

*Starship Excelsior Transcript*  
***“Wildfire”***  
*(Season 1, Episode 3)*

Transcribed by Peter Stine

**SCENE 103-01**

**LOCATION: Space Station *Vigilance* Royal Chambers.**

**NARRATOR:** Valandrian Premier Beta-na stalked the inner sanctum of her space station, *Vigilance*, while it was still hers to stalk.

**BETRA-NA:** Status report!

**ASTRIN-SA:** It would appear that the fighting is continuing, Your Excellency. The rebels have captured levels one-seventy-four to one-eighty-five, but, for the time being, our forces have stalled them there. For the time being.

**BETRA-NA:** That is still fifteen levels below us — and twelve levels below the controls for the orbital weapons network. What of the planet?

**ASTRIN-SA:** Since your timely escape from General Sorid's ambush, Your Excellency —

(Beta-Na stops pacing.)

**BETRA-NA:** (angrily) There was nothing timely about it, Matriarch. I had already been separated from my bodyguard and the Sacred Grove of the Oracle, which I am sworn to protect. I could not even do anything to defend my own *guest-friends* while the Gee slaughtered their men. It is only chance that anyone escaped. And for a true Valandrian... there is no such thing as chance.

(There is a silence.)

(Beta-Na resumes pacing)

**BETRA-NA:** Proceed.

ASTRIN-SA: Yes, Your Excellency. Since the... attack, General Sorid's agents have opened hostilities in at least six major cities, including Theyven.

BETRA-NA: Fighting in the United City! It is a disgrace!

ASTRIN-SA: The conflict appears to be spreading outwards from Theyven, engulfing the Kessock and Chodak regions. In the last hour, Clans Re, Gor, and Tri'nal have declared support for the Gee rebels. The government has fallen, but the six Great Clans who have not seceded from the United Military are retaliating.

BETRA-NA: And if they survive this day...

ASTRIN-SA: Then it would be a great victory for us.

BETRA-NA: No... then this would no longer be a coup but a true civil war, such as we have not seen in centuries. Many will die. Much will be lost.

(She looks away.)

BETRA-NA: There is only one way to end this. Cut off the head of a rebellion and the rest will convulse and shortly die. Matriarch, fetch me my sword!

ASTRIN-SA: What? But — my liege, you cannot simply —

BETRA-NA: Please, Matriarch, spare me the dramatic display of your loyalty. Do you really think I don't know about the dealings you've made with the Gee?

ASTRIN-SA: (taking exaggerated offense) Why, Your Excellency, how could you say such a thing of one who —

BETRA-NA: Matriarch, you are about as faithful as a lusty male. But, then, even males have their uses. (harder) Now, bring me my —

(A sensor alert sounds)

BETRA-NA: Report!

ASTRIN-SA: I — for an instant, our sensors thought they saw the Fed'ration starship coming towards us, very slowly. But it is gone now.

BETRA-NA: Hm. Rachel Cortez seemed a worthy fighter. I will await her here for now. We shall see what it is she has to say.

ASTRIN-SA: But . . . our detectors no longer pick them up, Your Excellency.

(Beta-na settles back in her chair.)

BETRA-NA: Yet they are coming, Matriarch. They are coming.

**OPENING CREDITS:**

**CORTEZ: Space. The final frontier. These are the voyages of the Starship Excelsior. Her ongoing mission: to explore strange new worlds. To seek out new life, and new civilizations. To boldly go where no one has gone before.**

**SCENE 103-02**

**LOCATION:** *Excelsior* Observation Lounge

(The door swishes open and Lorhrok enters.)

**LORHROK:** We're on course for the Valandrian space station, sir, one-eighth impulse. That should be slow enough to keep us from showing up on their sensors, as long as we continue to use Crewman Adow's scattering field.

**DOVAN:** Excellent. And you still think that it was this... General Sorid-Gee who ordered the attack on the *Excelsior*, not Premier Beta-Na.

**LORHROK:** Given what I saw on the planet, that's the only conclusion that makes sense to me.

**DOVAN:** Good. I'll take it under —

**COMPUTER:** *Now hear this; now hear this: Level-2 Quarantine Protocols are in effect. All non-essential personnel are restricted to quadrants four through seven. Repeat: all non-essential personnel restricted to quadrants four through seven.*

**DOVAN:** Boy, I'm getting sick of the computer interrupting me mid-sentence. Any chance we can turn off the audible warnings, Doctor Sharp?

**SHARP:** I could... but I won't. At the rate the disease is progressing, quarantine information may have to change quickly. I need the whole crew kept up to date.

**ROL:** So, it *is* a disease.

**SHARP:** (frustrated) I... I don't know. It has all the *markings* of an infection, but I can't find a *cause*.

(The door swishes open as Sharp finishes:)

SHARP (continuous): As far as I can tell, it shouldn't be any more contagious than a dream.

P'CHK'RO'TA: I may be able to help you, Melissa.

SHARP: What? Who are you?

