

Starship: Excelsior

"Saudade"

(Season 6, Episode 6)

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

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SCENE 6F-01**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

(A few computer consoles sputter weakly. The red alert klaxon is weak, distorted, and inconsistent. A fire burns in the corner.)

NEEVA: (coughing) Unnnh. My head. Anyone? Captain? Alecz?

(She stands up, slowly)

NEEVA: Uhf.

(She hobbles over to the command chair and shakes Lorchrok.)

NEEVA: Captain.

LORCHROK: Huh-- whuh? I'm up, I'm up, Neeva. (Pause) Oh, spast. This... this is not good.

NEEVA: The damage might not be as bad on the lower decks. The bridge maybe took the worst of it?

ELBRUN: (weakly) Nope. Th-the envelope of th-the wave function that... translated us here...

NEEVA: Science officer Elbrun. You alright?

ELBRUN: Oh boy... I can't do the math in my head but the... uh th-the ventral hull would have borne the brunt of it. (he shakes his head vigorously, letting his cheeks flap noisily) Ah!

(Breathes out) I'm alive. (Lets out a breath) Which doesn't count for much. Let me help Sly. H- He saved the ship. You should have seen him.

(Neeva starts limping back to help Yubari and the ensigns. Elbrun lurches to his feet, kicking aside twisted metal)

LORHROK: I think Neeva's console exploded before anyone else's. Those burns are...

NEEVA: Hey (pause) I'll live, too. Asuka? Wake up.

LORHROK: Jordyn, I need to know: did it work? Did we close the S.D.-One Impossibility?

ELBRUN: Yeah. Yeah w-we did. The universe will not be draining out into oblivion through a sinkhole in space-time, and it has *Starship Excelsior* to thank for it.

SYLVESTE: Unfortunately, your-your, uh your faithful ship's pilot couldn't stop us from (shaky breath) couldn't stop us from going halfway down the drainpipe first.

ELBRUN: (half-laughing) Hey! Welcome back, Sly Guy. It's good to see you back in the land of the living.

SYLVESTE: Hey, Jordyn.

ELBRUN: Jon's being modest, sir. As you can see, our particles did not end up scattered across eternity, and I don't know another starship pilot who could have dodged it.

LORHROK: So where did we end up?

(Yubari starts entering commands into a malfunctioning console)

SYLVESTE: More like when, sir. We were pulled mainly along the Impossibility's temporal axis, not the spatial one. We should actually be within a few light-years of where we started.

NEEVA: Okay, so when did we end up? Are we talking days, months?

YUBARI: That's... going to take a while, Neeva. All primary systems are offline. I, uh... (pause) I'm not detecting our starboard warp nacelle.

ELBRUN: Uh...What?

YUBARI: We are near a planet, apparently M-class.

SYLVESTE: You have sensors? My board is dead.

YUBARI: No, just... look up. Through the skylight.

SYLVESTE: Oh.

YUBARI: I dunno. Looked M-class to me.

LORHROK: Let's try for a damage report, a distress beacon, and a stable orbit by the end of the day. Neeva, see if you can get down to engineering. (deep breath) Let's find what's left of *Excelsior*.

NARRATOR: *The ship: critically damaged. (Pause) The time: seven billion years ago.*

SCENE 6F-98

OPENING CREDITS

SCENE 6F-02**LOCATION: AGENT ISAAC'S CONTROL ROOM**

(An alert sounds)

JANATH: Isaac?

ISAAC: Yes, what is it?

JANATH: It looks like Starfleet's done cleaning up the Impossibility.

ISAAC: They should count themselves lucky. Once Lorhrok let the Impossibility get that big, even the Scions would have had trouble closing it.

JANATH: There... wasn't that much to clean up, really. The Impossibility burned twelve star systems, a hundred fifty billion lives... and all it left in its wake was void.

ISAAC: I wouldn't put it that way.

JANATH: What do you mean?

PSUEDO: (Laughs) *He means you're right but he refuses to admit Alec Lorhrok deserves any credit.*

ISAAC: He has an exemplary crew.

PSEUDO: *Had. They're dead.*

ISAAC: They are not dead. We would not still be looking for them if they were dead. Nor would Starfleet.

JANATH: Um. Well.

ISAAC: Yes, Janath?

JANATH: That was kinda the next thing I was getting to. Starfleet cleaned up the entire sector. They didn't find the *Excelsior*. Not even their temporal division. They've called off the search. (pause) Isaac?

ISAAC: What? They gave up... We will not. In fact, I think we're done with this century. Set course two hundred years downtime.

(He makes adjustments on some controls)

PSUEDO: *And how long will you have us searching, huh? We'll die of old age before we search a fraction of one percent of this sector's history.*

ISAAC: Pseudo, this is my penance and yours. The Scions need Lorhrok for the Beginning. If that is our fate... so be it.

JANATH: Is it my penance, too, or can I get dropped off somewhere?

ISAAC: Are you asking?

(Silence)

JANATH: No. (Pause) Let's save them.

SCENE 6F-03**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR - BRIEFING ROOM**

(There are some sparking power conduits in the background)

NEEVA: Well, the good news is... we found the starboard nacelle.

YUBARI: I thought Stellar Cartography was destroyed.

ELBRUN: It was. But the Stellar Cart team survived. So did our deflector dish, and as it turns out Ensign Joshi does ham radio.

SYLVESTE: Sorry, Jordyn, how's that help?

ELBRUN: Do you have any idea what a warp coil does to the E.M. spectrum? Course not. You steer the ship, you don't know how it works. Kidding! It's brighter than some nearby stars. She used... well, I, I don't want to call it "space sonar," so I won't.

NEEVA: Warp Nacelle Sulu is twenty A.U. from here, between the fifth and sixth planets of this system.

J'NAYA: But transferring it would be... tricky. Life support's on batteries, we had to transfer command functions from the Bridge to Engineering, and our shuttlebays are in ruins.

YUBARI: How long until we can get the *Excelsior* underway, then?

J'NAYA: I'm... not prepared to put an estimate on that, Asuka.

