

*Starship: Excelsior*  
**"The Graceful End"**  
(Season 3, Episode 9)  
by James Heaney

Transcribed by Peter Stine

---

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

## **SCENE 309-00 (Recap)**

**BRAHMS:** *Stardate Six-Zero-Zero-Six-Four? Yes, I remember it well. (pause) When you're in my line of work, you know every day when you wake up that you might never go to sleep again. But you don't really think about it. You don't... expect it. (pause) It was a Tuesday – my favorite day of the week. When Tryla – my sister – was in the Academy, Tuesday was when we met for lunch between classes. A different city every day – Bangkok, Calgary, Tycho – but she always found someplace with a view. (pause) After Tryla died, I fought to preserve the Federation she had loved. For nineteen years, I maintained an impossible stalemate.*

### **LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CONFERENCE ROOM (FROM 306-20)**

**BRAHMS:** The bluegills challenged the Borg, and the two sides were evenly matched. Their war has dragged on into a stalemate bloodier than a thousand Dominion Wars. But the day that war ends...

**UNDERWOOD:** Winner takes galaxy.

**YUBARI:** And nothing can stop them.

**BRAHMS:** *And, after nineteen years... I failed.*

### **LOCATION: TURBOLIFT (FROM 308-08)**

**DOVAN:** The only thing that has prevented the conquest of the galaxy for the last nineteen years has been the secret war between the Borg and the Bluegills... and they are on the verge of declaring peace.

**BRAHMS:** *The Federation was in full retreat.*

LOCATION: PALAIS DE LA CONCORDE – PRESIDENT’S OFFICE (FROM 308-01)

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

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

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

BRAHMS: *Trapped within a gas cloud, surrounded by enemy ships, we had one last – desperate – chance, to save the galaxy.*

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CREW QUARTERS (FROM 307-25)

BRAHMS: We’d have to kill every single living organism in this star system! (snip) ...And make it look like somebody else did it.

DOVAN: Go on.

BRAHMS: *It wasn’t easy.*

LOCATION: U.S.S. EXCELSIOR – MAIN ENGINEERING (from 308-04)

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

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

BRAHMS: *Sacrifices were made.*

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR (from 308-08)

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

BRAHMS: *I made myself into a telepathic weapon, with no idea of the psychic adventure I was to undertake.*

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR SICKBAY (from 308-08)

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

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

SHARP: I'm not finished. General Brahms was long ago dosed with (snip) a neural suppressant that will prevent you from taking control of his body.

BRAHMS: *But, finally, our preparations were finished.*

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR CORRIDOR (from 308-04)

UNDERWOOD: I was looking for evidence of the Scions of the Stars. (snip) I may have found them (snip) right out at the edge of the system.

BRAHMS: *Little did we know – we were not alone aboard the Excelsior. One Away Team had survived, and reached the surface of Gevinon, the world we planned to destroy.*

LOCATION: GEVINON PRIME – JUNGLE HABITAT – NIGHT (from 308-07)

LORHROK: I don't know. We need intel. Not just launch codes and star charts – information that helps us get back to the Federation – but something for Starfleet.

(snip)

NEEVA: Where are you thinking?

LORHROK: It's a hybrid spaceport, remember?

(snip)

NEEVA: Half of it was in the ocean. (snip) Uh-oh.

BRAHMS: *And the Major had discovered an even more shocking survivor.*

LOCATION: GEVINON – COMM TOWER – CONFERENCE ROOM (from 308-06)

COX: I'm Skipper Sam Cox of the S.S. *Anbar*.

(snip)

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

COX: We're busting out of here, Major. We're going to convince the buggers they're being attacked, use the cover of the storm to our advantage, and then we're gonna hitch a ride with the Scions of the Stars while the buggers've got their pants down. (pause) You coming?

BRAHMS: *Oh, but Simon. Simon Westlake. I never met the boy while he was with the Excelsior, but, after everything he'd been through...*

LOCATION: GEVINON PRIME – ANCIENT TUNNELS (from 308-05)

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

LORHROK: Oh, no.

LOCATION: SICKBAY (FROM 100-13)

WESTLAKE: I'm sick.

SHARP: Once it takes hold, it can cause a breakdown in the chemical chains which store memory. (snip) Sufferers' (snip) lives were, for all intents and purposes, over.

BRAHMS: *Stars! How I wish he could have shared my fate instead. (pause) But he got that shuttle off the ground, and that has made all the difference in the galaxy. (pause) It was twelve minutes until Zero Hour – oh-three-forty-eight hours. The date was January the twenty-fifth, Twenty-Three Eighty-Three. (pause; slowly) That was the day I died.*

**SCENE 309-01****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BATTLE BRIDGE**

**NARRATOR:** *Inside the gas cloud, aboard the Starship Excelsior.*

(A turbolift door opens. Dovan, Underwood, and Yubari are in it.)

**DOVAN:** Computer? Activate the battle bridge.

(The computer boops its acknowledgement, and, with a flourish, the battle bridge powers up.)

(Dovan and Underwood head for the captain's chair.)

**YUBARI:** Well, the rumors were true. We actually have one.

**DOVAN:** Underwood, run a diagnostic. Make sure it all works. I'm not sure this room has ever been used.

**UNDERWOOD:** I'm certain it hasn't. The Battle Bridge only has one function, after all.

**DOVAN:** True enough. Dovan to Adow. (pause) Adow, come in.

**SCENE 309-02****LOCATION: TORPEDO CONTROL****DOVAN: *Adow? (pause) Adow?*****(Adow is with another engineer, trying to lock a hellfire torpedo into a torpedo elevator.)****COMPUTER: *Warning: torpedo loading in progress. Exercise extreme caution.*****ADOW: *Gently... gently... Balance margin?*****RANDOM CREWMEMBER #309-1: *Plus-three, Chief. Well within safety.*****ADOW: *Crewman, we are loading the last legal hellfire torpedo in the galaxy. These things are so unstable even the Dominion agreed to ban them. Three have ever been fired, and nearly half a billion people died. I want balance minus-one or better.*****DOVAN: *Adow, where are you?*****ADOW: Son of a Borg! Harkless: take over!****(She steps away from the antigrav, her feet stomping over metal grating until she's a little way away.)****HARKLESS: (at some distance) *Right away, chief!*****(Harkless drops whatever he's doing and runs over to resume the anti-graving.)****(Adow has hit her combadge)****HARKLESS: (far background) *Gently... gently... (it settles into place) Okay, there we go; lock it in.*****ADOW: *Look, Bridge, we're on target. Now, I'm a little busy down here with the weapons of mass destruction. And I still have to fix the resolution on your holo-projectors. They were***



never meant to be mounted on the external hull, and the power requirements for the image you want me to project are off the scale.

*DOVAN: That holographic projection up is your top priority, Chief. You're authorized to take power from any system to maintain it. If it goes down, our ploy fails and the Federation is toast. What about the metreon torpedo?*

*ADOW: Shuttlecraft Mackenzie just got back. Your torpedo's deployed and ready to blow. Look, I know the bluegills want to kill us n'all, but don't you think exploding an explosive gas in the middle of an explosive gas cloud is making their job just a little too easy for 'em?*

*DOVAN: Tell you what, Adow: if you keep my ship in one piece today, I'll get you an officer's commission.*

*ADOW: Aw, hell.*

*DOVAN: What? You like promotions.*

*ADOW: Yeah, exactly. You wouldn't have offered me one if you thought there was a shadow of a chance you'd have to pay up.*

*DOVAN: Prove me wrong. Dovan out.*

**SCENE 309–03****LOCATION: BATTLE BRIDGE**

UNDERWOOD: You know, Dovan, if there's one person who'd survive this battle out of spite...

DOVAN: It's Adow. I know: I'm counting on it. (pause) You'd better get to your station. Did Yubari go?

UNDERWOOD: As soon as she'd loaded the firing solutions at tactical. You're certain their sensors won't see through the metreon explosion?

DOVAN: Are you sure you have the right coordinates to rendezvous with the Scions of the Stars? (pause) Thought so. Send in the relief crew on your way out.

(Underwood begins to walk toward the door.)

DOVAN: And, Underwood – remember. Wherever you go...

UNDERWOOD: There you are. (pause) Godspeed, Dovan.

DOVAN: You too, Underwood.

**SCENE 309-04****LOCATION: MARINE COUNTRY – FORMATION AREA**

**NARRATOR:** *Marine Country, Deck Twenty-Five.*

(Yubari is pacing back and forth, the marines silent in formation on either side of her.)

**YUBARI:** The *Excelsior's* marines have been hurt more, and in more ways, than any unit I've served with since the War. Valandria. The Wasting. The Battle of the Brig. You've lost two commanders and too many brothers-in-arms. (pause) Now you're being sent into a major bluegill fortress on Gevinon Prime. According to our telemetry, this is their central communications hub. The captain won't admit it, but we all know what this is. Mister Novacek: what is this?

**ZELENEY NOVACEK:** Ma'am, this a suicide mission, ma'am!

**YUBARI:** Correct, soldier. Leading you into your last battle is Asuka Yubari, a woman expelled from the Corps years ago for misconduct under fire. And your final assignment is to protect Isaac Brahms – the very man who was thrown out of the Corps for the crimes he committed against you and your brothers. (pause) This isn't a mission. This is an insult – an insult to this unit, an insult to your comrades, and an insult to the marine corps. This is one suicide mission none of you should have to volunteer for. Am I right? (silence) Except for one thing: you're marines. The thin green line between the United Federation of Planets and the hordes of Borg and bluegills ready to consume it. Your C.O. is not asking for volunteers, because you are marines! You will go where you are ordered, you will fight where you are ordered... and, today, you will die where you are ordered! (pause, quietly) And I've never been so proud to fight alongside any men as I am to fight with you today. (pause, loud again) Marines! Do you accept this mission?

**MARINES:** OOrah!

**SCENE 309-05****LOCATION: MARINE COUNTRY - SECONDARY ARMORY**

**NARRATOR:** *Secondary marine armory, Deck Twenty-Five.*

(General Brahms taps the control pad on a secured weapons drawer. After a few commands, the computer sends a lockout / access denied noise.)

**COMPUTER:** *Warning: biocontaminant detected. Exercise extreme caution when opening this storage unit.*

**BRAHMS:** Acknowledged, computer. Open locker.

(The computer boops affirmatively and a Starfleet drawer presents itself.)

**BRAHMS:** Now, where did I put that hypospray?

(The armory door opens.)

**ROL:** Isaac?

(Rol immediately starts walking toward Brahms.)

**BRAHMS:** Alex. I'll meet you in Transporter Room One with the rest of the assault team.

**ROL:** What are you doing?

**BRAHMS:** We'll talk in the Transporter Room.

**ROL:** We'll talk here. (pause) What's that hypospray you're holding?

**BRAHMS:** Empty.

(Brahms attaches the base of the hypospray to an electronic port on the petri dish.)

BRAHMS: Computer, load one milligram of the sample into the hypospray I have just attached.

(The computer beeps. The hypospray whirs.)

COMPUTER: *Hypospray loaded.*

BRAHMS: Now sterilize the rest of the sample.

ROL: What are you doing, Isaac?

BRAHMS: In a minute.

COMPUTER: *Place sample in the biohazard chute to the left.*

(Brahms steps over, opens the chute — it's like a mail slot — and sets the petri dish down inside. He presses a keypad. The slot closes, the computer boops, a latch is heard sliding into place and we hear a very quick disintegration take place. The latch unlatches, the computer boops.)

COMPUTER: *Sterilization complete.*

BRAHMS: We're ready. Let's go.

ROL: Let's not. What is that?

BRAHMS: Our mission.

ROL: I've never liked missions that rely on petri dishes.

BRAHMS: What about the mass vaccination on Utoff Six?

ROL: Is that a vaccine you're holding?

(Pause.)

BRAHMS: No. It's a single dose of the virus your shipmates discovered on Valandria.

ROL: We didn't "discover" the Wasting; it killed ten percent of the crew in less than two days. (pause) I hear you've also been surgically implanted with the parasite who murdered and took over Ensign Ermez. Anything you want to tell me, Isaac?

BRAHMS: The only way we can save the Federation from the Sword of Damocles is to kill every bluegill in this star system and make it look like somebody else did it.

ROL: Yes. We have a plan for that. It doesn't involve a telepathic virus.

BRAHMS: The plan we've presented to the crew is an elaborate fusion of cunning misdirection and brazen attack — but it can't hope to kill all of them! That's my job — I deliver this "Wasting" virus into the bluegill telepathic network. With the parasite in my body forming a psychic link, I infect their kings and queens. Every bluegill in this star system is linked to them, so every bluegill in this star system catches the virus, and every bluegill in this star system dies. Quickly. (pause) Everything else — all Dovan's bombast and spectacle — is window-dressing. A distraction. A way to make them think that somebody else did it.

ROL: Biological warfare is against the law.

BRAHMS: So are hellfire torpedoes, but you just spent ten hours configuring them for delivery. You need to remind yourself why they're illegal: because of collateral damage. But Gevinon is a garrison world; there are no civilians.

ROL: You hope!

BRAHMS: I know!

ROL: I'm sure. Another completely ethical plan from the man who killed everyone on New Victoria!

BRAHMS: (shouting) This was Dovan's idea, Alex! Not mine!

(pause)

**BRAHMS:** Yes, I did the surgery; I'm the one with the telepathic queen parasite inside me now; and, soon, I'm going to carry this disease, through her, to every parasite in half a dozen light-years. But if you have a problem with that, then take it to your captain. (pause) When it came down to it, Alex, he knew what had to be done.

(Pause.)

**ROL:** Everything you touch! Everything you touch, Isaac! It all goes rotten.

**BRAHMS:** I'm sorry it's come to this, Alex. If it helps —

**ROL:** Shut up, Isaac. It "came to this" a month ago — when you tried to murder your best friend on Christmas Day. (pause) Let's just get this done, Brahms.

(Pause.)

**BRAHMS:** (takes a deep breath) Agreed.

(Brahms pockets the hypospray. Rol exits.)

**SCENE 309-06**

LOCATION: GEVINON – COMM TOWER – UPPER CORRIDOR

NARRATOR: *Gevinon Prime, the Comm Tower.*

(Cox and the Major are walking side-by-side, footwear click-clacking on the lacquer floor.)

THE MAJOR: I'm very impressed with the operation you're running here, Captain Cox.

COX: Skipper'll be fine, Major.

THE MAJOR: Sorry, yes. But you didn't just infiltrate the blugills, Skipper; you cleared out an entire floor of their planetary communications hub without anyone noticing.

COX: Did I mention we report directly to the most important kings in the system?

THE MAJOR: You did not, Skipper.

COX: They host the three oldest queens on Gevinon, run the three largest families, jointly administer the Gevinon starfleet in King Kuran's name... and they've been trying to kill each other for as far back as anyone can remember. (pause) We encourage that.

THE MAJOR: You must maintain almost a marine level of discipline here, ma'am.

COX: Skipper.

THE MAJOR: Yes, sorry. Skipper. What's your secret?

(They reach a door and stop walking.)

COX: Let me show you. The crew's assembled in the conference room. We're making final preparations before the Scions' extraction mission.

THE MAJOR: I'd be delighted, Skipper.



COX: This way.

(Cox opens the door)

LOCATION: GEVINON – COMM TOWER – CONFERENCE ROOM

(Everyone is talking, drinking, eating, laughing.)

SCHMITTY: *...not like that time you fought off those Wolverines on Delos.*

BRADY WINTERS: *Oh, come on, Schmitt. It was just a little legerdemain.*

SCHMITTY: *Not that big a deal, she says! Brady, you're the best doctor in the cluster, but damn if I don't miss Tom Skolund's storytelling.*

BRADY WINTERS: *I'm not a real doctor, Schmitt.*

SCHMITTY: *Sure, and I'm not a real Teamster.*

BRADY WINTERS: *Well, you're not!*

ANBAR CREW #1: *I'll bet you thirty crystals they're late.*

MRS CHEN: *Oh, come on, Andrew.*

ANBAR CREW #2: *I'll take that bet.*

ANBAR CREW #1: *Deal.*

MRS CHEN: *Oh, for heaven's sakes.*

ANBAR CREW #1: *Aw, c'mon, Missus Chen: when have the Scions ever been on time?*

ANBAR CREW #2: *Better question: when has Triassa ever been on time?*

ANBAR CREW #3: *Shots?*

ANBAR CREW #4: *Maybe not right now.*

ANBAR CREW #5: *After we're done?*

ANBAR CREW #3: *Think we'll still be alive?*

ANBAR CREW #4: *Mister, who even knows anymore? Yes: if we're alive, shots. (to #5) Shots?*

ANBAR CREW #5: *Shots.*

ANBAR CREW #3: *Shots.*

---

NB: These three conversations happen simultaneously, but are nearly inaudible due to crosstalk.

*(Schmitty and Winters laugh)*

THE MAJOR: This is your idea of discipline, Skipper?

*(ANBAR CREW #1 and ANBAR CREW #2 laugh.)*

COX: Discipline was your word, Major, not mine. (she claps her hands together) People.

MRS CHEN: *Wait... then why did you take the bet?*

ANBAR CREW #2: *What the hell am I going to do with thirty crystals on Avalon? May as well give 'em to Drew here and let him worry about currency! Right?*

(The conversation only quiets a little.)

ANBAR CREW #1: *Just shut up and gimme your money, eh?*

COX: People! (claps again) I'd like your attention.

(They actually do quiet down this time.)

COX: Don't worry, I won't keep you from the party. I gave my last speech the day we lost the *Anbar*. I just wanted an update. You all doing alright?

ANBAR CREW #1: Ready to get outta here, Skipper!

COX: Right you are, Palliven. Schmitty, how we doin'?

SCHMITTY: Lemme check.

(He gets up from his table, pushing the chair back across the floor, and pivots to face a computer console in the corner of the room.)

THE MAJOR: You have access to their military network?

COX: Not as much as it looks. If it swims, crawls, or walks, we know about it. But if it flies, the only person who can get through fleet security is Schmitty – and even he has limits.

(Something appears on the screen.)

SCHMITTY: Yep, still on schedule, Skipper. 'bout five minutes from the Big Go.

COX: And we're ready with our piece of the action?

(Some background conversation resumes, very quietly, here.)

SCHMITTY: Checked and triple-checked. Two minutes after the ion storm peaks, with the Scions on their way to rescue us, we'll spoof the Gevinon global communications grid into thinking the Borg have broken the cease fire in the Calumex system. But, Skipper, do you really think these buggers'll send reinforcements?

