cox of the S.S. *Anbar*, and your captain, Rachel Cortez, is the dumbest Vulcan I've ever met, and that's saying something, because she is the only Vulcan I've ever met! (just roll with it) What in God's name are you people doing back here? Me and my crew didn't plunge ourselves back into the jaws of hell just so Rach and her *Excelsior* crew could come back here and set the Sword of Damocles swinging all over again!

THE MAJOR: Skipper... Captain Cortez is dead, ma'am.

(Pause. Cox takes a couple steps forward.)

COX: Oh. (Pause) She was the only family I had left. (Pause) How did it happen?

THE MAJOR: Ambushed, on a diplomatic mission. She ordered her first officer — Captain Dovan — to return to the *Anbar* with her dying breath. We never found out why, ma'am.

COX: I guess... she wouldn't have been fool enough to try a rescue mission. Not with so much at stake. Would she? (pause and exhale) But that doesn't make your being here any less of a complication. If not a rescue, why?

THE MAJOR: I'm sorry, ma'am.

COX: The children — did they get back to Earth alright?

THE MAJOR: Well, it's been a right hell integrating them into regular society, given that everything they've ever known has been classified so high even the classification is classified.

COX: (sucks in her breath)

THE MAJOR: But they're home, they're safe, and they're living with the other *Anbar* survivors in a rural part of New Zealand.

COX: That's on Earth?

THE MAJOR: Yes, ma'am.

COX: You don't know how much that means to me. Three months living here in the City, trying to help my crew blend in, and hoping this Beetlejuice stuff holds out... it counted. (Pause, exhales again) Unfortunately, Major, your three friends have dropped off the radar. This is the Comm Tower, the hub of all military and civilian communications on Gevinon. My crew has gained access to almost all of it – and we're not hearing anything. We have less than twelve hours to find them.

THE MAJOR: Why? What happens in twelve hours, ma'am?

COX: We haven't been lazing about for the last three months, Major. We rescued an ansible from the *Anbar* and kept it from falling into enemy hands. We contacted some old friends of ours, and they've been moving into position for weeks now. They've stirred up the ion storm of the century, raging through the whole nebula. It's taken days to build up, and, in eleven hours, thirteen minutes, that ion storm will hit its peak. (Pause) We're busting out of here, Major. We're going to convince the buggers they're being attacked by the Borg, use the cover of the storm to our advantage, and then we're gonna hitch a ride with the Scions of the Stars while the buggers've got their pants down. (Pause) You coming?

**SCENE 308-07**

**LOCATION: GEVINON PRIME – JUNGLE HABITAT – NIGHT**

(Lorhrok's team suddenly materializes on the teleport platform.)

LORHROK: This is the place.

NEEVA: Can't see a thing.

LORHROK: Here. I took a few torches off the bluegills back there, along with Simon's new uniform.

(Lorhrok detaches an alien flashlight from a velcro belt, twists it to bring on the power.)

NEEVA: Wow. I'm not sure I've ever seen vegetation this thick above ground. What're the bluegills doing growing it in a big plastic bubble in the darkest part of the ocean?

LORHROK: Hydroponics, I imagine. What I can't figure it out is where the energy comes from. There's no sunlight down here.

(Neeva leans to the side and blows into a leaf. It makes an odd little sound, because it rotates 360 degrees, and clicks as it goes, like a tiny rotor.)

LORHROK

Neeva? Why are you blowing on a leaf?

NEEVA: It's the tides, sir.

LORHROK: Sorry?

NEEVA: The soil beneath us isn't just hard-packed. When I came through the teleport, I kicked it, and realized it's actually fixed to the ground, like a dirt turf. And did you notice? The soil is actually quite damp, all the way through. It was wet, recently – and it wasn't some farming sprinkler that did it.