SYLVESTE: From the people I've talked to, ma'am, seven billion years is a pretty scary number. Even a ballpark guess at when we're going home would do a lot for morale.

J'NAYA: I'm very sorry, Lieutenant. I can't.

YUBARI: Kestra, I've worked with you for... what, six years now? You've never taken longer than two hours to give a repair estimate. It's been eight.

J'NAYA: I, uh...

NEEVA: (snapping) Miss Yubari, Commander J'Naya is unable to estimate when *Excelsior* can be repaired because we haven't yet decided whether *Excelsior* can be repaired. (pause; quieter) In my professional opinion... she can't.

(Silence)

J'NAYA: The *Excelsior* has enough deuterium fuel left in her tanks to keep emergency power for... eighteen months -- less, if we need to tap into it for anything else. The more effort we put into repairs, the faster it drains. And when the tank runs dry... then that's it. The lights will go out, the air will stop, and the *Excelsior* will burn up in the atmosphere.

NEEVA: So... we have to choose.

YUBARI: Between what and what, exactly?

SYLVESTE: Can we... call for help?

LORHROK: Even if we ignore the Temporal Prime Directive -- and, to be clear, we absolutely cannot ignore the Temporal Prime Directive -- there'd be no one out there to hear us. Intelligent life is eons from evolving. No one's ever gone back this far. Not even close.

YUBARI: We could leave a message on that planet. Set it to stay dormant until our own time. When it activates, Starfleet can find us, and rescue us.

J'NAYA: Well, we'd have to invent a battery that lasts seven billion years.

ELBRUN: And ..one that's immune to nuclear fire.

J'NAYA: Beg pardon?

ELBRUN: Sorry. I just mean... look, the only light in this room right now -- or anywhere else on *Excelsior* -- is coming from that sun out the window. He's so bright. He's a young sun. (pause) Here's how far back we are: this whole star system will die when that sun goes supernova... a billion years before any of our species evolve out of the mud. It was a great idea, Commander. But Stellar Cart had it four hours ago.

SYLVESTE: Then we should send a message. Straight through time. Come on, 'dyn, you've always got some trick with chronitons up your sleeve.

NEEVA: Temporal beacons have a range of about a million years. There are some theories that suggest you could coax that higher with a large enough power source, but the requirements are exponential. A seven billion year beacon? Would take more energy than a Kardashev Three civilization makes in a century.

YUBARI: That just makes it even more important that we warp out of here ourselves. We have to go find a way home.

J'NAYA: Even if we could, somehow, get our nacelle back, repair the subspace coils, and fly off into the sunset without violating the Temporal Prime Directive: this far back, subspace itself is still forming. I don't know what would happen if we did form a warp field. We might suddenly pop straight through to Andromeda. We might just evolve into lizards. We'd probably just explode. I'm not saying we can't get home. I'm just saying that Federation science doesn't have a way for us to get home.

YUBARI: Yet.

(Pause)

J'NAYA: Yet.

SYLVESTE: Andromeda? Wait... Wouldn't the Galactic Barrier stop us?

ELBRUN: The Barrier around our galaxy doesn't exist yet. Recent scholarship says the Barrier is artificial, like the Bajoran Wormhole, and won't be built until maybe a quarter-million years B.C.. If you ever wanted to warp out into the Big Empty, now's your chance.

(Lraac Ovdan enters with a tray full of water bottles.)

NEEVA: If we had propulsion, which, I want to emphasize, we do not.

LRAAC OVDAN: One thing at a time. Current thing: I have water bottles.

(He sets the tray down on the table and starts handing them out. They start drinking)

ELBRUN: Oh, thank God. I am parched! Thank-you, L.

SYLVESTE: I'll take about three of those.

J'NAYA: Thanks, L.

LORHROK: Excuse me, Mister...?

LRAAC OVDAN: Ovdan.

NEEVA: Lraac Ovdan, assistant barkeep.

LORHROK: Did you just come aboard?

ELBRUN: What? L joined the crew the same day I did - ages ago!

NEEVA: This is a restricted area, Mr. Ovdan.

LRAAC OVDAN: It took me almost two hours to climb up here. Uh, could I just rest a minute or two, Commander?

NEEVA: Regulations are clear, Mister Ovdan: you can rest do[wn the stairwell, on deck two.]

LORHROK: It's fine, Neeva. I'm not sure how much the regulations matter anymore. It's just... you do announcements or something? I know I've never seen your face before, but something about your voice...

LRAAC OVDAN: Aliens think all Bolians sound alike, but it's fine. Actually, I do have an announcement. There's a party in the Delta Lounge tonight at eighteen hundred.

NEEVA: A party?!

LRAAC OVDAN: And now my ulterior motive for coming up here: I'd like to invite our guest of honor, the man I'm told we have to thank for not being dead, Lieutenant Jonathan Sylveste. We have contraband ration packs, Lio's making his Klingon Death Chili, and I got one of the Dabo tables back up. I figure one night off before the repairs start?

YUBARI: (darkly) We're not all agreed that repairing the ship is possible.

LRAAC OVDAN: Oh? Seems to me this crew already did the impossible twice today just getting here.

LORHROK: I'm not so sure enough of us did. Neeva? (deep breath) It's time. I need the casualty report.

NEEVA: We don't have a full report yet. Couriers haven't re-established contact with the entire ship. Most of Marine Country is still sealed off by rubble. But... well, most crew had time to get to shelter before we translated through the Impossibility. I'm hearing mostly light injuries, a dozen or so broken bones. We do expect some fatalities near the starboard nacelle, but... none so far. None that we know of.

ELBRUN: Didya hear that, Sly? You didn't just save the galaxy; you saved everyone!

SYLVESTE: So far.

LORHROK: No, Leftenant, he's right. That's the first good news since I woke up. While this crew breathes, there's hope.

J'NAYA: Yes, there is, but also... I hate to say it, but, while this crew breathes, it puts a huge strain on our life support. Most of our scrubbers are gone, and our surviving solar panels can't

recharge the batteries fast enough. I don't know how long it'll take to get a fusion plant back up, but I know we don't have enough air left to find out.