COX: They'll have to.

SCHMITTY: They can't possibly reach Calumex in this ion storm. Any reinforcements they send would be destroyed within a light-year!

COX: And all three of the kings upstairs would be executed by High Command if they failed to answer a call for help. You know how the buggers think. They'll send those ships, even if it costs them troops and hardware. With a little luck, that'll give the Scions enough of an opening to sneak in here and 'port us all out.

THE MAJOR: Uh, Skipper, what about...?

COX: Brady, what about the Major's friends? Lorhrok, Simon, and... the green one? Any sign?

BRADY WINTER: Sorry, Skip. Security doesn't have a clue where they are, so we don't either. You'll both be the first to know if they turn up.

THE MAJOR: Skipper, we can't leave without them.

COX: In a few minutes, Major, I'm not going to have a choice. (pause) And neither will you.

**THE MAJOR:** Skipper —

**COX:** This isn't up for discussion, Major. Schmitty, what's the read on their fleet?

**SCHMITTY:** Still gathered around that gas cloud, Skipper.

**COX:** Know why yet?

**SCHMITTY:** Nope. Whatever the navy's saying, it's going straight to the Kings, not coming through us.

**COX:** Put 'er up on the big screen.

(Schmitty presses some buttons.)

**SCHMITTY:** Righ'ch'ya are, Skip.

**BRADY WINTERS:** They've had three hundred ships ready to pounce on that gas cloud since yesterday. What could possibly deserve that much attention?

**SCENE 309-07**

**LOCATION:** *EXCELSIOR* BRIDGE

**NARRATOR:** *U.S.S. Excelsior, main bridge.*

(Underwood emerges from the turbolift and proceeds toward his chair.)

**WARRICK:** Captain on the bridge!

**UNDERWOOD:** At ease, Mister Warrick. Your tactical report.

(Underwood takes the center seat. Warrick taps some buttons.)

**WARRICK:** Phasers charged, torpedoes loaded.

**UNDERWOOD:** All quantum torpedoes, correct? No hellfires.

**WARRICK:** That's correct, sir. Fighter squadron reports ready to launch.

**UNDERWOOD:** Splendid. Mister Sylveste, you should be receiving coordinates at your station now.

**SYLVESTE:** Yes, sir. May I ask what they are?

**UNDERWOOD:** They describe a parabolic course through Gevinon Prime's orbit at full impulse. That course passes directly over what we believe to be the planet's central communications hub. We will be within transporter range just long enough to beam down a single marine assault team – and then run away, with God-knows-how-many battleships at our heels.

**WARRICK:** Hopefully they'll keep most of them in reserve. We can handle three or four, but more than that...

**UNDERWOOD:** Oh, no, Mister Warrick. We want as many of them on our tail as possible. Mister Sylveste, make it happen.

**SYLVESTE:** Yes, sir.

**UNDERWOOD:** Bridge to Dovan.

**SCENE 309-08**

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BATTLE BRIDGE

DOVAN: I'm here, Underwood.

UNDERWOOD: *We're ready. I'll leave the inspiring speech to you.*

DOVAN: Good man. Dovan out. Tactical, put hellfires on standby, and double-check their magnetic resonance footprint.

HARKLESS: Yes, sir. (he presses some buttons) They're configured to your exact specifications, sir. Ready to fire.

DOVAN: Good. Thank you. (pause) And, Crewman: is your name Harkless?

HARKLESS: Why, yes, sir.

DOVAN: Any relation to Ensign Timura Harkless?

HARKLESS: My older brother, sir. Lieutenant now. Actually, sir, he's the reason I requested a posting under your command.

DOVAN: The Battle of Betazed.

HARKLESS: You saved his life, sir.

(Doctor Maiek Saline and Chief Adow enter the battle bridge from the corridor.)

DOVAN: And lost five hundred others. Timmers was lucky.

HARKLESS: That's not how my mother saw it, sir.

MAIEK: Excuse me, sir.

DOVAN: Yes?

MAIEK: Doctor Maiek Saline, reporting for duty. Sickbay wants a skilled medic in every key area of the ship.

DOVAN: Good idea. You can take a seat over there. Adow, what are you doing up here?

ADOW: I wanted to look you in the eye, Captain. I wanted to look you in the eye and make sure you have some idea what you're dealing with. You've got a metreon warhead sitting eighteen hundred kilometers to stern, surrounded by antimatter pods, in the heart of a gas cloud. When that thing explodes, you're going to have a shockwave two hundred kilometers wide in less than five seconds. It will consume more energy in that time than every atomic weapon ever fired on any planet in known space – and then it will keep growing.

DOVAN: I hope so. The energy from that shockwave has to white out ever sensor array in the system.

ADOW: And what about the energy it's going to slam into the aft of our starship?

DOVAN: You met Ensign Valeri? He's an excellent helmsman. He has my full confidence.

ADOW: How inspiring. Good luck, Dovan. I'll do my best down there.

(Adow turns and exits.)

DOVAN: Helm, time to Zero Hour?

VALERI: Ion storm activity will peak in just over one minute, sir.

DOVAN: You have everything you need?

VALERI: Holo-emitters are green. We'll be ready to fire up the projection on your order. As for these warp speed computations, sir – (chuckling) I've never seen anything like them.



DOVAN: Can you implement them? We will be going to warp inside a gravity well – one mistake, and we're gonna be black hole [food.]

VALERI: Oh, I can do it, sir. The mathematicians did all the hard work for me.

DOVAN: Okay. (pause) Okay. We're ready. Time to Zero Hour?

VALERI: Forty seconds.

DOVAN: Activate countdown.

COMPUTER: *Thirty-five seconds.*

DOVAN: Adow, get ready to detonate the metreon torpedo.

ADOW: *Engineering here. That's still crazy. (pause) And we're still ready.*

COMPUTER: (in background) *Twenty-five seconds*

DOVAN: Underwood?

UNDERWOOD: *Receiving you loud and clear.*

DOVAN: I'm going to wait until the shockwave is right on top of us. You won't have much margin for error.

UNDERWOOD: *Then we won't err, Doan.*

DOVAN: Good plan.

UNDERWOOD: *Underwood out.*

DOVAN: Mister Harkless. Let's see if my inspiring speech lives up to Commander Underwood's standards. Gimme shipwide.

COMPUTER: (in background)  
*Twenty. Nineteen.  
 Eighteen. Seventeen.  
 Sixteen.  
 Fifteen.  
 Fourteen.  
 Thirteen.  
 Twelve.  
 Eleven.  
 Ten.  
 Nine.  
 Eight.*

HARKLESS: *Aye, sir.*

(Harkless presses buttons. The ship's intercom wails.)

DOVAN: *All hands, this is the captain.*

COMPUTER: *Two. One.*

DOVAN: *Hit it.*

LOCATION: SPACE

(A massive, all-encompassing explosion!)

COMPUTER: (in background)

*Seven.*

*Six.*

*Five. Four. Three.*

**SCENE 309-09****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BATTLE BRIDGE**

**HARKLESS:** Shockwave now approaching at a quarter million kph!

(The shockwave is faintly beginning to roar behind them.)

**DOVAN:** Time to impact.

**HARKLESS:** Thirty seconds on my mark.

(That roar gets louder.)

**HARKLESS:** Mark!

**DOVAN:** Underwood! Now!

**UNDERWOOD:** *Yes, sir!*

**SCENE 309-10****LOCATION: BRIDGE**

**UNDERWOOD:** Computer, commence autoseparation sequence. All hands, brace for emergency saucer separation!

(Red alert klaxons sound.)

**WARRICK:** All turbolift traffic rerouting.

**SYLVESTE:** Demagnetizing hull interlocks.

**WARRICK:** Switching the saucer to internal power.

(A shipwide powerup sound as the fusion power system takes over for the warp core.)

**SYLVESTE:** Decoupling from the stardrive section. Retracting magnetic latches.

(We hear great big booms and clanks and humming operating deep in the bowels of the ship as the saucer section decouples from the stardrive.)

**UNDERWOOD:** Velocity to one-half meter per second.

**WARRICK:** Decks Eleven through Sixteen report successful detachment.

(That roar from the approaching shockwave rises again.)

**SYLVESTE:** Commander, the saucer section is powered and free for independent navigation. Separation complete.

**UNDERWOOD:** One ship against three hundred: advantage, bluegills. Two ships against three hundred: advantage, *Excelsior*.

(Warning sirens on Warrick's console as the roar gets big again.)

WARRICK: Shockwave approaching, sir!

UNDERWOOD: Shields up! Adjust pitch negative... (he checks his console) six degrees and accelerate to one-quarter impulse.

SYLVESTE: Aye, sir. Shockwave still gaining!

UNDERWOOD: All part of the plan, Ensign. Put our backs to that shockwave and ride it straight out of the gas cloud, right past the bluegill dragnet!

SYLVESTE: Yes, sir!

(Warrick's console sounds an alert.)

WARRICK: Impact imminent!

(Underwood whacks a button on his console. The ship's intercom wails.)

UNDERWOOD: Now hear this: brace for impact!

(Impact! The ship is slammed hard from behind and accelerates. Everyone grunts as they fall out of their chairs:)

UNDERWOOD: Report.

SYLVESTE: We're clear of the gas cloud, sir, and we're beyond weapons range of the enemy ships. (coughs)

WARRICK: Minimal damage to the *Excelsior*, but the interdiction fleet waiting for us wasn't ready for an explosion of that size. They took the brunt of it. At least ten ships destroyed; several dozen adrift.

UNDERWOOD: That still leaves at least two hundred surrounding the gas cloud – and every single one of them will be after us once their sensors are back online. Time to Gevinon Prime?

**SYLVESTE:** With our inertia from the shockwave? Eleven minutes at full impulse.

**UNDERWOOD:** Very good. And remember, gentlemen: that was just phase one. We've hardly gotten started.

**SCENE 309-99****THEME SONG!****NARRATOR: *The Sword of Damocles Part 9: The Graceful End.***

**SCENE 309-11****LOCATION: GEVINON – SPACEPORT DOME**

**NARRATOR:** *Gevinon Prime, Spaceport Habitat Bubble.*

(Lorhrok, Neeva, and Simon are anxiously weaving their way through the crowds in the giant bubble.)

**SPACEPORT ANNOUNCER:** (in background) *Due to ion storm activity, all extrasolar flights are temporarily grounded. Please see your regimental muster officer for information about rescheduling your flight.*

Meanwhile, however, our scene continues with Neeva and Lorhrok and Simon, all of whom are walking along through the center of the crowds.

**NEEVA:** This is crazy. We're too exposed. If just one guard remembers us...

**LORHROK:** Just keep quiet and keep walking. I think I see the airlock we want. Simon, stop staring at the security people.

**WESTLAKE:** Sorry, boss.

**SPACEPORT ANNOUNCER:** (in background) *The white zone is for immediate loading and unloading of passengers only. There is no stopping in the red zone.*

(They stop walking.)

**NEEVA:** Here it is. Can you get it open?

**LORHROK:** Easy.

(He presses a few keys, and the big alien spacedock door rolls open.)



LOCATION: GEVINON – SPACEPORT BUBBLE – AIRLOCK

LORHROK: Quickly – everybody in.

(They hustle in while the door is still opening, then immediately start to close it.)

WESTLAKE: Did anyone see us?

NEEVA: If they did, they didn't seem to think anything of us. I'm a little unnerved by how easy it's been for three wanted fugitives to sneak right through the middle of central spaceport. Why weren't there any guards on this airlock?

LORHROK: Same reason there were guards on all the others, I think: this airlock is shared; all the rest are owned by one of the families. Bluegill security seems to be a lot more about protecting the families from each other than catching people like us.

NEEVA: So they neglect anything that doesn't give them an advantage.

(She presses an alien button, causing a door to slide back.)

NEEVA: Sure hope that doesn't apply to these diving suits. Get dressed, everybody.

(They begin to do so.)

LORHROK: Good point, Neeva. Simon, figure out how these things work while I scan for leaks.

WESTLAKE: I... I can't, boss. Not anymore.

LORHROK: Oh... right. I'm sorry. I forgot your Elarin's Syndrome for a moment. I'll do it. Are you still feeling okay?

(He pulls out his tricorder and does a quick, fairly quiet scan of the suits.)

WESTLAKE: It's... fine. I just, um – Neeva, can you help me put this thing on?

NEEVA: Of course.

(Neeva helps Simon.)

LORHROK: Alright. We're going to be under six hundred atmospheres of pressure – enough to kill us in about a milisecond – but these suits work just like Starfleet deep-dive suits: the frames are articulated by high-quality flexible ceramics reinforced by forcefields, with propulsion and full freedom-of-movement provided by haptic-based EM fields.

WESTLAKE: What?

NEEVA: It'll feel like we're just going for a swim.

LORHROK: Still, I don't want to linger. These power cells just look a little old to me. Even if they don't fail outright, we could end up with narcosis, decompression sickness... Simon, are you listening?

WESTLAKE: What? (pause) Sorry, sorry. It's gettin' hard to... follow along. What's "narcosis", again?

LORHROK: Are you alright to make this trip, Simon? I can have Neeva wait with you here.

WESTLAKE: I thought it was safer if we all stayed together.

LORHROK: Only if you... [aren't going to make any mistakes out there] It's hard to say, Simon. But aren't you scared to go out there?

WESTLAKE: Yeah. (pause.) Which means I'm ready.

(Pause.)

LORHROK: I never should have taught you that. Alright, let's go. Neeva, you ready?

NEEVA: Aye, sir.

LORHROK: Helmets on.

(They all put on their helmets, starting the air flow.)

LORHROK: Check your indicator lights to verify you're sealed and pressurized with no leaks. Like this, Simon. Now, I want you all to remember: we are going out there in order to find an unsecured computer terminal that can show us a way off this planet.

NEEVA: *And some intel to give Starfleet a fighting chance when the war comes.*

LORHROK: Yes, absolutely. But no heroics. No sabotage. Our mission is too important. We swim out there, we swim back, and we run like all the pirate fleets of Ronec Vex are right behind us. Neeva, will you do the honors?

NEEVA: *Let's go for a swim.*

(She taps the exterior door control. A deep, low warning noise (like a horn or klaxon) sounds within the airlock, and it begins to fill with water.)

(When the pressure is equalized, the exterior door opens.)

LORHROK: Everyone alright?

WESTLAKE: *I can't see anything out there. Even with the lights on the suit...*

NEEVA: *We're so deep underwater it's just... black.*

LORHROK: The final frontier. (pause) Let's go.

(He leads off. The others follow.)

**SCENE 309-12**

LOCATION: GEVINON – COMM TOWER – CONFERENCE ROOM

COX: Where are they?

WINTERS: They'll be here, Skipper. Whatever happened out there, the Scions'll [be here.]

SCHMITTY" Skipper!

COX: Schmitty. What've you got?

(Schmitty is pressing buttons.)

SCHMITTY: I got sensors, Skip. (pause) Well, I got some sensors. Whatever happened in that nebula, that metreon burst played merry hell with our eyes in the sky.

COX: Let's see what we can get. Switch to viewscreen mode.

(Schmitty does so.)

COX: What the blazes happened to the bluegill fleet?

THE MAJOR: Skipper, if they were struck amidships without warning by a full metreon shockwave, they're lucky it wasn't worse.

WINTERS: Do we know what caused the shockwave?

SCHMITTY: Hard to tell.

THE MAJOR: Mister Allison, may I? I have some experience with explosions.

SCHMITTY: Yeah, I'll bet you do. Go ahead.

(Schmitty steps aside, The Major steps up, and presses some controls.)

THE MAJOR: It looks like there was a matter/antimatter detonation in the heart of the gas cloud. Almost like...

COX: Almost like what, Major?

THE MAJOR: Exactly like a warp core breach, Skipper. If I were to guess, I'd say there was a starship in there that was trying to collect some of the gasses. It struck a pocket of metreons, lost containment, and set off a chain reaction.

WINTERS: So the buggers've had their whole fleet lurking outside the gas cloud for days because of one ship hiding inside? Could it have been the Scions?

COX: Impossible. The Zeero could never detect them. Besides: the Scions don't use warp engines.

SCHMITTY: Then who?

THE MAJOR: I'm beginning to get an idea.

(An alarm on the console.)

COX: Proximity alert! Schmitty!

(Schmitty instantly takes back control.)

SCHMITTY: There's a large mass on a direct course for this planet. It's already practically inside the defense perimeter; we didn't see it because of the interference.

COX: Scions?

SCHMITTY: Not sure. Switching viewscreen.

(The viewscreen changes views.)

SCHMITTY: Oh, my.

WINTERS: It looks like a frisbee.

SCHMITTY: But what is it?

THE MAJOR: It's the *Excelsior*.

COX: How?

THE MAJOR: They separated the saucer section. (pause) Skipper, my crew is still alive.

**SCENE 309-13****LOCATION: U.S.S. EXCELSIOR – BRIDGE****UNDERWOOD: Time?****WARRICK: Oh-four-oh-nine, sir.****SYLVESTE: Two minutes to transporter range.****UNDERWOOD: Good. A little ahead of sched[ule].****(A blast lightly rocks the ship.)****WARRICK: Shields holding!****UNDERWOOD: I take it from our welcome that the fog of war is clearing up? How many ships?****WARRICK: The entire planetary reserve is on an intercept course. But none of them are in range yet.****UNDERWOOD: Then what [just hit us?]****(The ship rocks from a light blast impact.)****WARRICK: There are two or three mass-acceleration cannons firing from Gevinon itself.****(Another weapon hits the ship.)****UNDERWOOD: Damn. Dovan wasn't counting on that. (pause and a thoughtful exhale) Well, then we'll just have to do our bit that much better – buy him some breathing space. Underwood to Transporter Room One.****LOCATION: TRANSPORTER ROOM**

(Yubari taps her commbadge.)

YUBARI: Yubari here!

UNDERWOOD: *We are ninety seconds from range. Prepare to deploy!*

YUBARI: Already am, Underwood! Yubari out.

(She taps an intercom panel.)

YUBARI: Yubari to all ground teams: if any of you aren't on your transporter pads - get there.

(Yubari closes the comm channel and bounds up onto the transporter pad.)

YUBARI: Rol, General – you ready?

(Pause.)

ROL: "General"?

(Pause.)

BRAHMS: (after exhaling) We've been ready for nineteen years.

YUBARI: Alright, then. Let's kill some parasites. Like you always say, General: we do the good work.

(Pause.)

ROL: What?

