*Starship: Excelsior*
**"The First Two Deaths"**
(Season 2, Episode 1)

## SCENE 201-01
## LOCATION: CONTEXTLESS

DOVAN: Did it work?

LORHROK: We have absolutely no way of knowing, sir.  The jury-rig may hold... or it may not.

DOVAN: So... I'll take that as a "yes"?

## LOCATION: SPACE

DOVAN: (staticy) *...is an emergency hail... ... ...I am forwarding our logs and further records with this transmission... Please advise.*

(Silence)

(A ship flies past.)

## LOCATION: *SIZEMORE* BRIDGE

(A door swishes open.)

MASTERSON: Admiral on the Bridge!

PARKER: Thank you, Commander.  Sorry I'm late.

MASTERSON: Perfectly understandable, Admiral Parker.

PARKER: Thank you, Commander.  But you can call me 'sir.'  Ship's status?

(Parker and Masterson walk together down to the captain's chair, Masterson clikcing her padd as she reports.)

MASTERSON: Sorry, sir. All stations report condition normal.  The U.S.S. *Sizemore* is in perfect condition.

PARKER: And her crew?

(Pause.)

MASTERSON: Tired, sir.

PARKER: (proud) They should be.  It's been a long eight months.  (pause)  At ease, gentlemen.  Resume your stations.

PARKER: This crew performed admirably during our last mission.  Her command staff in particular.

MASTERSON: Thank you, sir.

PARKER: E.T.A. to Starbase Nine-One-One -- and our well-earned rest?

MASTERSON: Three —

(Sensor alert.)

ROBINS: (confused) Captain... I'm picking up an emergency transmission.  Starfleet band.

PARKER: I see.  It seems Duty grants us no quarter today. On screen.

ROBINS: It's pretty broken up, sir--audio only.  I'm not going to be able to get much.

PARKER: Get what you can, and put it on speakers.

ROBINS: Aye, sir.

(The comm activates.)

DOVAN: (Broken up by static) *Our... mission... Valandria succeeded...*

(Comm abruptly shuts off.)

PARKER: Commander!  Get him back!

ROBINS: Trying, sir!

(Robins presses several buttons.  The speaker clicks back on and playback resumes.)

DOVAN: (severe static) *Captain Cortez was gravely injured... needs immediate medical attention at a starbase facility... suffered heavy losses and debilit...*

(Message ends, speakers shut off.)

(Silence.)

PARKER: (grave) Commander Masterson.

MASTERSON: Sir?

PARKER: (darkly) Find out where that came from.

## SCENE 201-02
## LOCATION: *EXCELSIOR* READY ROOM

(Dovan enters the ready room, conferring with an unidentified officer over a padd.)

DOVAN: These repair projections look good.  Tell Crewman Adow that I think we can spare the ion converters, but the warp pods are going to have to—

(Shocked pause.)

CORTEZ: (cheerfully) Carry on, Mister Dovan.

DOVAN: You're dismissed, Ensign.

(The ensign leaves.)

DOVAN: Captain Cortez.  Aren't you still in a coma?

CORTEZ: I've been reading your reports, Dovan.  You did very well at Valandria.

DOVAN: Captain... I nearly lost the ship.  And I lost... so many--

CORTEZ: (interrupting) Don't be so modest, Number One.  You stopped Sorid-Gee from destroying the *Excelsior*.  In the end, you and Lieutenant Yubari took the personal risk upon yourselves... and you won.  Starfleet will probably pin another medal on your chest.

DOVAN: I... um, thank you, ma'am.

CORTEZ: (stern) 'Captain' will be fine, Commander.  Not that that seems to have slowed you down any.

(Pause.)

CORTEZ: In fact, you've moved into my office quite comfortably, haven't you?

DOVAN: Only for the time being, Captain.  Until you're fit for duty again.  Which raises the question--

CORTEZ: Why am I here?  Just... looking over some things.

DOVAN: Such as...?

CORTEZ: A few things, really.  But mainly... Casualty reports.

DOVAN: Captain--

CORTEZ: (cutting him off) Abramson.  Aff.  Amara.  Ben'lat.  Davidius.

DOVAN: Captain, I--

CORTEZ: (interrupting again) Leo Amara.  Second Lieutenant.  Chief of Special Operations, U.S.S. *Excelsior*.  Born Nairobi, Kenya.  Starfleet Marine Academy Class of Seventy-One.

(She presses a button.)

CORTEZ: (reading, somewhat dramatically, from the padd) "In classes, Leo always had to run the farthest, jump the highest, answer the fastest.  He had to be the best at everything he tried.  We of the Starfleet Academy Board of Review are confident this ambition will serve Mr. Amara well as an officer of the Fleet."

(She clicks again and puts the padd down.)