YUBARI: What are you saying?

NEEVA: She's saying this ship can only support a skeleton crew.

J'NAYA: Maybe half. Everyone else has to evacuate. Immediately.

SYLVESTE: To where?

J'NAYA: Well, I think we can jury-rig one of the central transporters. We should still have some farming and foraging equipment in the botany labs. And... well, didn't Asuka say that planet looks M-class?

LORHROK: I want that confirmed, immediately. And check its chirality. Jordyn?

ELBRUN: Captain, I don't know about the rest of you, but I need my department up here, working on the astrophysics pro[blems, if we're ever going to find a way home.]

LORHROK: Lieutenant, I've just been informed we don't have the air left to argue about this. Get to it. Next staff briefing will be groundside, at my tent.

YUBARI: You're going to evacuate?

LORHROK: We're obviously going to be here for a while. Probably forever.

LRAAC OVDAN: Forever? Now, that's panic talking.

NEEVA: Accepting reality is not panic, Mister Ovdan.

LRAAC OVDAN: The mission's only half-finished! We still have to get these people out of here alive, and we can't do that if we divide our focus, divide our crew!

LORHROK: Thank you for the water, Mister Ovdan. The rest of you: that planet needs to become the first inhabited planet in the galaxy by tomorrow. Hit it.

LORHROK: Neeva, a moment?

(The others leave)

LRAAC OVDAN: Captain, respectfully, [please reconsider.]

LORHROK: Mister Ovdan, I'm sorry I cut you off just now. I know you're a civilian; I'm sure you're scared.

LRAAC OVDAN: I'm not scared for myself. I'm scared for this crew. Pull us apart? From each other, from our ship, our mission? Divided like that, for long enough... that's the real danger here.

NEEVA: Hwhat?

LORHROK: Don't worry, barkeep. We're Starfleet.

LRAAC OVDAN: You're people.

LORHROK: If you'll excuse me, I need a word with my first officer.

(Pause)

OVDAN: Fine. Okay.

(Ovdan exits.)

LORHROK: Neeva, how do you think the crew will take it?

NEEVA: Sir?

LORHROK: You can drop the rank, Neeva. I do with everyone else.

NEEVA: I'm not everyone else.

LORHROK: No, you're not.

(Silence)

NEEVA: The first winter will be hard, but we can tap the deuterium to get through to a full planting season. After that, the colony should be on its feet. Most of us should survive. How long do they say intelligent life usually lasts? Fifteen thousand years? There's no dilithium this far back, so our descendants won't be spreading out among the stars, and that sun will erase every trace of us when it goes. We'll live out our lives here, I hope build something wonderful, that our children and grandchildren enjoy for thousands of years, but history will never even know we were here. Very... tidy.

LORHROK: That's just it. I'm not sure we're all ready to accept that as our fate. I don't think Asuka is even ready to let go of this ship. Or Ovdan. They can't be the only ones. (pause)

Should we give them some space? Ease everyone into the big picture? (pause) Evacuation doesn't have to be mandatory, at first.

NEEVA: You heard Kestra; we need *Excelsior* evacuated. You think half the crew will voluntarily abandon ship?

LORHROK: They will if you, me, and Kestra all join the evacuees. It'd set a good example.

NEEVA: All three of us? Who's that leave at the conn?

LORHROK: Does it matter? The ship is dead. You know it as well as I do. I know I'm asking you to set aside your rank and position. Given our last fight before we broke up...

NEEVA: This is different. You've made an actual decision this time. Really the opposite of how you were with me. (sigh) I'm sorry.

LORHROK: No, no... I wish I didn't deserve that. You know I wanted to go further, but I was the X.O., and you were my subordinate.

NEEVA: I don't think rank was your obstacle to popping the question, Alecz. At least you've grown in the captain's chair.

LORHROK: Look, I promise you, we're going to make this colony work. For everyone.

NEEVA: You've pulled this crew out of some hot fires, Alecz, but this...

LORHROK: Remember the dedication plaque, Neeva. "No matter where you go, there you are." Well, this is where we went. Our command structure, the obstacles of rank, might not make

sense anymore down there, but... Whether or not people still call me "captain", I won't dishonor *Excelsior's* memory by failing her crew. Not in seven billion years.

SCENE 6F-04**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR**

(The corridor is dead quiet)

(Ovdan jogs to catch up to Yubari)

OVDAN: Commander!

(Yubari stops in her tracks.)

YUBARI: Is there something I can do for you, Mister... "Ovdan," is it?

OVDAN: My friends call me "L". I just wanted you to know, ma'am, I'm a trained and certified pilot. I was in the War.

YUBARI: Shuttles? Fighters?

OVDAN: Starships, ma'am. I flew light cruisers and escort vessels.

YUBARI: Interesting. For the merchant marine?

OVDAN: Fair warning: they say I pull a pretty sharp L-4.

(Pause)

YUBARI: Why are you telling me this?

OVDAN: In case you need a pilot. Someone has to look after the Delta Lounge, so I'll be around.

YUBARI: I'll... I'll bear that in mind. Thank you, L.

(She walks on.)

SCENE 6F-05**LOCATION: PLANET - WHEAT FIELD****NARRATOR: *Twelve months later.*****(A shuttle is landing. Sylveste waits nearby with an antigrav unit)****SYLVESTE: Ho! Whoa! Whoa, whoa. Put her down there! Uh, here. Over there, over there! Yeah! Right there! That's it. Yeah.****(The shuttle settles, the door descends and Elbrun appears, with an antigrav of his own.)****SYLVESTE: Jordyn the Science Giant!****ELBRUN: Sly Guy!****(They hug, with some loud back pats.)****SYLVESTE: You got my juice?****ELBRUN: Its legal name is "replicated nutrient gunk."****SYLVESTE: Yeah, but juice sounds cooler. The First Light Colonization Task Force humbly thanks you.****ELBRUN: What's put the bounce in your step today, Lieutenant?****SYLVESTE: (Chuckles) Is it that obvious?**

ELBRUN: I mean, I wish you were always this happy to see me, but...

