

*Star Trek: Excelsior*  
*Season Five: The Round Table*

Vignette:

"Hide"

by Alexandra Whitley

INT. Excelsior Bridge

YUBARI

Captain, we're picking up a weak distress signal within short range.

LORHROK

This close to Borg space?

NEEVA

Someone must not know where they're going!

DOVAN

Maintain our stealth posture in the dust clouds, but take us closer. Maybe we can help whoever it is without breaking radio silence.

HELM

Aye, Captain.

(Whoever has reliably acted as Helm for Excelsior in the past should play this role--no good reason to audition for someone new.)

YUBARI

Their transmission was garbled, but I've patched it.

DOVAN

On speakers.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

This is Captain Jora-Na of the Valandrian exploration vessel Sigur-ur requesting assistance from any friendly ship within range. We are unable to repair our warp coils and are stranded. While our homeworld is distant, we will gladly compensate any

who would lend us aid.

DOVAN

Valandrian!

SHARP

My contact on the Wasting Plague told me their mission is exploration now, like Starfleet's. At least, like the Starfleet I used to know. They've reportedly made great strides into becoming a peaceful society since we eliminated the alien influence on their planet.

DOVAN

You keep tabs on the places we've been?

SHARP

You're the captain, and you don't?

DOVAN

Point taken. Yubari, passive scans.

(Actually, Dovan does keep tabs, but he has an image to maintain.)

YUBARI

Their story checks out. They've apparently salvaged a lot of tech from the remains of the U.S.S. Oracle, plus our new trading agreements. The ship looks on the outside like something designed by reptilians, but the technology reads practically like a Federation ship of the line. I'm sending the data to J'naya.

The ship is Valandrian because it gives the audience more to care about than if it were random bumpyheads. This can easily change if the show has intentions for Valandria.

DOVAN

Are you seeing this in engineering, Commander?

J'NAYA

(over comms)

Aye, captain. It'd be a simple fix for us, really. Like screwing in a light bulb. The guts of their design principles copy ours, so it'd take a few hours tops, possibly a few minutes.

DOVAN

Could we beam over the needed personnel and equipment without risking detection?

J'NAYA

(over comms)

The Borg shouldn't see a thing from this far out, nebula or no. It helps that your chief engineer knows what these long-range scanners are for this time and can tune accordingly!

DOVAN

Make the necessary preparations. You have five minutes to be ready and fifteen minutes to beam over, explain to the Valandrian's that you're friendly, and get the [job done]

YUBARI

(interrupts)

Borg vessel incoming at high warp!

DOVAN

Jehoshaphat!

LORHROK

Red alert!

DOVAN

Belay that! No activation of shields, no activation of any tactical systems whatsoever. Shut down any unnecessary systems that aren't already off.

NEEVA

Shutting down everything but minimal life support and passive sensors, Captain.

HELM

This isn't even supposed to be Borg space!

DOVAN

Borg space is wherever the Borg want something and the Zero aren't stopping them.

YUBARI

They're on an intercept course with the Valandrian vessel and broadcasting in the clear.

DOVAN

On speakers.

BORG

(over speakers)

We are the Borg. Lower your shields and surrender your ship.

We will adapt your biological and technological distinctiveness to service our own. You will be assimilated. Resistance is futile.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

(over speakers)

Approaching vessel, we are on a peaceful mission of exploration and are keeping our shields down as requested. We mean no harm and wish to avoid hostilities. If we have intruded on your space, we will depart as soon as we repair our warp coils.

BORG

(over speakers)

Territory is irrelevant. You will be assimilated.

DOVAN

Tactical analysis!

YUBARI

The Borg sphere is their smallest recorded class of scout.

We're in an upgraded Sovereign class dreadnought, the jewel of the Federation fleet. The Valandrian ship is a close equivalent. Two on one, we might stand a chance.

(beat)

*Might.*

SHARP

We have to help them.

DOVAN

Negative. We can't risk the Borg learning we're conducting scans on their war with the Zero. Keep all systems powered down. Lower power to life support to 50%.

NEEVA

At that level, we will lose sustainable heat and atmosphere within a few hours.

DOVAN

Hopefully the Borg sphere will be gone long before then.

SHARP

You mean hopefully they'll be efficient about mutilating and stealing the free will of those people?