CORTEZ: They were right.  His first day on the ship, Amara came to me in the briefing room with a list of demands he felt would make his department stronger.  I had to pull rank on him--twice--to make him see reason. He was shaping up to be an _excellent_ human being.

(Pause.)

CORTEZ: And now?

(Pause.)

DOVAN: And now he's... lost.

CORTEZ: And now he's _dead_, Commander.  Why is that?

DOVAN: Captain, I... I didn't...

CORTEZ: Didn't what, Mister Dovan?  Try hard enough?  No, you didn't.  But more imporatantly.  You didn't keep your word to me.


LOCATION: WHITE SPACE – flashback!

CORTEZ: Mr. Dovan… get these people out of here alive.

DOVAN: I will, Captain.

LOCATION: _EXCELSIOR_ READY ROOM

CORTEZ: You made me a promise.

DOVAN: (desperate) I tried to keep it.

CORTEZ: Why are these officers dead, Commander?  You could have done more!  Why didn't you get our people out _alive_?

(Suddenly, on that last word, Dovan wakes up.)

DOVAN: (gasps)

(The Ready Room doorbell chimes again.)

(Long Pause.)

DOVAN: (sigh) Another dream.

(Pause.)

(The door chimes again.)

DOVAN: Come!

(The door opens.)

DOVAN: Ah, Doctor Sharp.  Please, come in.

SHARP: Captain.

DOVAN: _Acting_ Captain.  You have something for me?

SHARP: (grimly) I'm afraid so, sir.

(She places a padd on the desk.)

SHARP: (still grim) Latest casualty reports.

DOVAN: Good.  I need to see them.

SHARP: Sir, that's the third time this week we've updated the list.  You don't need to keep subjecting yourself to this.

DOVAN: (picking up the padd) Some people would disagree with you, Melissa.

SHARP: Well, whoever "some people" are, _I'm_ your doctor and your counsellor, and _I_ say you need to stop this.

DOVAN: Counsellor?  Since when do I have a counsellor?

SHARP: Since your doctor assigned you one.

DOVAN: (quietly, firmly) Don't push me on this.

(A tense pause.)

SHARP: (tightly) Are you looking for anyone specific this time, or are you just trying to beat up on yourself some more?

DOVAN: Actually... yes.  I'm looking for Leo Amara.

SHARP: Oh.

SHARP: (cheerful) You won't find him on there.  Lieutenant Amara turned the corner early Monday morning.  He's going to make it.

(Dovan has been clicking through the list.)

DOVAN: Umm... He's listed.

SHARP: _What?_

(He hands her back the padd. She scrolls through.)

SHARP: Abramson.  Aff...  (dumbfounded) Amara. That's... that has to be a mistake. I'd better get this report checked out.  May I be excused, sir?

DOVAN: By all means.  Thank you, Doctor.

DOVAN: Actually, there's one more thing. (pause) Has there been any change in Captain Cortez's condition?

(Pause.)

SHARP: I'm sorry.  There's nothing more I can do except keep her in the coma for as long as I can without causing permenant brain damage.  She needs a Starbase sickbay if she's going to recover.

DOVAN: (grim) Understood.

(The intercom beeps.)

LORHROK: *Bridge to Dovan.  There's a message coming in for you, Commander.*

(Dovan taps his combadge.)

DOVAN: Finally!  Who from?

LORHROK: (facetious) *If you give me an engineering team, a hyperspanner, and three days, I could build a new subspace transceiver good enough to find out for you.*

DOVAN: (chuckle) Guess I'll just have to discover for myself, then.  Put it through here.

LORHROK: *Don't mind text-only, sir?*

DOVAN: Not a problem with me.

LORHROK: *Aye, sir.  Patching it through.*

(Dovan's computer switches on.)

PARKER: *Lieutenant Commander Dovan: Both Starbase Nine-One-One and the U.S.S. Sizemore, my flagship, have been apprised of your situation.  I have declared Code*

*One-Alpha-Zero and ordered the Sizemore to intercept you; we stand ready to provide any assistance possible.  Furthermore, the hospital ship U.S.S. Hope will be waiting for you at the edge of the Fohca Sector to receive your captain and any other wounded who require Starbase-quality medical care. We estimate rendezvous in two days. Until then... Godspeed, Commander. Parker out.*

## OPENING CREDITS

NARRATOR: *Today's episode: Murder in the Blue Morgue, Part One: "The First Two Deaths."*

**SCENE 201-03**
LOCATION: *EXCELSIOR* ENGINEERING

(Heavy work going on in the background.)

(Lorhrok is doing something with a plasma welder.)

(Rol enters the main doors and calls out to him.)

ROL: Ahoy, Lorhrok!

(Lorhrok switches off the plasma welder.)

