



"Empathic Advantage"
1.03

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

It's a lazy opening for our crew. SHERA is at the helm, tapping a button in monotonous monotony, listening to the monotone beep that emerges with every press. AZEL sits at a side console, looking at the nearby wall in a catatonic state usually only reserved for one in a coma. ADELE stands near the door, looking out at the viewscreen every moment or two before going back to a small book in her palms.

There is almost no sound on the bridge.

It's quite calm.

It's tough to even make out the sounds of the engines.

In fact, it's almost impossible to tell if the bridge crew is even breathing.

At least until...

ZORIN

Not again!

We whip pan to ZORIN, sitting very uncomfortably in his seat, shifting and wiggling in powerful discomfort. He grabs a large, corroded bucket from off screen, holding it before his lips expectantly.

Shera turns for but a moment before turning back around, shutting her eyes and covering her ears in a motion almost too fast to see.

Very fortunately, Zorin simply slumps back in relief after a moment of tense anticipation. He tosses the bucket down almost as if it were burning.

SHERA

Maybe you should go back to your room for a bit.

Zorin tilts his head up only slightly.

ZORIN

I'll abandon my seat when I am dead.
Not a moment earlier.

SHERA
 (nods at bucket)
 I'm just saying...

Zorin reaches for the bucket suddenly, holding it in front of his face once more. He sits perfectly still once more...

ADELE
 I agree that you should at least do this in private. What if Shera has to pilot us in a maneuver you cannot take?

ZORIN
 There is no maneuver-

Shera taps a button on the helm console, suddenly diving the vessel straight down 90 degrees! It lasts only a moment, but it's all that's needed.

ZORIN
 Don't you EVER-

Zorin grabs the bucket one last time, coughing and retching into it as you would expect a sick Hirogen to do.

AZEL
 That's.... disgusting.

ISAAC (O.S.)
 You're damn right it is.

ISAAC SAROLA strolls in, his arms burdened by a large mass of cloth and plastic containers.

ISAAC
 (smiling, to Adele)
 Hello.

Adele sighs and goes back to her book. Isaac shrugs and turns back to Zorin.

ISAAC
 Zorin, you God damn idiot. I told you to stay in your room for the next three days so your fuckin' stomach virus didn't stink up the whole ship.

Isaac tosses a small bag full of a crushed leaf into Zorin's lap.

ISAAC

And keep putting these in your drink for God's sake! Don't need more uncontrolled emissions from another one of them holes.

Zorin looks two seconds away from throttling Isaac, but the bucket and his condition prevent it.

ZORIN

I'll be fine.

ISAAC

At least until the virus moves past your stomach and into your lungs. Ain't nobody aboard gonna clean that shit. So for everyone's good sanity, take your damn medicine and go to your room!

Zorin stands as imposingly as he can manage.

ZORIN

If anyone talks to me that way again...

ISAAC

(unmoved)

Yeah, whatever. You know what, Zorin? You can stay here. Stay here and ignore everything the guy with the medicine says and die. See if I care.

Zorin looks over every member of the assembled crew. All of them have the same expression as Isaac.

SHERA

We won't blow your ship up while you're gone.

AZEL

Promise.

ADELE

I swear in the Prophet's name nothing will befall this vessel, Zorin.

Zorin grunts and thinks for a long beat.

ZORIN

Very well. As Siren has chosen to remain in her room for the time being... just keep us together until I return.

He stands and quickly grabs for the bucket.

ISAAC
Don't go makin' a mess in the
hallways. I don't need to see that.

Zorin groans and slowly staggers off the bridge.

Another long, silent beat.

AZEL
So what do we do now?

ISAAC
I'm gettin' some food. You want
some, Adele?

ADELE
I'm fine.

Isaac exits.

Silence once more.

SHERA
So... want to talk about... something?

ADELE
No.

AZEL
Not really.

Shera slumps forward.

Another long time of silent boredom.

At least until we slowly turn to get a full view of the door
leading into and out of the bridge.

It slowly opens...

And TOM HATCH steps out, a grin on his face.

HATCH
So what's this I hear, Zorin is out?

ADELE
Captain Zorin has contracted an
illness, nothing more.

SHERA
Yeah, he'll probably be back tomorrow.

Hatch still looks happy. He walks over to Zorin's seat and brushes its texture lightly.

HATCH
Huh... and Siren?

AZEL
Still locked up in her room.
(gets it)
Oh no. By the Gods, no.

It's too late. Still grinning like a schoolboy, Hatch takes a tentative sit onto Zorin's place on the bridge. Hatch's small frame makes him look like a child sitting behind the wheel of a car.

Gaining confidence, Hatch sits down more firmly. Eventually, he is fully encompassed by the large seat, his legs barely dangling off the side.

HATCH
This thing is really comfortable.

Everyone suddenly looks very concerned and nervous.

AZEL
Uh... maybe you should get up?

SHERA
Yeah. You had your fun... now get off before he throws us all off the ship!

To emphasize her point, Shera points to the viewscreen, which shows a lazily drifting starfield.

HATCH
What's he gonna do, sneeze on me?

Hatch chuckles.

SHERA
We tried to warn him...

Unfortunately, the mirth and nervousness of the scene is suddenly shattered when Shera's console goes wild in alarm!

HATCH
The hell?

Shera works.

SHERA
Uh... I can't read it...

Suddenly, the comm system activates with the voice of the Avalon's familiar computer, AVA.

AVA
Distress call, twelve o'clock!
Coming from that planet up there.

HATCH
Planet?

The viewscreen shifts to a view of a rather pretty world spinning around an equally pretty star. In the distance, a pretty asteroid field rings a pretty nebula.

HATCH
Ooh... pretty.

Shera still works.

SHERA
Got a fix on it. North side of the world.

HATCH
Uh... can we get there?

AVA
Quick warp over. A minute flat.
Zorin won't even notice.

Hatch smiles. He leans back in the oversized chair as if it were all his.

HATCH
Then... let's see what's out... I mean... let's boldly ventu.... nah...

Everyone turns to Hatch, puzzled and confused.

HATCH
Just go.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. ORBIT OF MYSTERIOUS WORLD

Avalon slides forward in front of the lush, green world. It all looks quite beautiful.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

It's the same as before.

AZEL

Think Zorin knows yet?