**SIMON:** And the leaf?

**NEEVA:** Well, just look at it. It's brown. They're all brown. No photosynthesis. And look at that shape – it's all wrong if they're trying to capture light... but the way it spins when I blow on it, all three hundred sixty degrees, is almost like a rotor. (Pause) I think the tide still comes in, even all the way down here. The floor beneath this soil layer is probably a fine mesh, to allow the sea water to pass through. The sea rises past these leaves, and the microcurrents make the leaves spin. The leaves process that mechanical energy into complex sugars, which nourish the plant. Then the tide goes down, creating more microcurrents, and the harvesters come through to pick up the day's crop yield. (short Pause) Basically, most plants run on solar power. These are running on hydro power.

**SIMON:** You figured out all that from kicking some dirt and blowing on a leaf?

**NEEVA:** I'm an operations officer.

**LORHROK:** It's her job.

**NEEVA:** Yes, sir, it is.

**SIMON:** Well, it was brilliant.

**NEEVA:** Thank you, Simon.

**SIMON:** I didn't even understand half of what you said!

(Pause.)

**NEEVA:** Oh.

**LORHROK:** Simon, why don't you take the lead here? You did a great job of it when we were on the run. Here's the tricorder. You have a light?

**SIMON:** Right here, boss.

(Simon pulls one of the “flashlights” off his own belt and turns it on. He starts walking ahead into the vegetation.)

LORHROK: We need to talk.

NEEVA: Yep. About you, sir.

(Pause.)

LORHROK: Sorry, what?

NEEVA: With all due respect, sir, I’m finding your attitude... challenging.

LORHROK: What’s that supposed to mean?

NEEVA: I just mean – it makes no difference to me, I’m an officer, command me however you like – but I think, in the interest of Simon, we should both try to smile a little more.

LORHROK: Smile? Neeva... we’re trapped behind enemy lines on a planet controlled by a race as dangerous as the Borg. One of our team has gone missing, likely captured. The Federation is a few weeks away from all-out invasion, thanks to the Sword of Damocles. One of our team is a young man –

NEEVA: -- a child --

LORHROK: Yes, alright, a child, thank you, who is suffering from a grave mental disease that is going to break down his intelligence to nothing in a matter of *days*. And our shipmates, Neeva, our friends, are all dead. Dovan, Rol, the *Excelsior*, even Adow – gone. (Pause) If I started smiling now, he’d think I was insane.

NEEVA: You’ve got to do something, before he starts thinking we’re about to die.

LORHROK: And you know, it’s not making it any easier for me to smile, this thing you’re doing to me.

(She stops walking. He stops immediately after.)

NEEVA: Excuse me, sir?

LORHROK: I'm sorry. That came out wrong.

NEEVA: Yeah, it did. I'm being affected by my pheromones every bit as much as you.

LORHROK: Okay; you have no idea what you're talking about.

NEEVA: You think so? You think so, sir?

LORHROK: And, another thing! Stop calling me "sir"! Don't you get it? There are only three of us left! Our ranks don't matter anymore!

NEEVA: What? No! I refuse, sir! Our rank always matters. It's who we are!

LORHROK: (humorless laugh) The Major's rank didn't mean anything, in the end. All the pips on the *Excelsior* didn't do them any good.

NEEVA: It's not the pips. It's the people who have them and what they stand for. If you can't see that, you're an idiot who doesn't deserve them.

(Pause.)

LORHROK: Take them off.

NEEVA: What?

LORHROK: Take.

(Lorhrok clenches a pip on Neeva's collar and tears.)

NEEVA: Hey!

LORHROK: Them. (He tears off another pip.) Off!

(The last pip comes off with a big tear.)

(Lorhrok grunts as he hurls all three pips into the dark woods, clinking and bouncing off a tree trunk, setting several leaves a-spinning.)

LORHROK: There! Can we get on with surviving now?

(Stony Silence.)

NEEVA: Am I to understand that there is no effective difference of rank between us at this time, Alec?

LORHROK: Why are we still wasting time on this? Yes! Fine! I just abolished rank!

NEEVA: Good.

(She punches him, square in the jaw.)

LORHROK: Ah!

(He falls backward into the dirt.)