SYLVESTE: No, no, no no, you're right. I... I met someone.

ELBRUN: No way! Aw, good for you! Uh, how'd you meet?!

SYLVESTE: You wouldn't... You wouldn't... I mean... it sounds stupid.

ELBRUN: Come on, man. I've respected your privacy since your fiancé passed on* ... but I did tell you all my embarrassing stories about... uh... Lieutenant Hodges.

SYLVESTE: Well... okay, fair; fair. It was at one of the early bonfires. Actually, the first one after Novacek rigged that solar-powered still, which... explains things, I guess. And then there's some dancing.

ELBRUN: And you're sitting off to the side as usual, nursing a drink and staring a thousand-yard hole in the bar, trying to look mysterious instead of depressed?

SYLVESTE: Well... I was staring at the fire this time, but... okay, and she walks up to me and, just, you know, as a joke, we were all still getting used to the idea of living here for a while, lots of fooling around and...

ELBRUN: Come on, Lieutenant!

SYLVESTE: Well, she walks up to me and says, well, "I see that you are strong man. If you put hand to plow and food on table I will bear you many strong boys." (he laughs) Then we danced.

*This occurred in 5M "Listen"

ELBRUN: Jon, thank you. That is the cringiest first date I have ever heard. You are a true friend. Now take this stuff and give me the water tanks, I have to get back to the ship and tell everybody else.

(Elbrun and Jon swap antigrav units.)

SYLVESTE: Hey, that was in confidence!

ELBRUN: I recall signing any papers, (light Italian accent) "Strong man!"

SYLVESTE: Rosetta will hunt you down!

ELBRUN: Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa! Wait, Rosetta? You're dating Rosetta Sisinni?

SYLVESTE: Yeah, from your department. So she knows where you live!

ELBRUN: Ha ha, joke's on you. My quarters blew up on the way here. Shouldn't be long now before she gets recalled, so, so maybe I'll be seeing more of you when you come up to visit!

SYLVESTE: Wait, what? I haven't heard anything about a recall. Is it voluntary?

ELBRUN: Oh, sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself. Today has to go well first! (he starts entering the shuttle) Hey, uh, We should catch up some time soon, and I think we're overdue to start the ship's theatre company on a new production!

SYLVESTE: Would Twelfth Night be too on the nose?

ELBRUN: I have to admit, I was thinking The Tempest! Cheers, Sly!

SYLVESTE: Bye, 'dyn. Hmm.

(The shuttle door closes)

SCENE 6F-06**LOCATION: TOWN CENTER**

(We hear a busy Old West type busy street.)

J'NAYA: Okay, how about this? How about this? Move the pump to G-Ten, then there's room on Main for both of you.

RANDOM COLONIST #6F-01 ("REEVES"): But that'll take days!

J'NAYA: You can do it in one if you work together. And if you'd rather not, then I'll know being on Main isn't that important to either of you, so I'll make sure the Council turns that entire space into a park.

RANDOM COLONIST #6F-02: Alright, you've made your point. Come on, Reeves, might as well get busy digging.

RANDOM COLONIST #6F-01 ("REEVES"): I could do with some lunch at the tavern, first.

RANDOM COLONIST #6F-02: Aye, me too. Care to join us, Kestra?

J'NAYA: Too much to do. But if you brought me back a beer, gents, I would not be ungrateful.

RANDOM COLONIST #6F-02: Right. Good luck.

(They mosey away as Sylveste approaches.)

J'NAYA: Thanks.

SYLVESTE: Hey, Madam Mayor, got a minute?

J'NAYA: The office I was elected to was council member, same as everyone else who won. What can I do for you, Sly?

SYLVESTE: Well, uh, I don't know if this is even... I'm not sure.

J'NAYA: Jon, if you just dropped by to chat, both I and Rosetta will be annoyed.

SYLVESTE: No, it's... I... I just got the juice. The nutrient gunk.

J'NAYA: Good. And dropped it off at the farm depot?

SYLVESTE: Yep, it's not that. It's... Jordyn brought it down.

J'NAYA: And how is Mister Elbrun? Can't imagine he's having much fun up top right now, with two-thirds the crew and all the action down here.

SYLVESTE: Well... he sounded like there was something going on up top. (pause) Have you heard anything?

J'NAYA: They finally got the Delta Lounge fully re-opened? It might be worth a trip up just to play some *dom-jot*.

SYLVESTE: Jordyn mentioned... he said there might be a partial crew recall? And Rosie a[nd I didn't think anyone would be sent up to the ship this year.]

J'NAYA: A recall?

SYLVESTE: I was looking for the captain, to see if it's anything to worry about. Haven't seen him in a few days, though. Do y'know where he is?

J'NAYA: There's been zero discussion of a recall, Jon. We'll need you and Rosie down here for the foreseeable future. I'll talk to Alecz and make sure we didn't cross any wires with the skeleton crew up top.

SYLVESTE: Thanks, Kestra. Gonna grab some lunch... then back to the fertilizer!

J'NAYA: (wry) One thing I'll say for First Light: it sure has been a final frontier for our noses!

SYLVESTE: Can't argue with that! Thanks again, Madam Mayor.

J'NAYA: Councilwoman! (takes a breath) Alright... now where the frak's Alecz?

(Kestra walks a short distance down the thoroughfare and knocks on a door)

NEEVA: *Come in, I guess!*

(Kestra opens the door. Neeva is welding an electronic project)

J'NAYA: Hi, just me.

NEEVA: Oh, hey, Kestra. You mind if I keep going with this? I might have something this time.

J'NAYA: No problem. What's it for?

NEEVA: Officially, it's going to be a nitrogen exchange unit for C.P.O. Grex.

J'NAYA: Unofficially?

NEEVA: The nineteen unsolvable problems I have with this are keeping the panic about my own unsolvable problems at a low volume.

J'NAYA: You weren't at last night's bonfire.