SHERA

Probably...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - ZORIN'S ROOM

Zorin stares out his window with a mixture of seething rage and hatred across his brow. Unfortunately, before he can shout or do anything to act on said rage, he reaches for the bucket once more.

SMASH BACK TO:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

The viewscreen shows the planet sparkling in space.

AZEL

What d'you think is going on?

AVA

Still the same S.O.S. call.

SHERA

I'm putting it up on speaker. Sorry, gotta push you aside for a sec, Ava.

AVA

Now wait one minu-

Ava "disappears" after a brief tone.

A second female voice suddenly takes over.

FEMALE COMM VOICE

Uh, hey. Anyone out there? I kinda got stuck out here and crashed. Any help would be good.

Shera ends it there. Ava pops up immediately.

AVA

Just be glad these consoles don't explode like they used to...

Everyone ignores her.

HATCH

Can you tell where it's coming from?

AZEL

Uh... nope.

HATCH

What?

AZEL

(duh)

I don't know how to trace comm systems.

HATCH

So... what are you doing in that seat?

AZEL

It's actually really comfy....

Shera stands and literally shoves Azel aside.

AZEL

SHE can do this stuff.

She rolls her eyes and gets to work. As she does, the sparkling world slowly spins closer and closer on the viewscreen.

SHERA

I'm getting something... Wait... yeah... triangulating... hold on... little bit...

HATCH

Oh come on!

Shera turns to Hatch, fire in her eyes.

SHERA

Hey, you could do this if you want.

HATCH

No... no. You're doing a great job.

Shera sighs and gets back to work. As she does, the same distress call plays once more. It plays in sequence at a low volume for the rest of the scene.

FEMALE COMM VOICE

Uh, hey. Anyone out there? I kinda got stuck out here and crashed. Any help would be good.

Adele walks up from the shadows.

ADELE

I don't... trust this voice.

HATCH

What don't you... trust about it?

ADELE

It's a distress signal yet she doesn't sound to be in much distress.

HATCH

Maybe she landed on a tropical beach somewhere and just needs a lift?

ADELE

Doubtful. It's been sent on all the channels. Anyone could pick it up.

HATCH

Even Cult?

ADELE

(rolled eyes)

Of course.

AZEL

Then we should go get her before they do.

Shera doesn't look up from her pinpointing. Aside from the soft tones of her console working, the bridge is a sound black hole.

Azel coughs lightly.

FEMALE COMM VOICE

Uh, hey. Anyone out there? I kinda got stuck out here and crashed. Any help would be good.

Hatch shifts around in Zorin's seat, making squeaky noises with the material.

Adele stands behind him, watching Shera work.

AZEL

You know... it's been nearly twenty minutes and nobody who's been on the ship for more than a year has shown up? Even Zorin.

HATCH

Yeah, I noticed that. What do you think is going on?

AZEL

I'd put money on a meeting. A secret meeting.

HATCH

With punch and pie.

AZEL

A meeting where they talk about how to throw us off.

HATCH

Naaah.

SHERA

Could be they're just in their rooms resting after everything that's been going on lately.

FEMALE COMM VOICE

Uh, hey. Anyone out there? I kinda got stuck out here and crashed. Any help would be good.

HATCH

Yeah, trading at six separate outposts and resting on a grass world for a week 'cause someone gave us too much cash. REAL stressful.

ADELE

(knowingly)

They could be tending to Siren.

HATCH

Yeah... haven't seen her since Novograd.

There's a sad, dark silence.

At least until Shera stands up.

SHERA

I got it!

HATCH

Where is she?

SHERA

Southern continent. I don't have it exactly right but... I think if we take your ship, Tom, we could help her.

HATCH

Sweet. I'll get it ready.

Hatch is suddenly on his feet, chest pushed out and his jaw squared like a true hero.

HATCH

Let's go help someone for a change.

With a flourish, he walks out. Music swells in the background!

AZEL

Hold it.

Hatch stops cold.

HATCH

Now what?

AZEL

Are we sure Zorin's going to be happy about this?

There's a long pause.

AZEL

Right. Sorry. Let's hope she's got big pockets...

Hatch walks out, closing the door behind him. Adele stands a moment later and follows.

SHERA

Why're you going?

ADELE

I still do not trust her voice. I need to find if my suspicions are founded.

AZEL

You just don't want to be around
when Zorin gets here, don't you?

Adele smiles slightly.

ADELE

Would you be?

Adele exits.

Azel looks to Shera for a moment before they, too, get up to follow Hatch.

INT. AVALON - CARGO BAY

Hatch is sitting in his shuttle's cockpit, slowly activating the old machine when the trio of characters enter. He waves them in silently.

As we get closer to Azel and Shera, we see them dressed slightly different from what we're used to. Azel now sports a long, brown coat that hides a holster with a gun almost too large for him to easily use. Shera is similarly attired, though her jacket is not quite as long and is jet black. She has two rifles strapped to her back in an X position. In all, they almost look tougher than our regular action trio.

Almost.

Because Azel stumbles on the threshold of Hatch's shuttle, dropping a gigantic knife from a hidden pocket in the jacket.

AZEL

Oops.

Shera jumps around almost in a panic.

SHERA

I hate knives. Pick it up! Pick it up!

Azel scrambles on his hands and knees. He cuts his finger ever so slightly before grabbing it.

AZEL

Ow.

SHERA

Looks like it hurt.

AZEL

Yeah...

Adele pushes past the Xindi and sits near the back of the shuttle. Hatch looks into a rearview mirror to see her.

HATCH

Gonna avoid Zorin for a while, too, huh?

ADELE

I'm making sure this distress call isn't a trap it so obviously seems like.

HATCH

Don't you have some book to write or something?

Adele scoffs and sits back. Azel and Shera sit together.

HATCH

You two look... interesting.

AZEL

Hey, without anyone else, we gotta make sure to hold on to what we got.

ADELE

And what is that? A junk shuttle full of more junk?

HATCH

Hey.

AZEL

No... what if it IS a trap? What if there's a thousand Red soldiers out there who want to grab us and... abuse us?

HATCH

You're losing it, you know that? Stop throwing things into the warp reactor. That's gotta be causing some kind of radiation damage.

SHERA

Shut up, everyone! There could be someone in real trouble out there. Let's see what we can do.

Everyone nods and allows Hatch to get back to his piloting. He presses more buttons, meddling and working until the cargo bay goes dark and windy with the telltale sign of decompression.

HATCH
Hold on to your asses...