BRAHMS: Asuka – no. I was wrong. This is the worst work there is. Remember that. I want you to be the one thing I didn't poison.



(Pause.)

YUBARI: Aye, sir.

UNDERWOOD: *Ground teams, begin transport!*

YUBARI: Energize.

(They all dissolve in transporter beams.)

**SCENE 309-14****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR BRIDGE**

(The ship is still being hit by large fire, but is now being peppered by smaller craft as well.)

WARRICK: Sir, transporter rooms report assault teams deployed to coordinates. Gevinon planetary fleet is entering weapons range.

SYLVESTE: Recommend we get the hell out of here, sir!

UNDERWOOD: Hang on!

(He hits the comm button on the arm of the captain's chair.)

UNDERWOOD: Scramble code six. Fat Man to the Angry Lady, Fat Man to the Angry Lady. Reply on scrambler frequency.

YUBARI: (through static) *Reading you. Deployment successful; your intel was good.*

UNDERWOOD: Superb. Mr. Sylveste, resume course, all ahead.

YUBARI: (through static) *Fat Man -- when this is over, you need to have a word with the captain about picking better code names.*

UNDERWOOD: Agreed. But we'll do it together, Lieutenant. Good luck.

YUBARI: (MORE static) We'll give ['em hell. Out.]

(The channel closes with a computer boop.)

WARRICK: We're leaving the defense perimeter. Contact lost.

UNDERWOOD: Set course for the rendezvous point. How many vessels in pursuit?

SYLVESTE: All of them, sir.

UNDERWOOD: The entire planetary flotilla?

SYLVESTE: No, sir. All of them. Every spaceworthy ship from the gas cloud is now on intercept course as well. Total bandit count now is two hundred forty-four -- and they are closing.

UNDERWOOD: Perfect.

**SCENE 309-15****LOCATION: GEVINON – COMM TOWER – CONFERENCE ROOM**

COX: Where the hell are the Scions?

BRADY WINTERS: At a guess, Skip, I'd say they don't wanna come roaring into the middle of a space battle.

SCHMITTY: Skipper! They're going after the *Excelsior*.

THE MAJOR: What?

COX: How many?

SCHMITTY: All of them. The interdiction fleet, the central defense command.

THE MAJOR: How many?

SCHMITTY: Two hundred forty-four. Some of 'em are twice the size of your ship, Major.

THE MAJOR: Skipper, you have to help them.

SCHMITTY: What do you expect her to do? We run a communications array, not a weapons platform.

THE MAJOR: Skipper.

(Pause.)

COX: Send the signal.

SCHMITTY: What? You know we can't do that, and you know why we can't. The Borg diversion is our ace-in-the-hole. It's how the Scions get in close enough to rescue us!

COX: Scions are late, Schmitty, and we owe that ship. Get it going.

SCHMITTY: We owe them? They owe us!

COX: Schmitty...

(Pause.)

SCHMITTY: Right away, ma'am.

(He starts doing some technical wizardry.)

BRADY WINTERS: Well, this makes three times I've sacrificed my life since we left Paradise. Startin' to wish God would stop toying with us and get it finished.

COX: Don't say that, Brady. Don't ever say that. And Major – now you owe me.

THE MAJOR: Yes, Skipper, I do.

SCHMITTY: It's done. I've sent our fake message to the kings – “the Borg have struck Calumex. Send reinforcements. Top priority.” Even added distortions to make it look like it came through the ion storm. It's up to the kings now.

COX: They'll respond. I just hope they send away enough ships to give the *Excelsior* a fighting chance.

(The air is split by an alarm.)

GEVINON COMPUTER: *Intruder alert! Intruder alert!*

SCHMITTY: Somebody's downstairs. They're trying to take control of the comm array! Security responding!

COX: Where'd they come from?

**SCHMITTY:** Transporter from orbit.

**THE MAJOR:** A landing party. (pause) Skipper, I don't know where the Scions are, but I'll bet I can get you a ride out of here.

**COX:** You think? (pause) Brady, grab the *Anbar* dedication plaque. Schmitt, take every logic bomb we've put in the bugger security systems and blow 'em up. And Major? Lead the way.

**SCENE 309-16****LOCATION: COMM TOWER – COMM ARRAY LEVEL**

(Brahms is working at a circuit bypass junction, switching between tools to rewire the circuitry and an LCARS-style alien control panel.)

**ROL:** Phew! Anybody bring a water bottle?

**BRAHMS:** I can try to increase the fan speed from this circuit junction, but it would be too noisy for anyone to hear Lieutenant Yubari's orders.

**YUBARI:** Then forget it. We have more important things to worry about than the heat. General, keep trying to get that comm array working for us. Clark, Baxter, Meyers – those condenser units look a lot less explosive than the servers Novacek's squad is using for cover. Get them moved.

(The three marines hop to it.)

**ROL:** What about me?

**YUBARI:** See that door? Find out if the room behind it holds three people.

**ROL:** What?

**YUBARI:** Just do it.

(Rol walks away.)

**BRAHMS:** Damn it!

(Yubari steps closer to Brahms.)

**YUBARI:** General?

**BRAHMS:** Our hosts know we're here.

**YUBARI:** Then I'll get our housewarming present ready.

(She taps her combadge.)

**YUBARI:** Ground teams, prepare to open fire.

(She taps her combadge again.)

**YUBARI:** General, I'll keep you covered. Get me that comm system.

(Some distance away, an elevator door opens and building security forces leap out of it and scatter.)

**MARINE SMAGATA:** (some distance away) Contact!

(The two sides open fire almost simultaneously. Somebody in the battle screams in pain and dies.)



**SCENE 309-17****LOCATION: THE GEVINON DRYDOCKS – UNDERWATER**

(Our three heroes, Lorhrok, Neeva, and Simon, are swimming through the black.)

LORHROK: This is incredible. Look at these drydocks. Look at these starships!

WESTLAKE: *I guess, when you're as big as somebody from Gevinon, you have to build big, too.*

LORHROK: But it's incredible. The scale of that dreadnought! We're lucky we didn't see one of them in orbit!

NEEVA: *You have no idea, sir. The pressure at this depth would – should – crumple a whale like an aluminum can. It should be physically impossible for anything that big to live down here, much less build starships! And what I can't understand is why the bluegills would want to. It has to be easier to build in space!*

WESTLAKE: *Do you think the, uh, the whales helped build the underwater cities, too?*

LORHROK: Natives, Simon, not "whales." We have to remember that every one of these leviathans was once a sapient member of an entire Gevinon civilization – before the bluegills came and enslaved them.

WESTLAKE: *I know, boss, I just... I couldn't remember the word "native." I'm losing a lot of words now.*

LORHROK: Oh. Oh, Maker. I'm sorry, Simon.

WESTLAKE: *It's fine. Can we just go find whatever we're looking for?*

NEEVA: *My suit's picking up an energy matrix at one o'clock. Looks like a computer core.*

LORHROK: Let's hope the natives keep on paying no attention to three little tiny people like us. Lead the way, Neeva.

**SCENE 309-18**

LOCATION: COMM TOWER – COMM ARRAY LEVEL

NOVACEK: (somewhat distant) Cobbum! Cobbum! On your flank! On your -- !

(A somewhat distant series of bluegill shots ring out.)

(Cobbum dies loudly and painfully.)

NOVACEK: (somewhat distant) No!

(Brahms puts in one or two more commands on the alien control pad and it boops out a very happy computer success sound to him.)

BRAHMS: Done. We have control of their communications array. There should be just enough power to punch through the gas cloud and contact Dovan.

YUBARI: I'll make sure we wipe the log after. No loose ends.

BRAHMS: I see I trained you well.

(Yubari squeezes the trigger of her phaser rifle. A male yelps and disintegrates.)

YUBARI: Very well.

BRAHMS: Shall I proceed to Phase Two?

YUBARI: Are you sure you want to go through with it?

BRAHMS: A bit late for me to have second thoughts, Asuka. Would you please do the injection? I can't reach the back of my neck very well.

YUBARI: You should work out more.

**BRAHMS:** I'll be sure to do that right after the suicide mission.

(He unclips something from his belt and hands it to Yubari.)

**BRAHMS:** Here's the hypospray. Captain Dovan wants you to inject the virus as close to my parasite's gill as possible. He says it will make it easier for the doctor to cure me when this is over.

**YUBARI:** When this is over.

**BRAHMS:** I know. Do it anyway.

**YUBARI:** Yes, sir. (pause) And, General — thank you. For everything.

**BRAHMS:** You deserved better than me, Yubari Asuka. (pronouncing her name correctly - "YOO-bar-ee AH-skuh")

**YUBARI:** You overestimate me. Sir.

(She depresses the trigger on the hypospray. It hisses.)

**YUBARI:** It's done. You're now infected with The Wasting. Are you feeling alright?

(Brahms falls forward into the big metal box he's been working at, but catches himself with his arms.)

**BRAHMS:** (strained) Oh, my. (pause) Yes, I'm all right.

(Rol is just coming back from his search.)

**ROL:** Brahms? Brahms? (pause) So it's begun. The genocide.

**BRAHMS:** I'm not sure genocide is a big enough word, Alex. We're exterminating an entire infested planet, with its native species. How about "xenocide"?

ROL: I checked out the door, ma'am. It's a broom closet.

YUBARI: Would it fit three people?

ROL: Not comfortably. (pause) Yes, ma'am.

YUBARI: Good. Then take the General and get in there. We're committing xenocide from a broom closet.

ROL: What?

YUBARI: Sorry, Brahms is committing xenocide from the broom closet, and you're going to make sure he doesn't get killed. General!

BRAHMS: I'm alright. I'm al... uhhhhnnnn...

(Brahms topples to the ground with a heavy thud.)

YUBARI: General! General, what's the word?

BRAHMS: Con... tact.

(He loses consciousness.)

YUBARI: It's working. He's made telepathic contact with the local kings. Now it's war. Rol, drag him to the closet. Rubio! Protect Rol; Double time! Good luck, Lieutenant.

ROL: No.

YUBARI: What are you still doing here, Rol?

ROL: I object! I didn't come down here to help Isaac Brahms commit his last atrocity!

**YUBARI:** Yes you did, Rol. If you had any real objection, your conscience never would have let you beam down with us. You're not mad about our mission; you're mad at General Brahms.

**ROL:** That's not [remotely true, Lieutenant.]

**YUBARI:** If you value your life, Rol, get out of my sight before I tell you what I really think.  
(pause) GO!

(Rol complies.)

**SCENE 309-19**

**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR SAUCER - MAIN BRIDGE**

(The Excelsior is under heavy fire.)

**WARRICK: Captain! Aft shields buckling!**

**UNDERWOOD: Give them more power!**

**WARRICK: There isn't any more power, sir!**

(An alert at his console.)

**WARRICK: Torpedo deck reports they've reloaded!**

**UNDERWOOD: Aft launchers: fire at will!**

(Another heavy volley in response.)

**UNDERWOOD: I'm open to suggestions, gentlemen!**

(Pause.)

**SYLVESTE: Mitch! I'm not seeing a lot of point-defense on those carriers. What'd you think?**

(Warrick checks his instruments.)

**WARRICK: I think you've got a point. Go!**

**SYLVESTE: Captain, we sortie the fighters. They can keep the worst firepower off our backs for a couple of minutes.**

**UNDERWOOD: A few fighters against a fleet of that size?**

WARRICK: (pressing some buttons) I estimate only fifteen percent casualties.

UNDERWOOD: Acceptable. Bridge to fighter squadron.

VESANT: *Vesant here, sir.*

UNDERWOOD: Prepare to launch. Same as the last one; coordinate with Mister Warrick on the bridge.

VESANT: *Aye, sir. Vesant out.*

(The battle subsequently gets less noisy as the fighters launch and get to work.)

UNDERWOOD: How close are we to the rendezvous coordinates?

SYLVESTE: Sir, there's nothing at the rendezvous coordinates! Just empty space! We're still going to have a fleet on top of us when we get there!

UNDERWOOD: Let me worry about that, Mister. How far?

SYLVESTE: A few more minutes. I can't do better than that and still get us there in one piece. But I'll get there.

(Sensor alert.)

WARRICK: Sir, fifty-six ships are breaking off pursuit.

UNDERWOOD: What? Are they headed for the planet?

WARRICK: No, sir. Edge of the system. Course suggests they're en route to... the Calumex system.

SYLVESTE: Through that ion storm? They'll never make it.

**UNDERWOOD:** Which leaves just one hundred eighty-nine ships on our tail. Steady on course, gentlemen. We may yet prevail.



**SCENE 309-20**

**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR STARDRIVE - BATTLE BRIDGE**

(The crew are working quietly on the silent Battle Bridge.)

DOVAN: Can't see a thing through this gas cloud. People are dying out there. Come on.  
(pause) Time, Mister Valeri.

VALERI: Approximately, sir, it is [oh-four-twenty-one hours.]

DOVAN: "Approximately", Ensign?

VALERI: Yes, sir. Chronometers lost synchronization when the shockwave hit. We could verify current time against pulsar emissions, but tracking signals outside the gas cloud would require active scans.

DOVAN: Active scans, eh? Forget I mentioned it. Keep us hidden, for now. They think the stardrive section has been destroyed, and they need to keep thinking that. (a long pause.) Harkless. Something I meant to ask you earlier.

HARKLESS: Sir?

DOVAN: When we fire the hellfire torpedoes, what color are they going to be?

HARKLESS: Green, sir. As ordered.

DOVAN: Okay. Good work.

Dovan starts to turn away, but Harkless, after a moment's hesitation, asks:

HARKLESS  
Sir, if I may?

DOVAN: Speak freely, Crewman. It'll pass the time.

HARKLESS: Yes, sir. We spent nearly a day reconfiguring the hellfires to meet your specifications. The color was easy, but the magnetic resonance signature you asked for – that took time. Time we could have spent increasing the yield, or improving their countermeasures.

DOVAN: You think it was time wasted.

HARKLESS: I just don't understand, sir.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Valeri, run a quick internal scan of the torpedo elevator. Maintain silent running: no emissions, no alerts.

(Valeri runs the scan.)

VALERI: No emissions, no alerts. Aye, sir.

(Suddenly, a quiet – but scary – siren at Harkless's console.)

HARKLESS: Sir! Computer is ordering me to engage emergency protocols pursuant to... to a Borg incursion on the torpedo deck?

DOVAN: Ignore it.

HARKLESS: But -- the Borg?!

DOVAN: Crewman, you know Captain Elizabeth Shelby of the, um... Ah, I can never remember the name of her ship, but she's out at D.S.-Twelve.

HARKLESS: Well, yeah. In the Briar Patch. Aboard the --

DOVAN: Right. About fifteen years ago, right before the Battle of Wolf Three Fifty-Nine, Shelby discovered a sort of "Borg footprint" – a magnetic resonance signature their weapons always

leave behind. That resonance frequency has been programmed into all Starfleet computers ever since, so we can always identify a site after the Borg destroy it.

HARKLESS: Makes sense.

DOVAN: Brahms and I are assuming that the bluegills discovered the same footprint, decades ago. So I had that frequency programmed into our hellfire torpedoes.

HARKLESS: So, when the Bluegill High Command comes to investigate why this planet has gone silent...

DOVAN: All they'll find is a pile of rubble covered in Borg footprints.

(Pause.)

HARKLESS: But, sir — surely at least fragments of their visual logs will survive. If they see the *Excelsior* firing those torpedoes, it won't matter how many Borg fingerprints we've left behind.

DOVAN: (punching the palm of his hand) Aw, shoot! That's a great point, Harkless. I knew we'd forgot something. I guess we're really in trouble.

(Alert at Valeri's station.)

VALERI: Sir! Receiving a coded message on scrambler frequency.

DOVAN: They've taken the comm relay. Good for them. On screen!

VALERI: Interference from the gas cloud, sir — we didn't get that much.

DOVAN: On speakers!

VALERI: Just text, sir.

DOVAN: On... Well, just read it, Ensign.

VALERI: Two words: "Manufactured... Triumph." (pause) Does that mean anything to you, sir?

DOVAN: Oh, so many things, Ensign. A subtle taunt at my least favorite captain. A succinct summary of our situation. But, mostly... Dovan to Engineering. Adow, ready for Phase Two?

ADOW: *I'm not dignifying that with a response.*

DOVAN: Engineering reports ready.

(He hits his intercom and continues.)

DOVAN: All hands, this is the captain. Terminate silent running mode. Power the holo-emitters. Run program Futility-One. (Pause.) And lords help us all.

HARKLESS: Sir! Perimeter alert! Sensors detecting a Borg Cube inside the gas cloud!

DOVAN: Yes. Position?

HARKLESS: Uh... right on top of us, sir.

DOVAN: Good.

HARKLESS: Good?

DOVAN: While you were on torpedo duty, Crewman Harkless, Chief Adow was installing hologram projectors on our hull. That Borg Cube is us. All ahead full, Mister Valeri! Get us out of the gas cloud before they figure out what's happening.

VALERI: All ahead full, sir.

---

TRIVIA: "Manufactured Triumph" is a reference to "Take Me Out To The Holosuite" —Captain Solok of the U.S.S. T'Kumbra accused Ben Sisko's baseball team of attempting to "manufacture triumph where none exists." Dovan once served under Solok, and they had a mutual hatred.

HARKLESS: But it's just a hologram. It won't take them long to figure it out!

DOVAN: I am well aware of that, Crewman, and Mister Brahms is executing a plan to reduce their cognitive powers. Besides, it's like you said – we only need to be good enough to fool their visual sensors.

VALERI: Clear of the gas cloud, sir. Still a lot of interference from the explosion, but I'm getting a little on scans.

DOVAN: Report.

VALERI: The saucer section is under heavy fire. Now being pursued by... hundreds of ships. Sir, they're venting atmosphere in three places.

DOVAN: Then let's give the parasites a bigger target. Helm, are your computations prepared?

VALERI: Yes, sir.

DOVAN: Verify them one more time. I don't want a microsingularity opening up the moment we hit the planet's gravity field.

(The computer boops success.)

VALERI: Verified. Course to Gevinon Prime laid in.

DOVAN: Set warp factor seven. Engage.

LOCATION: SPACE

(The *Excelsior* leaps to warp.)

**SCENE 309-21**

**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR SAUCER SECTION – BRIDGE**

(Under very heavy attack now, the bridge is on fire.)