LORHROK: What the hell?

(He stands, quickly.)

LORHROK: Alright, you want to do this hard way? I'm game. That's the last punch you land on me today.

SIMON: Stop it! Stop it! I have a disease that's stealing my intelligence minute by minute and I'm still acting older than the two of you put together! (Pause) Don't look at me that way! Of course I knew my Syndrome was back! You think someone can't tell when he's getting dumber



by the hour? I was just waiting for you to talk to me about it – but you're too busy fighting over a bunch of rank pips! Act your bloody age, do you – under[stand me?] uhhh! (coughing fit)

LORHROK: Simon, are you – [alright]?

(Simon coughs horribly for a while, then he takes a long gasp for air, freezes, and collapses to the ground, limp.)

LORHROK: Simon!

(The others both run to him.)

NEEVA: Simon!

LORHROK: Fever! He's burning up!

NEEVA: Put some of the dirt on his forehead! It's still cold!

LORHROK: Where's the tricorder?

NEEVA: I've got it!

(She grabs it up off the floor and starts scanning. Pause.)

LORHROK: Is there anything we can do?

NEEVA: It's alright. It's just a spell. They happen in Stage Two Elarin patients. He's going to wake up groggy and very... well, stupid... but he'll mostly recover after a few minutes. Just don't be fooled: he'll seem like he's getting better, but, whatever the Wasting did to Simon's brain to fix it, the infestation did just the opposite. There will be more spells like this – and more frequently.

(She closes the tricorder.)

NEEVA: Tricorder says to keep him cool and elevate the head.

LORHROK: I'll put his head on my lap. (Pause. He repositions.) There. (sigh) Look, he was completely right. I don't know what came over me. The pheromones are no excuse for taking your pips like that.

NEEVA: Let's keep this conversation as short as possible. How are we going to get Simon home safe?

(Pause.)

LORHROK: I don't know. We need intel. Not just launch codes and star charts – information that helps us get back to the Federation – but something for Starfleet. Something about the bluegills – something that might give us an edge when they launch the invasion.

NEEVA: And maybe find the Major. Where are you thinking?

LORHROK: I'm not sure. Remember the Comm Tower in the City? Somebody mentioned it when we were trying to sneak out of the spaceport where we landed.

NEEVA: True, but they also mentioned it was heavily guarded. We'd never make it.

LORHROK: No, I suppose not. (Pause) On the other hand...

(Pause.)

NEEVA: You obviously have an idea.

LORHROK: The spaceport computer must have a lot of information about their fleet and its capabilities.

NEEVA: Ha. Good luck getting in there. Don't you remember? That's how they caught us the first time. We were on the run for half a day. We'd be recognized the moment we got into the computer room.

**LORHROK:** True... but that's not the only computer bank at that spaceport.

**NEEVA:** I don't follow.

**LORHROK:** It's a hybrid spaceport, remember? Half of it is inside the habitat bubble, which is where we disembarked...

**NEEVA:** And half of it was in the ocean, where the aquatics disembarked... and where they have the major shipyards. (Pause) Uh-oh.

**LORHROK:** Neeva, I think the three of us are going on a cakewalk.

**SCENE 308-08****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR SICKBAY**

(Gathered around a biobed, with the infested Ermez in it.)

DOVAN: Can we wake him up now?

SHARP: Yes, I think he's stable. But I'm taking it slow.

DOVAN: Do we have to?

SHARP: My patient may not like what I'm about to do to her. But I'm not going to endanger her.

DOVAN: What about Ensign Ermez?

SHARP: Phillippe was infested for months. There's nothing left of him in there. There's only one patient on that biobed.

DOVAN: (sigh) Ethics. Alright. I'll be in the operating ward, with Brahms.

(Dovan walks away.)

SHARP: Tell Isaac to be careful with that cell culture – it's a strain of The Wasting!

DOVAN: Yes, ma'am.

Sharp presses a hypospray to Ermez's neck. It hisses, and, after a moment, Ermez begins to come around.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: (stirring noises, a waking-up moan) Where...?

