



Star Trek Avalon

Midnight Fire
1.07

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. XANTORAS CITY - NIGHT

A gray moon. Smoke billows across the brightly shining celestial body. Pure silence is heard.

We look down to see a cityscape, or what's left of a cityscape. Smoke rises from the fallen city, towers that clearly once stood tall and proud now barely stand at all.

EXT. XANTORAS CITY - STREET

The streets look appropriately razed. Rubble abound, smoke filling the air and not the whisper of a breeze to be heard. We then hear a crunch.

A pair of legs are now visible, in a dark gray suit. We pan up on the figure who is clearly in an environmental suit, helmet and all. This person holds a large flashlight and beams it across the destroyed city. The person turns, we see it's ISAAC SAROLA behind the glass helmet.

ISAAC

I needn't tell you what this reminds me of, do I?

Three more people walk into view, all sporting the same outfits. We clearly see one is ZORIN.

ZORIN

No, you needn't.

The other two become apparent, SIREN and RIDEK.

SIREN

(musing)

God forbid that any planet we go to be a welcoming place. The dark of space is all the home we'll ever have.

The four crewmen stumble through the wreckage and ash.

ISAAC

What the hell happened here? War?

ZORIN

Something along those lines, I'd be guessing.

ISAAC

Those Fintese I bet. They always wanted dominance over this continent. Though, didn't think the fuckers would've had the balls to annihilate the entire atmosphere.

SIREN

Isaac, shut up.

He does, and all three look over to Ridek, who is solemnly scouring the wasteland far away from the others.

SIREN

Ridek, you okay?

A moment's silence. He clear his throat and speaks on the comm.

RIDEK

(insincere)

Yeah. Fine. He's probably right. The Fintese and all.

They remain silent as a vigil as their beams of light spotlight the street's ruins. The bleak gray of a world's end heavy on our vision.

Siren pulls out a hand scanner, its blue scanning strip providing a change of color to the gray overtones.

Isaac moves close to Zorin.

ISAAC

We scanned the whole planet. Nothing's left. We should just pack up and go. Or if you want, we could pick the bones...

Zorin points to a shattered building down the street.

ZORIN

Almost all of the cities left of this planet have been leveled. That building over there has burn marks.

We see that the building is indeed charred.

ISAAC

Nuclear fire before the atmosphere was wasted. Look Zorin, to be honest, this place is giving me the creeps. Can we go?

Zorin is stunned.

ZORIN
I never thought I'd hear you say that.

Silence.

SIREN
Zorin!!

Siren's exclamation grabs their attention.

ZORIN
What? What is it?

Siren is waving her scanner near the ground.

SIREN
I've got something. It's an
emergency transponder, underground
shelter by the looks of it.

ISAAC
Survivors?

SIREN
I'm not getting any life signs, but
can't be too sure if the shelter's
dense enough.

Zorin shines his light over to Ridek, who's still alone and
sulking among the ruins.

ZORIN
Ridek. Let's move.

All four head off.

INT. RAMP

A steel door is bashed open. The obvious figure of Zorin
stands in the doorway, his flashlight beaming into the ramp.
The ramp-way is a narrow, stone set of stairs leading down
into darkness. Cob webs and other indications of age line
the hall.

SIREN
Goes down for about 50 meters.
Another door at the bottom.

The four file in one at a time to proceed down the cracked
stone stairwell. Zorin leads with his weapon drawn, followed
by Siren, Isaac, and Ridek bringing up the rear.

ISAAC
There was a lot of ash up there.
Were all the people just vaporized?

SIREN
Isaac, would you shut you trap?
This is Ridek's home world for God's...

RIDEK
The people on this planet had it
coming. They deserved it.

Their decent slows slightly as they hear this.

ISAAC
You're not holding grudges?

RIDEK
The people on my planet deserved to
die. Every one of them. Slavers,
gamblers, arm dealers. The only
people I mourn are my family, the
family I'm not sure I even had.

ISAAC
I know what it's like to loose your
home Ridek.

RIDEK
My home's on the Avalon. This place
is--just a rest stop.

They reach the bottom. There is a black, metal door before
them. Siren scans it.

SIREN
What the hell? The door isn't even
sealed.

ISAAC
Either no-one saw the attack coming
and didn't make it down here, or
someone can really hold their breath.

Zorin pushes open a lever. The metal barricade creaks open.

INT. SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

They enter. It's a barren, concrete room. No rations, no
beds, no technology. Nothing.

ISAAC
Hell of a place to spend the rest
of the apocalypse in.

SIREN

The signal's over there.

She points to the other end. There is a singular black box on the ground, splayed open with exposed circuits and chips. As if it was just haphazardly tossed in.

Zorin moves to pick it up. He assembles it back together the best he can and sits it up straight.

ZORIN

Looks like more than just an emergency transponder.

Siren consults her scanner. She reaches down and fiddles with a knob on the side of the box.

Suddenly, a light bursts from the top of the box! Light consumes everything until it fades...

EXT. XANTORAS CITY - STREET - NIGHT

The four Avalon crew members now stand, still in their suits, in a fully restored Xantoras City. The moons hang overhead, the sky a clear, starry night and people walk the streets as if nothing is wrong. It's a grand, spacious city looking exactly nothing like what we've previously seen.

ZORIN

What the hell?

RIDEK

Xantoras City. What's going on?

The citizens of the city don't even recognize the four, very out of place, people.

ISAAC

This a hologram?

Siren checks her scanner.

Just then, a piercing siren is heard in the distance. Much like an air-raid call, this haunting sound causes the people of the city to stop their lives and assess the situation. Many look frightened, and others are already running.

SIREN

Oh my god. They recorded it.

The four are captivated as the city suddenly erupts in panic around them. The citizens of this world scramble in all directions as a voice is heard...

VOICE

Xantorax Citizens. The end of all time is nigh, the leaders who rule you refuse the last refuge your eternal souls have. Today is your reckoning.

Swiftly, a monolithic Cult ship descends from the sky!
Across the city, hundreds more of all shapes and sizes appear.

RIDEK

Fucking Cult.

Just then, the Cult ship unleashes several streams of fire from nozzles on its underbelly. The fire literally melts entire skyscrapers, huge pillars of red flame consume the streets and the people in them, and the very air seems to liquefy at the intensity. All the while, the ever present sound of people screaming is heard.

ISAAC

Turn that thing off. Right now!

Siren stumbles around, checking her scanner and the ground around them.

SIREN

Where is it?

ISAAC

I don't know, it was right there!

The fires of the Cult continue to burn and increase. Smoke and ash begin to pour down more than any volcano. A fire spout begins to race toward our four crewmen.

ZORIN

Siren, turn it off!

SIREN

I can't!

All four shield themselves as the fire overtakes them.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. SHELTER

We fade back into the same shelter from before, barren walls and all. All four characters still stand with their arms up, still expecting the fire to consume them.

Isaac emits a very loud scream for a moment, his eyes closed very tightly shut.

Ridek is the first to relax.

RIDEK

It's all right. Camera must've been destroyed at that moment.

Zorin recovers a moment later and visibly reacts to the still screaming Isaac. Ridek and Siren follow suit a moment later.

ZORIN

Isaac?

Still screaming.

SIREN

Isaac!?

Scream.

RIDEK

Hey, asshole!

Isaac finally stops screaming and looks directly at Ridek, murder lurking behind his eyes.

ISAAC

What did you just call me...?

ZORIN

Enough. Let's get back to Avalon. There's nothing here.

All four timidly exit the room, pointing their weapons around a bit more cautiously than before.

As they exit the room, we pan up through the street to see an awesome sight, the Avalon herself landed in a cleared patch of pavement surrounded by more or less intact buildings. The visual would be quite stunning if it weren't so bleak.

INT. AVALON - EMPTY ROOM

The entire main cast is assembled, even TOM HATCH. They all sit around the same table from 1x01, looking calm yet uncomfortable.

SIREN

So it was all a bust. If there was anything of value down there before, it's long gone now.