DOVAN: Arden —

P'CHK'RO'TA: I am sorry I'm late, Alcar. I was only just informed that I am now the ranking science officer on the *Excelsior*.

DOVAN: But aren't you--?

P'CHK'RO'TA: The fourth in line, yes. My superiors have all been incapacitated.

SHARP: The science department leadership is mainly humans and Trill, Commander. Those two plus the Grazerites are the three species that have been hit hardest by the infection. We've had to convert two of the cargo bays to handle the overflow, and we're making use of the stasis fields in the ship's morgue to try to stabilize the most serious cases. But we're barely able to keep up.

DOVAN: I can't help noticing, Doctor, that this *ship* is predominantly humans and Trill. Including everyone at this table except Arden and myself.

SHARP: (somewhat defeated) I know, sir. I'm following the only lead I have right now — massive hyperstimulation in the patients' cerebral cortexes. The only thing it remotely resembles is the telepathic communication used by Species Eight-Four-Seven-Two... but, in this case, there appears to be almost *no* infection among actual telepaths. (exhales) Commander, I'm confounded, and I don't like it.

P'CHK'RO'TA: Actually, Melissa, as I said, I might be of some use to you.

SHARP: At this point, I'll take anything.

P'CHK'RO'TA: If I may, Alcar.

DOVAN: By all means.

(Ro'ta stands and activates one of the viewing screens.)

P'CHK'RO'TA: This is the *Excelsior* when we entered the Valandrian star system at twelve-thirty-nine hours this afternoon.

ROL: What's that orange aura around the ship?

P'CHK'RO'TA: A low-level telepathic field.

DOVAN: Hold on. You can pick up telepathy?

P'CHK'RO'TA: (with a disapproving glance) It is no simple task. (to everyone) At first, I assumed we were being observed by a higher-order being — not at all an unusual occurrence, but always an opportunity for learning, so I set my scans to continue for later review.

(He presses a button on the screen. The image changes.)

P'CHK'RO'TA: This is the *Excelsior* at thirteen-forty-five. As first contact procedures continue, there is no change in the readings, and, as events progressed, I was soon focused on... other unfolding eventualities. My preoccupation prevented me from noting... this.

(He presses another button.)

ROL: Whoa.

NARRATOR: The orange glow around the *Excelsior* that represented the telepathic field suddenly thickened tenfold, changing from an accent against the viewer representation of the *Excelsior* to the dominant feature.

P'CHK'RO'TA: That happened at thirteen fifty-four . . . at the very moment our away team set foot on the planet. *This* was the situation ten minutes ago.

(He presses the button again.)

DOVAN: I can't see the ship anymore under all that orange.

P'CHK'RO'TA: That, Alcar, is my po (to Sharp) Now that I've heard your data, Melissa, I think these two phenomena might be related. Perhaps this will help. For the sake of my colleagues, I very much hope so.

LORHROK: (reluctant) A few minutes before he collapsed, I overheard Lieutenant Amara tell the captain he was feeling a . . . *disruption* in his empathic abilities.

SHARP: Incredible. Simply incredible. Telepathic weaponry. (she shakes her head dispiritedly)

DOVAN: Is there anything else, Mr. Ro'ta?

P'CHK'RO'TA: In fact, there is. Ours is not the only telepathic field I am reading. In fact, once I started really looking, I detected a much stronger one in the immediate vicinity. On the planet, in fact.

(He presses another button.)

P'CHK'RO'TA: Here. At roughly forty-five degrees north, ninety-two degrees west.

DOVAN: That city... Theyven. Isn't that the capital?

P'CHK'RO'TA: Yes, Alcar.

LORHROK: (perking up) Theyven? The *Oracle* A.I. listed that as a cross-reference today. We didn't know what it meant.

DOVAN: A cross-reference? To what?

LORHROK: (shakes his head) He didn't know. (imitating the Oracle) "Database corruption is extensive."

DOVAN: We need to know more about that A.I., Temporal Prime Directive or not. Mr. Lorhrok, you and Crewman Adow will work on that. In the meantime... I think we can only interpret this telepathic infection as a direct attack against us, and we don't have much time left before there aren't enough of us left to run the ship. Doctor Sharp, keep trying. You are our top priority, so consider every resource at your disposal. The rest of you are to maintain red alert and await further orders. Good luck, and hopefully the Doctor'll have the Captain back on her feet in no time.

(awkward pause)

DOVAN: Dismissed.

(All rise and exit, except Lorhrok.)

DOVAN: Yes, Mr. Lorhrok? By the way, I'm sorry about pairing you with Crewman Adow.

LORHOK: (hand-waves it away) It's perfectly alright. Her scattering field was actually very good work.

DOVAN: Then what can I do for you, Lieutenant?

LORHROK: Captain, I... I think you need to find someone else to be your Acting First Officer.

DOVAN: Really.

LORHROK: Yes, sir. I... don't even know how I got this assignment in the first place. (with emphasis) I'm a lieutenant junior grade. I'm not ready for this.