**SYLVESTE:** Inertial dampers are fluctuating! Captain Underwood! I can't maintain maneuvering speed!

**UNDERWOOD:** Time to the rendezvous!

**WARRICK:** Sixty seconds!

**VESANT:** *Summit base, we've dropped the corvette's shields! They're all yours!*

**UNDERWOOD:** Vesant, get your fighters out of there! Helm, give us a shot!

(The ship veers sickeningly to one side. The entire saucer groans with the stress.)

**UNDERWOOD:** Tactical! (pause) Tactical!

**WARRICK:** Target locked!

**UNDERWOOD:** FIRE!

(Two torpedoes blast out the aft tubes and strike home A Corvette is destroyed.)

**WARRICK:** Target destroyed!

**UNDERWOOD:** Resume course! Damage control, is artificial gravity broken, or is my stomach getting weaker?

**BERTRAND:** Gravity plates are at – at (moan) (groan) (she retches.)

**UNDERWOOD:** Ensign, are you alright? You may be relieved.

**BERTRAND:** No – I'm... I'm fine, sir.

**WARRICK:** Sir, destroyer on our port elevation! (pause) Torpedo inbound!

**UNDERWOOD:** Reinforce port shields!

**WARRICK:** We have no port shields, sir!

**UNDERWOOD:** All hands, BRACE FOR IMPACT!

(The torpedo hits the ship *HARD*, resulting in a huge explosion, blowing out most of the bridge stations and throwing everyone out of their seats.)

(Bertrand and Sylveste scream.)

(Power fails; even the main red alert klaxons die, and are replaced only by feeble alert computer buzzes at a couple of consoles around the bridge. A separate faint sensor alert beeps insistently at Warrick's tactical console.)

**UNDERWOOD:** (deep breath) All stations, report.

(**SYLVESTE** and **WARRICK** are taking some deep breaths, too, plus moaning and groaning at various aches and pains, as they, too, lurch to their feet. Warrick fails, and sits heavily back down with a groan.)

**SYLVESTE:** Lieutenant Sylveste, sir. All limbs present and accounted for. (he checks his console) Helm not responsive, sir. We're adrift.

**UNDERWOOD:** Distance from the rendezvous?

**SYLVESTE:** Unknown. But it can't be more than a few thousand kilometers.

**UNDERWOOD:** Mister Warrick. (pause) Mister Warrick!

WARRICK: Here, sir. Aohhh... Both my legs are broken. And, sir, Ensign Bertrand is right next to me.

UNDERWOOD: Bertrand, report.

WARRICK: She's dead, captain.

Underwood rises out of his chair, his boots crunching on broken glass.

UNDERWOOD: What? Revive her.

Underwood starts walking toward that spot on the bridge, so he can see.

WARRICK: Sir, that's... not going to happen.

UNDERWOOD: Why n – Oh... God. (pause) All my years in Starfleet, I never lost someone under my command. I knew today would be different, but... I'm sorry, Ensign Marion Bertrand.

(Pause.)

WARRICK: Sir.

UNDERWOOD: Right. Yes. Okay. The first question, obviously, is why they haven't finished us off yet.

SYLVESTE: Maybe they retreated? Maybe the stardrive launched its part of the plan, and they had to break off?

UNDERWOOD: Perhaps. Perhaps. (pause) On the other hand, we're receiving a tactical alert. (He presses a button.) Gentlemen, I'm afraid the news is bad. That torpedo was no torpedo. (pause) It was a bugbomb. (pause) Prepare to repel boarders.



**SCENE 309-22****LOCATION: COMM TOWER – COMM ARRAY LEVEL**

(The shooting is at a pretty even tempo now.)

YUBARI: They're trying to turn our flank. Novacek, get down the line and hold them off at the generator.

NOVACEK: Ma'am, there are five of them, ma'am.

YUBARI: One Starfleet marine is worth a dozen of those goons. And you'll be in cover.

NOVACEK: Can [I take Carter with me?]

YUBARI: No. Go.

NOVACEK: Ma'am.

(He goes and then gets cut down by a single, distinctive-sounding, shot – from above! He groans and keels over.)

YUBARI: Novacek! (pause) They're turning us. We don't have enough [people to stop them.]

(A barrage of Original Series-style type-II phasers breaks out across the line!)

YUBARI: What the hell?

THE MAJOR: *This is Major Ryan Willis of the Starship Excelsior to whoever's in charge here. I have reinforcements.*

YUBARI: What? (She hits her combadge.) Major?! (pause) You had better have a damn good explanation for this.

THE MAJOR: *Lieutenant Yubari, it's good to hear your voice. I'm coming to your location.*

(Yubari jogs back toward the ragged front line, scanning for The Major.)

YUBARI: Keep your eyes on the battlefield, Earnest!

EARNEST: Ma'am, those are old-style phasers. A century out of date.

YUBARI: Your ears, too, Earnest!

THE MAJOR: Ma'am!

EARNEST: It's him! It's our Major!

YUBARI: Major! On your right!

(The Major sees the threat and fires his sidearm.)

THE MAJOR: Got him, ma'am.

(Yubari trains her weapon on the Major and his companion.)

YUBARI: Hold it right there, Major. You mentioned reinforcements. Who's — Oh my God.

COX: Hi. I'm Skipper Sam Cox, widow of the S.S. *Anbar*, and I would love it if you'd lower that weapon, Miss.

YUBARI: Samantha Cox? But you're... [ "...somebody who looks exactly like Captain Cortez" ] But you're dead. You're both supposed to be dead. So I'm not lowering this phaser until I'm satisfied that you are who you say you are. Turn around.

THE MAJOR: Ma'am, I'm not sure that's a good idea! We both —

YUBARI: Turn around!

COX: If you're looking for buggers, Miss, you're going to be disappointed. We both have one.

YUBARI: What are you saying?

THE MAJOR: Beetlejuice, ma'am! We were both infested, but we were both immunized! Our bodies are our own!

YUBARI: I'm sure they are. Major, where did we go for dinner on our first date?

THE MAJOR: Nowhere. We've never been on a date, and we've never eaten dinner together.

YUBARI: Not yet, Major. You – Cox: what makes your face look exactly like Captain Cortez's?

COX: The eyes. She tried to be a Vulcan, but her eyes gave away the game.

(Yubari lowers and decharges her rifle.)

YUBARI: Good enough. Welcome back to the land of the living, comrades.

COX: That's it?

YUBARI: I might be more skeptical if I didn't have General Brahms in the closet back there with a parasite in his head and a vial of Beetlejuice keeping him sane.

THE MAJOR: General Brahms? Here?

YUBARI: Our mission is to defend him to the last man.

THE MAJOR: Sir, yes, sir!

**SCENE 309-23****LOCATION: COMM TOWER – CLOSET****BRAHMS: Alex... Uhhnn! (pause) Rol!****RUBIO: Sir, Mister Brahms is asking for you.****ROL: I know that, Lieutenant. Are his vital signs stable?****RUBIO: Uh, yes sir. Yes they are.****ROL: Is he in pain?****RUBIO: Looks like it, sir. Shall I administer a painkiller?****ROL: No! By no means!****RUBIO: Sir?****ROL: He needs his mind completely clear for this. We have no idea what he's up against.****BRAHMS: Rol! Help... me!****(Rol steps closer.)****ROL: I don't believe I can do that, Isaac.****BRAHMS: (mumbling) they're winning****(Rol steps even closer.)****ROL: Pardon? I didn't hear you.****BRAHMS: They're winning.**

**ROL:** You are trying to murder them.

**BRAHMS:** My queen's telepathic field... not strong enough. Not on my own. (whispered) Not on my own.

**ROL:** You'll land on your feet. You always do. Now is there something I can do for you?

**BRAHMS:** Yes. I wanted you to get close enough for me to grab you.

(He grabs Rol.)

(The moment Brahms grabs Alex, a roaring in the background begins to warm up.)

**ROL:** Isaac!

**BRAHMS:** You never see it coming, Alex. Never really grew up, did you?

**ROL:** Isaac, what are you --?

(The roaring climaxes, and the environment we were just in is gone.)

**SCENE 309-24**

**LOCATION: BRAHMS'S MIND – CASTLE**

(Cold wind blows through these drafty old halls.)

**ROL:** What the...? (Pause.) Where am I?

(Silence, except for the wind.)

**ROL:** It's like some kind of a... castle. Except – so many passageways from here. No signs, no decoration...

(Someone steps up behind Rol.)

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** More like a labyrinth, really.

**ROL:** Ermez.

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** The parasite who killed Ermez, actually. Call me Pseudo.

**ROL:** You're the parasite. The one in Isaac's head.

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** At last report, yes. I've been trapped in these corridors since the transplant. I am not a big fan of the décor. And it's freezing in here.

**ROL:** Sparse, cold, and utterly without introspection. Sounds like Isaac Brahms's brain, all right. How did I get here?

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** He must have pulled you in. Maybe your family has a little telepathic blood. Or maybe that genetic control goes deeper than you thought. What are you going to do now that you are here?

**ROL:** Hm. (pause) I suppose we'd better start walking.

(And so he starts walking. Pseudo hastens to keep up.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Won't you just get lost?

ROL: No. Whatever we do, we're going to end up right where Isaac wants us to go. It's one of his talents: his mind always twists to reach the conclusion he wants.

(They walk on.)

**SCENE 309-25****LOCATION: SPACE**

(A Borg Cube drops out of warp just over the Gevinon homeworld.)

**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR STARDRIVE — BATTLE BRIDGE**

VALERI: Warp burst complete.

HARKLESS: Borg Cube projection stable.

DOVAN: Well done. Ensign, target all inhabited surfaces. Compute for total extermination with minimum time interval and ammunition expenditure. I believe you'll find Lieutenant Yubari left you some very well-made firing solutions to that end.

VALERI: Yes, sir. Firing sequence ready. Estimated time to planetary sterilization: twenty-five minutes. (pause) Should... should I open fire, sir?

(Pause. Dovan rises and steps forward.)

DOVAN: No. No, I guess you shouldn't. Stand aside, Ensign.

(Valeri gets out of the way. Dovan does not waste any time on ceremony. He presses a single red button, and a hellfire torpedo launches.)

DOVAN: Torpedo away. Resume your station, Ensign.

(Dovan walks back toward his chair.)

MAIEK: Captain. Are you alright?

DOVAN: Doctor Saline. I almost forgot you were there. (pause) Strangely enough, I'm fine, Doctor. Killing a planet isn't the soul-destroying horror it's cracked up to be.



(As an alert goes off on his console.)

VALERI: Impact.

DOVAN: I... I can't see that area of the planet anymore. Is that steam? (pause) Full report, Valeri.

VALERI: Hellfire torpedo attained terminal velocity of seven thousand meters per second. Detonation depth was five hundred meters. Eight quintillion cubic meters of water were vaporized. Sixty-seven habitat bubbles destroyed instantly; one hundred and seven now experiencing terminal flooding. An area half the size of France no longer exists. Compression shockwaves are spreading through the oceans. They will be felt everywhere on the planet. Computer estimates initial casualties at... seventy-seven million.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Do we have another hellfire torpedo loaded?

VALERI: Armed and about to fire, sir. Shall I hold?

DOVAN: Negative. Let's do it again.

(Another torpedo fires.)

**SCENE 309-26****LOCATION: THE GEVINON DRYDOCKS – UNDERWATER**

(We hear slowed-down whalesong. Lorhrok is tapping at what seem to be buttons.)

NEEVA: *Uh, I don't mean to rush you, but I don't think those natives are happy to see us.*

WESTLAKE: *How can you tell? Their song is... beautiful.*

NEEVA: *I agree, but for all we know, it's a bluegill call to arms. They're circling around us, and I doubt it's because they want to use this computer console.*

LORHROK: I know, I know. I just – every time I press a button, something different happens! It's like the buttons are completely meaningless!

NEEVA: *Get out of the way. I'll try.*

LORHROK: Why don't you – (sigh) No, good idea. Go ahead. I'll be over with Simon.

(She takes his position. He walks across the metal undersea platform to Simon.)

LORHROK: Do you see something out there, Simon?

WESTLAKE: *Oh. No, boss. Just thinking. All the things I'm going to miss, when my disease catches up with me.*

LORHROK: None of that. You're not going to miss anything. That's an order.

WESTLAKE: *It's alright, boss. I know what's happening to me. You don't have to worry about my morale.*

LORHROK: It's not your morale I'm worried about, Simon. It's mine.

WESTLAKE: *You're a good friend, Alec. I think I'm going to miss that most.*

LORHROK: You'll always have friends, Simon.

WESTLAKE: *You know, I stowed away on starships for a whole year before you guys caught me. I wasn't good at much, but I was a great hider.*

LORHROK: A year? I had no idea. It must have been lonely.

WESTLAKE: *Maybe. To me, it wasn't that different from home.*

LORHROK: But you had your family.

WESTLAKE: *I had doctors, Alecz. It's not the same thing. (pause) I thought running away to see the universe alone was the best idea I'd ever had. I had no idea how much better it could be until you took me under your wing.*

LORHROK: You're a brilliant young engineer, Simon. It was easy.

WESTLAKE: *Don't kid yourself. I wasn't a brilliant anything when I came aboard. You just acted like I was. And... for as long as I'm still capable of gratitude, you have mine.*

LORHROK: Simon, I don't want you to think you owe me anything. You saved our lives yesterday.

WESTLAKE: *And you saved mine. Promise me you'll never doubt that. Promise me, Alecz.*

NEEVA: *Duj tlvoqtaqH. I've got it! Hey!*

LORHROK: Neeva?

(He steps back over to the console. Simon follows.)

LORHROK: Brilliant, Neeva. I'm starting the data download. (he presses some buttons) You know, we might make a good team after all.

NEEVA: *Thanks. But [you have to remember you're not thinking straight about me right now.]*

LORHROK: I know, I know. It's just the pheromones talking. But [honestly, this is brilliant.]

WESTLAKE: *Boss, what is that out there? It's coming at us really fast.*

LORHROK: It looks like a... shockwave! Everybody, get behind the console, now!

(The whalesong goes quiet as the torpedo shockwave from last scene approaches, with its underwater roar. We hear the metal gratings tremble and loosen like they're about to come apart, but they don't, and they pass on.)

WESTLAKE: *It's gone.*

LORHROK: There'll be more. This planet is being bombarded. Neeva, you've downloaded everything we need?

NEEVA: *Aye, sir! And then some.*

LORHROK: Back to the airlocks! Full speed ahead!

**SCENE 309-27****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR STARDRIVE – BATTLE BRIDGE**

(Just as another Borg-style torpedo is fired, the battle bridge is hit.)

HARKLESS: Ground-based mass cannons. Shields holding.

DOVAN: Is it just me, or did most of those shots miss us?

HARKLESS: They're not actually targeting us, sir. They're firing on the Borg Cube hologram we're projecting. We're a very small target in the center, so they're only hitting us on lucky shots.

VALERI: Sir, the second hellfire has detonated. New projections are coming available at science station.

DOVAN: Doctor Saline?

MAIEK: Similar results. At this rate, all life on the planet will be exterminated in twenty-one minutes.

DOVAN: You look troubled, Doctor.

MAIEK: It is... efficient.

DOVAN: So no problem?

MAIEK: Sir, I defected because of Romulan efficiency.

VALERI: Captain, sensors have finished recalibrating! I have a fix on the saucer section!

DOVAN: Report!

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Report!

VALERI: Dead in space. Full decompression of the starboard outer ring. They have life support, but not much else. And... Sections 16 and 17 are... they no longer exist, sir.

DOVAN: How much longer can they hold off the bluegill fleet?

VALERI: They don't have to, sir. All one hundred seventy-seven remaining bandits just set course for us.

DOVAN: ETA?

VALERI: They're traveling at sublight speed.

DOVAN: Of course they are. Can't risk going to warp so close to the planet – not without precalculation.

MAIEK: But once they get here, they'll be firing so much ordnance at us it won't matter how often they miss. We'd be torn apart by just the lucky shots.

VALERI: The fastest ships will arrive very soon. The bulk of their fleet will be in position in twenty minutes.

DOVAN : Twenty minutes. (pause) So this is going to be pretty close.

**SCENE 309-28****LOCATION: BRAHMS'S MIND – TUNDRA**

(A heavy wooden door opens. Pseudo and Rol step out of the castle and into a windy arctic plain. Their boots crunch into a thin layer of snow.)

**ROL:** Where are we now?

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** If I'd known it was going to be even colder, I'd have stayed in the castle.

**ROL:** Stop whining, Pseudo. Some kind of... tundra. I don't think I've ever seen soil so barren.

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** Maybe we've entered Brahms's conscience. (pause) I've never been to Earth, but is it normal for tundra to be on fire?

**ROL:** Not really possible. Not with this much snow on the ground. Too cold.

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** Well, did you notice the ring of fire on the horizon?

**ROL:** Not... until you pointed it out. (pause) Your people are killing him. (pause) Come on.

**PSUEDO-ERMEZ:** Where are we going?

**ROL:** The center of the web. Isaac Brahms wouldn't be anywhere else.

(They start hurrying through the snow and wind.)

**SCENE 309-29**

**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR SAUCER – BRIDGE**

(Metallic thunks, muffled behind a door. The turbolift door begins to grind open. Sylveste, poised next to it, charges his phaser.)

**SYLVESTE:** They're coming through the turbolift door!

**UNDERWOOD:** Steady on. Relax your trigger finger, Ensign. Fire only on my order. Mister Warrick.

**WARRICK:** Sir?

**UNDERWOOD:** Cover the other entrances, as well as you can. This could be a distraction, and we don't want the buggers getting the drop on us.

**WARRICK:** And you, sir?

**UNDERWOOD:** Well, I thought I might just say, "Hello."

(The turbolift door suddenly hits a groove and slides the rest of the way open, smoothly.)

**SHARP:** Don't shoot! Don't shoot!

**SYLVESTE:** Doctor Sharp. Only you. Welcome.

**UNDERWOOD:** Ensign, don't you dare lower that weapon. Hands up, Doctor. Your assistant, too.

**SHARP:** Her name is Aurora. You think we're bluegills?

**UNDERWOOD:** The thought had crossed my mind.

**SHARP:** Want to ask me a few trivia questions to prove my loyalty?



UNDERWOOD: Not sure that'll work for us, Doctor. We've never really spoken with one another.

SHARP: True. Otherwise you'd know to call me Melissa like everyone else.

UNDERWOOD: You're on a first-name basis with the senior staff?

SHARP: Well I see it's true what they say about you.

(Sylveste uncharges his phaser and lowers it.)

UNDERWOOD: Ensign, keep that phaser up!

SYLVESTE: It's her, sir. Trust me. That is Doctor Sharp.