ISAAC

Prolly stolen by the Reds right after they torched the place.

SHERA and AZEL suddenly rise, fear in their eyes.

SHERA

Cult!? Why didn't you tell us that!? We gotta get out of here now!

ZORIN

The remains and recording clearly showed this happened several months ago, long before our arrival.

HATCH

Recording?

Siren tenses up before speaking, remembering the onrush of flame.

SIREN

There was a... bunker underneath a pile of rubble that still had a player.

(beat)

It showed the whole thing.

ISAAC

Fucking Reds did their speech about the end times and all that bull before turning up their nozzles and "boom".

Isaac sweeps his hand across the table to accent his last word.

HATCH

My God...

AZEL

So they're finally catching up to us. We can't just pick through the bones anymore, hiding in the shadows. It's game over for us, man! They'll find us and it'll be the Temple and broken space all over again...

ADELE (O.S.)

No, it won't be.

ADELE stands from her place in the back of the table, finally making her presence known.

ZORIN

I am inclined to agree more with Azel's statement than yours. If the Cult has reached this far out, there are few places left for us to find refuge.

ADELE

They did not attack this planet to crush a rebellion or even eliminate a hiding hole for us. In the long run, we're not that important to their agenda. If it were, they would have simply sent down nuclear weapons from orbit and left the system like they did Tyvor.

(beat)

Isaac said they personally descended and unleashed flames down to the surface.

Isaac beams at the mention on his name.

ADELE

That can mean only one thing... they were looking for something.

AZEL

Yeah, burning everyone and everything to ashes is a GREAT way to look for something.

ZORIN

Indeed. Why would they do something like that if they were searching for something?

ISAAC

Like anything the Reds do makes sense, Zorin. You know that. They probably thought the holy fire would eliminate the wicked to let the truth shine free, or some shit like that.

HATCH

Excellent impression. You'd make a good Cultist if they needed a loudmouthed jerk.

ISAAC

Why you little sack of-

Zorin slaps his palm on the table, ending the conversation. Even Adele looks disgusted by the two's display.

ZORIN

Shut up, both of you! We know the Cult has not been here for several months, so we should be safe. We have also only searched a very small portion of the planet or its cities so there is much ground to cover in search of more resources.

SHERA

This is a mistake if you ask me. The Cult never leaves anything like this behind. I'll bet you half my share they're not done with this place...

ISAAC

And what do you know, Xindi bitch? Shut your mouth and let the grownups talk.

AZEL

Hey!

ISAAC

Same to you! Why Zorin keeps you around will always be a mystery to me and half the ship. Hell. I'd even bet that...

Adele shakes her head as Isaac once again goes off, prompting Zorin to shout once more.

ZORIN

Isaac, keep your mouth shut before
I smash your jaw.

(beat)

We'll stay for the time being. I'll
have Siren stay at the helm in case
any trouble arises. We will not be
caught off guard. Not today.

Everyone nods in one way or another and begin filing out.
Adele is the first to exit. Isaac is up the instant he sees
her, shoving Hatch into the wall to catch up with her.

HATCH

Hey!

INT. AVALON - CORRIDOR

Adele walks forward with intent, shaking her head with a
myriad of emotions. Though she isn't crying, tears don't
look too far off.

ISAAC (O.S.)

Adele!

She keeps walking, her face turning ever more sour.

ISAAC (O.S.)

Hey, Adele!

She finally stops but two paces from her own room's door.
Isaac, nearly out of breath, finally catches up with her.

ISAAC

Why didn't you stop?

ADELE

I just need some sleep. That's all.

Isaac leans in closer to Adele, studying her in uncomfortable
closeness.

ISAAC

You do look a bit exhausted. You
been eating good? Anyone I need to
break in half to get you more
comfortable?

Suddenly, Adele pulls back from Isaac, leaving him hanging.

ADELE

I'm fine.

ISAAC

It's really no trouble. The Xindi giving you grief? I can give them the Naomi treatment.

Adele is just outside her door.

ADELE

I said I was fine, Isaac. Please just let me be.

He's suddenly on top of her again.

ISAAC

I won't go until I know you're really all right and there's something I can...

He raises his hand to her cheek. Adele stays more still than a block of stone, her eyes clenched shut.

ISAAC

...Do for you...

He slowly pushes forward, his lips slightly puckered out. They're headed right for her lips. Adele tries to cringe back, but Isaac's gentle caress has become an insisting fist, holding her hair in an iron grip.

ADELE

Isaac! Please!

ISAAC

Yes, Adele. Please let me.

His lips land on hers, smothering their two faces together. Adele has had enough now and is batting at his head and arms with all her might, which is nothing compared to his. He continues to push his face into her, trying to push his tongue between her lips.

The uncomfortable kiss lasts a moment more before Isaac finally pulls back, a triumphant smile on his lips. Unfortunately, he is only met with Adele's open palm onto his face, slapping with every ounce of her strength. A dark welt immediately forms on Isaac's dark cheek and blood begins to drip from cuts made by her jewelry.

ADELE

DON'T EVER DO THAT AGAIN!

Isaac slowly raises his hand to his cheek and feels the warm blood.

ISAAC
But... Adele...

ADELE
I tolerated your presence here
because it was my only refuge from
Sovari and his followers. But not
even the Prophet has words for this.

ISAAC
I- I... don't understand.

Isaac reaches out for Adele once more, but she gruffly slaps
it away. She quickly reaches behind herself to open the door.

ADELE
Keep away from me!

She runs inside, leaving the stunned Isaac alone in the cold
corridor.

We follow Adele into:

INT. AVALON - ADELE'S ROOM

She locks the door behind her as soon as it shuts, sparing
no time to look behind her.

Not a moment later, the tears she was hiding begin to flow.

CUT TO:

INT. TEMPLE -- LIBRARY ROOM -- FLASHBACK

The camera pans down slowly over a massive library room
similar to the one seen in the pilot episode. Sixteen
computer consoles, easily three stories tall and equally
wide, dominate the already oversized room.

And standing among them are three very tiny beings. As we
get closer to them, we slowly begin to realize we are
looking at three much younger versions of SOVARI, ROL'GIN
and Adele! All three loiter about the room, looking happy if
a bit tired.

ADELE
I swear to His name, if Rashalla
spoke for just one more minute, I
would have walked out of the room
permanently.

SOVARI
I'm glad I wasn't the only one who
thought that way.

Rol'Gin nods his head, causing his very thick, wavy locks of blond hair to swirl wildly.

ROL'GIN

You don't grasp the gravity of her words, my friends. She spoke of the very foundation of our beliefs, of how we must be ever vigilant against forces that would cause us to lose our faith.

ADELE

By speaking for three hours about a farm boy and his beloved pet on a planet with no name?

ROL'GIN

(smiling)

Well, she could have possibly put it a bit more concise than that.

All three chuckle politely, but it fades slowly. Sovari clears his throat nervously.

SOVARI

So we've finally reached the end of our education here. We're all probably going to move on to different planets, never to see each other again.

ADELE

Thanks for making it seem so grim, Sovari.

Rol'Gin puts up a weak smile.

ROL'GIN

You'll at least see me. I've sent a communication to my uncle, Tarkis. He's a converter.

SOVARI

(awed)

Impressive. So you've plans to one day command a vessel of your own?

ROL'GIN

I hope so.

(beat)

What about you, Adele?

Adele is quiet for a moment.

ADELE

I think I'll stay here for a time.

SOVARI

What? Why? You're the one who wanted to leave here the most.

ADELE

I think I wish to continue my studies. Become a scholar into the Prophet's mysteries, possibly one day running this temple myself.

ROL'GIN

Big ambitions. Always expect the unexpected from Adele, eh, Sovari?

The trio chuckles again. Rol'Gin and Adele slowly turn to Sovari.

ADELE

So what are your plans, Sovari? You know our plans.

Sovari takes in a deep breath.

But just before he speaks, we:

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - CARGO BAY

The cargo bay is exactly like every other instance we've seen it. Dark, cold, full of old crates and boxes and still home to Hatch's shuttle in the back corner, now sporting some more burns and dents from first we saw it.