DOVAN: Funny you should mention that, Lieutenant. I happen to know how you got this assignment.

(He glances out the window, recalling his conversation with Cortez about this very officer.)

LORHROK: Sir?

DOVAN: Captain Cortez knew that good officers are more than a good recommendation and a few years' experience, and so she didn't look for those things. (he looks back) The Captain was looking for men and women who were ready to change from good officers to great men. She read everything there was to find on Alec Lorhrok before she made her decision, and *that* is what she saw in you. Greatness. (introspective) It's what she saw in all of us. You're on the best ship there is, Lieutenant, and you're third-in-line for command after me. That's all I need to know to be certain you'll do well in this position. And that's an order.

LORHROK: Aye, sir.

DOVAN: This'll be over soon, Lieutenant. We'll have the captain back in the big chair before you know it. Dismissed.

(Lorhrok exits.)

Dovan faces the window.

DOVAN: Captain Cortez... don't make a liar out of me.

ROL: *Bridge to Dovan. We're approaching the inner Valandrian sensor perimeter.*

(Dovan taps his combadge.)

DOVAN: Acknowledged. On my way.

**SCENE 103-03**

**LOCATION: *Vigilance* Royal Chambers**

**ASTRIN-SA:** The alien starship just appeared again on our sensors! Range: less than two million centars!

**BETRA-NA:** This we expected, Matriarch.

**ASTRIN-SA:** Their weapons are locked onto us!

**BETRA-NA:** (darkly) This I did not. Begin a transmission.

**ASTRIN-SA:** Your Excellency, they are already requesting transmission frequencies.

**BETRA-NA:** Then give them one. On screen.

*(The *Vigilance's* viewscreen switches on.)*

**DOVAN:** *Premier. We need to talk.*

**BETRA-NA:** (shocked) Cuh — Cuh — (trails off) Where is Captain Cortez? This is outrageous!

**DOVAN:** (petulant) *This is Acting Captain Alcar Dovan. And you're dealing with me now, because the highest ranking female on this ship is in sickbay, recovering from your general's attack. So let's leave behind your sexism for a minute and start dealing with reality.*

**BETRA-NA:** (dangerously) And may I ask what that reality is... *Dovan?*

DOVAN: *The reality, Premier, is that we are being slowly eaten alive by a remarkable bioweapon being controlled from your capital city, and I'm hoping you have the antidote.*

BETRA-NA: A *bioweapon*? I cannot fathom what you are talking about.

DOVAN: *Don't test my patience, Premier. Every few minutes another member of my crew seizes up and falls unconscious. They're dying, Premier, and the field is emanating from your capital.*

BETRA-NA: I assure you, Dovan, I have no idea what is causing your illness.

ASTRIN-SA: Your Excellency, this sounds much like—

BETRA-NA: Nonsense. The Wasting is a storybook tale, nothing more.

ASTRIN-SA: The Oracle said that it would come again.

BETRA-NA: It is *impossible*, I say!

DOVAN: *It sounds to me, Premier, like you're hiding something. (sarcasm) In case you didn't know that already.*

BETRA-NA: (rising fear) If it *were* the Wasting... then the prophecy... the prophecy about your coming...

Astrin-Sa is feeling a rising agony in her head.

ASTRIN-SA: Premier! I— It is upon me! Keep — (she groans terribly and collapses from her chair)

(Shocked silence.)

BETRA-NA: (terrified) . . . then it is true.

(She hits an intercom button.)

BETRA-NA: Weapons control, target the *Excelsior* and prepare to fire!

DOVAN: *See, this is why I don't trust you people. Mr. Rol, retarget our quantums at the planet surface. Densest population centers.*

(Rol presses several buttons.)

ROL: *Aye, sir.*

BETRA-NA: You wouldn't.

DOVAN: *All things considered, you're probably right. I doubt I could bring myself to massacre thousands of people, even if they were members of a grievously savage race such as your own. Still, only one way to find out, Premier, and I don't think you can risk it.*

BETRA-NA: What would you have me do, Dovan? If I do not destroy you, you will destroy us all. Weapons, fire on my —

DOVAN: *Hold on. Why don't we start with that? One minute we're speaking . . . well, not civilly, as such, but at least the threats were veiled, and then I mention your telepathic weapon and all of a sudden I'm going to destroy your planet? Would you care to explain that at all?*

BETRA-NA: There is no other option! The Wasting is the greatest of diseases. It nearly wiped out my people two hundred millenia ago. Legend claims that it left only one survivor and her husbands. There is no treatment, no prognosis . . . no hope. Once the

Wasting has appeared, all who come in contact with it *die*. (realizing) Including me. But Sorid-Gee was right: the prophecy states that the death-bringers must be destroyed.

DOVAN: *I don't think you're hearing me, Miz Na. This isn't our weapon. It's coming from your capital!*

BETRA-NA: Why should I believe the words of a man faced with death?