(Pause.)

UNDERWOOD: I see. In that case, Doctor. Welcome to the bridge.

SHARP: What's left of it. Aurora, check for wounded.

RUSTWICK: Yes, ma'am.

WARRICK: Actually, um, miss? I could really use a bone regenerator. Or, better yet, enough painkillers to knock out a Lurian.

(She walks over to him.)

RUSTWICK: I've got just the thing.

UNDERWOOD: Have you had any contact with engineering?

SHARP: Underwood... We were on our way back to sickbay from the Deck Three triage when that last torpedo hit. When we came to, the corridor behind us was on fire, and the corridor in

front of us was filled with intruder alarms and phaser fire. Diggs Dawson comes around the bend in the corridor shooting his gun into the air and shouts, "Run. For God's sakes, run. We'll hold them off as long as we can – you have to warn the bridge – they're coming."

UNDERWOOD: They're coming. (pause) We need to get external communications back online. That's the top priority.

SHARP: Communications? Underwood, who do you need to call at a time like this?

UNDERWOOD: We're barely two thousand kilometers from the rendezvous.

SHARP: And you think...

UNDERWOOD: I have to. With the buggers on board?

SHARP: With no security systems, no power, nothing to keep them from swarming over every inch of the ship –

UNDERWOOD: The rendezvous may be our only chance.

SHARP: Then communications it is.

UNDERWOOD: You and the others cover the doors. I'll see what I can do from here. Warrick, once she has your legs fixed up, come over here with me.

(Underwood pulls a heavy metal grating off a wall and starts using an engineering tool.)

UNDERWOOD: How long do you say we have, Doctor?

SHARP: At the rate those things move? A few minutes.

RUSTWICK: What rendezvous?

WARRICK: I don't know. He won't tell us. There's nobody out there but the bluegills.

**UNDERWOOD:** You haven't needed to know, Mister Warrick. We think the Scions of the Stars have a hidden starship at those coordinates.

**WARRICK:** The Scions are a legend.

**SYLVESTE:** They're no legend.

**RUSTWICK:** You think they'll help?

**UNDERWOOD:** I don't intend to give them a choice.

**SCENE 309-30****LOCATION: BRAHMS'S MIND – TUNDRA**

(The windswept tundra continues to howl, but now we hear the crackling fires all around us as well. Rol and Pseudo trudge through it.)

ROL: Isaac!

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: There's no one here!

ROL: Isaac!

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: We should turn back! The fire is coming!

ROL: No! He's close!

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: WHERE?! There's nothing here!

ROL: Feel free to turn back, then! I'm staying here until I find -- !

**LOCATION: BRAHMS'S MIND – THE GARDEN**

(Suddenly, it's tranquil, with the sounds of chirping birds in the background.)

ROL: ...him?

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Well, this is a bit tawdry.

ROL: What are you talking about? These gardens are beautiful. Look at those flowers. Look at the trim on those hedges. This is a part of his mind Brahms keeps very well-tended... and I can see why.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: There's no accounting for taste. I found your friend.

ROL: We're not friends anymore. What do you mean, found him?

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Right there. Curled up on the ground next to the eight-foot flower at the end of the path.

ROL: He's hurt. Isaac!

(Rol runs off to Brahms.)

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Not friends. Sure.

(Ermez jogs after. Rol arrives at Brahms's side)

ROL: Brahms. Are you alright?

BRAHMS: (weakly) The kings. I reached into their minds. I told them to be sick. But they fought back. The Wasting rebounded on me, and they're destroying what's left of my mind. (pause) Mister Rol, those swords...

ROL: These rusty green swords next to you?

BRAHMS: Yes. They are The Wasting. Take them, Alex. Finish what I started.

ROL: Not a chance, Isaac Brahms.

BRAHMS: What... They're coming... they'll... destroy...

ROL: I'm not going to help you commit another atrocity. Those days are over. Tell me how I can help you.

BRAHMS: Take... the swords.

ROL: Isaac...

**BRAHMS:** Then at least protect the garden. If you care for me at all, protect my garden. It is the very best of me.

**ROL:** That I can do.

**BRAHMS:** Swear it.

**ROL:** I'm a Starfleet officer, Brahms: I already have. Rest now. We may need you later.

**PSUEDO-ERMEZ:** Rol, I think you'd better see this.

(Rol gets up.)

**ROL:** Yes? What is it, Pseudo?

**PSUEDO-ERMEZ:** Look. There, at the far end of the path.

**BRAHMS:** The fire... has arrived.

**ROL:** Three old men in robes, standing side by side. (pause) Are they wearing crowns?

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** It's them. The High Kings of Gevinon Prime: Balthazar, Caspar, and Melchior, arrayed for battle. They've come here, to the center of Brahms's mind, to finish him off.

**ROL:** Let's end this.

(Rol starts walking down the path.)

**PSUEDO-ERMEZ:** What are you doing?

**ROL:** Talking to them.

**PSUEDO-ERMEZ:** Do you want to get us all killed?

**ROL:** Not my first choice. You coming?

(Pause.)

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** Sure. Go ahead. I'll be right behind you.

(Rol complies.)

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** You don't mind if I borrow these swords, General?

**BRAHMS:** I can't stop you.

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** How true.

(Pseudo grabs both swords off the ground and follows Rol.)

**ROL:** Hail, Lords of Gevinon!

**KINGS' CHORUS:** Identify yourself, trespasser!

**ROL:** I am Alex Bevoney Rol, of the Federation Starfleet. I invite you to parley.

**KINGS' CHORUS:** (cold laughter) And what reason have we to parley, Alex Bevoney Rol?

**ROL:** Your kingdom is dying. My comrade is dying. My race, and yours, hang in the balance.  
(pause) We can end this. Right now. Today. No more killing.

**BRAHMS:** Alex... No!

**KINGS' CHORUS:** You propose a trade.

**ROL:** Your world for his life.

**KINGS' CHORUS:** And what of the Sword of Damocles? Your friend's mind has revealed its details to us.

**ROL:** We'll find a solution. A compromise, negotiated aboard my ship. Your superiors, and mine, need never know what happened here. The Sword can fall another day.

**BRAHMS:** You cannot... trust them!

**ROL:** And he's not my friend.

(Pause. We hear whispers in the wind.)

**KINGS' CHORUS:** Your ship may bargain for safe passage. But this man will not be allowed to live.

**ROL:** No. The dying stops now. Forever.

**KINGS' CHORUS:** Then we are at an impasse, Alex Bevoney Rol.

(There is a puff of air.)

**ROL:** What? They vanished. Where did they go?

**PSUEDO-ERMEZ:** They're getting ready to make the final assault on Brahms's mind. At a guess? I'd say that each king will attack one at a time. Each one will manifest himself as one of Brahms's deepest fears.

**ROL:** You've been involved in telepathic warfare before?

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** You'd be surprised how much time the high kings spend on it. It's usually among themselves.

(Someone appears in an audible puff of air.)



BEZU: Lieutenant Colonel Rol! Long time no see!

ROL: Bezu?

BEZU: That's Prince Bezu, Colonel. The entire Reman starfleet is under my control, so I think I've earned the title. You should never have come here.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: And there's our first now.

**SCENE 309-31**

**LOCATION: COMM TOWER – COMM ARRAY LEVEL**

(Fighting continues.)

YUBARI: Major, this is brutal. We need to get the civilians out of here!

THE MAJOR: Ma'am, they are civilians – but they have a great deal of combat experience. Skipper Cox and her men are prepared to hold the line until our exit strategy is activated, ma'am.

YUBARI: Major... now might be a good time to tell you that there is no exit strategy.

THE MAJOR: Ma'am?

YUBARI: It's a suicide mission, Major! Our mission is to buy General Brahm's as much time as possible before we are overwhelmed! Those civilians need to be evacuated!

(Pause.)

THE MAJOR: Ma'am, there's a shuttle launching pad on the roof of this building.

YUBARI: Then take them and get out of here, Major!

THE MAJOR: No, ma'am!

YUBARI: Major! That is a direct order! The day you outrank me is the day you get to decide who lives and who dies!

THE MAJOR: Ma'am, these are my marines. We trained together, fought together, and died together. I've never asked for anything from a superior officer, ma'am – but I am certain this is where my duty lies. (pause) The buggers won't get to General Brahm's as long as I'm here, with my soldiers, on the barricades. That's a promise.

(Pause.)

YUBARI: Alright, Major. You have a death wish, you can have it. I order you and your men to hold this position. Skipper!

COX: Yes, ma'am.

YUBARI: Get the rest of your people. We're moving out.

**SCENE 309-32****LOCATION: GEVINON – SPACEPORT BUBBLE – AIRLOCK**

(Everything is dripping in here; the airlock has just closed up and returned to surface pressure. Neeva is running her tricorder. Lorhrok takes off his helmet with a heavy click and a hiss of stale air.)

LORHROK: Oh. Feels good to be out of that helmet.

NEEVA: You got that right.

WESTLAKE: All that water...

LORHROK: Do you have the data downloaded from the suit?

(Neeva closes her tricorder.)

NEEVA: Just finished. This tricorder has everything we need to put a stolen shuttle in orbit, and enough stolen intel to fill the Library of Gesseret. Our ride is going to be the... ninth shuttle from the left.

LORHROK: Simon, take a look out onto the concourse, see if the coast is clear.

WESTLAKE: Right, boss.

(Pause)

WESTLAKE: One, two, three... (again, a little slower) One, two, three... Four...

LORHROK: Simon?

WESTLAKE: Oh, for pity's sake! You know what I'm going to miss the most after friendships, Alecz? Counting! I'm going to miss counting to five! (pause) Here. Take a look. My brain is mush; I'm useless.

NEEVA: You're not useless.

WESTLAKE: Look, Neeva —

LORHROK: Simon, what do you want her to say?

(Pause.)

WESTLAKE: You're right. Sorry, boss. Sorry, Neeva.

LORHROK: This is not going to be easy. Whoever's bombarding the planet isn't letting up. The shield bubble looks like it might collapse. They're panicked. Some are already running for the shuttles.

NEEVA: Then we'll just have to run faster than they do.

LORHROK: On four?

NEEVA: As always.

LORHROK: Simon?

WESTLAKE: What? Oh. One.

LORHROK: Two.

NEEVA: Three.

LORHROK: FOUR!

(Neeva touches the door panel and the airlock begins opening.)

**SCENE 309-33****LOCATION: GEVINON – COMM TOWER – UPPER CORRIDOR**

(Yubari and the ten or so surviving Anbari are running down the corridor.)

YUBARI: This way! The stairs!

BRADY: Skipper, shouldn't we [take the rafters?]

COX: You're right. Lieutenant! Shortcut!

YUBARI: Which way?

BRADY: This door!

(She opens a door.)

YUBARI: Outside?

COX: It's the fastest way up. Come on!

(They go through the door.)

**LOCATION: GEVINON BUBBLE – THE CITY OF THE DEEP**

YUBARI: What in hell? I've heard of emergency stairs, but this – there must be two dozen intersecting stairways wrapped around the outside of this building! Ridiculous!

BRADY: Do you hate the style of every planet you visit, or just the beautiful ones? Come on. I know the rafters like the back of my hand.

COX: Really?

**BRADY:** Not much call for a medic in these parts. Took a lotta walks. We need to take these stairs up to —

(A sniper shot rings out. Brady gasps and tumbles to the metal grating.)

**COX:** Brady!

**YUBARI:** Sniper! Everybody back inside! Cox, I've got her legs.

**COX:** Right.

(They get back inside.)

**SCHMITTY:** Why shoot us? We work here, for Christ's sake!

**YUBARI:** He must have seen my uniform and drew the right conclusions.

**COX:** Brady, your medkit. Where is it?

**BRADY:** Um... down the hall. Break room.

**COX:** Anders!

**SCHMITTY:** No, I got it.

(He runs pell-mell down the corridor.)

**COX:** We're going to stop the bleeding. Can you walk?

**BRADY:** Skipper...

**COX:** You're right. Dumb question. We'll carry you.

**BRADY:** Skip... This looks pretty bad. I don't think I'm going to make it.

COX: Oh, what do you know? You're not even a real doctor, Brady.

BRADY: Ha. Thirty-eight years I've waited, and now you finally admit it. Skipper, my left lung is —

COX: Is going to be just fine, if you'll shut up and let us do our job, alright?

BRADY: Right you are, Skip.

YUBARI: You still need to get to that shuttle. Find another way up — from the inside.

COX: If that sniper is still there when we reach the roof, he'll mow us down.

YUBARI: That's why I'm going back out there.

COX: Alone? I don't think so, Lieutenant.

YUBARI: My job is to keep you civilians safe. I've already failed your medic. If you try to follow me back into the line of fire, I swear I'll stun you myself.

(Pause.)

COX: You are a little bit big for your britches, Lieutenant.

YUBARI: I'm holding the gun.

COX: If I were a little younger, Lieutenant... Good luck out there.

YUBARI: Meet me on the roof. Don't be late. This whole planet is coming down.

(Yubari exits back out the door onto the external stairwell.)



**SCENE 309-34**

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR STARDRIVE – BATTLE BRIDGE

(Another hellfire torpedo launches toward the planet.)

VALERI: Torpedo away.

DOVAN: How close are we?

VALERI: Fifty percent of our hellfire complement has launched.

MAIEK: Fifty percent of the planet is dead or dying. Ten minutes to program completion. Right on schedule.

HARKLESS: Railgun fire. Looks like another lucky shot. Brace for impact!

(Another volley from the railguns on the planet strikes the *Excelsior*. An unmanned console sparks into flames.)

DOVAN: The war of attrition continues. Harkless, put out that fire. Time to fleet intercept?

(Harkless presses some buttons and the fire is quickly doused.)

VALERI: Enemy fleet will be in firing range in nine minutes.

MAIEK: Then we're still dead a minute too soon. Do you have a plan, sir?

DOVAN: Of course I have a plan, Doctor Saline.

MAIEK: Which is?

DOVAN: To come up with a new plan in the next eight minutes.

**SCENE 309-35****LOCATION: BRAHMS'S MIND – THE GARDEN**

(We hear swords clang and lock together, then come apart.)

ROLL: Bezu, just stop. We had this fight fifteen years ago. You died. There's a better way.

BEZU: Oh, I know. I remember, Rol. Dying was the worst thing that ever happened to me. And you are going to suffer so much more this time.

ROL: I don't think you have an accurate sense of your own swordsmanship, Bezu.

BEZU: When I'm done with you, I'll have my technicians rewire your brain until you no longer know how to go to the bathroom without my say-so. And then I'll make you into one of my assassins, and use you to wipe out everyone you've ever loved. Then, when you're not useful anymore, I'll cut the strings and leave you in an alley on Farius Prime to die in your own excrement.

ROL: God, you're dull. And you always were dull, Bezu, even when you were on our side. You're really one of Isaac Brahms's deepest fears?

BEZU: Oh! He never told you! He never told you the rest of my story? Oh, that's rich. Oh, and I thought you were friends.

ROL: We're not.

BEZU: Then let's think about this. Swords down.

(The swordplay stops.)

ROL: Alright.

BEZU: See this sapling next to me?

(He grabs it, shakes it a little.)

ROL: Yes. It's small, but just smell it. Smell all that life inside. I think it has a lot of potential.

BEZU: It's Isaac Brahms's only memory of romantic love.

ROL: He was in love?

BEZU: Once. She didn't love him back. This memory is all that's left. Know what I'm gonna do to it? HEE - YAH!

(He swings his sword savagely into the thin trunk. Brahms screams.)

ROL: Stop it.

BEZU: Why defend him, Colonel? He's not your friend. He doesn't know how to have friends. He already tried to murder you. All you have to do today is just let him die. Then maybe we can settle our old score.

ROL: You're just a projection of a bad memory, Bezu. And wherever you are, King Balthazar, I said no more killing!

BEZU: (sigh) And you accuse me of being dull? Defend yourself!

(Their swords clash again.)

ROL: Oh, Bezu? There's something you should know.

BEZU: Yes, Alex Bevoney Rol?

ROL: I've been going easy on you.

(Bezu's sword flies away from Rol's disarming blow. Then Rol stabs forward into Bezu's guts.)

BEZU: (death gasp) What... what's that... it burns. It – it burns...

(He vanishes in a puff.)

(Pause.)

ROL: Alright, Psuedo. You can come out from behind that tree. He's gone, for the moment.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Not just gone. You killed him.

ROL: Killed him? All I did was give him something to think about between the ribs.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: (sigh) These aren't swords you're using, Rol. They represent the disease Brahms is carrying to infect them. You just gave King Balthazar the Wasting.

ROL: And what will that do?

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: No idea.

**SCENE 309-36****LOCATION: COMM TOWER – COMM ARRAY LEVEL**

**EARNEST:** Major, we're being overwhelmed. The left flank is caving, and we don't have any reinforcements.

**THE MAJOR:** Then tell left flank to fix bayonets and fight man-to-man. The entire Alpha Quadrant is depending on us to keep Isaac Brahms alive until he [completes his mission.]

(Down the hallway, people start screaming.)

**EARNEST:** What in the Great Bird's wings...?

**THE MAJOR:** Wait. Keep your head down, Earnest. (pause) It's working.

**EARNEST:** Sir?

**THE MAJOR:** Look. Some of them just fell over dead. Some of them look confused, and they can't aim their weapon. And some of them apparently just went insane and started attacking their own men. (pause) Brahms is doing his job. But it's only affecting about a quarter of them so far, and it's probably affecting different groups at different rates. We still have work to do, Corporal.

**SCENE 309-37****LOCATION: BRAHMS'S MIND – THE GARDEN**

ROL: So, is that it? Are we done?

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: That optimism will get you killed someday, Rol. We're not done.

(There's a faint rumble underfoot.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: You hear that?

(It gets steadily louder.)

ROL: The ground is shaking. What nightmare are you having now, Isaac Brahms? (pause) Oh, this one. I forgot about this one!

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: What is it?

ROL: You'll want to stand back.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: I'm going back behind that tree.

ROL: It won't help. In a few seconds, an invincible worm ten meters tall is going to explode out of the ground and eat everything it sees.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Invincible is a strong word.

ROL: It's three thousand kilometers long, has over a hundred heads, and eats entire planets. When Brahms and I fought one of these on Codis Nu Six, the first thing we tried was blowing up the planet.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: That didn't work?

ROL: If it had, I wouldn't have called it "invincible", would I?

(Suddenly the ground bursts. Rubble and pebbles fly everywhere. Trees fall. The beast emits a world-shaking roar.)