HATCH (O.S.)

OW! Dammit!

We whip pan over the shuttle's underside to see Hatch lying underneath it, an open panel spraying sparks into his hair.

SIREN (O.S.)

I guess that didn't work?

We move once again to see Siren in the cockpit of the shuttle, intent on the ancient control panel. The frame is surreal with Hatch on his back under the shuttle and Siren above him face-up.

HATCH

No, not really.

Hatch slides out from under the shuttle, his hair smoking and standing on end much like a weird mad scientist. Siren has to stifle a laugh.

SIREN
So what do we do now? Your ideas
aren't working.

Hatch bends down to pick up a box of tools, all of them look older than even Hatch's shuttle and in double worse condition.

HATCH
Well one thing's for certain, these
tools Zorin so generously bought
for us aren't going to do the trick.

On cue, one of the more technical looking devices sputters and finally dies, giving off a pitiful puff of smoke to signal its demise.

SIREN
Then what else do you suggest to
fix a warp core that's older than
recorded time?

HATCH
I dunno, something more recent maybe?

Siren sighs and steps out of the cockpit and through the hole in the shuttle's side.

SIREN
It's not like we can strap a warp
sphere to this thing and expect it
to zip around in space.

HATCH
I know. Not as easy as repolarizing
the secondary EPS modulators
through the next adjunct and hope
the tachyon grid doesn't explode.

Siren's face drops.

SIREN
What?

HATCH
Yeah, I don't know, either.
(beat)
So what do you think we can do?

SIREN

Scrap it and use the money to buy something that actually works?

HATCH

Hey, now. Isaac dogging on me every day for God knows what I can take, but making fun of my old girl here? That crosses a line, missy.

SIREN

I'm just saying there's a lot better stuff out there we can buy for this hunk of scrap you call a shuttle. Human collectors pay out of their-

HATCH

Yeah, yeah, "gas-holes" or whatever you call them. That sounds really gross, you know. Just what the hell are gas holes? The one up at the peak or down at the foothills?

SIREN

Does it really matter?

HATCH

No... I guess not.
(beat)

But we're not selling her and that's final. I own her and everything inside her.

SIREN

Really? Because in your little story of where you came from, the Federation owns it all.

HATCH

Yeah, well... I'm the only surviv... I mean... I bought it, got the receipt in my old apart... I mean... shut up.

Siren cracks a rare smile as Hatch's flustered outburst causes him to drop the tools in one fell swoop.

HATCH

Aw, man.

Off his now sad face, we slowly:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TEMPLE ROOM

The room is dark and massive, a testament to wealth and power beyond any conventional wisdom. Statues of men and women of dozens of species bowed in horrible reverence, scraping jagged knives over their arms and faces adorn every wall.

We continue on this horrible shot until:

SOVARI (O.S.)
Magnificent, aren't they?

We pan down to see two men dressed in red clothing, a weird mix of flowing robes and sturdy armor not unlike medieval knights. The shorter of the two is obviously Penultimate SOVARI while the other is a regal, if slightly uneasy, Cult GENERAL.

GENERAL
I fail to understand the
significance of these statues,
Penultimate, or your bringing me here.

Sovari grins his predatory grin before replying.

SOVARI
These statues are well over five
centuries old, did you know that?
They were allegedly carved on the
very first world to see the
Prophet's wisdom. Each statue
depicts actual individuals of the
time showing their reverence to His
word with their blood.
(beat, sad)
A practice that seems to have
unfortunately been lost to us.

The General somehow looks even more uneasy than before.

SOVARI
And before you ask again why I
brought you here, please let me
finish.

(pause)
I brought you here to show that
times are changing faster for us
than we would like to admit. I have
been studying His final Prophecy
from the moment he gave it to us.

GENERAL

Yes, the end times are here and the only way to survive is to ensure the entire population is converted. Am I correct?

SOVARI

After a fashion, yes. But yet this Prophecy seems in direct conflict with one of His first, in which he preached that we only allow those under our wing who choose to be, not forcibly converted under threat of total destruction.

GENERAL

Surely you don't mean to doubt the Prophet? The traitor Adele and Lord Rol'Gin were...

Sovari is suddenly at the General's throat!

SOVARI

Don't speak to me of Adele and her ilk again! Her vile ideals plague us like a virus. The entirety of our numbers saw the fiasco atop the Avatar of light, where that witch somehow coerced that poor innocent vessel into such evil acts...

Sovari lets the General go just as quickly.

SOVARI

I just intend to say that as the worlds change, so must even His word. We cannot look to peace as our first solution. The creation of your rank is but one of many changes I have implemented that will allow us to spread His influence far faster than we ever have before.

The General nods in thanks and understanding.

SOVARI

Now, onto other matters. I understand the search parties have been largely successful in their efforts?

GENERAL
Indeed, Penultimate. With the
exception of but two worlds, we-

Sovari perks up.

SOVARI
What?

GENERAL
Two worlds, Lord. Two worlds have
proven... empty.

Sovari's expression darkens considerably.

SOVARI
No no no no no, this shouldn't be
possible. His word would say
something...

The General steps forward quickly to calm a rapidly
glowering Sovari.

GENERAL
Perhaps we simply have not yet seen
the complete outcome of these
events. For certain several
prophecies do not speak of one
simple event but may take several
decades to play themselves out.

SOVARI
Excellent quoting of one of the
most elementary schools of thought
on his thinking. It's a wonder
you're not my right hand yet, general.

GENERAL
Forgive me, I was simply trying to
offer a solution to-

Sovari grins once more and turns back to the gruesome statues.

SOVARI
Yes, you were. And a very wonderful
one at that.
(pause)
We will play this thing to its
course. Send out the search fleets
once more.

GENERAL
Of course, Penultimate.

The general nods with respect and makes a sharp, military exit.

When he is alone, Sovari finally looks up at the statues... and shudders.

INT. AVALON - CARGO BAY

In exact contrast to the vast opulence of the previous scene, Avalon's cargo bay is a tiny closet in a very cheap motel. Hatch is still there, working on his shuttle. Zorin, Shera and Ridek file in a moment later.

ZORIN

Ridek, are you sure there are other vaults in the city?

RIDEK

I'm sure. Some of the higher ups, crime bosses and others like them, must've kept their valuables in places like those.

SHERA

And since the Cult didn't find that first little treasure, they should have missed the others, right?

RIDEK

Yeah, I guess.

ZORIN

It's a good place to start looking. Get your suits ready as soon as you can.

The pair nod and walk off. Zorin watches the door open quickly to reveal a slightly freaked-out Adele.

ZORIN

Is there something I can do for you?

ADELE

May I join your party?

ZORIN

I'd rather you did not. If a Cult vessel somehow sees you, they will send in forces I cannot hide us from.

ADELE

But I feel I must join you this time... it's important. I ask for very little from you, Zorin.

ZORIN

And you give very little in return,
if I recall, compared to some other
passengers.

ADELE

Then perhaps I can help you look
for things out there you need.
Extra eyes always help in any kind
of search.

ZORIN

I will... consider it.

Adele almost moves closer to Zorin to plead her case, but
stays still when he moves to speak once more.

ZORIN

Although I would understand your
intense desire to be away from
certain... uncomfortable situations
for a time.

Adele half smiles at Zorin's near-agreement.

EXT. SPACE

The planet Xantoras looks from orbit exactly as it does on
the ground. Blackened, burned and ruined.

And suddenly appearing over this dreary scene is a vessel
that is in such contrast the dark surface as to be quite
unpleasant to the eyes. The deep red of the small ship, not
much larger than the Avalon, almost looks like an open wound
over the burned planet's surface.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The small Cult vessel sits in orbit above the burned world, just calmly floating forward in a peaceful yet threatening pose.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Siren is frantic at her console as alarms go wild and the two other crewmen with her panic wildly.

GOR'TIEN

Ohmygod! Ohmygod! They found us!
They found us!