EXT. SPACE

Avalon hangs in orbit of the pretty world, her cargo ramp slowly descending.

Before it's completely down, Hatch's shuttle pops out like an escaping bat, barely scraping against the bottom of the ramp in her escape.

EXT. JUNGLE LANDSCAPE

Hatch's shuttle flies lazily over a thin layer of jungle, slowly heading for a slowly curling tail of smoke rising into the heavens.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Hatch pilots with intent. Azel, after struggling with all his gear and weaponry, finally sits in the seat next to him.

AZEL
Hey, you're not half bad at this.

HATCH
Thanks.

AZEL
Care to tell us where you're going to set down?

HATCH
(points forward)
There.

AZEL
Where?

HATCH
Over there. Next to the smoke.

AZEL
Ah. Nice.

A silent beat.

HATCH
You might want to get back if you wanna look tough when we get out.

AZEL
Sounds good.

Azel moves to stand up... but finds one of his guns is stuck on an armrest.

AZEL
Damn arm thing!

He struggles with incredible might to free himself. By now, Hatch is quite close to landing.

Also by now, Hatch can't help but chuckle at Azel's silly antics.

HATCH
And I thought I was bad...

Azel fumbles around even more when Hatch sets the shuttle down with little grace.

Hatch stands.

HATCH
Watch the car while we're out, m'kay?

Azel keeps struggling...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNGLE

In a small clearing made by a sudden and violent impact, Hatch, Shera and Adele walk around carefully. In an odd way, they seem a strange parody of the regular trio who does this kind of thing.

In the exact center of the scene is a relatively undamaged shuttle. The smoke from before rising from a fire pit now long extinguished.

HATCH
Uh... hello? Anyone out there?

Shera moves to the shuttle.

SHERA
Yeah, this is what we were looking for.

(beat)
Look familiar, Adele?

ADELE
No, it's not.

SHERA
Not Cult, huh?

ADELE
No.

SHERA
Confed?

ADELE
I wouldn't know.

We go back to Hatch, who is peering into the shuttle's cockpit.
He taps the glass curiously.

HATCH
Hello? Anyone in there?

He looks into the shuttle for one long moment...

His reflection comes into full view.

And...

A sudden shadow flits inside!

HATCH
Hey? You trapped?

The shadow darts away.

HATCH
I can help you. You need some?

No movement for a long while.

Until a gun suddenly presses against the back of his head.

FEMALE VOICE
No, I think you need some help.

Hatch slowly turns to see the person holding the weapon.

It's a woman of average height, build and physique. She'd appear almost human if her eyes weren't a uniform black and her cheeks weren't covered in an exotic scale pattern.

HATCH
This is stereotypical.

Shera is suddenly behind the mystery woman, a rifle pointed at her head. Though it's easy to tell that Shera doesn't have the strength to hold the weapon for long.

SHERA
Drop it.

MYSTERY WOMAN

No.

Shera cocks her rifle, almost dropping it in the process.

SHERA

Now.

MYSTERY WOMAN

No.

Shera smacks the girl with her gun.

MYSTERY WOMAN

OW! Geez! What was that for!?

SHERA

Drop your gun.

MYSTERY WOMAN

I almost shot him, you know? That HURT!

SHERA

It'll hurt more if you don't DROP
YOUR DAMN GUN!

Hatch watches in a weird awe.

The woman turns to him in a creepy fast motion.

MYSTERY WOMAN

You the leader of this group, right?

HATCH

Yeah, sure.

She suddenly closes her eyes for a long moment, rolling them slowly from side to side.

They open just as quickly.

MYSTERY WOMAN

So you are. Stand up.

Hatch does. He gun lowers a few inches.

MYSTERY WOMAN

You here to help?

HATCH

Yeah. I'm Tom Hatch.

Hatch smiles warmly.

HATCH

I'm unarmed in case you wanted to know.

Her gun lowers a bit more.

MYSTERY WOMAN

Good.

Adele suddenly shows up.

ADELE

Is this her?

Her gun is suddenly up, this time on Adele!

MYSTERY WOMAN

Red bitch!

SHERA

Watch it!

HATCH

Whoah whoah! She's friendly! With us!

MYSTERY WOMAN

With you?

HATCH

Yes.

MYSTERY WOMAN

You sure she's not lying?

HATCH

I'm sure.

Another long beat. She closes her eyes once more.

MYSTERY WOMAN

... Fine. She's with you.

She lowers her gun and hides it behind her. Shera slowly does the same.

Another beat.

HATCH

So... what's your name?

CHALA

I'm Chala.

HATCH

Nice name.

Adele is on top of the situation.

ADELE

And what are you doing here?

CHALA

As you can see... I crashed. I need help getting out of here.

ADELE

And why did you send out a distress beacon on every channel?

CHALA

I'm not afraid of a few Reds.

ADELE

You should be. Especially after His latest proclamation.

Chala's eyes widen.

CHALA

Hey, aren't you the guys who screwed that whole thing up? It's all over the news waves.

Hatch steps forward with a smug expression. He tightens his pants just a little bit.

HATCH

That's us. Stuck it to 'em like nobody's business.

CHALA

More like pissed 'em off. Been to Vyr recently? Bombed to hell.

Hatch's head sinks.

SHERA

What are you doing out here?

CHALA

Same as everyone. Just getting out of the Red's way 'till it all dies down. I just happened to snag a meteor on my way here. I've been here a week or so. Can you help?

ADELE

It depends on what kind of help you require. And what you can offer us.

Chala smiles coyly.

CHALA

Offer you?

(beat)

Adele Tiernan. You were once present on Jushai during its fall. You pass the time by writing the Prophet's books out from memory and you can't figure out for the life of you why Isaac loves you so much.

(another beat)

Oh... and you still love the Prophet no matter what his mortal disciples do to corrupt his message. Did I get it all?

Everyone is stunned.

ADELE

How did you...?

Chala points to her forehead.

CHALA

I've got a few gifts up my sleeve.

Off her smile, we.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

HATCH

Well yeah. I'm not exactly from here.

(works for one second)

Hold on, I gotta do some trick flying here.

EXT. SPACE

Hatch pilots the shuttle almost straight upwards into Avalon's cargo bay, barely missing the ramp and ceiling by mere inches.

The shuttle lands easily and the ramp begins to close almost immediately after all is calm.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Chala is pleasantly smiling.