NEEVA: I switched to half-doses of my suppressants, trying to stretch what's left. Having a friend over is fine. Joining a crowd of drunk ex-officers who are all trying to feel out the shapes of their new lives? Not a great place to leave a light dusting of Orion pheromones.

J'NAYA: Some might call that the perfect place.

NEEVA: Thanks for trying, Kestra, but not helping.

J'NAYA: Sorry. We will figure this out.

NEEVA: It's not like it's fatal, it's just... (deep breath) Thanks for checking on me, though. You had lunch?

J'NAYA: (sigh) Not yet.

NEEVA: I've got a couple ration packs over there, if you're sick of beets.

J'NAYA: Oh, I couldn't...

NEEVA: Bake me a cake next year. Keep me company now.

J'NAYA: I can't stay.

NEEVA: Kestra, give me my ration pack, sit your butt down, and have a bite before you pass out from exhaustion. You're too busy for friendly visits, so what's up?

J'NAYA: I'm looking for Alecz. Something weird might be happening up top, and I haven't seen him since last Tuesday. I don't want to let on to the crew, but I thought you might have a lead on him.

NEEVA: I haven't seen him, either.

J'NAYA: Frak.

NEEVA: The past few weeks, he's been sneaking off to a certain spot in the northern forest. I saw it in the nav logs last time I took the *Fuji-San* out for a drive.

J'NAYA: Ugh, that's two hours from here by dune buggy.

NEEVA: You've got stuff, "Madam Mayor." I'll go.

J'NAYA: Really? Thank you, Neeva.

NEEVA: Hey, I'll take a two-hour buggy ride over designing a colonial sewer system any day.

J'NAYA: Oh, did you hear about Thursday's working session? I swear, we're this close to voting that the Bolians can build their own damn toilet system separate from ours.

NEEVA: Tear open that ration pack and you can tell me about it.

J'NAYA: ...Alright, I can spare five minutes.

(Kestra tears open her ration pack.)

SCENE 6F-07**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR - ENGINEERING**

(We hear some computers and some flickering power relays, but no warp core)

ELBRUN: Internal nacelle stress passing thirty-four kilopascals. Shuttlecraft, I need that tractor beam steady.

ADOW: *You keep telling me what I already know, sir, I'm gonna add thirty-four kilopascals to your solar plexus!*

YUBARI: Ensign Adow! Focus!

LRAAC OVDAN: *I think insulting officers is how Adow focuses, captain.*

YUBARI: Funny she never tries it on me, then, only nerds like Elbrun. No offense, Lieutenant.

ELBRUN: None taken, ma'am. Adjust relative heading zero mark zero zero two.

LRAAC OVDAN: *Shuttle answering point zero zero two degrees.*

ELBRUN: Entering phase four, final approach.

YUBARI: Alright, people. Six months to get a shuttle out to our missing warp nacelle, six weeks fixing the pylons, ten more guiding it home... get the last few minutes right and we can turn the warp core back on.

LRAAC OVDAN: *And then: we celebrate. Party in the Delta Lounge tonight!*

ADOW: *Hey, barkeep, stop trying to turn everything into a party and focus up!*

YUBARI: (muttering) That's what I keep saying.

SCENE 6F-08**LOCATION: FOREST CLEARING**

(Neeva drives up in the Fuji-San dune buggy and gets out.)

(We hear sawing in the distance)

NEEVA: Hello? (echo) Anyone here?

(Neeva walks over the lip of the hill)

NEEVA: Hello?

(The sawing stops)

LORHROK: Neeva? Who told you where to find me?

NEEVA: Nobody's seen you in days, Alecz! What are you doing way out here?

LORHROK: Well, I was trying to keep you from finding out before I was finished! I'm sorry, Neeva.

NEEVA: It's some kind of structure. A sawmill? I thought we weren't planning to start harvesting timber from here until Year Three.

LORHROK: We aren't. It's not a sawmill. It's... well, it's not yet, but it's going to be... a house.

NEEVA: A house?

LORHROK: Your house, actually.

NEEVA: I don't understand.

LORHROK: Well, you've been spending so much time and energy trying to help everyone else in the crew with special needs. (Pause) And I thought maybe somebody should do something special for you.

NEEVA: So you built me a house?

LORHROK: Well, I haven't actually built it yet. As you can see, I've barely got the frame together.

NEEVA: A house, though.

LORHROK: More like... a retreat. There's a time coming when you'll want to be away from the rest of the colonists, while you're learning to master your Orion powers. This is a place where you can do that.

NEEVA: It seems a little big for one person.

LORHROK: Neeva, there are a lot of people who love you. If you ask us, we will be there to help you. And, one day, when we get to the other side of all this... you won't need help, you might just want company.

NEEVA: I don't know what to say.

LORHROK: I know, I'm really sorry. You weren't supposed to just stumble into it...

NEEVA: No, no, I'm... amazed, Alecz. This is amazing. It looks like a really nice house. (chuckle) Well, alright, house frame. But all just for me, with resources so tight?

LORHROK: Neeva, have you or I spared one single thing when it comes to helping the special needs crew? That nitrogen exchanger for Grex -- did we replicate the cheap materials, or the expensive ones that will last a century? (pause) You're worth every molecule as much as Grex. And this is what you need.

NEEVA: You wouldn't do this for anyone else in the crew.

LORHROK: Only because you would have already done it for them.

NEEVA: You're very sweet, Alecz.

LORHROK: We're settling down. My command is ending. Pretty soon, I'm going to be entitled to be sweet. And there are a few mistakes I've made that I'm... keen on correcting.

NEEVA: Don't burn your uniform just yet. In fact, you might want to put it on.

LORHROK: What's up?

NEEVA: Something's going on up top.

LORHROK: Yubari wants another meeting about how we're putting too many resources into the colony?

NEEVA: It sounds... bigger. Sly heard it from Jordyn -- something about a recall, something about something that's happening today.

LORHROK: There has to be a miscommunication. A recall? I'm disappointed that so much of the crew is still trying to live on that shipwreck as it is.

NEEVA: So you haven't authorized any major operations?

LORHROK: Absolutely not!