DOVAN: *Because you don't have any other choice. If your officer there just keeled over of this disease, then she must have been exposed when our Away Team beamed over. So we've now infected the leadership of the two factions that are now engaged in a civil war... which means most of your planet has been exposed by now. If I'm lying... you've already lost.*

BETRA-NA: Dovan... if I allow your people to do this, I am placing the whole of Valandrian civilization in your hands.

DOVAN: *We're Starfleet, Premier.*

BETRA-NA: You are a *male*, which is of no reassurance to me. But I have left too much to... *chance*... and this is my just reward. Take your people, Dovan. Just make sure you have a woman with you. We will fight to maintain control of *Vigilance* and prevent Sorid-Gee from using the orbital weapons network to destroy your vessel during your attempt to find and destroy your supposed source of The Wasting.

DOVAN: (nods) *Agreed. We'll launch in ten minutes. Excelsior out.*

(The screen deactivates.)

**SCENE 103-04**

**LOCATION:** *Excelsior Sickbay:*

(Rol enters and crosses the busy sickbay to the CMO's Office. Inside the office are Adow and Lorhrok, working hard on a pile of circuits and isolinear chips and other tech.)

**ROL:** Lieutenant Lorhrok. I thought I'd find you in Engineering, but the computer sent me here.

**LORHROK:** (working with tools) Hold on a minute, Lieutenant. (to Crewman Adow; frustrated) Crewman, you can't just go rerouting those circuits any way you —

**ADOW:** I'm *trying* to restore power to the secondary proton channels, and if you'd just let me do —

**LORHROK:** *I'm* the — no. You know what? Never mind. Just... do it. (Adow working with tools.) (he stands up; speaking to Rol) Right. Yes. We're trying to tap the *Oracle* A.I. directly into our EMH, so we had to set up here, in sickbay. I can't say Dr. Sharp was too happy about it, but we're staying out of her way. (exhales) What can I do for you?

**ROL:** Commander Dovan had to send me down to inform —

**ADOW:** Lorhork! I've got it!

**LORHROK:** What do you--?

(The Oracle appears.)

**ORACLE:** Please state the nature of the medical — wait. That's not my line. Where am I? What year is this?

LORHROK: You're onboard the U.S.S. *Excelsior*, and it's 2383. You're tied into our EMH, so you're likely to experience some —

ORACLE: Error! Error! Improper activation environment! Initializing emergency decompilization!

(Lorhrok makes a frustrated noise.)

LORHROK: Listen, you, I don't care about your directives *or* your programming. Tell me what I want to know, or I'll take you offline and wring the information out of you kiloquad by kiloquad.

(pause)

ORACLE: Proceed.

LORHROK: We can start with what *exactly* happened to your ship at this battle of yours.

ORACLE: (still hesitant) On Stardate seven-nine-two-eight-three-point-two, my captain ordered the first in-combat usage of the trans-chroniton torpedo during an enemy attempt to meld with my hull. Despite perfect test runs, the torpedo had unexpected effects when used against the enemy. Both vessels were downed — the enemy vessel's spatial and temporal crash coordinates remain unknown.

LORHROK: What enemy? Who were you up against? The Borg?

ORACLE: (Error beep.) Database corruption is —

LORHROK: Extensive, I know. Crewman, let's plug in another module, see if that helps.

ROL: Are you certain that's wise, Lieutenant?

LORHROK: I don't understand this machine, but it's still just a hologram. I mean, how dangerous could it be?

ADOW: Try this one.

LORHROK: Looks good.

(Lorhrok plugs in the box, and we hear it quietly energize.)

ORACLE: Integrating module... Reinitializing... temporal transponder module active. Scanning...

ADOW: Pull the module!

LORHROK  
(simultaneous)  
I'm trying! It's — it's  
fused, somehow! Hand  
me the decoupler!

ORACLE (simultaneous)  
No temporal  
interference detected.  
Coordinates set.  
Beginning transport.

(Rol jumps forward to  
push Lorhrok away.)

ROL (simultaneous)  
Lieutenant, get away  
from that con —

(The temporal transporter activates and the two are beamed away.)

(stunned silence)

ADOW: Lieutenant Lorhrok? (pause) Lieutenant Rol?

(She taps her combadge.)

ADOW: Adow to Dovan.

DOVAN: *Dovan here.*

ADOW: Commander, we have a . . . situation.

LOCATION: Excelsior Bridge:

DOVAN: That's not a report, Crewman.

ADOW: *Yes, sir. (hesitates; takes a deep breath) Sir, we just lost the AI. It took Lieutenants Lorhrok and Rol with it.*

DOVAN: (incredulous) What? How?

ADOW: *I have no idea, sir. He plugged in a module, and the AI just . . . beamed away.*

DOVAN: Well, get them back!

ADOW: *I— I don't know how.*

DOVAN: Well, it's your assignment to find out. Try using the same ingenuity you used to sabotage the replicator systems in spacedock. But get them back.