SIREN

Shut up! They haven't done anything
to show they see us yet!

Gor'Tien turns from his panicking to Siren, fear clouding his eyes.

GOR'TIEN

They will! They always do! First
it's the speech, then they guilt
trip ya into not fighting... then
they burn you! BURN YOU!

SIREN

They won't burn us if they don't
see us.

GOR'TIEN

I don't think you understand the
concept, Siren. BURN! FIRE!
Sentient barbacoa!

SIREN

Shut up! Good thing they can't use
sonic sensors or we'd be dead already!

GOR'TIEN

Then maybe I should shut up in case
they do have them!

SIREN

That would be a good start!

Gor'Tien nods and exits the bridge, still shaking in fear.

Carlise enters immediately after.

CARLISE
Reds really up there?

There is a sudden, soft beep.

AVA
Yes, you pill popping drughead! I
told you that like a million times
already!

CARLISE
Do you hear a buzzing sound
somewhere, Siren?

SIREN
Ava still locking your little stash,
Carlise?

Carlise twitches in some strange withdrawal symptom but
quickly covers it up.

CARLISE
I have no idea what you're talking
about.

Siren shrugs and goes back to watching the Cult ship. On the
very small viewscreen, there is a slightly magnified view of
the sky showing the small blip of the Cult vessel in orbit.

CARLISE
They do anything yet?

SIREN
Not yet. They're just floating up
there like some pleasure stop or
something. Only getting passive
readings from them.

CARLISE
Not even scanning the surface for
us? This is too weird.

Carlise looks around the bridge for a moment.

CARLISE
Where's Zorin?

SIREN
Out in the city looking for
anything we can use.

CARLISE
Again? Isn't this like the fourth time?

SIREN
Ridek said there'll probably be
more vaults like we... discovered
last time. So they're back out there.

CARLISE
You tell them about our friend up
north yet?

SIREN
No, they've got enough worries out
there with miss High and Mighty out
there with them.

CARLISE
(awed)
Adele actually left the ship? Shit,
shouldn't have gone to get some
grub when Zorin wanted me out there...

A beep.

AVA
I recorded the moment for everyone
if you want to see it.

Indeed, just a split second later, the viewscreen changes
from the telescopic view of the sky to Adele exiting the
cargo ramp, a nervous expression flitting across her brow.

CARLISE
(cold)
Hmm... looks like the screen's on
the fritz again. Better take a
hammer to it.

AVA
Hey!

INT. SHELTER

Zorin, Adele, Ridek and Shera descend back into the very
same shelter from before. The device is still there, resting
as always.

ZORIN
Why did you lead us back here again,
Ridek?

RIDEK

It's the first shelter we found.
There could be something in a
hidden chamber or something.

ZORIN

Or it could have been looted by the
very people who placed this here.

Ridek and Zorin move off to investigate the rest of the
space, talking to themselves. Adele slowly moves forward,
staring at the recording device with intent.

RIDEK

No, see these marks on the floor?
Like the little scratches?

ZORIN

I do. But what-?

RIDEK

Those scratches are a code by the
rich bitches that lived here. Would
someone rich enough to buy a cellar
in soil not fit for keeping a fence
up want to see their floors
tarnished like this?

ZORIN

I would think not.

As they speak, Adele slowly reaches forward, her
concentration fully on the small thing. A moment later...
she touches it!

The box glows again.

RIDEK

The hell?

Zorin and Ridek turn around, directly into the faces of a
small throng of:

EXT. XANTORAS CITY - STREET - NIGHT

Xantoras citizens just going about their lives. They pass
through the duo like smoke before re-combining and continuing
on their pre-recorded path.

RIDEK

Why the hell did you do that?!

ZORIN

Adele!

Adele is lost in the crowd, staring at the stars, the billboards, the people in all their glory. Zorin trods through them like a monster in an ancient movie, forcing himself through the holograms like nothing.

When he finds her, Zorin grabs the woman bodily, holding her shoulders with an iron grip. Adele seems to not care as she watches the scene around her.

ZORIN
Adele, why did you do this!?

After listening to the Cult vessel's speech and watching the initial panic, Adele finally turns to Zorin, a slight grin tugging at her lips.

ADELE
I understand why they came. I know what we need to do.

ZORIN
What?

ADELE
We have to go back to the ship. Immediately.

Overhead, the holo-ships spew holo-fire onto the holo-people. Ridek keeps his head down next to Zorin, keeping his ears covered with all his might. The sound of the fire and panic begin to overtake the scene.

ZORIN
I still have a job to do!

ADELE
This is far more important than scavenging dead ruins, Zorin! Something is about to happen among their ranks...

The fire is just about to overtake the three...

ADELE
And we can stop it!

The fire immediately dies, leaving everyone in darkness and silence.

Zorin looks hard at Adele as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AVALON - CARGO BAY

Zorin and Adele, flanked by Ridek of course, walk onto the ramp with heavy steps, shrugging their suits as soon as the massive door is closed. Siren approaches as soon as Zorin is back in his normal attire.

ZORIN

(sigh)

Don't tell me. Something happened,
Siren.

SIREN

Something big. We have to get out
of here quickly.

ADELE

We cannot! Something very important
is here and we have to find it
before they do.

SIREN

Well, not to burst any dramatic
bubbles by taking you to the bridge
and revealing it there, but the
Cult's back and they're in orbit.

Zorin's Hirogen nostrils flare in anger. He takes his fist to a nearby cargo crate, shattering it into splinters.

ZORIN

Damn the Cult! Siren, get Azel to
warm up the nacelles and get us out
of here as fast as you can. Don't
spare a moment for the safety
checks if you can.

Zorin begins to trod off to the bridge before Adele is once again in the scene.

ADELE

You can't run! Not now! Too much is
at stake!

ZORIN

My ship is at stake. That's all I
need to know.

ADELE

They will not detect us as long as
we keep the reactor powered down
and the engines cold.

ZORIN

Not until they land or send their endless legions of minions to the surface.

ADELE

I implore you, Zorin. What is out there will be more than enough convincing to keep you right here and not blast off into space in a suicidal escape run.

ZORIN

You're not convincing me...

ADELE

Then give me five minutes. If I cannot convince you then, you can run.

ZORIN

Two minutes. In the conference room.

Adele nods and runs out of the cargo bay, leaving Zorin and Ridek alone.

ZORIN

Tell Siren to belay my last order.

Ridek staggers forward, fear haunting him at every turn.

RIDEK

(slowly)

Yeah... sure... whatever.

Ridek shuffles like an old man...

ZORIN

QUICKLY!

On the bark, Ridek leaps forward and out the room like a flash.

INT. AVALON - EMPTY ROOM

We open on an angle directly above the polished wood table that is the centerpiece of Avalon's pseudo briefing room.

A moment later, a leather-bound book full of scribbled handwriting is thrown atop it, its pages landing open to a page with a heavy metal clip in its center.

ADELE (O.S.)

It's almost a forgotten prophecy now. Something written down in the earliest days of His ascent and the formation of his faithful.

We slowly lift up and over to see the grim faces of the entire cast, save Isaac, curiously. Adele is the only one standing, pacing around the table as she remembers every detail.

HATCH

You actually wrote this down yourself? It's gotta be, what, four hundred pages long!

Adele, wisely, ignores him.

ADELE

If it were not for us... interfering with his final message ceremony, it is unlikely this prophecy would have even been read by mortal eyes again.

SIREN

So what does it say.

Adele closes her eyes for a moment, remembering the exact passage from the open book.

ADELE

"His message broken, His followers legion, the lost treasure of the ancients will light the way past the darkness and into the light's warmth. Run from destiny and be immolated in His holy flame."

Hatch whistles.

HATCH

Heavy stuff.

ZORIN

"His holy flame." Sounds like the recording. So they're looking for something from the past to make up for their recent mistakes.

SIREN

Think it's valuable?

AZEL

If the Cult would torch an entire planet to look for it... I'd say so.

ZORIN

And there is good chance that they did not find it, according to Adele and the presence of a scoutship in orbit.