LORHROK: (suspiciously) Lieutenant. What can I do for you?  Adow _said_ internal communications were back up; if she was wrong--

ROL: If they _were_ down, I wouldn't be seen on the same _deck_ as you.  You remember what happened the last time I came looking for you after comms went down.

LORHROK: The *Oracle*'s not something I'm going to forget soon, Lieutenant.  Is there something I can do for you?

ROL: Actually, Lieutenant, I just came down to see if I could help.

LORHROK: Help?

ROL: I have a little engineering experience.  From the Academy.

LORHROK: Well... if you're sure, I was actually waiting for someone to help me realign the flow regulators.  Once that's done, we might be able to pump a bit more petrol into this engine--

ROL: --and increase our warp speed.  Happy to help.  Just tell me what to do.

LORHROK: Well, first, you have to call up the autoalignment tool.

(He demonstrates on the neighboring console.)

LORHROK: Then, while I'm adjusting the constrictor intensity from over here, you just monitor the self-diagnostics and make sure the neutron flow doesn't reverse polarity on us.

ROL: Okay.  But wouldn't it be easier and faster for you if I bypassed the autoaligner and used direct magnetic force waves to get my bearings?  Like this?

(He inputs a few things on the console in quick succession.  It displays output.)

LORHROK: Well, yes, but...  I guarantee they didn't teach you _that_ at the Academy.

(Pause.)

ROL: (tersely) No, they didn't.  I also served as Assistant Chief Engineer on the _Victoria_ right before the War broke out.

LORHROK: (exasperated exhale) Tell me, Rol, do you _ever_ tell the whole truth?

ROL: As a rule?  Not unless the other guy thinks it's a lie.

LORHROK: But _why_?

ROL: I'm an infiltration officer in special operations; what did you expect?

LORHROK: You're going to have to do better than _that_.

(Pause.)

ROL: Do you want the honest truth?

LORHROK: (ironic) Or its nearest approximation.

ROL: Alright. I learned when I was very young that the first rule of warfare is: know thy enemy.  I just don't let my enemies have that advantage over me.  If they don't understand me, they can't manipulate me.

LORHROK: You don't have to treat _everyone_ as if they're your enemy, Rol.

ROL: (matter-of-factly) I don't.

LORHROK: Well, you've never let _me_ learn anything about you.

ROL: That's because I don't trust you.

LORHROK: (very dry) How ironic.

ROL: You can trust _me_ to uphold my oath, Lieutenant.  I might not always take the most direct path, but when I swore "to serve and protect the natural rights of all sapient beings," I meant it. I don't trust you because I'm not sure I can say the same of you.

LORHROK: (incredulous) What about the Prime Directive, Rol?  And all the other regulations you broke aboard the _Oracle_?  What about the part where you swore "to conduct yourself according to the laws of your homeworld and the directives of Starfleet"?

ROL: There's a reason that part of the oath is listed last.

LORHROK: What, so you can ignore it at your whim?

ROL: (intense) No: it's because we Starfleet officers are _trusted_ to decide when there are more important things at stake!

LORHROK: Now you're going to fancy yourself the philosophical heir of Captain Kirk, aren't you?

ROL: Actually, I was always partial to _real_ cowboys.  Like Paul Edwards.  Or Malcolm Reynolds.

LORHROK: (Angrily) I can't believe--

ROL: (interrupting) _Lieutenant_.

ROL: I suggest we go back to focusing on the flow regulators, before this conversation gets out of hand.

(Silence.)

LORHROK: (huffily) Hrm. Agreed. In fact, I was going to have Crewman Harkless do the manual adjustments, but I think I'm going to go make them myself.  You may go, Lieutenant.

ROL: (graciously) Of course.

(Lorhrok walks away.)

(Rol starts pressing buttons.

ROL: (to self) Of course, the fact that I've just driven you away gives me _just_ enough time...

COMPUTER: _Input sigma-seven security override._

ROL: ...to deactivate internal sensors in my quarters.

COMPUTER: _Security authorization accepted.  Override complete._

ROL: Thank you, computer.

(Rol starts walking.)

ROL: I love a nice, _successful_ plan.

(He exits Engineering.)

## SCENE 201-04a
## LOCATION: *EXCELSIOR* BRIDGE

(Dovan enters from the turbolift.)

YUBARI: Captain on the bridge!

DOVAN: (cheerful) At ease, everyone.  And to you humans: Merry Christmas!  I'm sorry the only gift I can give you is a double shift.

(The six other people on the bridge groan, except Lorhrok.)

LORHROK: (playing it straight) Thank you, sir!

DOVAN: It's my pleasure, Lieutenant.  Miss Yubari.  You called me up here.  Ship's status report?

YUBARI: (coldly) The U.S.S. *Sizemore* just dropped out of warp fifty thousand kilometers off our port bow.