ADOW: *I—*

SHARP: (interrupting urgently) *Sharp here, sir. I'm afraid I have some more bad news.*

DOVAN: Of what kind, Doctor?

SHARP: *I just completed a new test I devised with Mr. Ro'ta. I— I can't explain the results, but I'm certain now. This disease is contagious. And I know how it's transmitted.*

DOVAN: . . . Yes?

SHARP: *It's a virus. (hesitation) And it's spread by telepathy.*

DOVAN: Doctor...

SHARP: *Look, I know what it sounds like. And it is crazy. I'd explain my results, but I could catch it at any time, and right now I need a Code-1 Quarantine.*

DOVAN: Will that *help*?

SHARP: *I don't know, Commander. The best I can hope is that it will slow the spread. Everyone in sickbay right now is a carrier, even the non-telepaths. I assume the same is true of most of the ship by now. We have hours... at most.*

DOVAN: Alright. Let's hope it buys us some time. (Dovan presses a button; All Hands sounds.) All hands: execute level-one medical quarantine! Code: Wildfire! Repeat: Code: Wildfire!

(An alert sounds. A moment later, forcefields drop into place — in sequence — over all bridge entries and exits.)

KIBYR: Bridge forcefields in place, sir. Biocontainment teams are deploying... All sections report full lockdown. Engineering secured and set to maximum automation.

SHARP: *Thank you, sir. This will help.*

DOVAN: I hope so. It's just Kibyr and me left on the bridge, and, frankly, it's getting a bit lonely up here.

SHARP: *Aye, sir. Sharp out.*

**SCENE 103-05**

LOCATIONS: Vigilance Royal Chambers

(Betra-Na is alone in her royal chambers, running the sensor controls. She sees something. She presses buttons and starts scans.)

BETRA-NA: What's this...? (pretending to talk to Sorid-Gee) You're launching interceptors, General. A very foolish move. (She presses intercom button.) Weapons control!

(No response.)

BETRA-NA: Weapons controller, reply! The rebels are sortieing fighters; they must be destroyed!

(A security alarm buzzes.)

BETRA-NA: Weaponeer, where are you?

SORID-GEE: *I greet thee, Your Excellency.*

BETRA-NA: Sorid-Gee! Oath-traitor! I have nothing to say to you!

SORID-GEE: *I, however, would like to speak with you, Your Excellency. You have locked out controls to the weapons satellites from your chambers, have you not? I would like those codes.*

BETRA-NA: No words. Honor Combat — as the old ways dictate.

SORID-GEE: (laughs, with a degree genuine mirth) *You still believe in the old ways, Betra. Your surprises never cease.*

BETRA-NA: Why should it surprise you that I would defend them as I am sworn? The old ways are the force that has bound our people together for the last five hundred years, united in common honor.

SORID-GEE: *I agree! What startles me is that you think so. For all these years, I believed your respect for the ways to be a pretense and nothing more. Yet here you are, at the end of your reign, and you cling to them as a drowning woman to a life raft. You truly believe in it, on some level. My eyes are opened.*

BETRA-NA: You agree with the strength of the old ways, yet, with the conceit of an usurper, you overturn them all! You replace the visions of the centuries with your own, tiny and short-sighted though it is! For what? Vengeance? Or are you just that arrogant?

SORID-GEE: *Arrogance? You speak to me of arrogance? Of usurpy? When you came to power, Premier, your first acts were to undermine and cast away the traditions that no longer suited you — you spoke of progress, of a new path for our people, and did away with that “binding force” in one blow. Today, it is even rumored that you spoke ~~today~~ on equal terms with one of the alien males, and your respect for our tradition is already so eroded that I even half-believed it. You overturned the ancient codes, Beta-Na, and now they are dead. Even I can not bring them back. Your new vision failed as it must, and you have brought us to the brink of destruction. The Wasting has already returned. Time runs short. I can only hope that mine will be a better way, a more loyal one. But you, Beta-Na, will go to your grave with the knowledge that you brought this wildfire down upon the people. And I will do everything I can to see that you meet that grave very, very soon, as payment for your arrogance. I am coming for you, Your Excellency.*

BETRA-NA: And I am waiting. For Valandria.

SORID-GEE: *Always.*

**SCENE 103-06**

**LOCATION:** *Excelsior Bridge*

**DOVAN:** (dread) What?

**SHARP:** *I — I'm sorry, sir. Every single human and Trill in sickbay just — and then we suddenly lost Commander Helder. I don't know what else —*

**DOVAN:** Wait: *Lost Jack Helder?*

**SHARP:** *I'm sorry. There was nothing — it was if his mind was gripped in a vise that just kept on getting tighter and tighter, until... (she trails off) We made him as comfortable as we could.*

**DOVAN:** So the Wasting is fatal, too.

**CORTEZ:** *...get these people out of here... alive...*

**SHARP:** *I'm doing my best.*

**DOVAN:** (distractedly) Of course. Of course. Dovan out. (refocused; to Kibyr) Mr. Kibyr, we're ready?

**KIBYR:** Aye, sir. The marines are loaded, and they've been given pinpoint coordinates for what appears to be the center of a network of tunnels underneath the city.