SIREN

True.

(beat, delicately)

And they still haven't detected us yet.

AVA

Nope. They've got their crappy little sensors stuck on a little corner of the city.

ADELE

Which one?

AVA

I'll print out a copy on the bridge for everyone.

SIREN

So what's your order, Zorin?

Zorin ponders for a long moment.

AZEL

We're safe as long as we're powered down and inside. They won't be here forever. At least they shouldn't be...

ZORIN

True. A scout ship will not remain longer than its mission requires of it.

SHERA

At least until the bigger ships get here...

SIREN

All the more reason to run.

HATCH

But they'll see us if we do. Trace us to wherever we go.

AZEL

All the more reason to stay put. If a ship loaded with sensors can't see us, no chance a speaker-loaded cruiser will.

SIREN

And if they decide to camp here for a few weeks? Set up a new base or temple in effigy for something? What then?

Zorin breathes in heavily, ending the conversation in an instant.

ZORIN

It's decided.

(beat)

We run. If a fleet of cruisers could not find this object in the prophecy, I doubt one more will. We will try to slip in under their sensors and warp out in the upper atmosphere.

AZEL

They'll still trace it. We can't mask that.

ZORIN

By the time they do, we should be far out of range to be in any danger. Besides, if this object is so sacred, they will be more interested in it than us as we make a simple escape.

With Zorin's word, everyone goes quiet.

ADELE

Then I will remain to keep searching for it to keep it out of their hands.

AZEL

You can't do that!

SHERA

What?

SIREN

Adele, this is insane. You can't stay here, not with them running around.

ZORIN
If this is her decision, she will
stay behind.

HATCH
This is insane!

ADELE
I must stay to keep this thing out
of their hands.

SIREN
But we don't even know what will
happen if they get it, the prophecy
doesn't say.

ADELE
It is my decision and mine alone.
Besides, it's one less mouth to
feed on this vessel, one less
problem for you all.

ZORIN
And if she wants to stay off my
ship and die, it is one thing I do
not control on this ship.

ADELE
I will at least require a suit and
a scanner to find my way.

ZORIN
Agreed. Azel, prepare the engines
for a cold burn. Siren, prepare an
emergency escape route with Shera.

HATCH
What about me?

ZORIN
Just stay out of my way.

The group stands, making ready all of their plans. As they
move, the camera snakes forward, through the wall and into
the corridor outside.

INT. AVALON - CORRIDOR

Where Isaac stands, his ear to the wall, an expression
darker than we've ever seen before twisting his face nearly
apart.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. AVALON - CARGO BAY

Adele and Zorin stand alone in the cargo bay, their faces grim with their equally grim missions.

ADELE

It has been a... unique experience
on this vessel, Zorin.

ZORIN

As it has been with you on board.
Do what you must to interrupt their
plans.

ADELE

And you to survive.

The two shake hands, a strange scene due to their wildly different sizes. Zorin flashes what could be a warm smile before handing Adele her suit and scanner. A moment later, he depresses the control to slowly lower the ramp.

ZORIN

Should you survive... you are
welcome back here with my full
confidence.

ADELE

I will remember that.

With that, Adele bows shortly and makes her exit. As soon as she is gone, Zorin closes the ramp and turns about.

To see Isaac right in front of him, his chest heaving and his eyes bloodshot with tears.

ISAAC

What the FUCK did you do this time,
Zorin!?

ZORIN

(cold)

Isaac?

ISAAC

Don't "Isaac" me, you alien pile of
shit! You let her go!

Against the human's attitude, Zorin leans forward, showing his full height against Isaac. Zorin is a full head taller and half again as large as the human. But he does not back down.

ZORIN
She made the choice to leave, not me.

ISAAC
She's alone on a bombed world with
fucking Reds about to crawl all
over it! YOU LET HER GO!

ZORIN
Step aside.

ISAAC
GET HER BACK! NOW!

ZORIN
Step aside, Isaac. There is a Cult
ship in orbit and we need to leave
this planet immediately.

ISAAC
No! You motherfucking ass!

In pure rage, Isaac rears back and PUNCHES Zorin full on in the face! The force of his fist plus the surprise of the hit reel Zorin back a step.

Zorin is still for a moment, hunched over and more visibly angry than we've seen him before.

But it doesn't last long before Zorin lands a like KICK into Isaac's gut, full force! Isaac is thrown back several feet and lands face down on the cold floor.

ZORIN
If you want her so much, go get her!

Zorin stomps away, slamming the exit door hard enough to pop its hinges.

Isaac slowly stands, gaining his bearings almost inhumanly fast.

ISAAC
I will.

Isaac stands still for a moment, pondering his move. He stares at the suits for a moment, but shakes his head quickly.

ISAAC
Gotta get her away from him before
he does anything else to her...

His eyes lock on Hatch's shuttle.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Zorin plods in, anger swirling behind his eyes.

Siren turns to him and balks.

SIREN
What happened?

ZORIN
Nothing of concern. Are the engines
hot?

Siren shrugs and turns to her console.

SIREN
As they'll ever be on such short
notice.

ZORIN
Then get us skyward.

Siren nods and presses the sequence.

EXT. XANTORAS CITY - RUINS

Avalon slowly powers up in a very dramatic fashion. Her dark nacelles don't simply glow to life, they FLASH like green fire consuming their surface. Her impulse engines roar like an ancient beast before blasting air and rubble backward for hundreds of meters.

The vessel slowly rises, retracting her landing feet and pointing toward the dark sky in a fluid motion.

But our focus is not on the ship entirely. A small, suited figure watches Avalon's ascent with a dispassionate gaze.

When Avalon is but a speck growing ever smaller in the sky, Adele turns around and walks with her scanner held before her.

EXT. ALIEN POND -- FLASHBACK

A city glows like a jewel on the horizon as dusk slowly settles over a planet completely unlike Xantoras. Adele sits by a small pond in a tranquil looking glen, staring out at the beautiful sight. Adele looks a year or so older than the last flashback, but is still considerably younger than how she looks now.

A female Cultist, donned in a red and white gown that elegantly covers her body, slowly approaches her.

This is TRIANA.

TRIANA
I knew I would find you here.

ADELE
(perfectly still)
Hmm?

TRIANA
The others have been asking about you lately. They wonder why you sneak off so early in the morning and not return back to her place until seconds before she must return, panting and out of breath.

ADELE
I enjoy it out here. It takes my mind away from the cares of the day.

TRIANA
Shouldn't reading your latest book on His prophecies accomplish the same thing? I heard Rashalla ordered it specifically for you as a sign of your accomplishments. You're moving up the ranks exceptionally fast here.

Adele is still silent and still, staring at the beautiful horizon. She makes a long sigh.

ADELE
Sometimes I just... wonder if I made a mistake.

Triana suddenly looks very concerned. She kneels down next to Adele.

TRIANA
What? What are you saying?

ADELE
I just got a communication from Rol'Gin, one of my friends from my early education. He and Sovari, another friend, have both completed their competency tests for starship commands and Conversion.

TRIANA
I hope you sent them the appropriate congratulations.

ADELE

I did, believe me. But their note
has left me feeling... strange.

TRIANA

I still don't understand.

ADELE

My friends are accomplishing so
much with their lives. They'll be
remembered long after their deaths
for simple fact they accomplished
something so extraordinary.

(beat)

And here I am still on the same
planet I was born on, even the very
same continent. I fear I have
already squandered my gift of life,
that my service to the Prophet's
word will mean nothing.

TRIANA

Adele, that is one of the worst
things I've ever heard one of the
faithful saying in all my life. You
must perk up and look forward. All
of us have a part in His message,
even if we don't know what it is.
If you feel your life is not what
you wish, always remember that you
will be remembered long after your
death. Perhaps not by scores of the
living for generations, but by the
Prophet himself. And isn't that
what we all want? Why we keep our
faith in Him?

ADELE

I guess so.

Triana stands, holding a hand out to Adele.