DOVAN: Thank you, Lieutenant.  Also, I'd like to see you in my office this afternoon. We have something to discuss.

YUBARI: (colder) Of course, sir.

DOVAN: (still cheerful) Now, put the *Sizemore* on screen, Lieutenant.

(Lohrok stops working.)

LORHROK: Actually, sir...

DOVAN: Don't tell me.  No viewscreen?

LORHROK: The viewscreen becomes a luxury when the crew is living on combat rations, I'm afraid.  I doubt I can get to it before Tuesday.

DOVAN: Five days is a long time to go without a viewscreen.

LORHROK: Five days without a viewscreen or five days without food.  It's your call.

(Lorhrok gets back to work.)

DOVAN: Well, then. Tactical, what about transporters?

YUBARI: We got Transporter Room Three operational this morning, but the technicians started complaining about some strange smell, so they shut it down.  Something about "molybdenum."

DOVAN: Figures.  How about shuttlecraft?

YUBARI: Not even close, sir.

DOVAN: Of course not.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Are the _umbilicals_ working?

(Yubari presses some buttons.)

YUBARI: Actually... yes, sir.  Yes, they are.

DOVAN: Well, then, tell the _Sizemore_ to hook up with us.  Flash our running lights in Morse Code if you have to, but get that message across.  Lorhrok, you're with me!

YUBARI and LORHROK: Aye, sir!

**SCENE 201-04b**
LOCATION: ROL'S QUARTERS

(Rol enters.)

ROL: Ah.  Home, sweet home. Computer, lock the door.

(The computer boops in affirmation.  The door locks electronically behind him.)

He sits down at his desk.  He presses a button and a servo-mechanism whirrs, causing a panel of his desk to slide back. He carefully inserts a single isolinear and the computer accepts it.)

ROL: Computer, I'm plugging in an isolinear chip for file playback.  Do you detect it?

COMPUTER: *Affirmative.  Ready to begin reading file.*

ROL: Before we do that, let's do a little forensic work on it, shall we?  Open a new file, computer.  Encrypt Sigma-Seven auth' codes and begin recording.

(The computer beeps in acknowledgement.)

ROL: Alex Rol, data-gathering session, Amara data chip. Overview: Chief of Special Operations Leo Amara, my immediate superior, attempted to sneak this chip into my posession shortly before he was afflicted with the Wasting.  When I detected him, he denied all knowledge of the chip and its contents.  His only hint was that it "might explain the dreams." Which raises the question: how does he know about my dreams? How _much_ does he know? After skimming the data file yesterday, I am sitting down now for a formal, recorded review. Beginning analysis. Computer, do you detect any fingerprints on the isolinear chip I just inserted?

COMPUTER: *Affirmative.*

ROL: Whose?

COMPUTER: *Lieutenant Alex Rol.  Second Lieutenant Leo Amara.*

ROL: Good.  That checks out.  How about the chip itself? What's the chip's origin?  Where was it first initialized?

COMPUTER: *San Francisco, Earth.*

ROL: Override security seals with my authorization and requery.

(The computer beeps and corrects itself.)

COMPUTER: *Starfleet Intellignce Annex, Starfleet Headquarters, San Francisco, Earth.*

ROL: What's the clearance level for access to this chip?

COMPUTER: *Sigma-Two.*

ROL: How in the stars did Leo Amara get Sigma-Two authorization?

COMPUTER: *Unknown.*

ROL: It was worth a try.  Who's the file's author?

COMPUTER: *That information has been deleted.*

ROL: Restore.

COMPUTER: *Unable to comply.*

ROL: Impressive! Let's get down to brass tacks, then.  Computer, analyze this chip and cross-reference it against file Rol-Four-Seven.  List all matches.

(The computer processes this.)

COMPUTER: (listing; quickly) *Sword of Damocles. General Isaac Brahms. Captain Chandra Siresh. Lieutenant Asuka Yubari. Second Lieutenant Ryan Willis. U.S.S. Yorktown. Junior Lieutenant Alex Rol. Genetic control. U.S.S. --*

ROL: Thank you, computer; that's all I needed to know.  Begin textual playback of data chip contents on my monitor.

(The computer boops acknowledgement and complies.  Text scrolls across his computer screen.)

ROL: Increase scroll speed by a factor of... two hundred.

COMPUTER: *Warning: that speed significantly exceeds human readback capacity.*

ROL: If you only knew the half of it, computer.  Do it anyway.

(Computer boops acknowledgement.  The scrolling sound quickly speeds up by an extreme factor, more like a high-pitched whine.)

(After few moments, the scrolling stops.)

COMPUTER: *File ends.*

ROL: Thank you, computer.  That was extremely helpful. One last question.  What killed Leo Amara?