**DOVAN:** Give the launch order. What's their ETA?

**KIBYR:** Already gave it, sir. Just over five minutes until they reach transporter range.

**DOVAN:** Then let's hope Beta-Na was able to keep that weapons network under control.

KIBYR: Runabout *Kilimanjaro* launching... (He checks his readouts and presses some buttons.) Sir, I'm picking up weapon signatures coming around from the far side of the planet.

DOVAN: Jehosophat! We can't handle a battle in this condition, and neither can the marines! (pause) I've got helm!

DOVAN: Looks like we have... sixteen Valandrian interceptors coming in. They're on an attack vector for the shuttle. (pause) Those marines are going to need our backup if they're going to make it. Sound battlestations!

(Red alert klaxon sounds.)

KIBYR: Sir, I've never been — ah! Ahh! AAAAA! (he collapses)

DOVAN: Medical team to the bridge! Computer, who's our next-highest-ranking tactical officer?

COMPUTER: *There are no remaining tactical officers aboard the Excelsior.*

DOVAN: Great. (pause) Computer... who is the next-most-*qualified*-tactical officer on the ship?

(Computer working sound, then command complete beep.)

COMPUTER: *Lieutenant Asuka Yubari.*

DOVAN: What? I know every lieutenant on the ship, and not one of them is named "Yubari."

**COMPUTER:** *Negative. Lieutenant Asuka Yubari received a score of one thousand, eight hundred, seventy-six in the Starfleet Tactical Program. Her position is Engineering Diagnostician.*

**DOVAN:** What, a full-grade lieutenant stuck in a job for enlisted ne'er-do-wells and cadets?

**COMPUTER:** *Affirmative.*

**DOVAN:** I don't buy it. But I don't exactly have a choice. Lieutenant Asuka Yubari— whoever you are— kindly report to the bridge at once!

**SCENE 103-07****LOCATION: Oracle Sickbay**

(Rol and Lorhrok are lying next to each other on biobeds.)

ROL: (to Lorhrok) Psst— Lieutenant Lorhrok! Are you awake?

LORHROK: (groggy) Mmmm... what? Where...?

ROL: I don't know; I can't quite see straight... but it looks a lot like...

SHARP: Hm. You're awake. That's very lucky. I was afraid one of you might have been permanently Splinched. Monty, I asked you to tell me when they were awake.

FOUR OF SEVEN: My designation is Four of Seven, not 'Monty'. These officers are irrelevant.

SHARP: (a bit coldly) I don't know why you're even in my sickbay, Monty.

FOUR OF SEVEN: I am present because I was wounded on your ship, an allied vessel of the Borg Collective.

SHARP: Starfleet Command never should have made that alliance. No matter how bad things were.

FOUR OF SEVEN: Your opinion is irrelevant. It will remain irrelevant, regardless of how often you repeat it.

LORHROK: Is that... Doctor Sharp? Where are we? (sitting up)

SHARP: You're... well, you're relatively safe for the time being, Alecz, which is about all I can tell you at the moment. *What* were you doing with our temporal transponders, though?

ROL: *Your* temporal transponders? Is this the *Excelsior*?

SHARP: I'm sorry; what's your name?

ROL: Rol, ma'am. Lieutenant Alex Rol, infiltration specialist. We're serving on the *Excelsior* together.

SHARP: Well... we aren't anymore, Lieutenant. I'm afraid that quite some time has passed due to your fiddling with the A.I.'s equipment.

ROL: (with distaste) Time travel.

LORHROK: (enthusiastically) Time travel! That's... amazing! Is this the future, Doctor?

SHARP: I'm afraid so. The Starfleet Artificial Intelligences aren't designed to transport organic matter, but I'm afraid this one was too damaged to tell the difference. He picked you up, and so he missed his own destination by several days, and you all ended up here. Surprisingly... neither of you were hurt.

ORACLE: I am nothing if not responsible for my shipmates.

LORHROK: (groans) Why did you go and *activate* him?

ORACLE: I am recompiling my temporal matrix. Current status is four-point-nine percent.

SHARP: He's repairing himself. When he's done, he's theoretically going to return you to your own time and then go on to his. Temporal Prime Directive isn't violated, and we

don't get a Temporal Investigations inquiry. As long as I can make you stay put here until he's finished.

ORACLE: Doctor, the Department of Temporal Investigations was shut down shortly after the destruction of Gemworld in —

SHARP: If you keep talking, Computer, you're going to call them right back from the grave to arrest you. (sarcastic) I mean, why don't you just go ahead and explain the entire Sword of Damocles to our guests right now? Could save the entire Federation a *whole* lot of trouble.

ORACLE: That suggestion was not intended seriously.

SHARP: (dry) Very astute.

LORHROK: Doctor... incredible as this is...