BRAHMS: Aaaagh! Nooo!

ROL: RUN!

(Ermez and Rol break the neatly-trimmed hedges, breathing heavily. The creature roars after them.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: We're in the hedges now. I don't think it can see us.

ROL: It can still smell us, Psuedo.

(The creature roars again, then chomps down on a big pile of vegetation. Brahms screams again.)

ROL: It's killing him. Worse: it's consuming everything good left in his soul. We have to do something. Now.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: How did you pause this thing the first time?

ROL: We lured it into a black hole. It couldn't escape the gravity.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: I thought you said you were fighting inside a star system.

ROL: Well, we were. When we started.

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: When did you decide to leave and go find a black hole?

ROL: Well, a black hole is a collapsed star, right?

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Right.

ROL: And we were in a star system. Work it out.

(A much louder roar.)

ROL: I think it's almost found us... BREAK!

(They're running again, in opposite directions!)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: How do we pause it this time?

ROL: I think we're in trouble, Pseudo!

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: It must be vulnerable to SOMETHING!

ROL: We tried everything! Phasers, photon torpedoes, small asteroids... Every time we hurt it, all it did was stop for a few minutes and heal itself!

(They run back behind another hedge, meeting up again, panting.)

(Pause.)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Wait! Heal itself? You hurt it?

ROL: Yes, but there was no weapon in the quadrant that could kill this monster. Thank the stars there was only one.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Hurting is all I need, Rol.

(He draws his sword and charges straight at the monster!)

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Hey, you! Yeah, you! King Caspar! I know you're in there! Come and get me!

ROL: Wha..? Pseudo! Pseudo, NO!



**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

(The sword plunges into the flesh of the monster. It roars a terrible, final roar... and vanishes.)

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** Always hated your family anyway. Gang of inbred halfwits.

(Rol comes jogging up.)

**ROL:** It's gone. How did you do kill it?

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** It was never really there, Rol. Just a mental projection. I didn't need to kill the projection — just dent it long enough to infect the puppeteer, King Caspar, with the Wasting. It's elementary.

**ROL:** Whatever you did, good job. That's two down.

**PSUEDO-ERMEZ:** How's Brahms's garden?

**ROL:** Look around you! There's not much left. We have to neutralize number three fast — very fast — or there won't be anything left of Isaac Brahms when we're done.

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** I'm starting to think your friend has a chance.

**ROL:** I was ordered to keep him alive. That doesn't make him my friend.

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ:** Hang on. I hear someone on the path.

**ROL:** Number three.

**PSUEDO-ERMEZ:** No doubt this will be Brahms's biggest fear of all. Do you know what it is?

**ROL:** I can't see. But we've never faced anything scarier than that monster. I don't know —

**TRYLA SCOTT:** (at some distance) *Isaac? Isaac, I've been looking for you.*

ROL: Oh, no.

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: What? Just some human woman.

ROL: Of course. It's Tryla Scott. Isaac's sister.

**SCENE 309-38**

**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR SAUCER SECTION – MAIN BRIDGE**

(Warrick and Underwood are working frantically to repair some equipment underneath the tactical console.)

**UNDERWOOD:** Ensign Warrick, this isn't going anywhere.

**WARRICK:** Maybe if we just route around the delay...

(As his tool passes over a spot on the equipment, we hear sparks.)

**UNDERWOOD:** Dammit!

**WARRICK:** Sir, I am so sorry.

**UNDERWOOD:** No, Ensign, it's just as well. That board was already ruined. We just weren't ready to admit it.

**WARRICK:** We can try the backups.

**UNDERWOOD:** Yes. Where?

**WARRICK:** Science station.

(They both stand up.)

**SHARP:** Do you have enough time to start all over?

**UNDERWOOD:** We don't have another choice, Doctor. Crack it open, Mister...

\*We hear skittering in the ceiling bulkheads, and the faint echoes of the screaming noises of the bugged swarm.)

SHARP: They're here.

UNDERWOOD: Warrick, get that panel off now.

(Warrick pulls a metal access panel off the bottom of the console.)

WARRICK: Oh, boy. This is almost as bad.

SHARP: Jon! Aurora! Start welding the ventilators shut!

RUSTWICK: I don't have a phaser!

SHARP: Grab one. The captain keeps an extra under his chair.

SYLVESTE: Just start shooting, Doc?

SHARP: I want this bridge hermetically sealed before the bluegills find a way in here.

SYLVESTE: Good thinking.

(Sylveste opens fire. A few moments later, so does Rustwick.)

UNDERWOOD: So all we have to do is fix the inversion control unit?

WARRICK: Yes. Except look: two of the command chips are burnt out. Recalibrating without them will take ten minutes. And then we can work on the unit.

UNDERWOOD: Get started.

WARRICK: Sir?

UNDERWOOD: I'm going to try getting the intercom back online. Even if we're taken, our shipmates might still have a fighting chance — if I can tell them where the Scions are hiding.

(Another swarm-like shrieking from the bulkheads, this time from starboard.)

**SHARP:** Whatever you do, Joshua, do it fast.

**SCENE 309-40****LOCATION: COMM TOWER – EXTERNAL CATWALKS**

(It's windy with the distant sound of the bombardment in the background.)

SNIPER: Alright, little girl. You have eluded my sniper rifle. The game... is yours. Now where are you? You may come out.

(Silence.)

SNIPER: I know you're close. I've been a marksman for three lifetimes, in five bodies. Don't think I'm not ready for you, little girl.

(Silence.)

SNIPER: The Borg bombardment is getting worse. I see the force-bubble beginning to flicker. If you and I don't settle this soon, we will both end up smashed to a million pieces when the ocean floods the dome. How about we discuss this like civilized people? I can be quite reasonable.

(Silence.)

SNIPER: We could escape together. I'm fond of this host, but it totters toward the grave. I'd make sure that we got to know one another for the first few weeks, before we begin the cohabitation.

(Silence.)

SNIPER: How does that sound, my young -- [friend]?

YUBARI: Annnnd GOT you!

(The sniper falls to grating ground as Yubari tackles him. His gun clatters across the grate in front of them both.)

SNIPER: Get – off me!

YUBARI: And let you get your sniper rifle back? Maybe after I break your neck.

SNIPER: I will give you one chance to release me. Then my offer is canceled.

YUBARI: Your “offer”? You mean a few weeks of rape in a shuttlecraft before you enslave and kill me? I like my chances from here, grinding your face into the grating.

SNIPER: So be it, little girl.

(We hear a liquid sound like a Changeling and the Sniper escapes Yubari’s grip. Then he’s on his feet, and draws a knife.)

YUBARI: Shapeshifter!

SNIPER: Just a little. Just enough for me to get my knife. (pause) A shame to ruin such an aesthetically pleasing host. I’ve never been a female, can you believe it?

(He swipes forward with his knife. Yubari avoids it with a grunt.)

SNIPER: There’s no point lunging away, little girl. I have the knife. I have the experience. You’re backed almost to the edge of the building. And I know your type. You really do need our brains; you alien military officers are all so predictable in close combat.

YUBARI: Ha. That’s one thing I’ve never been called. Predict this. YAAHHHHH!

(She’s on top of him in an instant, swinging her fists, but he jumps back.)

SNIPER: Oh, you’re quick on your feet alright, but I’m still quicker. Now let’s see how fast you are... without that arm!

(He plunges a knife into her shoulder!)

(Yubari cries out in pain. We hear sparks.)

SNIPER: What? That arm is cybernetic!

YUBARI: Yeah, and so's this one!

(Boom! Her fist connects with bone-cracking force! The Sniper whimpers.)

YUBARI: Your nose is looking a little crooked. Let me help.

(She punches him again! The Sniper gasps in pain.)

YUBARI: Didn't see that coming, did you? One more.

(One more hit, to the skull, and the sniper groans and loses consciousness.)

YUBARI: Alright, that's him knocked out.

(Yubari's arm continues to short.)

YUBARI: I need to get to the shut... to the shuttle... Oh God, oh God. Dammit. That blade... still in my shoulder. My arm's overloading. Nervous system shorting out. Oh God. C'mon Asuka. Come... Oh God dammit to Hell.

(she topples over onto the grating. Shocks are getting longer and more powerful – as are the convulsions.)

YUBARI: Stay with me, Yubari. Stay with me. Can't go into shock. (wincing and groaning)  
Hnng... AHHHHHHH!

(The yell reverberates for a long time into the empty layers of scaffolding and the skyline around it.)



**SCENE 309-39****LOCATION: COMM CENTER – ROOFTOP**

(Cox and her surviving crew bust through a cheap door onto the rooftop.)

COX: Go go go! Keep your heads low! Shuttle at two o'clock!

SCHMITTY: There's no sniper!

COX: And no Yubari.

SCHMITTY: The bubble's taking a lot of damage! The City of the Deep will be meeting Davy Jones' locker in a few minutes!

COX: We'll wait as long as we can. Now get on that shuttle and start preflight! (pause) Brady, stay with us.

BRADY WINTERS: You bet, Skipper.

**SCENE 309-41****LOCATION: GEVINON – SPACEPORT BUBBLE – CONCOURSE**

(Lorhrok, Neeva, and Simon are running through the middle of the panicked, crowded concourse. Everyone else is running, too – the metal frame of the bubble groans under the strain of a weakened structure, the force-bubble flickers uncertainly, and people are screaming and yelling.)

**LORHROK:** Keep going! We're almost there!

Suddenly their footsteps turn from running to splashing.

**NEEVA:** Sir! We've got to get to higher ground!

**WESTLAKE:** Why?

**NEEVA:** There's water on the ground.

**LORHROK:** Which means this bubble is leaking. We don't have long. Whoever is bombarding the surface isn't taking any prisoners, I guess.

**NEEVA:** We're not gonna make it to our shuttle.

**LORHROK:** We have to try.

**NEEVA:** No. Let's take this one. Coming up on our left.

**LORHROK:** We can't. Look: that group is already prepping it for launch.

**NEEVA:** We have the launch codes; we can figure out the heavies. I'm going.

(She peels off and runs up some stairs to another launch platform.)

**LORHROK:** Neeva! Commander, I order you [to proceed to the original target!]

NEEVA: No you don't! You abolished rank this morning, Alec!

(Pause. Lorchrok stops.)

LORHROK: Bugger hell. (pause) C'mon, Simon. Change of plans.

(He runs after her.)

**SCENE 309-42****LOCATION: BRAHMS'S MIND – THE GARDEN**

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: (with a contemptuous chuckle) The thing Brahms fears more than anything in the universe... is his sister?

ROL: It could hardly be anyone else. Captain Scott!

(Rol steps out into the path.)

TRYLA SCOTT: I'm not here for you. I want to talk to my brother.

ROL: He's busy right now.

TRYLA SCOTT: That's exactly what I wanted to talk to him about. Lieutenant...

ROL: Rol, ma'am.

TRYLA SCOTT: Oh, of course – the accomplice! Get out of my way. That's an order.

ROL: Respectfully, sir, I don't take orders from bad dreams.

TRYLA SCOTT: Do you see that hedge there? The one you were hiding behind?

ROL: Yes.

TRYLA SCOTT: It represents the last piece of my brother's cleverness. I think it's outlived its usefulness, don't you?

ROL: No.

TRYLA SCOTT: His victims disagree.

(She fires her phaser into the hedge, which erupts in flames. As that happens, Brahms cries out in pain.)

TRYLA SCOTT: And there. The fir tree. Isaac's patriotism. Surely we've had enough of that.

(She fires again. The tree now starts on fire. Brahms screams again, then sobs before falling silent.)

ROL: You're killing him.

TRYLA SCOTT: I'm cleansing him. Consider it a service to the Federation. (pause) His arrogance.

(She fires again. Something else starts on fire. Brahms screams.)

ROL: His confidence! His honor! You can't erase Isaac's flaws without destroying his virtues!

TRYLA SCOTT: Virtues? You can't destroy what isn't there. There. His cruelty.

ROL: That's a lie!

(She fires again. Something else starts on fire.)

ROL: There isn't a cruel bone in Isaac's body!

PSUEDO-ERMEZ: This is charming, Rol, but I think there's a faster way to deal with this woman.

(He draws his sword.)

ROL: Psuedo, no!

PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Good-bye, Good King Melchi[or.]

**BRAHMS: Don't you dare!**

**PSUEDO-ERMEZ: Aaah!**

**(Brahms tackles Pseudo to the ground! Brahms punches Pseudo a couple of times.)**

**PSEUDO-ERMEZ: Uhhhhnn... (he falls unconscious)**

**BRAHMS: Not one finger on my sister, Alex. Do you hear me? Not one finger.**

**ROL: Then we're all dead, Isaac. Starting with you.**

**BRAHMS: So be it.**

**SCENE 309-44**

**LOCATION: U.S.S. EXCELSIOR – STARDRIVE SECTION - BATTLE BRIDGE**

(The ship is rocked by weapons fire! It's bad!)

MAIEK: Captain Dovan, let me help you!

DOVAN: No! Give it to someone who needs it! I'll be fine!

RANDOM CREWMAN #309-1: (in background) *Lock it down!*

MAIEK: Captain, you have shrapnel embedded a centimeter into your forehead. If it weren't for that thick Bolian skull you'd be dead.

DOVAN: But I'm not! And we're still under enemy fire!

RANDOM CREWMAN #309-2: (in background) *We can't! The interlock's fused!*

MAIEK: I am removing that shrapnel or you are going to sickbay!

RANDOM CREWMAN #309-3: (in background) *Get out of that section!*

DOVAN: Damn you, Doctor! Do it! Go!

(Maiek begins to run a dermal regenerator.)

DOVAN: Valeri! Status of the enemy fleet!

RANDOM CREWMAN #309-2: (in background.) *Reducing graviton flow to the navigational deflector!*

VALERI: They're forming a net around us, Captain! A few more minutes, and we won't even be able to break orbit without blasting through their line!

DOVAN: Is this all of them?

VALERI: No, sir! Not even half!

DOVAN: Lords of Kobol. Harkless! How's my planet?

ADOW: (in background) *Belay that order, Chief! We need those gravitons for the targeting sensors!*

HARKLESS: Reading seventy-four percent sterilization, sir! The program still needs a few minutes! And, sir, our firing pattern is beginning to converge on the away team! We need to extract them!

RANDOM CREWMAN #309-2: (in background) *But sir! We'll lose the--!*

DOVAN: Maintain all systems, Crewman! Continue firing! Come on, Brahms. Where are you?

ADOW (in background) *DO IT, Mister!*

HARKLESS: Sir! We've got an energy buildup on hellfire thirty-eight warhead!

DOVAN: Shut it down!

HARKLESS: Can't, sir! Disarm system offline!

DOVAN: Then fire it!

HARKLESS: Aye, sir!

(We hear it jettison.)

DOVAN: Valeri — two-one-four mark four, full thrusters! Get us away from that torpedo!

(The ship groans as it struggles with the turn.)



DOVAN: Watch those gyros!

VALERI: Gyros offline, sir! Inertial dampers barely compensating!

DOVAN: I can feel that, thank you!

(The ship is rocked by a modest shockwave.)

HARKLESS: Torpedo detonated, sir! No damage, but we're exposing dorsal to heavy fire!

(A high-pitched whining noise begins, slowly increasing in volume.)

DOVAN: Thank you, Mister Harkless. Prepare to reroute — (Pause.) Crewman! Get away from that console!

(Harkless frantically continues typing at his console, which is where the whining is coming from. The whining keeps getting louder.)

HARKLESS: I can't, sir!

DOVAN: Crewman, get away from there!

HARKLESS: If I don't recalibrate the targeting sensors right now, we're going to lose two minutes reacquiring the target —!

DOVAN: Crewman, I gave you a direct — !

(The console explodes like a cannonball going off in the middle of the bridge. Harkless screams as he is swallowed in flame. Shrapnel flies everywhere.)

DOVAN: DOWN!

(The shrapnel mostly strikes chairs.)

(Shell-shocked silence, though there is fire in the background.)

**DOVAN:** Helm! We're five degrees off! Keep this ship pointed at the planet or call relief! Science, make sure we don't lose that target lock! And where the hell is fire suppression?

**VALERI:** Fire suppression is down!

**DOVAN:** Typical!

**DOVAN:** Doctor, is there any chance...?

(The doctor starts treating a wounded ensign.)

**MAIEK:** No. If the fireball hadn't vaporized him, the shrapnel would have. Harkless is gone.

**DOVAN:** Then help me with the fire extinguishers. (pause) Doctor!

**MAIEK:** Sir, Ensign Reeq here has two punctures in his left lung and third-degree burns down the entire —

**DOVAN:** Fine, Doctor. You! Back there! Yeah, the Efrosian! I don't know your name, but today's your day to save the ship! Fire extinguishers! That locker! Yes!

(The ensign at the back of the bridge opens up a storage locker and pulls out two fire extinguishers.)

(A torpedo fires.)

**VALERI:** Hellfire thirty-nine is away!

(Dovan grabs one of the fire extinguishers, and both officers start spraying chemical flame retardants.)

(An intercom beep.)

**ADOW:** *Bridge, we're losing too many holo-emitters! The projection is starting to fluctuate!*

DOVAN: Chief, if we lose that projection, those bluegills will see we're not a Borg Cube, they'll start hitting us with every single shot, we'll die, and then they'll destroy the Federation. Do you understand that?

ADOW: *Sir, I'm as patriotic as anyone. But I don't do miracles!*

DOVAN: Divert power from hull integrity if you have to!

ADOW: *What do you think I've been doing down here, Dovan? We're already venting atmosphere in a dozen places because I turned off the forcefields!*

VALERI: Sir! Eighteen more ships just entered [firing range!]

(He's interrupted by the massive weapons barrage that strikes the Excelsior.)

(A new klaxon starts going off.)

DOVAN: Uhhn! What's that alarm? It's a new one!

(Maiek is reading off his medical tricorder.)

MAIEK: Environmental toxicity, sir! Plasma coolant in the atmosphere is at six p.p.m. and rising!

DOVAN: Can we use oxygen masks?

VALERI: Won't make a difference, sir. The port E.P.S. tap is malfunctioning. It'll overload in less than a minute!

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Understood! Bridge to Engineering! We've got an E.P.S. tap on overload! We're evacuating! Repeat: we are evacuating the battle bridge!

(Pause.)

DOVAN: Well? Everybody out! Mister Helpful, help Maiek with Reeq. Valeri, set the autopilot. Everyone: we reconvene in auxiliary control, five decks down, don't take the turbolifts, and good luck.