DOVAN

That... is what I mean.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

(over speakers)

To any friendly vessels in range, we have been boarded by a cybernetic life form. It has... interfaced with our engineering control panel.

(blink, then in a lower tone)

Ops, delete our entire archive before this *Borg* gets it. Comms, continue our broadcast. We will attempt peaceful first contact, but if these entities match the hearsay, Valandria needs to know.

(blink)

Borg male, we would parlay with your queen or other authority figure.

LORHROK

Every species hears rumors of the Borg. No one believes reality can be as bad as they've heard.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

(over speakers)

The cybernetic being has disengaged from our system and is now approaching me.

(beat)

Borg male! Cease your approach or we will respond with force.  
I repeat, cease your approach.

(blink)

Corporal, stop him. Shields up, fire all weapons!

SFX: A pulse energy weapon can be heard over the speakers. We may or may not hear the Borg drone fall, depending on what feels logical to hear over a transmission.

YUBARI

Valandrian vessel has raised shields and is firing phasers and quantum torpedoes. They're... slightly better than ours, sir.

(She sounds vaguely offended by this last. Beat.)

No appreciable damage.

NEEVA

Borg tractor beam has locked on; Valandrian ship is modulating shield nutation. Estimated shield collapse in... they're already down.

DOVAN

We thought we could prepare for the Borg. But adapting to every species the Zero have infested, they've advanced faster than we have. Lords of Kobol.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

(over speakers)

Quantum torpedoes and shields are ineffective. The fallen drone dematerialized. Three more of his kind have transported onto our bridge and are advancing on my bridge crew.

(blink)

Corporal!

The same pulse energy weapon fires in several successions of bursts.

ALIEN CAPTAIN

(over speakers)

The cybernetic males have devised personal force fields that repel our phasers. They have seized my comms officer and tactical officer. Borg male: halt. We will give you any technology or supplies you desire in exchange for--

(We hear a mechanical whir of the Borg grappling the captain and injecting her with nanoprobes. The Alien Captain lets loose a short scream that turns into a gurgle. With the realization that the rumors are *entirely* true, she gives her last order to protect her crew from the Borg gaining her knowledge of them.)

Corporal... shoot... me...

We hear the weapon discharge.

BORG

(over speakers)

State the number and disposition of your crew. They will proceed to your centralized command location for assimilation.

NEEVA

These dust clouds must wreak even more havoc with Borg sensors than we thought if they have to ask for a headcount! Our more primitive sensors can pinpoint the Valandrian life signs just fine.

SHARP

Their shields are down, our shields are down. Captain, we can beam those people out of there before the Borg find them.

LORHROK

Are we in range for that plan? Will it be detected?

NEEVA

In range, yes. From our hiding place in the densest dust clouds, I would say our transporter beam should go undetected.

But after watching how fast those shields went down, I'm not sure what the Borg can and can't do.

DOVAN

We are not discussing that plan. My orders stand.

ALIEN FIRST OFFICER

(over speakers, panting as he speaks--he is clearly running.)

Attention any friendly vessels: we require immediate rescue. A cybernetic life-form has boarded our vessel. They appear to have taken control of our comms and tactical officers. Anyone, please, assist us.

(blink)

All hands! This is the first officer. The captain is dead. We have been boarded. The boarders are immune to our rifles, and they take control of the bodies of anyone they physically seize.

Fight them with any weapon, any tool. Security teams, rendezvous with me at secondary control. Resist.

LORHROK

(woefully)

Resistance is futile.

SHARP

Captain, as the ship's chief medical officer I invoke my authority over the emergency transporters during a medical crisis under Starfleet regulation M-137.

DOVAN

Wait, is that a real regulation?

NEEVA

It is, in fact. Of course, that regulation was written before anyone imagined a Federation ship would be hiding from the Borg.

SHARP

(Walking toward one of the rear control consoles.)

Standing by and letting innocent people die isn't what Starfleet does.

DOVAN

Melissa, stop walking toward that console. That is an order.



SHARP

Like the orders you gave over Gevinon Prime? You forgot how far legal orders go then, and you haven't remembered since. I have invoked my medical authority.

DOVAN

This is your last warning, Melissa.