TRIANA

Then come. The sun is almost up and
we must be inside before then. We
have a big day of book transcribing
to do.

Adele half smiles and takes Triana's hand, slowly standing.

We:

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Isaac storms into the messy shuttle's interior, crunching the few remaining chips and piles of junk still underfeet.

ISAAC
Still a fucking pile of sh-

HATCH (O.S.)
Hey, now! That's uncalled for!

Hatch suddenly appears from the rear of the shuttle, covered in grease and smoke stains on his flesh.

HATCH
First Siren makes fun of my baby
and now you for the five millionth
time. It's getting a bit irritating.

Isaac is shocked for a moment before regaining his pissed composure.

ISAAC
Shut the fuck up and get out of
here. I gotta go before Zorin...

Isaac trails off, preferring to plop himself down in Hatch's pilot seat.

HATCH
Before he what? Leave here before
we all die? Guess you're finally
getting that suicidal streak
everyone wants you to have.

Isaac is up in a flash, slamming Hatch against the wall with his hand around the other man's throat. Isaac also slowly reveals his trusty and ever present sidearm. He points it at Hatch's temple.

ISAAC
He left her BEHIND.
(beat)
I already got myself kicked off his
ship. Don't think I won't do
something... desperate now.

Hatch, though obviously scared out of his mind, keeps a pretty good calm.

HATCH
Well.. um... you can't shoot me.

Isaac tightens his grip and shoves the gun tighter against Hatch's head.

ISAAC
Why THE FUCK not!?

HATCH
'Cause I'm the only one who can
pilot this thing.

ISAAC
Then I'd say you got five seconds
to show me how to do it or your
brains'll add to the mess in here.

Hatch begins to turn purple.

HATCH
Isaac... let me go...

ISAAC
No. No. You see, you got my only
fucking ticket to get her back. I
ain't going out in no pressure suit
to die when the air fucking leaks
out. No. See, me n' her are gonna
find a nice little planet away from
all this shit. Away from the Cult,
Zorin. Away from you. And this
little rusted piece of shit is my
only option.

Hatch is nearly unconscious. Isaac drops him like a sack of potatoes.

ISAAC
Get up.

Hatch coughs and sputters a moment, too afraid of Isaac's cold yet familiar pissed attitude to act.

Isaac reacts by KICKING Hatch in the gut!

ISAAC
I said get up!

Hatch reels for a moment before slowly standing, cradling his injured gut like a baby. Isaac doesn't care for a moment, instead choosing to point his gun again at Hatch's face.

ISAAC

Now show me how to work this piece of shit before I kill you and figure it out myself. And trust me, the second option is looking better and better every moment we stand here.

Hatch lets a few tears of pain drop before he moves to the cockpit and begins the powerup sequence.

HATCH

Th-the warp core's burned out. I can only get her to impulse.

ISAAC

You'd better be lying, Hatch. You'd GOD DAMN better be lying.

Isaac slams his gun to Hatch again, forcing him to yelp.

HATCH

(quickly)

But I can fix it! I just need time. I can get you to Adele first and I'll fix the shuttle in the meantime.

Isaac stands still for a moment, considering his options. As he does, the entire shuttle rocks and rumbles as Avalon makes her ascent.

ISAAC

(sigh)

Fine. Get me to her and you live. But I won't make any other fucking promises.

Hatch nods and snuffles a bit in pain as he gets to work.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

The scene is as tense as ever.

SIREN

Looks like Hatch's shuttle is powering up.

ZORIN

Let Isaac go. We won't be returning for him.

SIREN

We'll be losing a shuttle and most likely Hatch at the same time.

Zorin smiles a dark smile.

ZORIN
You make it sound like it's a bad
thing.

Siren sadly shrugs and gets back to work. She pilots with all her concentration, keeping her mind occupied as the sound of the opening cargo hold overtakes even the rumble of the engines.

ZORIN
Have the Reds seen us?

SIREN
Not yet, we're still on the other
side of the planet. We'll be in
their range in a minute or so.

ZORIN
And time to warp?

SIREN
A minute thirty, give or take.

ZORIN
Get ready to fly.

Siren grimly nods.

SIREN
Don't worry. I will.

EXT. ORBIT OF XANTORAS

Above the ruined world, Avalon rockets upward, her nose slowly heating up against the atmosphere.

And on her underside, Avalon's cargo bay door slowly opens, allowing Hatch's shuttle to escape in a perfectly vertical position.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Hatch, still scared and blubbering a bit, pilots his shuttle as best he can with Isaac sitting next to him, the gun pointed always at his head.

ISAAC
You'd better get us down there
faster 'fore the Reds see us.

HATCH
I can't! The shuttle's too damaged
to do anything else.

Isaac cocks the gun.

ISAAC
Then you'd better fix her up right
here. I'll shoot us both before the
Reds get close to us.

Still in fear, Hatch works on.

EXT. HIGH ATMOSPHERE

Against the buffeting winds and immense wake of heat from Avalon's ascent, Hatch's dinky little shuttle struggles to float back to the ground and stay together.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

There is a long, silent beat as Hatch works and Isaac sits coldly, keeping his gun pointed at the other man's head. Hatch is sweating profusely, though he tries to cover it up with a cool attitude lest he trip Isaac up in any way.

HATCH
So... how did you two meet?

ISAAC
What?

HATCH
You and Adele. How didja meet?

ISAAC
The fuck you asking me for?

HATCH
I dunno. Just trying to clear up
the atmosphere in here. Maybe
talking'll soothe both our moods.

ISAAC
I ain't got no mood to soothe, Hatch.

Hatch nods and goes back to work silently. The shuttle JOLTS several times with the rough winds but nothing serious really happens.

ISAAC
(quietly)
At the end of the war.

HATCH

Huh?

Isaac slowly drops his gun. Not completely, but it's a start.

ISAAC

At the end of the war. The last battle. I was a... a combat medic assigned to the fifth regiment assigned to defend the south quarter. Saw a lot of good guys cut down all around me. Friends. Brothers. We were alone against the entire goddamn enemy force by then. 'Bout three hundred men and women out to defend their homes and loved ones against a rampaging horde of, what, six million aliens just bent on raping your world of its minerals and taking its population for slaves.

HATCH

I... I never knew...

Isaac doesn't really listen.

ISAAC

We held out for a while. Artillery guys were the best on the planet. Shot down at least four squadrons each before one lucky kamikaze bastard killed himself and rammed the control bunker. When the air support died, the slaughter began. I can't even tell you the number of bodies I've seen in my life, and almost all of them were in those last few hours in the ruined streets of my own home. I even saw my... first girlfriend there. Face up. Naked. Not raped or nothin', just another soldier took her clothes for bandages and rags to soak up blood.

(beat, more delicate)

In the end, there were just about a dozen of us. We bugged out and headed for the last evac chopper heading for the starport. Reds had an embassy there that was left alone in the bombardment and had a ship waiting for us.

Hatch is completely shocked by Isaac's outpouring of real humanity.

ISAAC
But fuck my luck, the chopper had to touch down about two hundred meters from the 'port, right between two enemy positions. Twelve men running a gauntlet to safety...

Isaac takes in a long breath, finally putting his gun down. Tears are slowly leaking from Isaac's eyes.

ISAAC
Two of us made it. Me and Milch. Chatter said Harquin's men also made it to another port but that's just a rumor. At the port there were maybe thirty reds just standing there, watching us run to them like pigs to a slaughterhouse. Didn't even raise a finger to help us.

HATCH
But they did let you on the ship, right?

Isaac slowly looks up, square into Hatch's eyes.

ISAAC
They weren't at first. Hell no. They wanted to leave us there and let the warring heathens sort it all out. But one... lady changed it all.

At her mention, Isaac's sad looks becomes cautiously hopeful.

ISAAC
She told them we were non combatants anymore and the Prophet would command it or something. She couldn't believe how heartless they were. Right then the second bombardment started. All nukes from orbit, making sure the entire planet was glassed. The Red leader was about to let us burn up when she... she pulled a gun on them and forced them to comply.