CHALA

She looks like a good ship, just a little damaged maybe, but good.

HATCH

Yeah, we've been through a lot.

CHALA

Yes, I did see some damage on the hull. Can it be repaired?

HATCH

You know, I really don't know. Our hull usually repairs itself. I don't know why Ava hasn't really fixed those few spots...

CHALA

Ava?

HATCH

(smiling)

You'll meet her.

Chala smiles for a moment before her face slackens.

She points out the window quickly.

CHALA

Looks like you've been caught.

Hatch looks out to see Isaac standing right in front of the shuttle, his gun pointed directly forward and his face looking quite pissed.

Shera, Azel and Adele all pile in a moment later, completely filling the cockpit.

AZEL

Crap.

INT. AVALON - CARGO BAY

Isaac trails his gun on the group as they pile out of the shuttle. Except Adele, of course.

ISAAC

You're in a shitload this time, Hatch. Takin' us here, stealin' guns and now picking up ANOTHER piece of space trash?

HATCH

Hey, she was in trouble. I did the decent thing.

Hatch moves closer to Isaac. We go back to Chala and the other three.

CHALA

I thought he was in charge. Why is he yelling at Tom?

SHERA

It's complicated.

CHALA

Indeed it is.

We go back to Isaac and Hatch.

ISAAC

You take advantage of us enough, you little punk. I can't wait for Zorin to heal up and kick you out the airlock like we did Naomi.

This doesn't hit Hatch as hard as Isaac wants.

HATCH

You don't understand what she can pay us with.

ISAAC

What's that? I don't think we need any more pus-

HATCH
NO! Not that! She... knows things.

ISAAC
(mood falls)
What?

HATCH
Look, I don't really know what it is. She's either a REALLY good guesser or she's a...

ISAAC
Telepath. You brought a fucking telepath on the ship.

Stone-faced, Isaac shoves Hatch aside and stalks over to Chala.

CHALA
Can I help you?

Isaac looks at her black eyes and cheeks for one moment before raising his gun on her.

ISAAC
A Molia. A goddamn Molia telepath.

Azel and Shera are suddenly in front of Isaac, shouting and trying to get their own guns out.

The following happens almost simultaneously.

AZEL
Hey, calm down!

SHERA
What are you doing!?

ISAAC
Get out of my way!

AZEL
Let's talk this over!

SHERA
Put it down!

CHALA
Get out of my face!

ISAAC
Get the hell out!

It continues for one more moment before:

ADELE

Quiet!

It all stops. Everyone drops their weapons.

ADELE

Everyone, calm down. Let Chala talk.

Isaac smiles when Adele speaks, but goes back to stone when he turns to Chala. Adele moves over and puts a hand on his shoulder to calm him.

CHALA

I can tell you're upset.

ISAAC

Don't fucking read me...

CHALA

I don't need to read that. To answer everyone's question, yes, I'm running from the Reds just like you. Yes, my ship crashed out there and YES... I will work to make my keep here.

ISAAC

That wasn't my question...

CHALA

Oh, I know it. And the answer is I will send your decapitated and flayed corpse back to Jushai before you even think of shooting me again. Is that clear?

This shocks even Isaac. Azel looks sick to his stomach. Shera and Hatch have an awed expression.

ISAAC

Whatever. I'll be in my room before Zorin gets up.

CHALA

Hey, as long as Tom's in charge, I'll be safe, won't I?

Isaac is about to move away before he suddenly bursts with laughter.

ISAAC

Hatch... in charge!? The hell are you smoking?

Isaac walks away, laughing and guffawing until the door closes behind him.

Chala turns to Hatch, venom in her eyes.

CHALA

So you're NOT in charge.

HATCH

Of the shuttle... heh heh... And Zorin's been sick for a while...

CHALA

What an extraordinary liar you are, Tom Hatch. From me, that means a lot.

Hatch tries to giggle nervously.

CHALA

Any food on this ship? Living on a deserted world just doesn't fill the stomach, you know?

Seeing as disaster isn't about to happen just yet, Azel and Shera exit, shrugging off their weapons like many-ton weights. Adele stays behind, staring at Chala with cold eyes.

HATCH

Uh, yeah. Go up one deck and take a right. Galley's right there.

CHALA

I'll hold you to that.

She exits. Hatch is about to go before Adele steps before him.

ADELE

Do you know why she is running from the Prophet?

HATCH

Not really.

Adele begins to pace. She doesn't know how to explain it.

ADELE

Those with her abilities are sacred to the Prophet.

(MORE)

ADELE (CONT'D)

His first book tells that their abilities are the closest mortals have to his own power and should be kept safe.

HATCH

Doesn't sound too bad.

ADELE

Safe from life itself.

HATCH

Oh.

ADELE

But beyond that, in the previous few decades, an ambitious project was created to harness the abilities of those with her power.

(beat)

You know of Seers, do you not?

HATCH

I'm still lost.

Adele sighs. She hates this exposition.

ADELE

This project created Seers out of those with the gift. Their brains are modified and injected with a serum I know nothing about. They can sense those who are not faithful, reveal hidden dangers and allow long distance communication over broken space.

HATCH

Sounds convenient. Except for the whole brain thing. That sucks.

ADELE

And every Seer I've known has lasted but a year or so. The Prophet requires ever growing numbers of gifted individuals to further their plans.

HATCH

I understand. She's even more desperate than us. All the more reason to keep her safe.

Adele is suddenly closer to Hatch, grabbing his shoulders.

ADELE
You don't understand. Desperate is
an understatement. She will do
ANYTHING to stay away from them.

Off that warning, Adele exits.

HATCH
I still believe her.

INT. AVALON - CORRIDOR

Hatch, his head hanging low, walks slowly and aimlessly
through a corridor.

CARLISE (O.S.)
Hey!

CARLISE comes running up to Hatch, slightly out of breath.
She takes a long drink of some kind of liquid before talking.

HATCH
Hi, Carlise.

CARLISE
Hey, the rumor true? You brought
someone on here without Zorin
knowing? And a telepath?

HATCH
Yeah.

Carlise whistles loudly.

CARLISE
I knew you had balls but this is
just insane.
(beat, coyly)
So are we looking at another Naomi
here?

HATCH
(quickly)
No. Definitely not.

CARLISE
Damn. I love shipboard romance. So
you know why she can't be here, right?

