



Blake's 7

The *Ultimax* Betrayal

A
Radio
Drama

Script
By
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ACT ONE

OPENING MUSIC AND VOICED TITLES

1: THE LIBERATOR COMMAND DECK

(All is very quite. There is a low hum of power, indicating the Liberator's equivalent of night-time. A snoring sound becomes apparent. VILA is on 'watch'. A loud clapping noise startles VILA.)

VILA: What the..?

AVON: Sweet dreams Vila?

VILA: Yes, she was very... I mean no. I was having a power trance. Cally taught me. You can remain totally alert but appear to the uninformed, asleep. You should try one Avon.

AVON: Does this 'power trance' involve drinking half this bottle of Vinic?

(We hear a slight clink, as AVON raises the bottle to prove his point.)

VILA: It helps.

AVON: Anyway, I've come to relieve you of your 'watch'. You can finish your bottle in your room.

VILA: But my watch period doesn't finish for another four hours.

AVON: Then look on it as your lucky night. As strange as it may sound Vila, I am actually trying to do you a favour.

VILA: You don't do favours.

AVON: All right. I couldn't sleep. I just thought I might as well do something useful, that's all. You do understand what the word 'useful' means?

VILA: Ha.

(VILA drinks another mouthful of Vinic.)

VILA: Blake has said that there should be no change to the work rota, unless he personally authorises it.

AVON: *(Talking slowly as if addressing a child.)* Vila, I am on the next shift after you anyway, so how would Blake even know?

VILA: I don't know. Blake has the unpleasant knack of finding out most things.

(We hear another 'clink'.)

AVON: Are you sure? I'll tell you what - as a special 'thank-you', you can have a bottle from my private stock, with my compliments.

VILA: I don't suppose Blake would find out. After all, who would tell him?

AVON: Exactly.

VILA: All right then, I'm off.

(We hear VILA grab AVON's bottle and scurry off.)

AVON: Fool.

(AVON walks over to ORAC - a superior portable computer.)

AVON: Orac, how far is my pre-arranged destination?

ORAC: Ten spacials.

AVON: And the necessary speed?

ORAC: Really I must protest. I was not created to perform such menial tasks.

AVON: *(His voice is a harsh, ultra-determined whisper.)* Orac, the speed. I haven't the time or desire to consider your sensibilities.

ORAC: Speed: standard by twelve. Zen, compute the Liberator's course. Engage coded override.

ZEN: *(The ship's computer.)* Confirmed.

AVON: And Zen, if you must confirm - do it quietly. I have no intention to wake Blake, or the rest of his rabble.

ZEN: *(Quieter.)* Confirmed. Engine silences engaged.

(There is a slight rustling noise, as AVON leans closer to ORAC.)

AVON: And when we have reached the destination, you do fully understand the task you must perform, Orac?

ORAC: Of course. Now, if you'd kindly stop bothering me, I have more important thoughts to process.

(We hear AVON chuckling softly.)

2: THE PLANET SLYEATH

(The winds are howling, the rains are heavy. We hear the heavily booted footsteps of a group of Federation Troops.)

FEDERATION

CAPTAIN: Escort assembled Madam President.

(Two sets of footsteps walk down a ramp.)

SERVALAN: Then what are you waiting for Captain? Escort!

(The group moves off through the mysterious streets of Slyeath.)

TRAVIS: It was a mistake to land so far out, Servalan. The streets of Slyeath can be deadly. Why do you think this planet is so low down on the Federation's 'most wanted' list?

SERVALAN: The pilot has already paid for our inconvenience, with his life.

(There is a commotion up ahead. There are several 'thuds', and a few Federation troops fall down.)

CAPTAIN: We are under attack. Fire at will.

*(There is blaster fire. There are high-pitched cries as their attackers fall - or retreat.)
(There is a slithering sound, as TRAVIS withdraws a knife from a dead Federation guard.)*

SERVALAN: The locals are very friendly. Such a pleasant welcome - I feel most honoured.

TRAVIS: What a beautiful curved knife - with an extra sharp jagged edge for maximum effect. It's no wonder the Knifemen of Slyeath are rumoured to always make their point. You don't mind if I keep this, Servalan?

SERVALAN: *(Says with annoyance.)* Remind me once again, why have I brought you on this delicate mission, Travis?

TRAVIS: My ruthlessness - and my unmatched success rate.

(SERVALAN laughs.)

TRAVIS: *(He pats his hand - which houses a deadly weapon.)* Blake then. You promised me Blake. Before the day is out on this miserable backwater of a planet, there will be one less crusader to irritate me.