(Neeva starts walking back down toward the dune buggy and opens the car door.)

NEEVA: Then I think you'd better get in the dune buggy.

(Lorhrok, lightly jogging after her, opens his door and gets in. Neeva turns on the ignition and they drive away)

SCENE 6F-09**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR ENGINEERING**

ELBRUN: Alright, folks, this is the tricky part. We're going to use the shuttle's tractor beam to spin the nacelle a bit, line it up with our pylons, then quickly hand off from the shuttle to the *Excelsior's* main tractor beam. Then we guide the nacelle in. Are we ready for coordinates?

ADOW: *We were ready at the beginning of your little recap, Jord.*

ELBRUN: Ready, captain.

YUBARI: Yellow alert! Just in case that still does anything.

ADOW: (simultaneously) *It doesn't.*

ELBRUN: (simultaneously) *It doesn't.*

ELBRUN: Okay, from the shuttle, we need pitch up point one one five by two six four, on my mark.

(Ovdan enters the changes)

OVDAN: *Dot one one five by two six four, laid in.*

ELBRUN: And... Mark!

(The shuttle tractor beam engages.)

OVDAN: *We're spinning the nacelle.*

ELBRUN: We're only going to be about four meters from poking a hole in the fuel tanks, so [be careful and let's get this right.]

ADOW: *JORDYN! WE KNOW.*

YUBARI: Okay, on my mark, L, disengage shuttle tractor beam and, Lieutenant, engage the *Excelsior's* tractor beam.

OVDAN: *Prepared to disengage.*

ELBRUN: Ready, ma'am.

ADOW: *Elevation one one three... one one four...*

YUBARI: Mark!

(The shuttle disengages its tractor beam. The ship engages its own.)

ELBRUN: Tractor switch successful.

YUBARI: Okay, guide 'im in.

(Alerts sound. Sparks fly. An engineering panel explodes. All power flickers)

YUBARI: What's happening, Lieutenant!

(Red Alert sounds)

ADOW: *You just lost the tractor beam is what happened!*

ELBRUN: Overload! Tractor's down! Shuttle: re-establish lock!

ADOW: *I'm trying!*

OVDAN: *Too late! Brace for impact!*

(The nacelle slams into the side of the ship. The whole ship rocks, even more panels explode, and something is ruptured)

YUBARI: Damage!

ELBRUN: We're venting deuterium! Six months of fuel is down to four and falling fast!

YUBARI: Seal it!

ELBRUN: Can't! Nothing's responding!

OVDAN: *Adow...*

ADOW: *Yeah, I got an idea, but you're gonna hate it.*

YUBARI: (simultaneously) *DO IT, Ensign!*

OVDAN: (simultaneously) *DO IT, Ensign!*

ADOW: *Phasers locked!*

OVDAN: *Wait, what?*

(Adow fires phasers at the *Excelsior* hull breach, We hear explosions.)

YUBARI: What the HELL, Ensign! Did you just fire phasers at US?!

ADOW: *I just saved our fuel tanks, "ma'am."*

ELBRUN: I can confirm that, ma'am. It sealed the breach. Fuel supply at... (sigh) nine weeks. We get home in nine weeks or never.

(We hear the shuttle's tractor re-engage)

OVDAN: *Tractor re-established.*

YUBARI: Fine. I take it fuel isn't the only thing we lost?

ELBRUN: Sections ten to twelve on Decks Fourteen, Fifteen, and Sixteen are... gone, captain.

YUBARI: So much for all that repair work on Astrometrics.

ELBRUN: No kidding. You're on course, L. Guide her in gentle. Twenty meters. Ten. (pause) Lock off.

ADOW: *Locking off.*

(The nacelle thunks into place on the ship's empty nacelle pylon)

ELBRUN: We've got it. Powering the warp core.

(We hear big stuff powering up, and then the warp core begins to pulse its reassuring thrum)

OVDAN: *Mission accomplished, captain. Tough one.*

YUBARI: They're all tough ones.

OVDAN: *Welcome to the chair, I guess. How's it feel?*

(Footsteps coming down the corridor just outside Engineering.)

YUBARI: Being "captain of the flagship of the universe"? Mostly ruined my sleep.

LORHROK: Captain of the flagship of what was that, Lieutenant Commander Yubari?

YUBARI: Capt--! I mean, Alecz Lorhrok! What are you...?

LORHROK: I want to know what the spast you think you're doing to my ship! I authorized no mission to retrieve our nacelle -- because the risk was far too great!

YUBARI: I'm sorry, Alecz, we knew you'd disagree with this operation, but we thou[ght we could protect the fuel supply.]

LORHROK: So you committed mutiny?! And blew up almost half the fuel we had left?! Our first winter's almost here; we needed that fuel! I should have you and your accomplices up on charges!

YUBARI: I'm afraid that won't be possible, Alecz. It's just as well you're here. We've had a hard time reaching you.

LORHROK: Just because you couldn't reach me so I could specifically tell you for the ninth time not to do this doesn't give you the right to do it anyway!

YUBARI: No, Alecz. I had the right to order this mission because, as of eighteen-thirty hours, I am the commanding officer of this starship. You've been relieved of duty, per Starfleet Order One-Oh-Four.

LORHROK: Commander, we talked about this at our last meeting. One-Oh-Four doesn't apply here. Evacuating to the colony isn't the same as abandoning my post.

YUBARI: You talked. You didn't give me much chance to tell you so, but we disagreed.

LORHROK: "We"?

YUBARI: My senior staff, the only department heads still at their posts: myself, Lieutenant Elbrun, Ensign Kinash Adow.

LORHROK: I had a right to a hearing!

YUBARI: By the regulations, this mission was too urgent for another delay, what with the falling fuel level and our repair timelines.

LORHROK: Repair timelines?!

YUBARI: Like I said, we couldn't reach you.

ADOW: *What the boss means is, we figured, you haven't given a crap about your ship or your crew or your job in like six months, why start now?*

LORHROK: I care deeply about the people on this ship. I've just been out of contact! On a, well, a mission.