HATCH
I think so. Cult and all that
looking to mess with her brain.

CARLISE

And that she can use her abilities without us knowing and maybe sell out our secrets to the highest bidder?

HATCH

What secrets?

Carlise is dumbfounded.

CARLISE

Well... um... there's the warp... no... the hull... Shut up, Hatch.

Hatch chuckles lightly.

HATCH

It's okay. I know what she can do now. And I've just got that hunch she's on the level. Maybe she'll help us out.

Carlise suddenly gets serious.

CARLISE

Listen, Tom. I'm sure EVERYONE has told you this already, but this girl is a fucking telepath. She only looks out for herself. She won't work with us for very long. And you can bet Zorin isn't going to let her stay for long at all. 'Specially after what happened with the last recruit we brought on. And wasn't it your hunch that kept her on board?

HATCH

Yeah. But this is different. I just know it.

CARLISE

You'll learn eventually.

Carlise stops at a door.

CARLISE

My stop. Listen, Tom. This girl will rip your eyes out and sell your scalp to the highest bidder if she has to to get away from the Cult. Don't think for a moment she won't because of some gut feeling.

Carlise disappears, leaving Hatch once again alone and even more down.

Hatch tries to walk forward, everyone's words buzzing in his head.

HATCH
GOD DAMMIT!

Hatch KICKS the nearby wall, sending a loud crashing sound echoing down the corridor.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Azel and Shera sit around the bridge, not doing anything of particular importance. Azel looks very relieved to be rid of his weaponry.

AZEL
I don't want to carry a gun ever again...

SHERA
I dunno. It kind of was a power trip.

AZEL
Yeah, well you were able to get out of the shuttle. I got stuck on that damn seat the whole time. I had to unclip my belt and cut my way out.
(beat)
Think Hatch'll notice the rip in his upholstery?

SHERA
Are you serious? By gods that thing is a mess.

AZEL
Sorry for being courteous.

Azel quiets down for a moment.

A single beep comes from nowhere.

AZEL
So why do we seem not to care about Chala? I mean, we've run into telepaths before and they've all been the same...

SHERA
Yeah, but we've also never had Zorin around.

AZEL
Need I remind you of his status?

Azel mimes vomiting profusely.

SHERA
Stop that.

AZEL
Remember that Arcturan we ran into
a few years ago?

SHERA
Gorrgis or Volsh?

AZEL
Uh--the one with the scar on his
neck.

SHERA
Oh, the cute one.

AZEL
Remember what he did to
the ship we were on?

SHERA
(dreamily)
Not really...

AZEL
Oh yeah... I remember you and him...
that's gross. But remember what
happened to that ship?

SHERA
Didn't its nacelles suddenly fall
off like the moment after we got off?

AZEL
Yeah. The crew was thinking about
going through a bit of Cult space,
so he disconnected the engines and
let them die.

SHERA
But we're not going near Red space
like--ever.

Azel rolls his eyes.

AZEL
And has that stopped them?

SHERA

Not really.

AZEL

My point stands. We're in it deep this time, and everyone knows it but Hatch. I think we're all just waiting for Zorin to get up and take care of it himself.

On cue, of course, Zorin shows up. He is heavy on his feet and looks absolutely horrible, but he is there.

ZORIN

What is going on... on my ship?

Off Azel and Shera's suddenly very nervous glances we:

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - GALLEY

Chala is nearly alone in the galley, the other few patrons taking seats as far away from her as possible. She is munching on what can best be described as a hamburger with a still-whole crab serving as the meat. It crunches loudly as she eats.

Hatch enters soon, deliberately sitting across from her.

CHALA

This food is great. Where'd you get it?

HATCH

Can't you find out on your own?

CHALA

I could. But it's more fun if you tell me.

Hatch picks up a small piece of bread from Chala's plate before replying.

HATCH

Last trading post. They had a little bakery where they made these little sticky buns... Isaac took most of them.

CHALA

That sucks. I like sticky buns.

There is a sudden silence.

CHALA
(quiet)
Zorin's up.

HATCH
And he's pissed.

CHALA
How do you know?

HATCH
He always is.

CHALA
Oh.

At this instant, Zorin, Azel and Shera arrive. Zorin tears over to Chala and throws her food to the opposite wall, sealing the food into the bulkheads. Azel holds up a large tissue for Zorin to wipe his nose with a second later.

ZORIN
I've allowed you to make mistakes before, Hatch, but this is by far your worst.
(sniffle)
I will not allow her presence on my ship!

CHALA
That was my food!

Zorin weakly raises a gun toward Chala.

HATCH
What is it with you people and guns?

Chala is on her feet.

CHALA
Watch it, Zorin!

ZORIN
I will not tolerate you on my ship!

HATCH
Can't we talk this out?

CHALA
I can help you!

ZORIN
 There is nothing you can do for us.
 (readies gun)
 Go back to where you came from.

Zorin coughs loudly.

CHALA
 But I can-

The entire ruckus is suddenly interrupted by Ava's suddenly quite loud voice.

AVA
 Hey... guys? I think you need to
 get up to the bridge pronto.

Zorin looks up but keeps his weapon in place.

ZORIN
 What is it?

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Everyone from the previous scene, even Chala, are on the bridge. Zorin still has his gun pointed at her, but we can tell he's getting weaker.

ZORIN
 What is going on?

AVA
 This.

The bridge's tiny viewscreen activates to show the last thing anyone wanted to see.

A small, blood red vessel brimming with weapons and other dangerous equipment.

SHERA
 A Cult attack cruiser.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The Cult ship isn't of a design we've seen before. It's only slightly larger than the Avalon, covered in very messy hull plates and lacks any kind of signage or representations that identify Cult vessels.

And it's very, very well armed.

But it's very, very ugly.

The ugly vessel slides into place just before the Avalon, pointing every single one of its torpedo launchers at our favorite ship.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

The bridge is quiet as the speakers activate with the expected Cult message. Zorin has a look of rage in his eyes so intense, they literally look burning. His gun hand gains a new resolve on Chala.

CULT COMM VOICE

We have identified you as the Avalon. Stand down all weapons and prepare to be boarded. We will take your vessel to the nearest shipyard to be used for our needs. You will bow to the Prophet's will.

AVA

They're arming their torpedoes...

Chala looks dead forward, rolling her eyes just slightly...

The Red ship hangs in space, ready to make a move.

Zorin pulls the hammer back on his gun.