COMPUTER: *Massive brain hemmorraging caused by the disease known as the Wasting.*

ROL: You're sure there was no foul play?

COMPUTER: *Cause of death given is one recorded on Lieutenant Amara's death certificate.*

ROL: Interesting. Computer, subject the data chip in slot one-A to a sustained isometric power burst at a frequency of two hundred seventy-seven megahertz.

COMPUTER: *Warning: that command will destroy all data and functionality on the chip in slot one-A.*

ROL: My point exactly. End recording.

**SCENE 201-05**
LOCATION: *EXCELSIOR* CORRIDOR — NEAR AIRLOCK

(Dovan and Lorhrok are walking down the corridor.)

LORHROK: So, have you ever actually _met_ Admiral Parker?

DOVAN: No.  But I'm told he's... big.

LORHROK: Really?  The computer told me he's only one-point-seven meters tall.  And skinny.

(They stop walking.)

DOVAN: I heard the same thing, actually.  But some people know how to make one-and-a-half meters _big_.  Admiral Athos Parker is one of them. Has pressure been equalized?

(Lorhrok checks the control panel on the wall.  It boops.)

LORHROK: Yes.

DOVAN: Then open the gates, Lieutenant.

(Lorhrok opens the airlock. Footsteps approach.)

DOVAN: (saluting) Admiral Parker, sir!

PARKER: At ease!  Lieutenant Commander Dovan, I presume?

DOVAN: Yes, sir.  Welcome aboard the *Excelsior*, Admiral.  And thank you for coming to our assistance.

PARKER: Given that we're having this conversation in a metal tube connecting our starships instead of on the viewscreens in our comfortable ready rooms... I have to say I appreciate the gravity of your situation, Commander.

DOVAN: I hope you'll forgive the small welcoming party. Our staff is tied up performing crucial duties.

PARKER: Perfectly understandable, Commander.  Social nicities aside, I'd like to get down to business.

DOVAN: Of course.

PARKER: This is my Executive Officer, Commander Alix Masterson.  She'll be working on logistical support for you and your crew, including supplies, medical transfers, and the like.

(Masterson checks her PADD.)

MASTERSON: We should have some replicated food coming over to your ship's galley within the hour.  That should get your crew off combat rations, at least until the replicators are repaired.

PARKER: ...and my Chief of Engineering, Lieutenant Commander David Robins.  His work crews are standing by to assist as soon as we're done talking here.

ROBINS: We think we can have you up to Warp 5 by the end of the afternoon.

PARKER: And if there's anything else we can do for you, Commander, just ask.

DOVAN: Thank you, both of you.  You're going to do a lot of good here. I'm very grateful, sir.  I just hope Mr. Robins' teams won't mind working under a junior lieutenant.

PARKER: (surprised) Your acting chief engineer is a junior lieutenant?

DOVAN: Actually, no.  My _real_ chief engineer is a junior lieutenant.  My _acting_ chief is a non-com.  I was referring to Junior Lieutenant Alecz Lorhrok, my acting executive officer.

LORHROK: (sheepish) Hi.

PARKER: (pause) My people will respect your chain of command. Insane as it may be at the moment. What's Captain Cortez's status?

DOVAN: Bad.  Doctor Sharp's last report says the Captain still has strong brain activity, but it's getting more chaotic.  She'll need a small miracle just to make it to your hospital ship before slipping into a persistent vegetative state.

PARKER: (determined) I don't make a habit of letting Starfleet captains die without a fight.  I'll see what I can do.

DOVAN: I appreciate that, Admiral.  You've been more than generous. Would you care to join me for a drink in my quarters?  I believe the appropriate human beverage would be "eggnog"?

PARKER: Thank you, Commander.  I'd be glad to join you.  But let's make it Christmas dinner.  My dining room, nineteen hundred hours.

DOVAN: Thank you, sir, but I feel obligated to--

PARKER: You owe us nothing, Commander.  Just one Starfleet vessel helping another out. I'll see you at nineteen hundred.

DOVAN: Aye, sir.

PARKER: Let's get to it!  Dismissed!

**SCENE 201-06**
LOCATION: READY ROOM

(Yubari enters and strides to the desk.)

YUBARI: Well, I suppose the only question is, are you gonna strip my rank like you threatened, or are you gonna pin a medal on my chest?

DOVAN: (politely) Lieutenant Yubari.  Thank you for coming.  Will you have a seat?

YUBRI: I prefer to stand.

DOVAN: (still polite) Then consider it an order.

(After a moment of stony silence, Yubari angrily sits.)

DOVAN: Lieutenant, I have three things I want to discuss with you.  First, about our argument on the bridge during the battle at Valandria... (he inhales and exhales once) ...I was wrong.  I'm sorry.  If you hadn't shouted at me when you did, we'd probably _all_ be dead right now.  I was way out of line. I'm certainly not here to demote you... though we'll have to wait and see about the medal.