SHARP: Alive.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: No. (He breathes heavily.)

SHARP: Are you in pain?

(Ermez stops his heavy breathe and lets his head fall back against the biobed pillow. Pause.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: You did this to me?

SHARP: Yes.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Why?

(Pause.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: That's what Cressida said. Is it contempt? Or regret?

SHARP: What about pity?

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Just contempt with more perfume.

(Pause.)

SHARP: Who's Cressida?

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: I hated her more than anyone in the universe, until today.

SHARP: Oh, good! I have a rival.

(Pause.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: I was wounded. She didn't know who I was, didn't even know I was intelligent, just that I was hurt. She... I couldn't tell where she took me, but I could hear her singing, the whole time. I only knew when she fell asleep because it was finally quiet.

(Pause.)

SHARP:  
And then?

(Pause.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: It was amazing, what I was able to do with that body. Run, sleep, wash my face. I stared at the dust suspended in sunlight for hours. She was my first – did I say that? Everything she took for granted was mine... and I did not waste that gift, Old Mole. Not for one minute. (long pause) But I could never sing, really sing, the way she did.

(Long pause.)

PSUEO-ERMEZ: Isn't this where you usually say something cloying and self-righteous, Doctor?

SHARP: I don't feel very righteous.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Regret? ... Or contempt?

(Pause.)

SHARP: (exhales) I need your help.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Really?

SHARP: I've been asked to perform a surgery on you.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Go on.

SHARP: We're going to transplant both you and your queen parasite from Ensign Ermez's abdomen into Isaac Brahms.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Not that I'm objecting to being given a new, healthy host, but don't you have a rule against cruel and unusual punishment?

SHARP: I'm not finished. General Brahms was long ago dosed with a compound called Beetlejuice. It's a neural suppressant that will prevent you from taking control of his body.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: So I'll be... what? Just awake in General Brahms's body? Paralyzed, powerless, and mute? (He scoffs) So it's a punishment for me, then. A taste of my own medicine.

SHARP: It's only for the duration of the mission.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Which is?

SHARP: They haven't told me. But, when they're back, I'll remove you from Brahms.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: And put me back in Ermez?

(Pause.)

SHARP: I think it's time we let Phillippe rest in peace.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Thought not. And what is it you need from me, "Doctor"?

SHARP: Your consent.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Excuse me?

SHARP: I can't perform a medically unnecessary and potentially dangerous surgery on you without your consent.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: So all I have to do is say no, and I get to keep this body?

SHARP: If you say no, I'll refuse to perform the surgery. Captain Dovan will ask Doctor Maiek to do it instead. He'll agree, but he lacks my expertise.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Ah. So I'm supposed to agree because otherwise I'll die.

(Sharp leans in close, very close, and speaks in a low voice.)

SHARP: What, like you don't want to die? Come on. Lie to them, not to me. I know you.

(Pause.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: What was that name you called me? When I first woke up?

SHARP: "Pseudo." I got sick of calling you "Old Mole." (Pause) What's your real name?

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: (another scoff) Ha! (Pause) Pseudo will do fine, Old Mole. It means "fake", doesn't it?

(Pause.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: I consent.

(Pause.)

SHARP: Okay. Mike, get Aidela in here and prep this man for surgery!

NURSE HENNESSY: Yes, Melissa!

(Sharp is already walking to the surgical area in the back of sickbay.)

SHARP: Isaac Brahms?

BRAHMS: Doctor.



SHARP: I'm going to put you under now.

BRAHMS: By all means.

(Sharp programs something into a hypospray and injects Brahms with a sedative.)

SHARP: Alcar, I'm going to have to ask you to clear the room. This is going to be a long and challenging surgery. If you want to observe [you can do it from the waiting lounge].

DOVAN: No thank you, Melissa. Bolian stomachs are weak enough as it is. Thanks for doing this.

SHARP: I have the patient's consent. No thanking is required.