(As if to illustrate his point, TRAVIS uses his 'hand' to blast one of the local Slyeaths out of existence.)

SERVALAN: Travis, before this day is over, I - I mean we - will have an awful lot more than simply Blake.

CAPTAIN: Advance.

(Visitors and escort, once again, move through the city.)

3: THE LIBERATOR COMMAND DECK

JENNA: No luck, I'm afraid. What about you Cally?

CALLY: There's no sign of him anywhere, Blake. I cannot even feel the presence of his mind.

VILA: If you ask me, Avon didn't have much presence of mind anyway.

BLAKE: Thank-you, but I will ask you this: what time did Avon relieve you of watch duty?

(We hear VILA rubbing his head and moaning slightly.)

VILA: Oh I don't know. I've got a bad head and it's playing havoc with my memory. I think he took over a bit early though.

BLAKE: Yes, but how early?

(JENNA steps closer to BLAKE.)

JENNA: Could he have teleported off the Ship, Blake?

BLAKE: Impossible Jenna. We are cruising between star systems. Unless... Zen, have any ships passed within scan range in the last, say twelve hours?

ZEN: Negative.

BLAKE: But, wait a minute, I assume we are still on our pre-determined course?

ZEN: Unconfirmed.

BLAKE: What? Explain. Where the hell are we? Show scanner.

(We hear a noise as the scanner reveals itself.)

ZEN: The Liberator is orbiting a planet known as Slyeath.

VILA: Slyeath, oh no.

JENNA: Why, what is it Vila?

VILA: The Knifemen of Slyeath. They make the Space Rats look like pussycats.

CALLY: Who are the Space Rats?

BLAKE: Don't ask. Carry on Vila.

VILA: The Slyeaths are feared throughout the universal underworld. Even the Federation keeps away from them. They wear long black cloaks and hoods that are so dark; it is said no one has ever seen what a Slyeath really looks like.

JENNA: You said they were 'Knifemen'.

VILA: Good point. The Slyeaths are remarkably skilled at killing with their Longknives. A knife that curls like a scythe with a jagged edge so sharp that you wouldn't know you've been cut in half until seeing your legs running on ahead of you. Legend says the Slyeaths can instantly kill in fifty-seven different ways.

JENNA: That's variety for you.

BLAKE: Which leads us all to a rather disturbing question: If Avon has teleported down to Slyeath, why?

4: UNDERGROUND SCIENCE COMPLEX

SERVALAN: Professor Enigman. Delighted to meet you.

ENIGMAN: Your hand Madam President.

(ENIGMAN kisses SERVALAN's hand.)

ENIGMAN: I hope the tiresome excesses of Slyeath's weather have not spoilt your beautiful, and if I may say so, stunning white gown.

TRAVIS: Oh per-lease.

SERVALAN: Do excuse my 'assistant', Enigman. He is a deeply disturbed and unpleasant creature known as Travis.

ENIGMAN: As you wish.

SERVALAN: Travis, don't you think it's time you rejoined the Slyeaths up on the surface. With that black outfit, I'm sure you'd blend in. In fact I think you'd get on famously.

TRAVIS: What do you mean? Oh yes, of course. Professor, Servalan.

(We hear TRAVIS's footsteps as he exits the scene.)

ENIGMAN: May I address you as Servalan, Madam President?

SERVALAN: You may.

ENIGMAN: Please sit down Servalan, have a drink. You may call me by my first name, Encill - if you wish.

SERVALAN: If it's all the same to you, I will stick with 'Professor' or 'Enigman'.

(We hear the pouring of drinks.)

ENIGMAN: I suppose you can't wait to see it, then?

SERVALAN: It is the sole purpose of my visit to this quaint, charming little planet.

5: THE LIBERATOR COMMAND DECK

JENNA: Blake, I thought you said the Liberator should be cruising in deep space, not orbiting that miserable looking planet.

BLAKE: Avon must have changed course - and at some speed. Zen, explain why I wasn't consulted about such a deviation?

ZEN: Confirm coded override was in operation.

BLAKE: *(Angry.)* What?

ZEN: Orders initiated from Orac.

VILA: Telltale!

BLAKE: Orac, would you be kind enough to explain what is going on here?

ORAC: You need to be more specific.

CALLY: Just tell us why you executed the coded override.

ORAC: That information is currently locked.

BLAKE: And I suppose Avon is the one who locked it.