ROL: ... where *are* we?

SHARP: Well... I suppose there's no harm in telling the name of the ship to a couple of old shipmates, if you'll both promise me you won't try to explore anything else. *Especially* the rest of the crew.

ROL: (immediately) Of course.

SHARP: The year is twenty-four-oh-two. And you're aboard the greatest experimental warship ever built... the U.S.S. *Oracle*.

(stunned silence)

**SCENE 103-08**

**LOCATION:** *Excelsior* Bridge:

(Yubari enters the bridge from the turbolift. Dovan doesn't look up from his station.)

**DOVAN:** I presume that's the hypothetical Lieutenant Yubari at the door?

**YUBARI:** Sir —

**DOVAN:** Take your station, Lieutenant. We're due to enter firing range in less than fifteen seconds. Our job is to open a window wide enough to get the *Kilimanjaro* through to transporter range of the cave network underneath Theyven.

**YUBARI:** Aye, sir. And, sir, my assignment —

**DOVAN:** For the moment, your assignment here isn't important. You're fully qualified?

**YUBARI:** Yes, sir.

(The ship shakes with the first hit.)

**DOVAN:** Then return fire. We have a boatload of marines to protect.

(The *Excelsior* returns fire.)

**YUBARI:** A solid hit, sir. Damage to their sensors. But can I point out that we're heavily outnumbered and even more outgunned?

**DOVAN:** I'm well aware of that, Lieutenant, but we only need to hold them off long enough for the Valandrian satellites to get a lock on them. Then Beta-Na can take care of them. Any minute now.

(Another hit.)

DOVAN: Aaaany minute now.

(The battle continues for a bit. Shooting and flying about on both sides.)

DOVAN: Nice shooting, Lieutenant.

YUBARI: Thank you, sir.

(Another hit.)

YUBARI: Forward shields are starting to buckle, sir!

DOVAN: (frowning) The *Kilimanjaro* is signaling that they're under heavy fire. Lieutenant, I'm going to move us in closer and run the Remeck Manuever.

YUBARI: (warningly) Sir, I doubt that we can avoid severe damage for long if we try to get any closer than we already are.

DOVAN: Then we're just going to have to blow those ships back to Valandria before "long" becomes "now," Lieutenant. Tell Engineering to prepare for damage control.

(He presses some buttons and accelerates the ship.)

YUBARI: Sir, this idea is... tactically unsound. At the very least. We are still seriously damaged and badly undermanned. They're likely to cut us to ribbons in a matter of minutes.

DOVAN: Objection noted, Lieutenant. (He presses some buttons.) Bringing us about to zero mark zero-one-one and engaging one-quarter impulse.

YUBARI: Sir, that'll take us straight through the center of their formation.

DOVAN: That *is* how the Remeck Manuever works, Lieutenant.

YUBARI: (reluctant) Aye, sir. But we need a new plan... *soon*.

DOVAN: We've got marines in there, Lieutenant and I'm not leaving them. (An alert sounds) The fighters are regrouping in formation!

YUBARI: (with concentration) I see 'em!

DOVAN: Take them out!

YUBARI: Ugh. Too late! Brace for impact!

(The entire ship is strafed by the entire enemy formation of sixteen vessels, and it hurts bad. Real bad. On the bridge, alarms, explosions and smoke.)

DOVAN: Report!

YUBARI: (coughs) Upper and forward shielding are gone, sir! *Massive* damage to the crew lounge and torpedo control; (cough) starboard and lower shields buckling!

DOVAN: (sarcastic) Oh, what ever shall we do without the crew lounge?

YUBARI: Captain, we need to pull back.

DOVAN: Not until those marines are safe on the planet, Commander!

YUBARI: (after a pause) Sir —!

DOVAN: Do you have a record of impertinence, Miz Yubari?

YUBARI: (not at all calmly) Actually, sir, I do. Do *you* have a record of suicidal flying?

DOVAN: Your protest has been *noted*, Lieutenant. Now get your attention focused on your tactical display! Dovan to Engineering!

(Another heavy hit. No response to Dovan's request)

DOVAN: Engineering, come in!

(FX Another moderate hit. After another tense moment without response, on crackles a breathless voice — slightly staticky (the static being in addition to the normal comm distortion we do))

WESTLAKE: *Westlake here, Captain!*

DOVAN: Westlake! What are you--!

WESTLAKE: (interrupting assertively) *We lost Crewman Adow almost fifteen minutes ago, sir. She never got out of sickbay. There are only seven of us left; Ensign Nebison is doing his best, but this damage...*

DOVAN: Mr. Westlake, I need to know right now — *can you hold this ship together?*

WESTLAKE: (immediate) *We'll give you what you need, sir. Westlake out.*

DOVAN: (after a moment) Simon sounded peculiar, didn't he?

YUBARI: Investigate later! We're about to make our second pass. (checking her instruments. Buttons pressed.) They're swarming us!

DOVAN: Keep it steady, Lieutenant.