ELBRUN: You never told us about that, sir. And, respectfully, sir, doesn't that kind of prove our point?

LORHROK: Lieutenant Commander Yubari, I am ordering you to im[mediately begin proper proceedings.]

YUBARI: No, Alec. You're not. You've been duly relieved. By the book! If I have to call security, [they can make that clear to you.]

LORHROK: Yubari, you clearly don't know the first thing about the book. Security only follows lawful orders.

YUBARI: The annotated regulations have been sent to your PADD. You should read them. Elsewhere.

LORHROK: He's right. We have better things to do than fight over a dead ship.

YUBARI: Sir, if you hadn't given up on this ship so easily, you might have seen [the progress we've been able to make the past few weeks].

LORHROK: Asuka, I used to be the chief engineer up here. I didn't give up easily. I gave up quickly -- before wasting months of limited resources on a doomed project. Where do you even expect to go from here? Earth's halfway across the galaxy -- and won't form from the cosmic gasses for another three billion years!

(Pause)

LORHROK: Well?

(Silence)

ELBRUN: We're... we're going to slingshot the *Excelsior* around the sun. A- At high warp. The gravity lens will send us back to our century.

LORHROK: You'll what?

YUBARI: We'll never abandon you or the colony, Alecz. We'll recall the crew first.

LORHROK: They aren't coming on a suicide mission.

YUBARI: If there are any... stragglers... when we get home, we'll give these coordinates to Temporal Investigations. They'll find a way to rescue anyone left behind.

LORHROK: *Excelsior* isn't strong enough for a slingshot. She can never be made that strong again, even at a shipyard. She's broken... in too many deep places.

ADOW: *You never were much of an engineer, were you, boss? Head too busy in the penthouse to see the details in the basement. She'll fly, captain.*

LORHROK: And when the ship snaps in half five minutes after hitting escape speed, and you all die of wishful thinking? A lot of your shipmates down on First Light will die, too, when winter sets in and they don't have *Excelsior* to help them weather it.

YUBARI: I believe in my crew, Alecz. And my crew has believed for twelve long, backbreaking months that we can do this.

LORHROK: You should come see what we're building on First Light.

YUBARI: Just leave us alone. That's all we want.

LORHROK: You know as well as I do that's impossible. We need each other, in more ways than either of us can count. (pause) Look, I don't want to involve security any more than you do.

YUBARI: They're my people.

LORHROK: Okay, maybe a little less than you do. Here's what I propose: how about any major decisions -- decisions that affect both sides -- we'll take those together? Otherwise, things stand as they are, and we keep sending each other what we need.

YUBARI: On equitable terms, of course.

LORHROK: Asuka, we're friends, not Ferengi. We're here to help each other.

YUBARI: We're a crew, and I'm its captain.

LORHROK: (snorts) Fine. If that helps you cope, okay. But I, speaking for First Light Colony, am willing to overlook the catastrophe you just inflicted on our deuterium supply only if I have your word of honor that nothing like it can happen again. So, do we have a deal?

YUBARI: Elbrun?

ELBRUN: Your call, sir.

(Pause)

YUBARI: Deal. Handshake.

(He clasps her outstretched hand and they shake.)

LORHROK: Not exactly the second founding of the Federation of Planets.

ELBRUN: Still. It's the first peace treaty in the history of the universe. Counts for something.

ADOW: *It's been TWELVE MONTHS, Jord. Please stop calling everything "first in the universe" all the time.*

YUBARI: Now, Lorhrok, I need to start power distribution.

LORHROK: And I need to inform the colonists that you just took three months off our lifespan. Excuse me.

(Lorhrok exits Engineering.)

SCENE 6F-10**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR**

(Lorhrok continues to walk away from Engineering.)

(He stops)

LORHROK: Computer. Computer. (sigh) Of course not.

THE MAJOR: Sir, can I help you?

LORHROK: Major! Yes, actually, I was looking for the way to the chief engineer's office. I see the main corridor is still blocked by debris.

THE MAJOR: There's a way around. I'll take you, sir.

LORHROK: Thank you, Major.

(They start walking.)

LORHROK: I was surprised to see you aboard. I thought I'd seen you down at the Seven Billion Club on First Light a few times.

(Some debris loudly clangs to the floor)

THE MAJOR: Ryan and I do live on the planet, sir. This ship is no place for a young man like him. But Nicole is a life support specialist, so she felt duty-bound to stay.

LORHROK: I'm sorry, Nicole Jensen in life support? You're... involved with her?

THE MAJOR: Yes, sir. She's my wife. Ten years next Christmas.

LORHROK: Of... course, I'm so sorry. Somehow, Major, you never put one in mind of a middle-aged dad.

THE MAJOR: Indeed, sir. We visit a few times a week -- every night, if we can -- at least until she decides it's time to go, or... well.

LORHROK: You can say it, Major. Or until *Excelsior* gives out entirely.

THE MAJOR: As you say, sir.

LORHROK: There are a lot of LARPerS around here, but I'm not one of them. I hope your wife sees the light soon.

THE MAJOR: (wry) The First Light, you might say, sir.

LORHROK: (one-syllable chuckle) I like that.

(They stop at a doorway.)

THE MAJOR: Well, here it is, sir. The Chief Engineer's office, just as Commander J'naya left it.

LORHROK: Adow isn't using it?

THE MAJOR: To be honest, sir, I don't think I've seen Ensign Adow outside a Jeffries Tube in months. It can still take hours to get from remote repair areas back to crew quarters and mess, so she may be sleeping out there, for all I know.

(The door opens.)

LORHROK: Why don't you step inside for a moment, Major? I want to show you something.

THE MAJOR: Of course, sir.

(They step inside and the door closes on them.)

SCENE 6F-11**LOCATION: DELTA LOUNGE**

(We hear a bottle decanted)

OVDAN: Top-up, Kinash?

ADOW: Keep 'em coming, barkeep.

(Ovdan pours something liquid into Adow's glass.)

ELBRUN: I'll say this for the disaster: we'd never have thought to move senior staff meetings to the bar, and now I'm not sure we should ever move them back. Ambience is everything!