(The guy in the back of the bridge and Maiek begin to drag an unconscious Rik out the door.)

(Dovan steps to the front of the battle bridge, where Valeri is applying the autopilot. The deep thrum coming from the EPS overload in progress becomes audible and begins to speed up rather quickly.)

DOVAN: Valeri, how's it coming?

VALERI: As it stands, sir, we might survive to deliver all our hellfires. If Harkless hadn't stayed at his post...

DOVAN: He gave us a chance. Let's use it.

VALERI: Sir, if we do finish off the planet — how do we get past those ships in one piece?

DOVAN: Right now let's focus on getting down to auxiliary control. Come on.

(He leads the way toward the rear egress.)

(A torpedo hits hard, slamming into the hull about a deck away. Dovan falls.)

DOVAN: Ooof!

(A part of the bulkhead, flaming, falls from the ceiling on top of Valeri during the impact.)

VALERI: Ahhg!

(The EPS overload thrum continues to accelerate.)

**DOVAN: Valeri! I'll get you out of there!**

**(Dovan reaches down and, grunting, starts lifting the bulkhead, with immense creaks and groans.)**

**(The thrum continues to accelerate.)**

**DOVAN: (straining) Come on, Valeri! Your lower body's free of the bulkhead! Just wriggle out!**

**(No response.)**

**(Dovan grunts as he drops the bulkhead to one side.)**

**DOVAN: Come on, Valeri. Wake up. There's no time. The E.P.S. is... (pause) No pulse. No breath. (he chokes a bit) I'm sorry, Valeri. I'm sorry, Harkless.**

**(He stands up and walks out. The door closes behind him.)**

**(We hear a thunderclap behind that door. Dovan breaks into a run. Dovan hits a Jefferies Tube control and dives in.)**

**(Taking deep breaths, he taps his combadge.)**

**DOVAN: Engineering, Dovan. The battle bridge is gone. I'm in a Jefferies Tube. Deck twenty is vacuum. Seal it off. Dovan out. (he breathes heavily for a moment) What have I done?**

**SCENE 309-43**

LOCATION: COMM TOWER – COMM ARRAY LEVEL

(The firefight has become very intense now. The friendly Federation rifles are now clearly outnumbered by bluegill fire. And it is punctuated by a strange noise: crossed blades at short range, and the occasional sound of not just a man screaming out in death, but his flesh rending along with.)

THE MAJOR: One, two, parry, THRUST!

(His blade strikes against his opponent's pipe on each word, until the last, when it plunges into flesh. We hear his opponent burble as he dies, and the Major withdraws his blade.)

(Corporal Earnest grunts, as her own melee is not going as well.)

THE MAJOR: I've got you, Corporal!

(The Major takes care of her enemy in the same way. The bluegill is stabbed through the guts and dies with a groan.)

EARNEST: Thanks, Major.

THE MAJOR: Shannon, you're injured.

EARNEST: Who isn't, sir?

THE MAJOR: Fall back.

EARNEST: Where to, sir? We're already up against the wall.

THE MAJOR: Damn. What's taking Brahms? They're pouring in troops, with no signs of slowing down.

EARNEST: And they have us surrounded. (pause) Starting to look like a last stand, sir.

**THE MAJOR:** I think it always was, Corporal. Take your phaser. I'll cover you. Right to the end.

**EARNEST:** Aye, sir. To the end.

**SCENE 309-45**

LOCATION: U.S.S. EXCELSIOR – SAUCER SECTION – MAIN BRIDGE

(The buggers are still looking for a way onto the bridge. Warrick and Underwood are working steadily at their respective stations. Rustwick is firing a phaser to seal what she thinks is the last opening. She finishes.)

RUSTWICK: Doctor Sharp? That's it. All access to the main bridge is sealed.

SHARP: Great. With the ventilation cut off, we should have about three hours of air up here.

UNDERWOOD: Doctor...

SHARP: Not that we'll still be trapped here in three hours.

UNDERWOOD: Absolutely not. Stay sharp. Warrick, any progress?

WARRICK: (sigh) Honestly, sir... not really. What about you?

UNDERWOOD: I'm trying to figure out how to replace a transtator with my communicator and a paper clip.

SYLVESTE: Is that even possible?

UNDERWOOD: The laws of physics are made to be broken, Ensign.

SHARP: So you think the Scions are really just sitting out there, watching us die?

UNDERWOOD: I studied the Scions of the Stars for ten years, Doctor. One thing I learned about them: [they're slow thinkers.]

RUSTWICK: Underwood! Look out!

UNDERWOOD: (gasp) A bluegill!



(The instant Underwood begins to step back, it gives Rustwick a clear shot. She fires, vaporizing the bluegill.)

RUSTWICK: Got him.

SHARP: How did that get past us? Everything's sealed off!

UNDERWOOD: I wonder... I have this access panel open so I can work on the communications system. If that one was able to get into the bridge circuitry, it could have climbed out before I ever saw it. Which means...

UNDERWOOD: Warrick! Get your access panel -- [closed]!

WARRICK: AAAGHGHG!

SHARP: Open fire!

(Rustwick and Sylveste let loose with a barrage of phaser fire around Warrick, trying not to hit him. It hardly slows them down. Warrick begins choking as a bluegill infests him.)

WARRICK: (horrified choking sounds)

SHARP: They've got Mitch!

UNDERWOOD: Ensign Rustwick, shoot Ensign Warrick. That's an order. (pause) Ensign Rustwick, now! Before he attacks!

RUSTWICK: Yes, sir!

(Horrified, she fires a sustained beam into Warrick's guts while Sylveste continues firing at the other bluegills. Warrick grunts and dies.)

SYLVESTE: Sir, there's way too many of them!

SHARP: There's no way out! We sealed all the exits!

RUSTWICK: Sir, what do we do?

(Pause.)

UNDERWOOD: SCIONS! (pause) SCIONS OF THE STARS, HEAR ME!

(Pause.)

SYLVESTE: What the...?

SHARP: Let him be. Focus on the bugs!

UNDERWOOD: By the terms of the Po'Genai Proclamation, I demand an audience! I know you can hear me!

RUSTWICK: They're getting close, Doctor!

SHARP: Buy as much time as you can.

UNDERWOOD: Scions, my name is Joshua Underwood and I. Will! BE! HEARD!

(With a flash, Underwood's voice disintegrates into reverberation as he vanishes.)

LOCATION: NOWHERE

(Underwood reappears, suspended in emptiness.)

ZAREM / TRIASSA: Then speak. An audience is granted.

(Stunned pause.)

**UNDERWOOD:** My Lord Scion. I most humbly thank you for hearing my plea, O Ancient and Exalted One. I am —

**ZAREM / TRIASSA:** You are Joshua Underwood. (pause) Vainly was it hoped that your name would never be heard in these halls.

**UNDERWOOD:** You know my name?

**ZAREM / TRIASSA:** The day of your arrival has been long lamented.

**UNDERWOOD:** I don't understand, my Lord.

**ZAREM / TRIASSA:** It does not matter now. By your coming here, our fate is beyond all power of remedy. Lead, Joshua Underwood. Lead the Scions to their doom.

**SCENE 309-46**

**LOCATION: GEVINON – SPACEPORT BUBBLE – BLUEGILL SHUTTLE**

(Neeva and Lorhrok are trying to get the engines started, but they can't. People are pounding on the skin of the shuttle.)

WESTLAKE: Are they going to stop? They're so angry.

LORHROK: We stole their shuttle. Without it, they're going to drown in a few minutes. (pause) I'd be mad.

NEEVA: Sir, I can't get these engines started.

LORHROK: I know. There's some kind of manual system clamping our energy output. I'm trying to find the override.

WESTLAKE: Can't they find another shuttle?

NEEVA: It seems like a lot of the Zeero have gone crazy. They're not thinking any more. Just pounding. Pounding. It's like... like they've been infected with something.

LORHROK: Remind me to do a bioscan once we're in orbit. Status of the bubble?

NEEVA: It's going critical, sir. I don't think it'll survive another shockwave.

(An alert at Lorhrok's console.)

LORHROK: Oh, spast.

WESTLAKE: What is it?

LORHROK: I found the override.

NEEVA: Where is it?

LORHROK: It's a big red button on the launch control console.

NEEVA: I don't see a launch control console.

LORHROK: That's because it's at the edge of the landing pad.

NEEVA: Outside?

LORHROK: On the other side of a mob of angry, insane, bluegills who want to steal our shuttle and kill us. Yes.

NEEVA: What do we do?

LORHROK: Well, one of us has to go hit the button. (pause) Neeva, I'm counting on you to cover me with the disruptors. There should be two in that [locker.]

WESTLAKE: I'll go.

NEEVA: Absolutely not.

LORHROK: Out of the question.

WESTLAKE: I can't help you here; I can't aim a phaser. But, even with my disease... I can still hit a big red button. With both of you covering me, my odds are twice as good.

LORHROK: Simon, there's absolutely no way we're letting you out of this shuttle.

WESTLAKE: Well, there's one other reason.

NEEVA: What's that?

WESTLAKE: I'm sitting right next to the door control.

(He hits it and jumps to his feet. The shuttlecraft doors open. Simon runs out.)

LORHROK: WESTLAKE!

**BLUEGILL 309-1: He's trying to open the docking clamp!**

**BLUEGILL 309-2: GET HIM!**

**(The mob roars its assent.)**

**LORHROK: Neeva, the disruptors!**

**(Neeva's already opening the supply locker, and quickly unlatches a disruptor, which she hands to Lorhrok, before taking one for herself. They both charge their weapons and open fire!)**

**NEEVA: He loves you, you know.**

**LORHROK: Too much.**

**SCENE 309-48****LOCATION: BRAHMS'S MIND – THE GARDEN**

(Everything in flames.)

(Brahms is crying out in pain.)

TRYLA SCOTT: It's all right, Isaac. It's all right. Your crimes are burning away. The murders. The betrayals. Everything you did to tarnish my memory.

BRAHMS: (through tears) Please...

ROL: Isaac.

BRAHMS: Not now, Rol.

ROL: It's now or never.

TRYLA SCOTT: He doesn't want to talk to you. Can't you see that?

BRAHMS: No, it's... Isn't this what you... wanted for me, Colonel? A reckoning for my sins?

ROL: Not like this.

TRYLA SCOTT: Oh, don't insult my brother. He's known you long enough to recognize a lie.

ROL: That wasn't a lie.

BRAHMS: Was it the truth?

(Pause.)

TRYLA SCOTT: You see what he thinks of you, Isaac? Such contempt!

ROL: All right, fine! Yes, Isaac, I wanted you to suffer. I wanted your conscience to rear up behind you in the middle of the night and choke you, slowly. I wanted it to hurt as much as it did when you hit my kill switch. Okay?

BRAHMS: Yes. That's exactly what I deserve. Do you know what it's like to wake up and know that every day?

ROL: Yes.

BRAHMS: Then you should be thanking her for this.

TRYLA SCOTT: You could have been so much more, Isaac.

BRAHMS: I know...

TRYLA SCOTT: So much more...

ROL: Issac...

(Rol drops to his knees, hitting the grass.)

ROL: Isaac. I'm sorry. She's not real.

BRAHMS: You're wrong.

TRYLA SCOTT: I am everything Isaac thinks about me. That's thirty-six years of experience and nineteen years of yearning memory. I'm more real than flesh and blood. Isn't that right, Isaac?

BRAHMS: Rol, just get out of here.

TRYLA SCOTT: You see? Isaac's always known this day was coming. One day, I would find out what he's done in my name. And he knew that would be the end of him.

ROL: I can't, Isaac. I'm under orders. So are you.



TRYLA SCOTT: Orders. Isaac, do you remember the last thing I said the High Commissioner on Zakharov after the Four-Minute War?

BRAHMS: Of course. "Orders are the best refuge of the worst monsters." (pause) Monsters like Isaac Brahms.

ROL: Isaac, she may be fifty-five years of memories – but whose memories? (pause) Would the woman who lit the lamps of peace in so many dark worlds – who loved you so much – would she rip your mind apart just to make the point that you did bad?

BRAHMS: She should.

ROL: That's not what I asked. Would she? (pause) This isn't her, Isaac. It's you.

(Rol lifts the sword from where it fell on the ground.)

ROL: Only you can end this, General. Take your sword.

TRYLA SCOTT: Isaac, we're so close.

BRAHMS: I can't, Alex.

ROL: Lives depend on it.

BRAHMS: How many this time? A billion? A trillion?

ROL: Mine, for one.

(Brahms takes up the sword from Alex, rises to his feet, and draws it against Tryla's throat.)

TRYLA SCOTT: I died once, Isaac. It destroyed you. Can you kill me again?

BRAHMS: I'm sorry. I've failed you so many times, Tryla.

ROL: So don't fail her again.

TRYLA SCOTT: I am Gevinon's last king. If you touch me with that sword, millions will die. It will be the end of all life on this planet. Do you know how many innocents will die? But if you can kill your own sister, I suppose it should be easy to kill one more world. (slowly) One last genocide, Isaac.

(Pause.)

ROL: Gevinon is a garrison world. There are no civilians.

BRAHMS: You hope!

ROL: No: We hope.

(Pause.)

BRAHMS: Alex... if you were holding the sword... would you do it?

(Pause.)

ROL: I don't know.

BRAHMS: Finally. A little honesty.

(He slices with the sword.)

TRYLA SCOTT: Scions. So it ends. (pause) You'll see your sister soon, Isaac. Pray she is as merciful as I.

(She cries out in pain as she vanishes.)

(Pause. Brahms grunts and collapses to his knees.)

**ROL: Isaac!**

**BRAHMS: It worked. They're dying. They're all dying.**

**SCENE 309-47****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR AUXILIARY CONTROL**

(The ship continues to get heavily pounded by the enemy fleet.)

(Dovan wrenches the doors partially open with his bare hands.)

DOVAN: Auxiliary control! Who else made it?

MAIEK: Just us, sir! Doctor Maiek and Transporter Chief Lorth!

LORTH: Captain on the bridge!

DOVAN: Such as it is, yes. Help me with this door!

(Lorth and Dovan get the door all the way open, and Dovan boards the bridge. The door then swooshes shut behind them.)

DOVAN: Oh, now it works, yeah.

MAIEK: Is anyone else with you, sir?

DOVAN: Not anymore, no. Chief, report.

LORTH: Sterilization program ninety-seven percent complete. Virtually the entire planet is dead or dying. Final torpedoes launching now.

(The last hellfire launches.)

MAIEK: Captain, the away team is still down there. They could already be drowning.

DOVAN: I know. Brahm's is out of time. Either he infected the queens or he didn't. Lorth, drop shields for transport.

LORTH: What shields?

DOVAN: Good point. Beam up the away team!

MAIEK: And then what? We're still surrounded by hostile ships.

LORTH: Sir, most of our transporter rooms are offline. I'll have to beam up the survivors in groups of two.

MAIEK: We don't have enough time. The flooding —

DOVAN: Wounded first, Mister Lorth. Beam them directly to triage ward. Except Brahms — I want him in the last group.

MAIEK: Sir, my sensors show Brahms with almost no lifesigns. He needs immediate attention.

DOVAN: Mister Lorth, our people first. Then Isaac Brahms. That's an order.

LORTH: Aye, sir. Energize!

**SCENE 309-49**

LOCATION: COMM TOWER – BLUEGILL SHUTTLE

SCHMITTY: Skipper – the bubble.

(There's a distant rolling thunder, then a distant crash.)

BRADY WINTERS: It's... collapsing.

COX: There's no more time. We have to go. Schmitt, launch the shuttle.

(Schmitt starts hitting controls.)

BRADY WINTERS: Skipper...

COX: Brady, we gave Yubari all the time we could.

(The shuttle's engines start thrumming at a higher frequency.)

SCHMITTY: We have... liftoff!

(The shuttle accelerates off the landing pad into the air.)

**SCENE 309-50****LOCATION: COMM TOWER – EXTERNAL CATWALKS**

(Yubari is laying on the catwalk, panting with her arm still shorting.)

YUBARI: I can't... The bubble...

(We hear the shuttle zoom off the landing pad a couple stories above and accelerate into the distance.)

YUBARI: They've lifted off. The city is drowning. So this is... how... [how I die] (pause) She was right. It was a beautiful city.

**SCENE 309-51****LOCATION: BRAHMS'S MIND – THE GARDEN**

**ROL:** Isaac... the garden. I'm sorry. They've destroyed it; I failed you.

**BRAHMS:** No, Alex. Look, right below you. In that little patch of unscorched earth.

(Rol repositions on the grass.)

**ROL:** One sapling? That's all I saved? An inch of beauty out of all this garden?

**BRAHMS:** It is enough. (pause) Now get out of here. It's all coming down. I don't want you trapped in here with me.

(Rol stands.)

**ROL:** You deserved better, Isaac.

(Brahms laughs. Joyfully)

**BRAHMS:** Oh, Alex, you silly boy. Don't you understand what I am?

**ROL:** Isaac Brahms. I have always been, and I will always be —

(The last couple of words are distorted, as, suddenly, Rol is picked up in a transporter beam.)



**SCENE 309-52****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR – STARDRIVE – TRIAGE WARD**

(Sickbay is crowded.)

(The rescued away team – Rol and a marine - materializes here.)

ROL: No. NO!

NURSE HENNESSY: Welcome home, gentlemen. My name is Nurse [Hennessy. Please lie down so we can classify your injuries for triage.]

ROL: Where's Isaac? Tell me you got Isaac!

**SCENE 309-53**

LOCATION: EXCELSIOR STARDRIVE – AUX. CONTROL

LORTH: Captain, I can't locate Lieutenant Yubari's lifesigns.

DOVAN: Keep beaming. Doctor Maiek, try to find her.

MAIEK: Aye, sir.

LORTH: I have the fourth group locked on.

DOVAN: Energize!

LORTH: The rest are being overwhelmed!

DOVAN: Beam them out!

MAIEK: Sir, the planet!

DOVAN: What? Oh, no. The last hellfire.

(Pause as the last hellfire hits.)

DOVAN: Chief.

LORTH: Sir, I've lost their lifesigns.

DOVAN: CHIEF!

LORTH: Captain, they're gone. The last torpedo just wiped out that bubble and the rest of the Assault Team is gone.

(Pause.)

DOVAN: How many?

LORTH: Three marines. Isaac Brahms... and Asuka Yubari.

MAIEK: Sir, more enemy ships inbound!

DOVAN: Right! I'm taking the conn!