YUBARI: Aft shielding gone, sir!

DOVAN: Steady...

YUBARI: Sir, we are *venting* drive plasma!

DOVAN: (completely focused) Aim, Lieutenant, and fire on my mark.

(Power fluctuates for a moment.)

DOVAN: Three... two... one... *Fire! Fire!*

(Quantum torpedoes launch. All three are hits, and two fighters go up in smoke.)

DOVAN: (checking his readings. Alarm, buttons pressed.) We've lost maneuvering thrusters. I'm going to have trouble turning the ship while maintaining combat speed.

YUBARI: Acknowledged. Reinforcing aft shields and preparing to repel pursuit.

DOVAN: Belay that. Prepare for an L-4.

YUBARI: (pauses to gape) Sir.

DOVAN: I'm an old hand at L-4's, Lieutenant. We used to do them all the time on the *Defiant*.

YUBARI: This *isn't* the *Defiant*. We're just too big; attempting a loop-de-loop at our speed will *snap* us in two!

DOVAN: Our marines still need another minute. Brace yourself.

(The entire ship groans under the sound of multiple *gees* for several long seconds. But it reduces; the ship survives.)

DOVAN: (a bit surprised) We're still in one piece. Report, Lieutenant!

YUBARI: We're alive, sir, but we just lost fifty percent of hull integrity under that stress.

SHARP: (coldly) *Sickbay to Bridge.*

DOVAN: Bridge.

SHARP: *Commander, if you attempt another maneuver like that, I cannot guarantee the safety of my patients.*

(pause.)

DOVAN: Acknowledged. Bridge out. (a longer silence) So much for *that* idea. Prepare for another run, Lieutenant.

YUBARI: (snaps) Commander, you're demanding the impossible! With this ship, with this crew, there is *no way* we can even *survive* another pass against those fighters, much less *win!*

DOVAN: Yubari, those are *our people* on the *Kilimanjaro*. We're not going to leave them to die.

YUBARI: They're already dead, sir! The only question is whether we die with them!

DOVAN: I refuse to accept that!

YUBARI: You're our *captain!* You can be a hero on your own time, but your job right now is to *get your people out of here alive!*

(There is a long pause.)

DOVAN: (taken aback, trying not to show it) Interesting... interesting choice of words, Lieutenant.

(pause)

DOVAN: Altering course. *Excelsior to Kilimanjaro.* (no response) *Excelsior to Kiliman—*

(There is an explosion on-screen.)

DOVAN: No. No!

YUBARI: Sir, the *Kilimanjaro* has been destroyed. The interceptors are changing course to pursue us.

DOVAN: We can outrun them. But we still need to get a team down to the planet somehow to shut down that weapon... or we're all dead of this disease within the hour.

YUBARI: We can withdraw and come up with a new plan, sir.

(pause)

DOVAN: Better idea. What's our range from the beamdown coordinates?

YUBARI: Three hundred thousand kilometers, sir. The fighters will intercept us before we reach transporter range at forty thousand.

DOVAN: Bridge to Transporter Room!

LORTH: *Lorth here, sir.*

DOVAN: Chief, lock onto the two signals on the bridge and prepare to beam us down.

YUBARI: Sir, I just said —

DOVAN: I know what you said, Lieutenant. Setting an autopilot out of here. (He presses some buttons.) (pause) I just hope you don't get transporter sickness.

YUBARI: I... Wait, what?

DOVAN: Chief, override safeties and energize, *now!*

(They beam out.)

**SCENE 103-09**

**LOCATION: Vigilance Royal Chambers**

(Beta-Na still alone in here, running the command controls.)

**SORID-GEE:** *Premier, if you do not make me force this door, I will allow you the honors you do not deserve in your execution.*

(Beta-Na puts the finishing touches on a computer sequence; countdown beeps begin)

**BETRA-NA:** In fact, General, since you do not give me the Honor Combat, I choose prudence. I am leaving.

**SORID-GEE:** *(hisses) You coward! Brigadier, get that door open before —*

**BETRA-NA:** Evidently, the old taboos are no longer in force for you and I, Sorid. It is as you said. 'Coward' simply does not hurt like it used to. Yet, to appease my nagging conscience, I will give you the knowledge that I have set the *Vigilance* to self-destruct. You have two yahrens until detonation. Farewell.

(She beams out just as the door is forced open. Sorid-Gee and the Brigadier rush in, the Brigadier to a control station.)

**BRIGADIER:** She has destroyed the controls, General. By the time they are repaired, she could well have escaped to anywhere from the companion portal in Theyven. What are we to do?

**SORID-GEE:** There is only one place Beta-Na would go now. There is a secret set of backup controls for the weapons satellites, hidden in the Sacred Catacombs beneath the city. She believes she is the only one who knows of them, but she is sadly mistaken. I

had hoped we would not have to resort to sacrilege, but we must follow her. Come, Brigadier. Sound the abandon station and let us return to our ship.