DOVAN: Then, good luck.

SHARP: Out, Alcar.

(Dovan exits.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR

(Underwood, right outside the door, instantly falls in step beside Dovan down the hallway.)

UNDERWOOD: You look troubled, Dovan.

DOVAN: Are you just lurking out here for me?

UNDERWOOD: Preparations are going well, but I need the captain's clearance for a few of the details.

DOVAN: Let me see.

(Underwood hands him a padd. Dovan starts to click through as they walk.)

DOVAN: I'm keeping secrets from my doctor and I don't like it. Speaking of which.

(He stops clicking through the padd, and pulls something out of a pocket of his captain's vest-jacket.)

DOVAN: This petri dish contains an active culture of the telepathic disease known as The Wasting. I need it transferred to the top-security locker in the secondary armory in Marine Country.

UNDERWOOD: Isn't that armory closed down? Something about serious hull damage sustained while undocking from a Valandrian space station?

DOVAN: Exactly. Just get it there. And don't drop it!

UNDERWOOD: I assume there's some reason there's no biocontainment protection on it.

DOVAN: Couldn't steal it otherwise. How are the holoprojections?

UNDERWOOD: (with a bit of a sigh) Visually impressive, but, frankly, Dovan, there's nothing Chief Adow can do to make a hologram stand up to even a cursory sensor examination for more than a few minutes.

DOVAN: You're holding our solution to that in your hands.

UNDERWOOD: I don't understand, but you're not going to tell me —

DOVAN: No.

UNDERWOOD: -- so let's move on. Yubari's scans. You said there was something special about them. Something only Captain Cortez would notice, after a long night of study.

DOVAN: Yes. So I did. (exhales) Alright, in here.

(He ducks into a turbolift.)

**LOCATION: TURBOLIFT**

**DOVAN:** Marine Country.

(The turbolift acknowledges and whooshes them away.)

(Dovan keys some commands into his padd.)

**DOVAN:** These space stations, from the scans. Remember them?

**UNDERWOOD:** Why, yes. Unidentified. Still under construction, in fact. We avoided them on our way to meet the *Anbar*, but, other than their surprising size, Yubari's readings made them look quite dull.

**DOVAN:** So they do! The architecture is totally unfamiliar, so, we assumed, we'll be making another first contact at some point in the future. (Pause) And then Captain Cortez did this.

(He presses a key.)

**DOVAN:** Subspace displacement topograph.

**UNDERWOOD:** So we can identify their warp signature. Why would we want to do that with a race we don't know anyway?

**DOVAN:** Because, at every station, there are two distinct sets of warp signatures. Two different races, working together to build a shared border.

**UNDERWOOD:** Give me that.

(He clicks a few more buttons.)

**UNDERWOOD:** These stations... are being built by the Borg... and the bluegills.

**DOVAN:** Correct.

UNDERWOOD: Which means... they're working together. Some kind of... armistice.

DOVAN: I believe that, if we had scans of their entire territory, we would see cooperative space stations like this along the entire Borg-Bluegill border. The only thing that has prevented the conquest of the galaxy for the last nineteen years has been the secret war between the Borg and the Bluegills... and they are on the verge of declaring peace.

UNDERWOOD: How? Why?

DOVAN: I don't know. Brahms was even more stunned than I was; he never imagined this was possible. (Pause) At least now we know: Captain Cortez didn't send us out here because she was high on painkillers. She didn't send us out here to recover a weapon, or to bring down Isaac Brahms. She didn't send us to the *Anbar* so we could rescue it. (Pause) She sent us out here in order to restart the greatest and most destructive war in recorded history. (Pause) That battle plan you're holding: I'm not sure if it's my plan... or it's been Captain Cortez's plan all along.

UNDERWOOD: My God. (Pause) She'd have to be a genius.

DOVAN: Or just a very good judge of character, Commander.

(The turbolift comes to a halt.)

DOVAN: Dismissed, Underwood. I'll see you at Zero Hour.

(Underwood exits.)