YUBARI: What had to be done at Valandria got done, sir.  Despite our tactical disagreement, we both lived, and the ship is... undestroyed, at least.  A lot more people would have lost their lives if we hadn't both been acting "out of line" during that whole affair. (Short silence.) With all due respect, sir.

DOVAN: You have a good point, Lieutenant.  My apology stands, but thank you. Now, the next thing.  I need to know: you weren't listed on _any_ manifest, Lieutenant.  I checked.  We're lucky we found you when we did.

YUBARI: I asked Captain Cortez not to add me to the manifest.

DOVAN: Yes, exactly.  You said during the battle that, if she were here, she would explain why.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: You're technically assigned in the computer system as an engineering diagnostician.  But we've already established that that was a cover story for some kind of intelligence mission, is that right?

(Silence.)

YUBARI: Yes.

DOVAN: Pray tell, Lieutenant.

YUBARI: I've been serving as an intelligence analyst for almost two years, sir.  This is my first field assignment since I left the marine corps; I'd really rather not divulge any more details than I've already leaked.

DOVAN: Okay.  Then allow me to let you in on what I've learned since we last spoke.

(Dovan picks up a small device off the table.  It whirs on and off.)

DOVAN: Mr. P'chk'ro'ta has done some checking up on your activities on the *Excelsior*.  This is just one of more than two dozen camera devices he's found around the ship... so far.

(He uncermoniously drops it to the table.)

DOVAN: Many of them were placed in crew quarters, in blatant violation of half a dozen Starfleet regs.

YUBARI: The regulations didn't apply here, sir.  We had clearance under the Starfleet Security Proclamation of 2372.

DOVAN: Mmm. I didn't know they left that in force after the War. Second thing we discovered is that there's a gigantic sensor array hooked up to the inside of the deflector dish. A sensor array with a range and resolution... well, I've never seen anything like it before. And it was hidden under three levels of security and protected by an access code.

YUBARI: Mine?

DOVAN: No. Captain Cortez's, actually. Which has me puzzled. Now, will you please tell me more about your mission, or do I have to start filling in the blanks myself?

(A lengthy pause.)

YUBARI: (takes a deep breath) It was a standard intelligence-gathering op, sir. The *Excelsior* was going to be passing near some unexplored territory en route to Valandria, and S.I.--sorry, Starfleet Intelligence--wanted some high-resolution scans of the area. I was given a few locations to scan and ordered to give the data to Captain Cortez. I didn't find anything interesting, sir. A few unidentified space stations deep in unexplored space and a new dark-matter nebula.

DOVAN: And the listening devices? Is it standard procedure in S.I. to ignore the privacy of entire Starfleet crews in order to spy on them?

YUBARI: I... I guess I wouldn't know, sir. This is my first field assignment, after all. But I've never heard of anything like it before. If there _was_ a larger purpose to my mission, no one told me about it. You'd have to ask my commanding officer.

DOVAN: Who is...?

YUBARI: I report to General Isaac Brahms, Special Projects division.

DOVAN: I'm not familiar with him.

YUBARI: (joking, but sounds serious) If you were, sir, I'd have to kill you.

DOVAN: (brightly) Well, I always wanted to be killed by someone with class. (seriously) There's nothing more you can tell me?  No way I could find out more information?

YUBARI: I was only able to explain my mission to Captain Cortez because she was on the approved list.  You are not.  And, frankly, sir, I've read your file.  You couldn't get on the approved list if you were an S.I. *informant.*  For a hundred years.

DOVAN: Nice to get a vote of confidence from Starfleet's spookiest. May I be forward, Lieutenant?

YUBARI: Sir?

DOVAN: I want you as my chief of security, effective immediately.

YUBARI: (surprised) I... *Sir?*

DOVAN: You performed well beyond my expectations at Valandria.  There's no doubt you saved the ship at least once, and my life several times more than that.  When I'm leading away missions as X.O., I'd like to know you're the who's got my six.  We seem to be fresh out of security chiefs after Valandria, so...

(Silence.)

YUBARI: I'd like that, sir.  I think I've shown that my prowess as an intelligence officer leaves much to be desired, and I would like to get back in the field permenantly.  I'm not sure that Starfleet Intelligence will approve, though.

DOVAN: Not to put to fine a point on it, but this kind of offer doesn't come around often.  Chief of Security on a *Sovereign*-class starship... it's a highly coveted position.

YUBARI: Yes, it is.  I really would like to take it.  I'm just worried that it might be difficult to obtain the transfer orders.  General Brahms has done a lot for me since my marine days.  He might not understand.

DOVAN: Well, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.  For now, Lieutenant, I'll consider that an acceptance.