Hatch looks nervous.

CHALA

They're lying.

ZORIN

What?

HATCH

Huh?

CHALA

They're not Cult.

HATCH

Um... red hull... lots of weapons.
I'd say they are. Maybe you're all
out of whack with that crab burger.

CHALA

I promise. They're not even armed.

AVA

(same as Hatch)

Um... I'm reading multiple heat
sources and stuff.

CHALA

Signal flares in hollow tubes.
They're nervous we'll figure it out.
(smiling)
They don't even have a single
weapon on that piece of junk.

Though Zorin doesn't look happy by any means, his rage has subsided.

ZORIN

Shera, activate the weapons. Point
them at their bridge.

Shera complies.

ZORIN

I make no illusions that she is
correct, but this vessel is acting...

Zorin suddenly reels over and COUGHS loudly. Almost powerful enough to send phlegm and such to the floor!

CULT COMM VOICE

(nervously)

Avalon, we are reading your missile
tubes activating. Stand down or we
will be forced to destroy you.

CHALA

You've got them.

SHERA

I'm firing a warning shot.

EXT. SPACE

Avalon's missile launchers suddenly activate! Two missiles go streaking by the vessel, barely missing their hull plates. Several of them are burned black in the process.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

SHERA

If they're really Cult, it's on now.

AZEL

Hey, check it out!

The red ship suddenly begins to move off!

AZEL

Would you look at that.

Hatch is suddenly beaming from ear to ear.

HATCH

Didn't I say there was something good about her?

Even Chala is smiling.

CHALA

You can lower your gun, Zorin.

ZORIN

No. You're still a telepath. You've just saved your life for today. But not much longer.

Zorin finally lowers his gun.

ZORIN

Unless you can provide me something of value to buy passage. But only to the next port.

HATCH

She has a shuttle on the planet down there.

Chala looks stunned for a second, but calms quickly.

CHALA

Yeah, I crashed down there. I can trade it for a lift.

ZORIN

Bring it up and I'll consider it.

Zorin doubles over for a moment.

ZORIN
I'll be in my room until then.

Zorin stands and very slowly exits.

Hatch turns to Chala.

HATCH
That was awesome.

CHALA
They were easy to read. Too nervous
throughout the whole thing.

Shera walks up suddenly, very miffed.

SHERA
We would have figured it out
eventually.

HATCH
I wouldn't have.

SHERA
That's because you're an idiot
sometimes. Especially under pressure.

HATCH
Hey, now. That's just uncalled for.

CHALA
And would you have figured it out
before they rammed your bridge and
boarded you that way? That was
their backup plan.

Everyone is speechless. Chala begins laughing.

CHALA
I'm just messing with you. They're
a hit or run type. Just like
everyone else in this damn system.

HATCH
Well that's good to know.

There's another beat. Hatch claps his hands together and
rubs them vigorously a moment later.

HATCH
Well, let's get to work bringing
your shuttle up so you can get a lift.

Nobody complains, and nobody looks happy.

EXT. JUNGLE

Hatch's shuttle once again descends into the clearing around Chala's shuttle. It slumps to the ground quickly and opens the door at the back quickly.

Hatch and Chala exit at the same instant, both of them loaded with tools and supplies to repair her shuttle. RIDEK follows hot on their heels.

RIDEK

Hey, guys, I feel honored you chose me to go along, but I really had something to do back there...

CHALA

Yes, we all know of your hot date tonight with that Orion girl.

(beat)

She's going to stand you up anyway.

Ridek stops cold.

RIDEK

What?

CHALA

Let's just say you need to wash your spots a bit more.

HATCH

That's a burn if I ever heard one.

RIDEK

Shut up.

The three quickly move to Chala's shuttle.

HATCH

So what's the problem?

CHALA

Like I said, I snagged a rock out there while orbiting this planet. Got caught in the intake there and clogged it all up.

HATCH

Hey, I'm no engineering-type person, but aren't intakes like... solid things? Rocks can't get in?

CHALA
Not when you're using damn
Rakellian technology.

Chala leads them over to the engine. Indeed, there's a massive hole in its otherwise smooth surface.

CHALA
Hull's made out of thinner stuff
than paper.

Hatch stares at the hole for a while, poking and prodding.

HATCH
So what can we do to fix it?

Chala tosses a wrench at Hatch. Since he isn't paying attention, it smack the back of his head.

HATCH
The hell...?

CHALA
We take off the panel, replace
what's broken then put on a new one.

HATCH
(rubbing head)
When you put it that way, it sounds
so simple.

Chala smiles and, from the bag of supplies, pulls out an engine part that almost looks like a metal squid with many hundreds of tentacles.

HATCH
Never mind.
(sigh)
Let's get to work.

Ridek and Chala get closer, slowly beginning to repair her shuttle...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNGLE - EVENING

Ridek is in Chala's shuttle, messing around with buttons and dials, running a few tests here and there. Hatch and Chala are sitting on its roof, staring at the starry night sky. Avalon is a distant, quickly moving star.

HATCH
See, there it goes again.

CHALA

I never knew you could see ships in orbit.

HATCH

Yeah, I grew up in a place with constant space traffic. My dad taught me how to tell the difference between ships and stations.

CHALA

Sounds like you grew up in a damn fine place to be able to stare at the sky for that long.

HATCH

Yeah, it was pretty nice growing up.

CHALA

San Francisco. Right across the street from the Starfleet museum.

HATCH

Yeah. But only for a few-

CHALA

Years. After he died, you moved to New Berlin on the moon.

HATCH

Exactly.

Chala is silent.

CHALA

I'm sorry. I was reading you without asking...

HATCH

It's okay. I don't mind. It's actually nice to be able to talk to someone who knows what I'm talking about. At least sort of.

CHALA

No problem, then.

(beat)

So tell me about Starfleet. It sounds wonderful. All kinds of people working together. No prejudices, no fights. Just peaceful cooperation.

Hatch closes his eyes... lost in thought...

CHALA
 Oh... oh... I see.
 (darkly)
 Melanie.
 (beat)
 I'm sorry, Tom.

HATCH
 It's okay. I'm way past her.

CHALA
 But you loved her so much... And
 she was cheating on you the whole time.

HATCH
 Yeah, well, it was also my fault. I
 should have held on tighter, fought
 for her.

Chala is silent for a moment.