Isaac's smile grows as he speaks.

ISAAC

She cared for me that much... she pulled a gun on her own superior and shot him. Right there. That got us on board and away from the port. Last second too, I could see the ID marks on the nuke sent to the spaceport. She even loved me so much to give me a drink and set me down on a peaceful world only a little bit under their control.

HATCH

Sounds to me like she was only doing the right thing and then drugged you and set you down.

ISAAC

Shows what you know. She loved me so much and then left to make sure they never found me.

HATCH

She was most likely captured and imprisoned. Face it, dude, we were lucky to find her in that cell back on Prime.

Fortunately for Hatch, Isaac doesn't hear a word, especially as the rubble of Xantoras city sprawls below the shuttle.

ISAAC

Looks so much like home.

EXT. SPACE

Avalon easily slides out from the atmosphere and into orbit, just moments before the small Cult scout vessel is on top of them.

And only a moment later, the small vessel's hull is darkened by a great shadow. A huge, red, threatening THING slides from warp speed directly on top of the scout ship.

A Cult cruiser.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. CULT CRUISER - BRIDGE

Sovari and the same General from before stand on the bridge of the Cult Cruiser. Like all Cult rooms, it's massive, monolithic and evokes the feeling of a gothic cathedral at every turn. The only light in the room comes from a ring of torches that goes around the entire room, tended by a handful of robed young men, obviously trainees of some sort. The consoles all look more like World War 2 style dials and manual readouts than anything scifi. Paper reports print from other consoles with more sensitive readouts.

In all, it's pretty creepy. Sovari brandishes a small dagger as he speaks.

SOVARI

What was so important you intruded on my prayers yet again and forced me to the bridge of this vessel, general?

GENERAL

Penultimate, I thought you would be interested to know this is the last planet on the search pattern, one burned in the first search those months ago.

Sovari almost buries his face in his hands.

SOVARI

Why would you come back to a world already deemed empty?

GENERAL

Because the scout vessel in orbit relayed to us two interesting pieces of information: One, a new power source unseen in the last search was uncovered.

SOVARI

And the second?

The general takes in a breath.

GENERAL

The Avalon was here, detected moments before they went to warp speed and out of scan range.

Sovari looks suddenly happy, a very dangerous look.

SOVARI

Avalon? The vessel the traitor
resides on?

GENERAL

And the vessel that caused a
travesty at the Prophet's ceremony
on Prime.

SOVARI

How very interesting. That must
mean they know what we're looking
for. Did the power source disappear
with Avalon?

GENERAL

No, Penultimate, but we detect
three life signs and one... ancient
vehicle left behind on the surface.

SOVARI

How very odd. Very odd indeed.

(beat)

Whatever they are doing, we must
assume the worst. General, they
know of the object we seek and are
either in the process of stealing
it or destroying it.

GENERAL

I'll send down a full squadron,
Penultimate.

SOVARI

Good, good. But remind them to keep
the traitor woman alive. I alone
have the honor of seeing her life
exit from her eyes.

(beat)

And begin a wide beam search for
the Avalon. I want her found the
instant we find the object.

GENERAL

Understood.

Sovari sighs a happy sigh and sheaths his dagger.

SOVARI

Well, now, General. If there is no further business, I will return to my prayers. Be sure there are no further interruptions.

GENERAL

There will be none, Penultimate.

Sovari nods and exits the massive, massive bridge. The heavy wooden doors creak in their opening and slam shut.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Hatch is staring both at Isaac and the ground in preparation to land. Isaac has his face nearly stuck against the glass window next to him, a strange look on his face.

And yet, the gun is still pointed at Hatch, though now it's more pointed to his right hip than anything important.

HATCH

I'm, uh, gonna land her in that clearing. The sensors say Adele's around here somewhere but, y'know, they're really not up to snuff right now.

ISAAC

Just land her, Hatch. Get me the suit when you're done.

Hatch smiles.

HATCH

You're lucky there. I got two here from when I had to open the warp core coolant... thingy. So I'll go with you.

ISAAC

I'd rather you didn't.

HATCH

Hey, there's a cult ship out there and Adele's my friend, too. Besides, two sets of eyes are better than one.

ISAAC

You need to fix the shuttle, remember?

HATCH
And three sets of hands are better
than one, right? You're not getting
out of this one.

ISAAC
I could shoot you.

HATCH
And be out one pilot and have a
broken shuttle. Yeah, right.

Isaac nods and actually holsters his weapon. He absently
rubs his sore arm for a moment.

ISAAC
You're right. Fine.

Hatch smiles, considering taking advantage of Isaac's nearly
human mood.

But is interrupted when the shuttle THUNKS with the
vibration of a rough landing.

HATCH
Oops.

ISAAC
Heh. Better than our last landing.

HATCH
Hey, shut up.

Finally looking more resolute than previously, Isaac stands.

ISAAC
She's out there, looking for
whatever the fuck's so important to
the reds and their plans.

HATCH
Whatcha think she's gonna do when
she finds this magical thing of
mystery?

Both men stand as they speak, suiting up into their
individual protective garments with speed.

ISAAC
Dunno that, either. Prolly gonna
destroy it just to keep it away
from 'em.

HATCH

While that's probably the smart solution, I bet you're thinking of selling it, aren't cha?

ISAAC

If it's really as old as from a couple'a thousand years ago, the collector's market would pay enough for me to retire on my own planet.

By now, both are in full suit and preparing to open the door.

ISAAC

Get yourself ready for some heat.

HATCH

What? Doesn't look that hot out there--

Isaac slams the door open, letting a gentile wind waft in that visibly warps the air around it like you see on the hottest of days.

HATCH

GEEZ! I prefer the ice world, thank you very much.

ISAAC

Suit's protecting you from the worst of it. You'll live as long as the air recycling system works.

HATCH

I'll take your medical advice on that.

They exit the shuttle into:

EXT. XANTORAS CITY - STREET

The ruins of Xantoras. The sky is semi-clear for once and the ever present smoke is light enough to show the stark and total destruction of the city. There is little outright signs of battle damage or explosions, but scorch marks and melted structures make it a very strange and alien environment.

A few charred skeletons seem to be sprawled under chunks of debris and burned vehicles, adding to the eerie feeling of the scene.

Though the suits obscure the faces of the characters, we can easily tell which one is Hatch due to his jumpy walk and freaked-out behavior.

HATCH

Eew! Dead body! Dead body!

ISAAC

Just skeletons. Nothing to freak about.

HATCH

Then you, sir, have not seen the movies I have. Skeletons are FREAKY. Especially all hunched over and... black like that. Any one of them could jump at ya and... do their skeleton stuff on you.

Isaac sighs and kicks over a nearby corpse. It falls over into a puff of charred dust an instant later.

ISAAC

Even if they DO move, Hatch, they'd be dirt a second later. You're safe.

They continue on for a moment.

HATCH

So let's talk about something else. You seem to be a little... not yourself at the moment. Ever since you, well, left the ship.

ISAAC

Maybe there's more to me than you'd think, Hatch.

HATCH

Oh, so you're really a nice guy deep down, but the psychological damage you took during the war desensitized you to normal human niceties. So you surround yourself with an aura of cold malice directed at just about everyone so you never have to feel what you did back at your home. Adele, being the woman who saved you from that horror in the first place, has become your symbol of hope from the darkness you think life has become. And you will cling to her as hard as you can lest she fade away like everything and everyone else you knew and loved.

Isaac stops cold.

ISAAC

What?

HATCH

Yeah, I don't know, either.

Isaac suddenly looks down at the burned ground, to a barely visible set of footprints.

ISAAC

She was here, watching us land.
Must've assumed we were Reds and
took off.

HATCH

Any idea where?

Isaac looks up a down for a long moment. Not an expert tracker by any means, but better than Hatch any day.

Eventually, he points toward a large, relatively undamaged building.

ISAAC

There.

HATCH

Tall, dark, creepy and the only
building for miles that isn't about
to fall over. Why is the 45th
century so cliché?