(He steps forward and slides into the helm console, immediately entering commands.)

DOVAN: Time we got out of here. Bringing us about to oh! One! One! Mark, nine! Tactical evaluation, Mr. Lorth!

LORTH: Sir, I'm not qualified [to give tactical advice.]

DOVAN: You see anyone who is qualified, Chief? Improvise!

LORTH: Umm... awright!

(He starts pressing buttons.)

LORTH: They seem... erratic. Like all their weapons officers suddenly got drunk. Bad aim is the only reason we're still alive, captain.

DOVAN: Then Isaac Brahms did his job. They're dying. Just not quickly enough. And your assessment now?

LORTH: Now you're flying what's left of us right down their throats. Sir.

DOVAN: The only way out is through.

LORTH: I don't like our odds!

DOVAN: That's the difference between you and me, Lorth: the captain doesn't have the luxury of realism. Ahead one-quarter impulse!

(The ship is hit by more fire. Another console sparks.)

(The intercom boop goes off.)

ADOW: *Well, now you've done it, Dovan. That last hit sprang an atomic intermix leak! I can't shut it down without more power! We have two minutes to a warp core breach!*

DOVAN: Engineering, acknowledged!

ADOW: *Dovan, give me the power from the holo-emitters or we'll lose the Excelsior!*

DOVAN: Negative, Adow! Maintain the hologram!

ADOW: Captain! *The Federation is destroyed if we are, Borg disguise or not!*

DOVAN: Dovan out! Doctor, target the lead ship and lock in the automatic firing circuits!

MAIEK: I can't, sir! We just lost weapons!

(Another massive volley strikes the ship.)

**SCENE 309-54**

**LOCATION: GEVINON – SPACEPORT BUBBLE – LANDING PAD**

(Simon is running across the pad. A mob is chasing him.)

(He makes it to the button and presses it. It makes a nice beep, and then we hear something big demagnetize. Simon hits his combadge.)

WESTLAKE: Westlake to Lorhrok!

**LOCATION: GEVINON – SPACEPORT BUBBLE – BLUEGILL SHUTTLE**

WESTLAKE: *Docking clamps released!*

(Lorhrok hits his combadge. He continues firing into the crowd.)

LORHROK: Great, Simon! Get back here! We're clearing a path through the mob for you!

NEEVA: Alecz, is just me, or is the mob starting to act... really strange?

LORHROK: You mean the ones that are just lying down like they're going to sleep?

NEEVA: I mean the ones that are punching each other. Or themselves.

LORHROK: They really are infected with something.

NEEVA: Maybe they're dying.

(Suddenly, a thunderclap. Then a sound like a distant waterfall, bigger and deeper than any waterfall ever, and coming closer. Then the distant, rolling sound of a thousand screams a second.)

NEEVA: That was the habitat bubble cracking open. It's flooding! We're dead if we stay here!

LORHROK: Get this shuttle ready to fly the instant Simon's aboard!

NEEVA: What about Simon's covering fire?

LORHROK: You leave that to me! They're keeling over fast enough anyway! No one touches the boy! Nobody!

(He punctuates this with some more weapons fire. Neeva runs up to the cockpit and starts hitting controls.)

NEEVA: The tidal wave is coming in fast!

LORHROK: Simon's coming faster! He's through the worst of the crowd!

(The roar of the mob approaches. Simon's fast footsteps are just ahead of them. The rumble of the entire spaceport collapsing under the flood is also starting to approach.)

WESTLAKE: (calling out from distance) Boss!

LORHROK: Simon! Great job! We have to go! Hurry!

WESTLAKE: Almost there! Aghghg!

(One of the bluegills tackles him to the ground!)

LORHROK: NOOO! LET HIM GO!

BLUEGILL 309-1: (insane cry of pure animal hunger)

WESTLAKE: OWWW! He's biting me!

LORHROK: What the spast?! They're completely insane!

(That rumble from the tidal wave is getting *much* louder.)

NEEVA: Sir, we only have a few seconds!

WESTLAKE: Help!

LORHROK: Simon's been tackled!

NEEVA: We don't have time! Get him out of there!

LORHROK: I don't have a clear shot!

WESTLAKE: Alecz, HELP!

(The rumble getting very scary.)

NEEVA: Take the shot, Alecz!

LORHROK: Great Prophet guide me.

(Lorhrok charges his weapon and aims.)

(Lorhrok fires.)

(He misses. He hits Simon square in the chest.)

(Simon screams and dies.)

LORHROK: NO! SIMONNNNNNN!

NEEVA: We're outta here! Shields up!

(She launches the shuttle, closing the back portal. We hear the rush of water – of the tidal wave – just behind the shuttle as it climbs for altitude.)

**LORHROK: (anger) SIMON! (pause; bargaining) SIMON! (pause; utter despair, tears) Simon... I missed. I missed. Oh, Maker, I just killed Simon Westlake. (He breaks down and starts weeping.)**

**(Then the back door finishes sliding shut, just as the shuttle is slapped by the wave.)**



**SCENE 309-55**

**LOCATION: EXCELSIOR – AUX. CONTROL**

(Relatively little weapons fire for the moment.)

**ADOW:** *Dovan, we have crystal collapse! I can't hold it! I'm sounding abandon ship!*

**DOVAN:** No you're not, Miss Adow! We are getting this ship out of here in one piece! Dovan out!

**LORTH:** Approaching the perimeter of the bluegill envelopment! Taking heavy fire!

**MAIEK:** Captain, we have no weapons, no shields. We are bearing down on an enemy formation and we have a warp core breach in progress. A Romulan commander would have ordered the self-destruct by now.

**DOVAN:** Then a Romulan commander would have condemned his galaxy to the Sword of Damocles. Gevinon was just destroyed by a Borg Cube. Their forensic team won't believe that if they find our warp nacelles floating in orbit.

**MAIEK:** Do you sincerely expect to break through that formation?

**DOVAN:** Accelerating to ramming speed.

(He inputs some commands and the ship lurches to higher speed.)

**MAIEK:** Captain! Do you believe it?

(The ship is suddenly rocked by much more intense weapons fire.)

**LORTH:** We've re-entered primary firing range!

**MAIEK:** Hull breach, this deck! The corridor is decompressing!

LORTH: We've lost attitude control! The *Excelsior* is adrift!

ADOW: *Bridge! Core breach is imminent!*

DOVAN: All hands, this is the captain! --

UNDERWOOD: *Excelsior, this is the Scion vessel Triassa One! Can we be of assistance?*

DOVAN: Underwood! We need to take the holo-emitters offline! **NOW!**

TRASSA: *The illusion is now maintained by my will. You have latitude.*

UNDERWOOD: The Scion is saying you're safe as houses. Go! We'll cover you!

(Dovan slams the intercom.)

DOVAN: Adow! Transfer power from the hologrid! Stop that breach!

ADOW: *I'll try!*

(The channel with engineering closes.)

LORTH: Sir, there's... something... approaching off our port bow. It's drawing the enemy's fire!

DOVAN: A ship?

LORTH: Not exactly. More like a... I don't know, sir. I'm not a tactical officer.

TRASSA: *This one is called Triassa by the Servants.*

UNDERWOOD: *Lord Triassa is a Scion of the Stars. He's agreed to help us escape.*

DOVAN: Good work, Underwood. I was starting to think you couldn't convince a fish to swim.

UNDERWOOD: *You know, I am the Excelsior's diplomatic officer.*

DOVAN: Ten seconds longer and there wouldn't have been an *Excelsior*.

LORTH: Triassa has opened fire. The bluegill ships are being torn apart. Their crews are infected with the Wasting; they can hardly fight back.

DOVAN: Lord Triassa, we are grateful for your aid. Underwood, where's the saucer?

UNDERWOOD: Safe. We were boarded, but the Scions fired a stun beam that knocked out everyone aboard, including the buggers. They're dying now of a telepathic virus. I presume that means Brahms's mission was a success?

DOVAN: We think so.

LORTH: Sir, I have one torpedo tube back online.

DOVAN: Status of the planet, Doctor.

MAIEK: Totally dead, sir. Every bubble has collapsed. Every ocean is boiling. No life signs whatsoever.

DOVAN: Good. Then find us a target, Mister Lorth.

TRASSA: *Excelsior, the crew of your ship has done enough damage for many yahrens. We shall attend to the remainder. You will now be withdrawn.*

MAIEK: Sir, we are moving out of the envelopment. Not under our own power.

DOVAN: They always said the Scions were impressive. Underwood, are you coming?

UNDERWOOD: Not just yet, Dovan. However, Triassa detected a few friends of ours as the City of the Deep collapsed. I think it's time we rematerialized them.

(Suddenly, alien transporter beams. Yubari and the Anbar survivors all appear on the bridge.)

DOVAN: Yubari!

MAIEK: Yubari.

(They run to her side! Maiek has a tricorder out immediately, and stabilizes her with a quickly-applied hypospray.)

YUBARI: What the... hell? The *Excelsior*? Am... I... dead?

DOVAN: You'd probably look better if you were, Lieutenant. Good work down there.

YUBARI: Dovan. (pause) I guess I must be alive – no one in Heaven would be that tactless.

DOVAN: Welcome home, Yubari.

MAIEK: Lorth! I need to get this woman to triage!

LORTH: Locked on!

MAIEK: Energize!

(They beam out.)

(Skipper Cox taps Dovan on the shoulder.)

COX: Excuse me.

DOVAN: Jehosephat! What – where did – Captain Cortez?

COX: Cortez was my cousin. My name's Samantha Cox. My crew and I were hoping we could hitch a ride on your starship, seeing as you rescued us and all.

DOVAN: Captain Cox. You're not dead, either?

COX: Damn straight. But we have wounded.

DOVAN: Lorth, get them to sickbay.

COX: I'll stay. You're gonna be alright, Brady.

BRADY WINTERS: Skipper... take the plaque.

(She hands Cox the *Anbar* dedication plaque.)

COX: See you in a few minutes. Glad you're still with us.

(Brady and the other survivors are beamed away.)

DOVAN: Whatever happened on that planet, I'm looking forward to reading your report.

COX: You and my union both.

DOVAN: At this rate, we'll rendezvous with the saucer section in two minutes twenty.

COX: The Scions will get you out of the star system, patch essential systems. After that, I reckon you're on your own.

DOVAN: May I see that, Captain?

(She hands him the metal plaque.)

COX: Call me Sam. It's the dedication plaque of my ship. The *S.S. Anbar*. I understand this is all that's left of her now.

DOVAN: I'm sorry.

COX: Not your fault.

(Dovan picks up the plaque again.)

DOVAN: If we must weep, let it not be for the fallen, but for ourselves. For our kinsmen met their fates in our service, and found rest in their Gods. We live on in the hope of gaining what they now possess, for they have attained the Graceful End. (pause) Good words.

COX: Yes. Good words.

(Silence.)

**SCENE 309-57****LOCATION: GEVINON SHUTTLE**

Neeva and Lorchrok have reached space. The interior of their shuttle is not that bad – certainly not compared to the *Excelsior* – but there are still a few periodic sparks, indicating the damage they took escaping the surface.

NEEVA: Sir? We've achieved standard orbit. No pursuit. Actually, no lifesigns. Sir? (pause)  
Alecz.

LORHROK: I shot Simon...

NEEVA: I'm picking up a battle on the far side of the planet. Viewscreen on.

(The viewscreen comes on.)

LORHROK: ...What is that... blob?

NEEVA: I don't know. But whatever it is, it's wiping out the parasite fleet. I'm also picking up a Borg Cube near the edge of the system.

LORHROK: Do you think he knew what happened? In that second? When he died?

(Pause.)

NEEVA: We can make warp two out of the system. There's an ion storm, but it's fading fast.  
(pause) Goodbye, Simon.

(She hits the control.)

**LOCATION: SPACE**

(The shuttle jumps to warp.)

**SCENE 309-58****LOCATION: *EXCELSIOR* ENGINEERING****DOVAN: Chief Adow?****ADOW: (angrily) What's this?****DOVAN: Open it.****(She opens the little box.)****ADOW: A pip.****DOVAN: You kept the ship together. Here's my end of the bargain... Ensign Adow.****(Pause.)****(Then Adow snaps the box shut.)****ADOW: You can take your frakking pip and go to frakking hell, Dovan! (she throws the box)  
You killed Harkless. (pause) Now get out of my engineering bay!**



**SCENE 309-60****LOCATION: EXCELSIOR – ROL'S QUARTERS**

(Yubari is weeping quietly as she listens.)

**BRAHMS:** *...other details of the estate should be left to my bridge officers, Tactical and Operations. Please have my remains buried at Arlington, next to my sister, Captain Tryla Scott. (pause) Finally, I wish to thank my friends for the kindness and the loyalty they have shown me. You have always been my saving grace. (pause) This concludes my last will and testament. Signed Isaac Tiberius Brahms.*

(Yubari releases a loud sob.)

**ROL:** Shhhh... It's okay, Asuka. It's okay.

(Yubari weeps.)

**SCENE 309-61****LOCATION: NOWHERE**

TRASSA / ZAREM: All Zeero vessels have been destroyed. All survivors died by the hand of our Wasting. The ion storm is passed. All is finished.

UNDERWOOD: You see, my lord? You survived. You triumphed. You saved everyone.

TRASSA / ZAREM: Except the Zero.

UNDERWOOD: Yes, except the bluegills. (pause) But you spoke of doom. I'm pleased that we avoided it. Perhaps this opens a new era of friendship between our peoples.

TRASSA / ZAREM: Avoided it! (pause) Do you mock us, Joshua Underwood? Do you dare? We were once called Demons of Air and Darkness! Are we believed incapable of wrath in this our dotage?

UNDERWOOD: My lord, I... no, I do not mock you. I... apologize for my offense?

TRASSA / ZAREM: Is it possible that it is not obvious to all what you have set in motion today? What suffering will come of it? Do you lack pity for the Ferengi... or merely understanding? (pause) But it is seen that we were mistaken. It is I who apologize to you, Joshua Underwood. The cruel fate inflicted by you is without malice.

UNDERWOOD: I thank you, Wise One. But [what do you mean? The Ferengi?]

TRASSA / ZAREM: We are reproached by your lingering here, while you are needed aboard *Starship Excelsior*. It is time for your departure.

UNDERWOOD: My Lord — I've searched for your people for so long. Now we've finally come face-to-face, and there is so much left to learn. Might I not stay here for a time, as a representative and ambassador for my people?

TRASSA / ZAREM: An ambassador of your people has already been secured this day, Joshua Underwood. Farewell.

UNDERWOOD: What?

TRASSA / ZAREM: One boon we do grant you: prophecy. When the time comes, Joshua Underwood, you must let Alex die.

UNDERWOOD: What?

(Underwood is beamed away in a Scion transport.)

**SCENE 309-62**

**LOCATION: *EXCELSIOR* – SAUCER SECTION – MAIN BRIDGE**

(Underwood materializes in the middle of the deck.)

DOVAN: Underwood. Welcome back.

UNDERWOOD: Permission to come aboard, sir.

DOVAN: Granted. I wasn't sure we'd see you again. Thought you might want to stay with the Scions.

UNDERWOOD: Perhaps next time. Status of the ship?

DOVAN: We've reintegrated the saucer, which was a small miracle by Mister Sylveste and me. Our Borg Cube hologram is staying up on minimal power until we're out of sensor range. We don't want any stray surviving bluegill computers recording that the Borg Cube was really us. The Wasting has killed every bluegill in the system. That Scion – Triassa – has destroyed their starfleet. And we made it look like somebody else did it. All that's left is to find out whether it worked.

UNDERWOOD: The bluegills will either cancel the armistice, attack the Borg, and hold off the invasion of the galaxy for another day...

DOVAN: ...or they won't, and we'll never make it back to starbase. Either way, it's out of our hands now. Time to care for our wounded. Mourn the dead. Major, good to have you back on your feet. Thanks for filling in on the bridge.

THE MAJOR: Sir, not a problem, sir.

DOVAN: Lay in a course for starbase nine-one-one. Best speed.

THE MAJOR: Aye, sir.

UNDERWOOD: So we did it.

DOVAN: Looks that way. Took on an entire fleet. Saved the galaxy.

UNDERWOOD: And survived. (pause) Proud?

DOVAN: Of this ship, of course. Of myself? (pause) Why shouldn't I be?

THE MAJOR: Course laid in, sir.

DOVAN: Hit it.

(The *Excelsior* jumps to warp.)

**END CREDITS**

**EPILOGUE****LOCATION: SPACE**

**NARRATOR:** *Several days later.*

(A Federation probe is flying past, beeping its signal home.)

**NARRATOR:** *No Starfleet probe had ever penetrated as far into Borg Space as D.S.P. Two-Two-Oh-Nine. There was nothing special about Two-Two-Oh-Nine: it was automatic, warp-capable, and very lucky. It rarely sent transmissions back to Starfleet Command, and, when it did, it took six months to get there. Two-Two-Oh-Nine had not seen anything of interest. Borg Space is vast and mostly empty. (Pause) But today, Starfleet's probe was closing in on the first important find of its existence. A month before, it had picked up a distress call, on a Federation frequency, from a ship identified, by registry, as the S.S. Anbar. The call had stopped, abruptly, about a week ago, but two-two-oh-nine's algorithms insisted it investigate the dark matter nebula, despite the risk of communications interference. (Pause) This is what it found.*

**PROBE (STARFLEET COMPUTER VOICE):** *Origin of distress call located. Wreckage detected. Consistent with class-three neutronic fuel carrier.*

(The probe beeps as it processes.)

**PROBE:** *Conclusion: S.S. Anbar has been destroyed. Resuming course.*

(The probe beeps. We hear ships drop out of warp.)

**PROBE:** *Unknown engine signatures detected. Number: at least one million. Warning: Borg engine signatures detected. Number: unknown.*

(We hear a Borg tractor beam and few Borg torpedoes.)

(The probe has alarms go off.)

**PROBE:** *Warning: multiple inbound projectiles. (The probe is hit) Warning: power failure. Warning: hull fragmentation. Performing immediate data dump. Warning: Starfleet comm-link offline. Switching to radio communications:*

**VOICE OF THE BORG:** *We are the Borg. Lower your defenses and abandon your hosts. We will add your technological distinctiveness to your own. Your life-form and culture have been deemed superfluous. Resistance is futile.*

**KING KURANES:** *This is King Kuranes of the flag Celephais. All Zeero vessels... open fire!*

**NARRATOR:** *At that moment, DSP Two-Two-Oh-Nine ceased operating.*