(He stands up and offers a hand.)

DOVAN: Welcome to the *Starship Excelsior*.

(She takes the hand.)

YUBARI: Thank you, Commander.

DOVAN: Dismissed.

(Yubari starts to leave.)

DOVAN: Oh, and, Lieutenant.  I almost forgot: You took a pretty bad hit on Valandria.  How's the arm?

YUBARI: (coldly) Prosthetic.

DOVAN: (taken aback) Oh. I'm sorry.  I had no idea Sorid-Gee's shot did so much damage.

YUBARI: (darkly) It doesn't matter.

(Yubari exits.)

**<u>SCENE 201-07</u>**
<u>LOCATION: SICKBAY</u>

(Lorhrok enters.)

LORHROK: Doctor Sharp?

SHARP: Over here, Mr. Lorhrok!

(She closes whatever file it is she was working on.)

SHARP: I'm glad you were able to come so quickly.

LORHROK: You said it was urgent.

SHARP: It is.  Come, look at this.

(She activates a monitor.)

LORHROK: These are... medical files?

SHARP: Raw data, actually.  Everything I've gathered from the people still suffering from the Wasting.

LORHROK: (clarifying) The ones you've put in those do-it-yourself medical wards all over the ship?

SHARP: Anywhere with stasis fields.  God knows we needed a lot of them. These are the files for the patients at Site Red--the critical condition cases.  That's down in the bioscience labs on Deck 15.

(She presses a button.)

SHARP: These are the files for people we're not sure about yet.  They might recover from the Wasting in a day or two, or they might join the long-term cases down in Red. Site Yellow, the Armory.

(She presses another button.)

SHARP: And _these_ are the files for the stable patients at Site Blue.

LORHROK: The morgue. All these files are empty.  No data.

SHARP: Exactly.  Everything we've recorded has gone missing.  The computer insists there was never any data there, but I've spent too many hours updating these files to buy that.  And you can see how painstaking our other records have been; this isn't some user error on our part.

LORHROK: (despondently) Oh, boy.

SHARP: I really need that data if we're ever going to get the people down in Red Ward back on their feet.  Isn't there something you can do?

LORHROK: I... Spast, I had no idea the damage to the computer core had gotten this bad. There should be a way to recover your data, Doctor.  I'll get on it myself.

SHARP: What about--?

LORHROK: Adow and this Robins fellow have things well in hand in Engineering.  They won't miss me for a few hours.

SHARP: (sincerely) _Thank_ you, Lieutenant.  I owe you one.

LORHROK: I'll remind you of that next time I'm on the operating table.

(He leaves the office.  Sharp follows him out. They pass by a medical bed.)

LORHROK: How is she?

SHARP: The captain? Don't ask.

(Silence.)

LORHROK: I don't know how this ship is going to hold together if she's gone much longer.

SHARP: Don't think Commander Dovan is up to keeping us in one piece?

LORHROK: I... I don't know, Doctor. I like the First Officer, and he's a decorated combat officer, but... he's not Captain Cortez. Four pips weigh a lot more than two and a half, especially when the ship is falling apart around our ears.

SHARP: Well... I hope we don't have to find out.

LORHROK: So say we all, Doctor. I'll see what I can do for your computers.

(He exits.)

**SCENE 201-08**
LOCATION: U.S.S. *SIZEMORE* – ADMIRAL PARKER'S DINING ROOM

(Dovan and Parker are eating.)

DOVAN: (swallowing) My compliments to your chef, sir.  I haven't had roast teracaq this good since the *Endeavor* visited the Cyngiai Expanse when I was an ensign.

PARKER: Please, Commander.  Call me "Admiral."

DOVAN: Yes, sir... Admiral.

PARKER: As for my chef, he tells me that the trick is in properly preparing the essence--

(The intercom beeps.)

MASTERSON: *Bridge to Admiral Parker.*

PARKER: I apologize, Commander.  I have to take this.

DOVAN: Of course, Admiral.

PARKER: Thank you.

(He hits his combadge.)

PARKER: Go ahead, Miz Masterson.

MASTERSON: *There's a message coming in for you, sir.  It's marked very urgent... and it's on Secure Channel One.*

PARKER: Secure Channel One... Nothing good ever comes in on that frequency.  Put it through to me down here, Commander.

MASTERSON: *Aye, sir.  Bridge out.*

DOVAN: Thank you for the meal, Admiral.  I'd better get back to the--

PARKER: Don't go just yet, Commander.  Whatever this message says may involve you. I'll be right back.

DOVAN: Aye, sir.  Admiral.

(Parker walks away from the table and steps through a side door into a private room and activates a computer console.)

PARKER: Admiral Parker speaking.  What's the nature of the emergency, Mister...?

BRAHMS: General.  Don't let my lack of official attire fool you.