SHARP

Or what, Alcar? Computer, prepare for emergency transport of all lifeforms with no Borg nanoprobe to [sickbay from these coordinates.]

DOVAN

(interrupts)

Yubari, step between Melissa and that console.

YUBARI

(footsteps)

Aye, Captain.

(beat as footsteps stop)

Melissa, I'm sorry.

SHARP

You're not the person to blame, Asuka.

ALIEN FIRST OFFICER

(over speakers)

They're breaking through the doors! Welders, rivet guns, anything you have, fire!

We hear weapons and tools of whatever variety the Valandrian security team has been able to muster discharge, with little evidence that any of them have substantive effect. As the following exchange of dialogue progresses, the sounds of melee and struggle gradually shift to shrieks of terror or sounds of being choked.

SHARP

Alcar, there are still people in other parts of that ship we can

save.

DOVAN

Lieutenant, please escort the doctor away from the console.

SHARP

Would you stop me if I reached past you to enter those coordinates, Asuka?

YUBARI

(pained)

Please don't.

DOVAN

I realize I'm the last person to threaten anyone with a court-martial, but [my orders in a combat situation must take priority.]

SHARP

(interrupts, furious, as we hear her and Yubari's footsteps)

That's right, you are. But not for the reason you think. Not because you're that rebel commander who flouts the admirals.

But because you're the captain who gives *illegal* orders. You ordered the death of every living being back on Gevinon Prime, and you lied to your Chief Medical Officer--*me*--in order to use a biological weapon to do it. Even if the Federation Senate had voted to declare war--*which they hadn't*--no situation, no circumstance makes those orders legal.

DOVAN

It was a garrison world, and the native Gevinese had been long since infested by the bluegills. They were dead already, Melissa.

SHARP

We could have saved their young! The person inside lives for months after infestation. And even in your imaginary universe where a fully populated planet doesn't have a single civilian, not a single person to shine the boots of the military or make

their coffee, do you believe that slaughtering every last Zero was in any way justifiable?

DOVAN

Melissa, every Federation world would be Borged or bluegilled by now [if we hadn't]

SHARP

(interrupts)

You're missing the point. In engagements with the Sword of Damocles, you have given illegal orders and deceived me in order to gain my compliance. Your current actions give me just cause to believe you will do so again. Therefore, my duties on this ship are not to your orders. They are to uphold the Hippocratic Oath and execute my responsibilities as the ship's doctor.

DOVAN

Is that all?

SHARP

That is all.

DOVAN

Lieutenant Yubari, please escort Melissa to sickbay.

YUBARI

Melissa?

SHARP

You don't need to say it, Asuka.

(They exit.)

ALIEN SOLDIER

(over speakers, in panic, with sounds of pandemonium faintly behind him)

They've killed the captain. They've taken the first officer. They've taken all the command staff. It's only us left. Help us. Someone, please help us. Please. Please. Please!

HELM

Captain, should I stop receiving transmissions?

DOVAN

No.

(blink)

No, I think we deserve to hear this.

We the audience continue to hear sounds of the terror of the Borg for several seconds before the ending credits music begins.

For the purpose this scene serves within the series, namely to render the Borg terrifying again, ending the scene on that note makes the most sense.

In case you want to follow Yubari and Sharp into the corridor, here's that dialogue.

YUBARI

Sickbay.

(The turbolift beeps acquiescence and begins moving.

Beat.)

Melissa. I'm sorry.

SHARP

You don't need to be, Asuka. I understand why you do what you do.

YUBARI

I understand why you make your choices too. And that you stick by them just as much as I do by mine. It's why I value our friendship.

SHARP

Same. Did you contemplate taking my side?

YUBARI

I think you know I can't answer that.

SHARP

We both know you don't need to.

YUBARI

The same way we both know you probably would have reached right past me if you thought you could take me. I saw the look in your face--sizing up the odds.

SHARP

Two cybernetic arms and years of both marine and Starfleet Intelligence training versus five-foot me.

(blink)

I think I would've creamed you.

YUBARI

Don't make me laugh right now, Melissa! I'm escorting you from the bridge. I'm not sure which of us feels worse.

SHARP

Probably you. I've wanted to say that to Alcar for a long time now. And those people... I think I have to accept I did everything I could. Breakfast tomorrow, as usual?

YUBARI

Always.