VILA: Slammed the door shut and thrown away the key, I'd say.

JENNA: Shut up Vila.

ORAC: Avon simply exploited a little known and rarely used device that locks my functional capacity.

BLAKE: Then I suppose the only way we are going to find out what Avon is doing on Slyeath is to teleport down there.

ORAC: That, also, will not be possible. Avon instructed me to lock the teleport system.

CALLY: I'll check.

(We hear CALLY depart from the command deck, and JENNA walks towards the teleport bracelets.)

JENNA: That's curious. There are three teleport bracelets missing. Wait a minute there's more miss...

VILA: The thief!

(CALLY returns.)

CALLY: I'm afraid Orac's right. The teleport controls are frozen.

VILA: Maybe he's just jumped ship. Perhaps Avon decided he wasn't cut out for this freedom fighter lark. Mind you, I'm not too sure about it myself. I can certainly think of better things to do like...

BLAKE: All right Vila. 'Jumped ship'? I think there's more to it than that.

JENNA: Yes, we're not a prison ship. Avon could have left anytime he'd have liked.

VILA: He has.

BLAKE: But why go to all this trouble. Why doesn't he want any of us down there?

VILA: Perhaps he wanted time to think.

BLAKE: (*Ignoring VILA.*) What the hell is Avon doing on the desperate world of Slyeath?

6: THE PLANET SLYEATH

AVON: Down and safe - so far. Not that anyone cares...

(*We hear AVON duck out of sight.*)

AVON: I can't let these Slyeaths see me or I'd be dead in seconds.

(*AVON breathes heavily, almost laughing.*)

AVON: Yes, there's some form of primitive alehouse. I must be very close...

7: UNDERGROUND SCIENCE COMPLEX

(*There is the clinking of glasses and the sound of pouring, as more wine is consumed.*)

ENIGMAN: How did you find the friendly locals, Servalan?

SERVALAN: Oh, they are a delightful herd, Enigman. The way the Slyeaths kept throwing themselves at us. Such good-natured enthusiasm, I adore them.

ENIGMAN: I'm glad you like the Slyeaths, my dear. However, I regret to say, you are not in distinguished company.

SERVALAN: Really?

ENIGMAN: In fact, I would go as far to say that I could not think of a single person, the universe over, who would even set foot on Slyeath. I imagine they have some fanciful notion that the legendary Knifemen of Slyeath would cut them to shreds.

SERVALAN: How could anyone make up such unfounded rumours?

ENIGMAN: Of course, on the plus side I can work on my project here in absolute secrecy. No one dares to visit Slyeath. And you, Madam President, only you know of my work here. I have been lonely these past years, that was until you arrived, my dear.

SERVALAN: All very interesting of course, but...

ENIGMAN: Another drink?

SERVALAN: Ultimax!

ENIGMAN: You tire of my company, Servalan. You wish to see my Ultimax creation?

SERVALAN: Call me old-fashioned Enigman, but I prefer business before pleasure.

(ENIGMAN presses a switch, and the double-doors slide open to reveal his inner workplace.)

ENIGMAN: *(Says with immense pride.)* The Ultimax Machine.

SERVALAN: How peculiar. It looks like a poor-man's Orac.

(There are heavy footsteps, as a group of Federation troops stride in.)

ENIGMAN: What, what are they doing?

SERVALAN: My men? Oh don't worry Professor. They are just setting up a variety of independent tests, merely to confirm that the Ultimax does what you claim it does.

ENIGMAN: Don't you trust me? I have worked on this project for years. I assure you the Ultimax will perform magnificently.

SERVALAN: *(Says quietly.)* For your sake I hope it does.

ENIGMAN: What was that?

SERVALAN: Oh I was just saying now that some of our business is out of the way, perhaps we could go somewhere private to indulge our pleasures.

(We hear SERVALAN touching him. ENIGMAN purrs with delight.)

8: THE PLANET SLYEATH

AVON: The coast is clear. Time to make a run for it.

(We hear AVON run, but also the shuffling of the Slyeaths as they ambush AVON. AVON blasts some of the Knifemen down, but they soon overpower him.)

AVON: No, not my gun.

(We hear the gun break. We hear a sound as a particularly long and nasty knife is unsheathed.)

AVON: Fascinating knife. You're not planning to use it though?

(The leading Slyeath grunts.)

AVON: You are planning to use it. Sharp, isn't it?

(There is a slight 'whoosh' as the knife is thrust towards AVON.)

<There is seven seconds of silence, indicating the end of Act One.>

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