CHALA
 It wouldn't have worked. I know
 what she did with that pretty boy.
 I'm sorry, Tom.
 (beat)
 At least you're somewhere safe.

Hatch laughs lightly.

HATCH
 Yeah... safe.

CHALA
 I mean it. A group of people that
 don't wish you bodily harm every
 waking moment, who'll keep you safe
 compared to the rest of the galaxy.
 It's like paradise compared to some
 places.

HATCH
 Like where?

Chala is caught off guard.

CHALA
 Well there's... um... well there
 was Jushai for a little bit. Tyvor
 is one nowadays. Most people have
 moved on since it was firebombed,
 leaving the gangs and dregs around.

HATCH

Yeah, don't get me started on Tyvor.

CHALA

But what I'm trying to say is that you're real lucky to be on the Avalon.

Hatch turns to Chala.

HATCH

So are you going to try to stay with us?

CHALA

Didn't you hear Zorin? This entire shuttle's getting me to a port just six light years away.

HATCH

Maybe you can use your gifts a bit more.

CHALA

And get caught by a passing Red? No thanks. I just do what I have to to keep going.

HATCH

Too bad. I could learn to like you.

CHALA

You're the first.

Another silent beat.

CHALA

So what's up with Siren? I hear everyone--thinking about her. But I've never seen her.

HATCH

She's been through a lot lately. We just give her the space she needs.

CHALA

Too bad. I'd have liked to meet her.

HATCH

You still might. I don't know when she'll feel better.

CHALA
 I doubt it. But oh well.
 (beat)
 Think Ridek's done with his work?

HATCH
 He's probably been done for an hour
 or so. He's looking through your
 stuff by now.

CHALA
 Dammit.

INT. CHALA'S SHUTTLE

The interior of Chala's shuttle is the opposite of Hatch's. It's organized, neat and impeccably clean. Ridek bumbles around in a small case that is obviously a refrigerator. He's palming several small bottles of alcohol.

CHALA
 What're you doing?

Ridek stands quickly. A few bottles fall from his sleeves and onto the floor. They, fortunately, only bounce around.

RIDEK
 GEEZ! I'm uh... just organizing
 your mini bar. That okay?

CHALA
 Just don't take the green stuff.

Ridek smiles and puts a few green bottles back.

CHALA
 Thanks.

Hatch walks in slowly.

HATCH
 She gonna fly, Ridek?

Thankful for the distraction, Ridek moves over to the cockpit.

RIDEK
 Oh yeah. Nothing else was wrong
 besides the damage outside from
 what I can tell. She can take it up
 to Avalon any time she wants.

HATCH
 Cool. Let's get the stuff loaded
 and leave the lady to her ship.

RIDEK

Sure thing.

Ridek and Hatch pick up their tools and exit the shuttle, leaving Chala alone.

She stays still for a moment before moving to the pilot seat. She sits down slowly, taking in the details. She slowly taps a slow sequence of buttons.

COMM VOICE

Took you long enough.

Chala smiles. The voice is quite familiar.

CHALA

I was worried you'd gone when that bitch launched those torps at you. You doing okay?

COMM VOICE

We're fine. And we got the money.

CHALA

Good, 'cause I think you're going to like this payoff. Let's start with the engines...

Off this very cliché scene, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Zorin is back on the bridge and looking much better than before. Isaac is at his side, measuring a test tube full of Hirogen blood.

ISAAC

Looks good. The infection's dying. But you'll keep puking for a while 'till the medicine clears up. Keep that bucket with ya.

ZORIN

Very well.

Isaac nods and exits, just in time to see Hatch approaching.

ISAAC

So I hear she's got passage to the next post, huh? You know, whatever you're feeding Zorin, I could use some.

HATCH

Shut up.

ISAAC

I'm just saying. Whatever you've got that can keep a Hirogen in that mood for longer than a minute must be good. I'll make you a deal. I'll lay off you if you show me what it is,

Hatch tries to shake his head and enter the bridge, but Isaac suddenly grabs Hatch's shoulder and SLAMS him into the wall!

HATCH

Ow.

ISAAC

Listen, you little shit. That "Chala" is going to be less welcome here as you. Nobody's gonna cry if she doesn't make it to the next port. You get it?

HATCH

Yeah yeah.

(mockingly)

"Readers are bad, seers are worse."
I get it.

Isaac flashes his gun.

ISAAC

And anyone helping 'em can be
considered under their control. You
know that?

HATCH

No...

ISAAC

We don't want to end up a
little army of slaves doing her
bidding.

HATCH

Now you're getting stupid.

ISAAC

Maybe. But I'm the one with the gun.

Off that, Isaac exits.

Hatch enters the bridge proper, where Zorin sits alone.

HATCH

She's coming up right now.

We turn to see the viewscreen, where Chala's shuttle is
easily visible.

ZORIN

I know.

HATCH

Will it get her passage?

ZORIN

It should.

Hatch moves next to Zorin. Something's very odd about the
Hirogen, more than usual.

HATCH

What is it?

ZORIN

She's signaling someone.

HATCH

What!?

Ava appears suddenly.

AVA

I can hear it clear as day. She's talking to that same ship from before.

HATCH

God dammit.

ZORIN

She's been sending our critical information to them. Weapon load times, engine components, the location of valuables. All the things she read while aboard.

Hatch slumps back.

HATCH

It's Naomi all over again.

As Hatch languishes, Shera and Azel run into the bridge. Shera takes the helm.

SHERA

We just heard. Chala's back.

AZEL

Do we let her dock?

ZORIN

Yes. Don't let them know anything is wrong.

On the viewscreen, Chala's shuttle slips under the Avalon, entering the cargo bay. The ship shudders slightly as her craft makes contact.

AZEL

Got a seal. She's getting out.

ZORIN

Send everyone with a gun over to her. Keep her in the cargo bay.

AZEL

Will do.

Azel stands and exits.

HATCH
How can you be so calm about all this!?

ZORIN
Be quiet.

Hatch moves to the back of the bridge.

AVA
They're coming.

ZORIN
Shera, arm torpedoes and prepare to evade all weapons fire.

Shera nods.

EXT. SPACE

The same pirate vessel from before slowly approaches Avalon. It looks just the same as before, though only three of the very many torpedo tubes are activated.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

SHERA
They're firing.

ZORIN
Move us out of the way and return fire.

Shera taps several buttons.

