

Starship: Excelsior

"I.O.U."

(Season 5, Episode 3)

by James Heaney

Transcribed by Peter Stine

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

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE

(Red alert.)

NEEVA: Yes, Captain, I am aware that your main reactor is at ninety percent of critical, but if you don't push it to ninety-five [we can't maintain containment!]

ALIEN CAPTAIN #4K-01: That is completely unacceptable! We [suggest you try asking the blasted Divitians!]

(Yubari steps forward and slams her comm-line open.)

YUBARI: Mister Baudette, this is the captain of the *Excelsior*. If you and the other Juddat ships don't push it to ninety-five, then the power transfer fails, and we're all dead. We passed critical ten minutes ago. Do your job! *Excelsior* out! (she slams the intercom again) God dammit these people are whiny.

NEEVA: That might not be quite the right word. We've already blown out the replicators for the next week, and, if I get this calculation wrong, we'll have to abandon ship. Sylveste, give me an update on [those relay coordinates]!

J'NAYA: *Bridge, I hate to be a broken record, but [our converters can't keep up with this demand for long!]*

YUBARI: Talk less, say more!

J'NAYA: *We need more power!*

YUBARI: Neeva?

NEEVA: We don't have any more! If you get any, it'll be from the ships that are holding out!

J'NAYA: *But [I cannae change the laws of physics, Commander!]*

NEEVA: That's all I can tell you! Keep trying! (Neeva who hits the intercom to close channel)
Commander, she's right. We need more.

YUBARI: Alright. Sylveste, hail the flagship of the Tulian flotilla.

NEEVA: Eighteenth ship in the network, Sylveste.

SYLVESTE: Yes, ma'ams.

YUBARI: Any suggestions?

NEEVA: Tulia... they're avians, right? What do you know about birds? Say something about flocks sticking together. Say anything. Make promises. Make threats. Do whatever it is you need to do, Commander, but do it now.

(Sylveste and Neeva press a lot of buttons.)

YUBARI: *Acting Captain's Log, supplemental. "Oh, yeah, we can put a bunch of fusion plants in orbit, they'll be fine as long as we never get hit by an ion wave front." That's what they said on Divitia, the capital of the "wise and glorious" Perenalthorias Union... right up until nine days ago, when they got hit by an ion wave front. The Excelsior's led relief efforts all week, and now those fusion plants are now losing containment. If we can't stop it, they'll blow up half the planet—and us along with. The captain should be here, but he's on a survey mission with Lohrok, out-of-contact, and he's late. I don't intend to get a planet blown up without him.*

SYLVESTE: I have a Shipmaster Jerrin, ma'am. His ship is the *Thir Thoren*.

YUBARI: In my ready room, Ensign.

(She exits. Neeva barely skips a beat as Yubari exits.)

NEEVA: Ensign! Those Tullian shuttlepods! Why are they drifting out of alignment?

LOCATION: READY ROOM

YUBARI: Computer, on screen. (The screen activates) Hi! Guess what?

JERRIN: *I [daren't imagine what you are going to say!]*

YUBARI: Don't answer that. Your ships're going to a hundred percent.

JERRIN: *One hundred percent! You must find some other way! We cannot afford [that kind of strain]!*

YUBARI: LOOK, Shipmaster! I've just been instructed to offer you compensation for your trouble. You push your reactors to the red line, and we'll... we'll... We'll owe you one!

(Pause.)

JERRIN: Owe us? One what?

YUBARI: A solid! A favor! You do this for us, and you can ask us for something later! After we get through this without everyone dying because you wouldn't go to one hundred percent!

JERRIN: *We can't run our warp reactor on empty promises, Captain!*

(An alert chimes at Yubari's desk.)

YUBARI: Oh, no. Containment for Power Plant Epsilon just started to fail. We have to shore it up. *Thir Thoren*, your quota is now one hundred three percent.

JERRIN: *I [absolutely refuse! Find someone else!]*

YUBARI: And if the next words out of your mouth aren't, "I agree, Captain," your quota's going to be a hundred and five just for all the time you've wasted the relief effort.

JERRIN: *I... I agree, Captain, but [we will hold you to the offer of a favor].*

YUBARI: Good. *Excelsior* out.

(Yubari stands up and returns to the bridge.)

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE

NEEVA: [Sylveste, I need the field's new] geometry to compensate for those shuttlepods thirty seconds ago!

SYLVESTE: They're not finished yet, ma'am!

(Part of the ceiling explodes, and debris smashes to the deck.)

NEEVA: Sylveste...

SYLVESTE: There! Done!

(Yubari sits in the center seat. Neeva is in the X.O.'s seat next to her. Neeva has a timer running down on her armrest. It beeps very slightly every tenth of a second, and more loudly once every full second.)

(The ship is starting to hum like it's building up to an explosion, everything is shaking a little, loud enough to hear, and every few seconds a console lets out a shower of sparks.)

YUBARI: Status, Commander?

NEEVA: The Tulian ships are all giving one hundred two percent, Commander, so that's good, and thank you. What's bad is that we are going to blow up anyway.

YUBARI: No, we aren't.

NEEVA: We are... (checks her armpad) seventy-three seconds from a core breach. There's nothing we can do to stop it except turn off the power transfer beam. But if we turn off the beam...

YUBARI: The reactors fail, and we explode. We're not going to do that.

NEEVA: But if we don't...

YUBARI: We aren't going to blow up, Commander.

NEEVA: Renegade Squadron, this is Summit Five Actual. Break off patrol and get to a safe distance.

VESANT: *Acknowledged, Summit Actual. Moving to a safe distance.*

YUBARI: We aren't going to blow up.

(Something blows up just above her.)

SYLVESTE: Containment still hasn't stabilized on the fusion plants. Shall I sound abandon ship, ma'ams?

NEEVA: No point. There isn't enough time for a pod to get beyond [the blast zone.]

(Readouts start streaming.)

SYLVESTE: Commander! Fusion plant six just re-established shielding!

J'NAYA: *Bridge, core temperatures are falling! Systems coming back online!*

NEEVA: It's stable.

SYLVESTE: Plants four and fifteen are back! Twelve!

NEEVA: Step down the beam — gradually! Recall the fighters and signal the fleet to begin Stabilization Phase Three.

(The beam power output is lowered.)

SYLVESTE: Yes, ma'am.

NEEVA: We made it.

YUBARI: Toldja. The *Excelsior* would never ju[st blow up like that.]

(A big explosion rocks the ship from outside – a shockwave. Alerts sound. Yubari, Neeva, and Sylveste cry out as they are thrown to the floor!)

NEEVA: What was that?!

SYLVESTE: Ship number twenty-two. A scout ship, part of the Tulian flotilla. They couldn't handle the power drain we were putting on them, ma'am. She just... blew up.

(Pause.)

NEEVA: How many people aboard?

SYLVESTE: A hundred five.

YUBARI: The reactor. Is the reactor holding?

SYLVESTE: Uh...

(Pause)

SYLVESTE: Yes, ma'am.

NEEVA: Thank the Lords.

YUBARI: Good.

NEEVA: "Good"?

YUBARI: Better than everyone.