ADOW: Especially now that we're getting supplied from Novacek's still.

YUBARI: For now.

ELBRUN: Mister Novacek wouldn't cut us off. It's just a friendly swap.

YUBARI: It was yesterday. Today, it's subject to the treaty.

OVDAN: First off, we need to stop calling it a treaty.

YUBARI: Fine. Agreement.

OVDAN: How about "surrender"? You're the captain of the United Starship Excelsior, Miz Yubari. Novacek's alcohol belongs to you. So does his still. So does his life. Except now you've given some civilian named Alec L the mistaken impression that he gets a vote, too.

YUBARI: I didn't hear your objection in Engineering.

OVDAN: I'm a barkeep.

YUBARI: You're our pilot. That's the only reason you're here.

OVDAN: Fine, either way, I'm in no position to defend the captain's prerogatives.

ADOW: At least top me up again before you try anyway?

OVDAN: We wanted to reduce the risk of a civil conflict. Instead, we just introduced the first element: some people on First Light are going to be confused now about who can give them orders. A legitimacy crisis. You did that.

YUBARI: Mister Ovdan, I have had it about up to here with your antics. First you convince us to relieve half the senior staff, [and then you have the gall to blame me when your little plan backfires?]

OVDAN: I only reminded you of Regulation One Oh Four.

ADOW: Uh-huh. "Reminded" us with a stack of legal briefs as high as my waist.

OVDAN: In my defense, Kinash, you're pretty short.

YUBARI: And then you have the gall to blame me when your little plan backfires? I don't know why I'm still listening to you!

OVDAN: (mumbled a bit) Well, I think I have some idea...

ELBRUN: As far as I'm concerned, ma'am, L's plan didn't backfire. We got what we needed: we have a warp core. My science team can finally start testing our theories about ancient subspace.

ADOW: It'll be slow going. Even with a core, we're still deep in a gravity well.

OVDAN: So let's get out of the gravity well. We can do whatever we want at the L2 Lagrange.

YUBARI: We can't.

OVDAN: Why not? Half the point of getting the nacelle was so we could restore impulse without the fusion plant!

YUBARI: I gave him my word. You of all people [should know what that means.]

ADOW: All we'll be doing is breaking orbit. It won't hurt the colony. We can still shuttle back and forth.

ELBRUN: But right now they can commute here in an hour. Out at the Lagrange... more like a day. People like The Major and his son...

OVDAN: If this counts as a major decision, Lorhrok's gonna veto everything we do from now until the power runs out.

YUBARI: (angrily) I'm not giving anyone a "veto," not Alecz, and certainly not the ship's barkeep. (deadly pause) Prepare for departure tomorrow at fourteen hundred. I'll be beaming down to First Light at oh-nine-hundred. Dismissed.

ADOW: We can be ready a lot sooner th[an that!]

YUBARI: DIS. MISSED.

ELBRUN: Ma'am.

ADOW: (sigh) Fine.

(Elbrun and Adow rise and head doorward.)

OVDAN: (big deep breath) Sorry, Yubari. I was out of line.

YUBARI: (icily) Correct. You never would have tolerated that.

OVDAN: Advantages of a civilian life, I guess.

YUBARI: Then don't tempt me to put you back in a uniform.

OVDAN: Heh, I know you can't. I'm damaged goods. That's why you're the only one who knows about me.

YUBARI: Neeva?

OVDAN: Well, yeah, but Parker told her. Look, I'm gonna go get some shut-eye. If you could lock up the Lounge when you're finished?

(Yubari has already picked up a padd and started studying it.)

YUBARI: Good night.

(He heads for the door and exits into the corridor.)

SCENE 6F-12**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR**

OVDAN: Computer, ship's time?

COMPUTER: The time is flux puppy ratchet heist.

OVDAN: That late, huh?

(He pulls out a pocketwatch, opens it, and we hear it ticking.)

OVDAN: I've got twenty-three-thirty, for what it's worth. On stardate two one one three nine... times minus ten to the twelfth.

(He comes around a corner and sees Lorhrok waiting for a turbolift. He puts the watch away.)

LORHROK: Interesting watch, Mister Ovdan.

OVDAN: Oh, are you waiting for the turbolift, too? Yeah, the watch, I found up on Deck One somewhere, in the wreckage. Someone must have lost it, and gave up looking too fast.

LORHROK: Or perhaps that little space -- you know, the one under the cushion of the captain's chair -- was intended to be its final resting place.

OVDAN: Then why would you come back? Why dig out your old uniform?

LORHROK: I have a responsibility to the well-being of this crew.

OVDAN: You abandoned them.

LORHROK: Not just the crew up here, Mister Ovdan. (pause) The people down there are mine, too.

OVDAN: And your responsibility to them is seven words long: get these people out of here alive.

LORHROK: That's right. Out of danger. Not into it. (pause) A slingshot, Mister Ovdan? Even if you could, without exploding, the range on a slingshot, around a star of that size, is only a thousand years, give or take. One slingshot won't bring you home -- a hundred slingshots, a million, and you'd have hardly begun.

OVDAN: Subspace is still forming this far back. One jump. A shuttle couldn't take it, but 'dyn -- that is, Lieutenant Elbrun -- thinks we can make it work right here.

LORHROK: He's wrong. *Excelsior's* back is broken.

OVDAN: The *Excelsior*.

LORHROK: Sorry?

OVDAN: The *Excelsior*. She's a good lady, but she doesn't get chummy with the crew. (morose pause) We don't last long enough.

(Pause)

LORHROK: What are you doing here?

OVDAN: Your job. (pause) Lift's slow. Think I'll walk. Smell the roses.

(L starts walking.)

LORHROK: Human idiom.

(L stops dead in his tracks.)

OVDAN: What was that?

LORHROK: "Smell the roses." A human idiom. I used to have a friend who'd rib us for using them. He thought they encouraged "human cultural imperialism." I hope my friend's alright.

(Silence)

OVDAN: You should look him up when we get home.

(L leaves.)

NARRATOR: *To be continued...*