PARKER: General?  I don't—

BRAHMS: I'm with Special Projects. Admiral, I'll get right to the point.  There's going to be an incident aboard the *Sizemore.*

PARKER: An... incident?  Of what kind?

BRAHMS: That's not your concern.

PARKER: (mildly outraged) Not my... General, how am I supposed to <u>stop</u> this "incident" if you won't tell me what it <u>is</u>?

BRAHMS: You're not <u>going</u> to stop it, Admiral.  You are also not going to investigate it.

(Pause.)

PARKER: Is that a threat, General?

BRAHMS: It's an order, Mr. Parker.  Anyone who looks into this matter places him or herself in grave danger.

PARKER: Danger at your hands, General?

BRAHMS: Again, Admiral, that's not your concern.  Brahms out.

(The connection abruptly ends. Parker stands and starts crossing back into the main dining area.)

PARKER: Bridge, this is Parker.  Yellow Alert.

MASTERSON: *This is the bridge.  Did I hear you right, sir?*

PARKER: Do it now.  Take us to a level one security alert.  Prepare to decouple from the *Excelsior* and raise shields on my order.

MASTERSON: *Right away, sir.*

DOVAN: Admiral?  What's happened?

PARKER: (bitterly) Apparently, it's none of my concern. I'm afraid I have to cut our meal short, Commander.  I'll escort you back to the airlock immediately.

DOVAN: Admiral--

PARKER: No, Dovan.  This is over your head.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Alright.  Lead the way.

(They exit Parker's quarters and enter the hallway.  The yellow alert klaxon is just going off. They get a little ways down the corridor, approaching Lt. Cmdr. Robins, who is going some heavy-duty work on an open power flow regulator in the corridor wall.)

ROBINS: Admiral! Sir, what's going on?

PARKER: I'm not sure yet, Robins.  What are you up to?

ROBINS: There was an power fluctuation in one of the plasma injectors while we were on the *Excelsior* today.  It was serious enough that I came back to the *Sizemore* to check it out.  And it seems to be coming from this power coupling here.

PARKER: Can it wait until later?

ROBINS: Frankly, sir, it can't.  It's probably nothing... but, if it's something, and it shuts down one of the plasma injectors while we're at warp, this ship is space dust.

(Pause.)

PARKER: Understood.  Finish up here as quickly as you can, and then get back to Engineering.

ROBINS: Aye, sir.

(Parker and Dovan move on.)

DOVAN: Admiral, this is a hell of a lot of reaction for one thirty-second long-distance call.  What's going on?

PARKER: Don't ask me again, Commander.

DOVAN: Don't intimidate me, Admiral.  I'm immune.

PARKER: (angrily!) Commander, I assure you, if there's anything you can do —

(There is a tremendous explosion behind them; a fireball rushes towards them.)

DOVAN: Down!

(He tackles Parker, who does not resist. The fireball roars, some bulkheads collapse, there are a number of secondary explosions, and there is ringing. After a few moments:)

DOVAN: Admiral.  Are you hurt?

PARKER: Yes.  But my body is fine. What the hell was that?

DOVAN: I'd say your Mr. Robins made a mistake on that--  Jehosephat.

PARKER: Robins!

(Parker jumps up and jogs down the hallway towards the burning wreck.  Dovan follows closely.)

DOVAN: Admiral, you can't go in there!

PARKER: My chief engineer is still in that inferno!  I can't leave him!

(Pause.)

DOVAN: I understand. But, Admiral... that was warp plasma running through that conduit.  When it went up, it would have been more than a million degrees at the epicenter. Commander Robins was vaporized, sir.  There's nothing we can do.

(They are both silent.)

PARKER: Get back to your ship, Commander.  We'll talk again later.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Yes, sir.

(Dovan turns and jogs away.)

## SCENE 201-09
## LOCATION: SICKBAY

(Lorhrok enters.)

LORHROK: Doctor.

SHARP: Ah, Mr. Lorhrok.  I figured I'd be hearing from you in a few minutes.

(She walks over to him.)

LORHROK: It took hours in the computer core.  But I found out what happened to your files.  They weren't just lost in a computer glitch.

SHARP: They were erased, weren't they?

LORHROK: I... yes.  Someone deliberately wiped those files from the database. How did you know?

SHARP: I just finished my autopsy of Mister Amara.  As it turns out, the Wasting isn't what killed him. There were ten cee-cee's of warp plasma in his blood.

LORHROK: _Warp plasma?_  But how?

SHARP: Simple enough, Lieutenant. Between the hours of twenty-one hundred last night and oh-seven-thirty this morning, someone injected him with it.

LORHROK: _Injected?_ What exactly are you saying, Doctor?

SHARP: (bitterly) Exactly what you think I'm saying. Leo Amara was murdered.