EXT. SPACE

The fake-cult-ship fires three missiles at the Avalon, all three aimed at the vessel's green nacelles. Avalon easily does a tight loop that avoids the missiles.

When Avalon fires back, her two missiles hit home perfectly. Several of the crudely-welded armor plates fly off and rip other details from their parent ship. She looks quite naked without them.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

It's calm as a cucumber on the bridge. Except for Hatch, of course.

ZORIN
Do they signal surrender?

AVA
Nope.

ZORIN
Keep firing, then. Just kill them.
We don't need to salvage anything
today.

SHERA
No problem.

EXT. SPACE

The pirate vessel is now trying to limp away with the Avalon in hot pursuit. She looks only minutes away from total destruction.

Especially when Avalon fires two last missiles...

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

The viewscreen flashes briefly to report the pirate's doom.

SHERA
Got 'em.

AVA
Not a scratch on us.

Zorin stands.

ZORIN
Very good. Hatch, come with me.

Hatch pops up from his hole in the bridge's rear to follow Zorin out.

INT. AVALON - CARGO BAY

Chala is surrounded by a dozen people with all kinds of guns, all of them lead by a particularly vicious-looking Isaac.

CHALA
Come on, let me get to Zorin!

ISAAC
Not on your life, Molia. Just stay
nice and still and we won't fill
you with holes.

CHALA
You're a bastard.

ISAAC
And you're a mind-sucking bitch.
We're even.

Into this, Zorin and Hatch enter.

ZORIN
Make room. Let me pass.

Zorin moves right in front of Chala, staring right into her eyes.

CHALA
How did you do it? What saved you?

ZORIN
You made a few mistakes. First, you assumed a poorly armed and disguised pirate vessel could hope to fool or even destroy us. Second, you're under the very mistaken impression we're all as big of a bleeding heart as Hatch.

CHALA
There's a third one...

ZORIN
You read Hatch to find out our critical information. Only Hatch.
(turns to Hatch)
Because he got it in his head that he was in charge in my absence.

CHALA
So he didn't know anything?

ISAAC
Not a damn fucking thing.

ZORIN
I'm glad you decided to trap us in this pathetic little web, actually. It was getting rather dull lately.

All of Chala's manners are finally gone. She looks very much a hardened criminal/predator now.

CHALA
You one-upped me. You actually one-upped me. Sending the dumbest idiot to try and sway me while you figured it out. I don't believe it.

Hatch is suddenly right beside Zorin, who hasn't moved a muscle.

HATCH

Hey, wait. I was the bait the whole damn time!?

Isaac's smiling quite broadly.

ISAAC

Yeah. Was a hell of a lot of fun scarin' ya. All that about mind zombies and all that.

Isaac guffaws loudly.

HATCH

Bastard.

ZORIN

And now your friends are gone and you are at our mercy.

There is a very long beat.

CHALA

What are you going to do?

ZORIN

We're going to drop you off.

Chala's face opens in pure shock.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JUNGLE

Chala's shuttle flies mere feet over the jungle top, barely skimming the treetops.

INT. CHALA'S SHUTTLE

Shera easily pilots the shuttle over the trees. Chala is not bound or held by anything more than Isaac and his gun. Zorin and Hatch stand on opposite sides of her. Hatch is still very dumbfounded but more collected than before.

CHALA

You're dropping me back off?

ZORIN

Exactly.

CHALA

But my ship...

ZORIN

You'll just have to rely on your wits to snare someone in from now on. Not tricks.

Chala is now almost animalistic.

CHALA

You're going to call the fucking Cult, aren't you?

ZORIN

As much as I wish to, I won't. We're in more trouble than you are and we don't wish to be dragged in along with you.

CHALA

That's very noble of you.

ISAAC

We try.

Chala's head jerks toward Hatch.

CHALA

Just tell me, where'd you get him? If anyone can fool me...

Isaac jabs his gun into Chala's side, causing her to yelp in pain.

ISAAC

We don't have to tell you shit.

CHALA

Can't you do a girl a favor? I mean, from two thousand years in the past!? Who can come up with that story?

ZORIN

The lives of my crew is not your concern.

CHALA

But he's so SINCERE! It's almost unreal.

Hatch, with unreadable eyes, moves in front of Chala.

HATCH

You probably don't care, but everything I said about me was true. I am sincere in the things I say because I always hope there's some good in people. Maybe I'm just fooling myself over and over again. But some things still stick to me from where I came from, including hope. Hope that people are still good no matter what they do in life.

Chala looks dead on with Hatch. It's tough to notice, but Zorin moves behind the pair and opens the rear hatch of the shuttle. Because it's moving so slow, however, there is very little wind.

CHALA

You're an idiot. Everyone just works for themselves. There's no "Good" anymore. Look at Siren. Given to be raped by the man who kidnapped her at five years old.
(beat)
Or Naomi.

Hatch's mouth drops in shock. He can't reply.

CHALA

You'll never find any "good" in this universe ever agai-

Chala is cut off when Zorin's heavy boot SMASHES against her backside, sending her out of the shuttle! Her fall is mercifully brief into the jungle.

Zorin closes the door a moment later.

ZORIN

I was getting tired of her.

Hatch and Isaac are stunned beyond words. Shera is clueless.

ZORIN

Let's go home.

EXT. JUNGLE

The shuttle flies overhead, slowly lifting up and out of sight, becoming a quickly moving star.

We pan around to see Chala clinging onto a large tree for dear life, slowly sliding down its trunk and to safety.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

The entire cast, save Siren, are assembled on the bridge, all of them looking just as bored as before this ordeal. Hatch, though, does look quite pleased.

HATCH

I don't know. We DID take down a pirate group that's probably been preying on ships for a while, tagged a telepath so she'll never find work again and survived. Not bad for my first day in charge, huh?

Everyone rolls their eyes.

HATCH

I mean, I did make some mistakes. I know I should have stayed on course, ignored the trap and let the pirates alone. But hey, I'm human. And humans make mistakes. If I had to grade myself...

Zorin stands from his chair and slowly begins to move toward Hatch.

HATCH

I'd give myself a B. Yeah, a good, solid B. Not stellar, but passing and worth mention.

(notices Zorin)

Oh, hey, Zorin. What say you go back to beddy-by and gimme another chance in the big chair?

Hatch smiles.

Zorin smiles.

And punches Hatch in the face, knocking the human out cold.

ZORIN

No.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END