ISAAC

Don't be an idiot. This was
probably one of the thousands of
buildings the Reds didn't burn for
their searchin'.

HATCH

So why couldn't they find this
thing way back when?

ISAAC

You assume the Cult has a basic
standard of intelligence in their
Prophet-books or something, don't
you? Maybe it's hidden behind some
kind of wall or something nobody
knew about.

ADELE (O.S.)

Or it was hidden by a group
disloyal to the Cult at large.

Hatch and Isaac turn around to see Adele hot on their heels, no mirth or any kind of pleasant look present on her face. In fact, she looks poised to strike.

HATCH

Hey, Adele! We were just talking about you.

ISAAC

Reds are bound to be here any second, Adele. We can use Hatch's shuttle to get to a nearby system. But we need to go now!

Adele does not listen to either for a moment, choosing to stare at Isaac with a look that could slaughter thousands in an instant.

ADELE

Isaac, you should go.

ISAAC

(dumbfounded)

What?

Adele slowly stalks forward as she speaks:

ADELE

I tried to make myself as clear as possible in the most basic way I could think of. Isaac Sarola, you are a violent, rude and awful example of a human being. I told you I only used you as protection from Sovari's followers, using your... horrible attraction to me as a means to convince Zorin and the rest of Avalon's scoundrel crew to take me on.

HATCH

Scoundrel? What about "Beloved knucklehead"?

Adele wisely ignores Hatch's babbling.

ADELE

So I hid aboard that flying hunk of garbage for the last eight months, hoping to finally find a place where I could be safe from them and you. And as luck should have had it... it was supposed to be here.

HATCH

Wait, what did you mean by "group
disloyal to the Cult at large"?

Isaac is too dumbstruck to respond at all. Adele's anger
grows as she speaks.

ADELE

I've endured much in my life, Isaac,
many things that would turn even
your stomach. But nothing, not even
staring death in the face before
the Prophet himself, could prepare
me for the life I lead while living
in the same space as you.

ISAAC

Wha... what are you saying?

ADELE

I'm saying I do not want to see you
again, Isaac Sarola. As long as I
draw breath I do not want to poison
my eyes with your presence anymore.

HATCH

But what...?

Isaac is all but a pouting child by now, allowing Adele to
finally turn to Hatch.

ADELE

There are signs on that building
that show the citizens of this
planet were as against Sovari's
rule as I am. They ransacked the
structure long before it was burned
from above, most likely destroying
the object many months ago.

Hatch's face falls as much as Isaac's.

HATCH

So no seeing the cool object that's
at least thousands of years old and
possibly one of the last remnants
of the Federation left in the galaxy?

ADELE

No.

HATCH

Darn.

Isaac sinks to his knees as the two converse. Tears begin to stream from his eyes, leaving a shallow pool in the chin plate of the suit's mask.

ISAAC

(quietly)

All I wanted... was to keep you safe. To make sure nothing happened to you like it did to me... I just wanted to pay you back for what you did for me. You're my guardian angel, Adele, and I wanted to be yours.

(beat)

Too much hate in this world to not protect yourself with a bad attitude and a gun. Too much hate. And I thought you were something good, someone I could... love... after seeing what I saw back home.

Adele's expression slowly begins to soften but is still like stone.

ISAAC

I just wanted something to hold onto for once. Something I knew wasn't gonna slip away the moment I turned around for something else. I thought having you around would make everything better.

ADELE

(semi-cold)

I can't bring Jushai back, Isaac. Not even the Prophet can.

ISAAC

I know. I really know that. I just wish it wasn't so, you know? We all have those childish fancies sometimes. But whenever I looked at you, no matter how bad Zorin made me feel or whatever Hatch did...

HATCH

Hey!

ISAAC

(ignoring, continues)

I knew it was all right. I'm alive, out of danger and earning a good living on the rim of civilization.

(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Hell, I even get to stick it to 'em every once in a while when Zorin goes on the warpath so that was a bonus. But nothing, nothing at all compared to seeing you almost every day. Seeing your face and your bright, perfectly pressed clothes compared to the crap on the rest of the ship... Made me think of better times and better fortunes.

Adele is still pissed, but the mood fades as realization washes over her.

ADELE

I had no idea, Isaac.

HATCH

I tried telling him. I did. Shoulda heard me back there getting all psychobabble technical and stuff.

Adele slowly sinks down to the still down Isaac, bending down to see him face-to-face in the faceplates of their suits.

ADELE

But this doesn't change the fact of your actions toward me in the recent past. Either you have a very deluded mind or your idea of affection is severely lacking.

Isaac doesn't look at her, instead choosing to stare past Adele. The tears pool around his eyes turning them red.

ADELE

I would rather stay here than on Avalon more than ever now, knowing why you act the way you do. Safety from Sovari is secondary.

HATCH

Ouch, burned on that one.

Adele's face finally turns to one of compassion as she holds Isaac's mask with affection.

ADELE

But I do not do it out of spite anymore. You must grow beyond your old prejudices, Isaac, if you are to truly live the rest of your life.

(MORE)

ADELE (CONT'D)

Yes, Jushai is gone but you have a new home now. A new life. If anything else, I order you to appreciate what you have instead of dwelling on what you do not.

Isaac's eyes slowly turn to Adele's. They smile.

ISAAC

I'll try.

But their smiles fade when Adele suddenly JERKS upright, grunting in pain as she does.

Slowly, Adele sinks to the charred ground.

ISAAC

Adele?

HATCH

What happened?

Isaac is on his feet tending to Adele with all his medical expertise. Hatch hovers around, his eyes wild.

HATCH

Isaac, what happened?

Isaac pokes around Adele for a moment before simply pushing her shoulder aside for Hatch to see.

A smoking bullet hole square in her back.

ISAAC

She's still breathin' but not for long if the ash gets into the suit.

Hatch nods and immediately begins to look around for the shooter.

From his POV, we see the dark sky of the destroyed city covered by the black ash.

At least for the first few seconds.

Because a moment later, the streets in the distance begin to look like they're oozing blood. Thirty armed and well armored Cult soldiers run toward the trio, intent on blood.

HATCH

Shit.

ISAAC

What?

HATCH

Um... I think the Cult knows we're here.

Isaac is still hunched over Adele, closing the hole above her wound with his hand. Adele is now long since unconscious from pain but still alive. She grimaces each time Isaac touches the shot wound.

ISAAC

Fuck.

HATCH

Exactly.

ISAAC

They shot her, didn't they?

HATCH

Yeah.

ISAAC

Cold blood, didn't even know who she was.

HATCH

Lucky shot, I'd bet. Not a real sniper or we'd all be corpsified by now.

ISAAC

Let's not give 'em a chance to fix their aim.

Neither men move.

HATCH

Well? Aren't you gonna pick up Adele and let me lead as we run back to my shuttle.

ISAAC

No Goddamn way.

HATCH

Huh?

ISAAC

Get your shuttle and pick us up. I
can't move Adele like this.

(beat, savage grin)

Plus I've been itchin' for a fight
lately.

HATCH

So I guess the old Isaac's back now?

ISAAC

You can thank the fucking Reds
while you run. GO!

Hatch barely nods before scurrying off to the burned streets.

Isaac stands over the prone Adele, slowly drawing his gun in
rage. His eyes square behind the mask of his suit.

The Cult squad draws closer.

We slowly pan over to Adele's face, drawing closer and
closer on her still, closed-eyed face until we:

CUT TO:

INT. TEMPLE DINING HALL -- FLASHBACK

The scene is much like one you might see in a Harry Potter
movie. A massive dining hall with dozens upon dozens of
straight tables, each fifty meters long, are filled with
people in matching red robes. They all clap and cheer in a
raucous chorus as someone takes a podium at the extreme far
side of the room.

Adele is one of the multitudes of people, sitting crushed
between two women wildly cheering. Adele, however, is only
slightly happy looking, standing out quite distinctly among
the crowd.

But our focus is not on Adele for long. We slowly pan around
to see the person the group is cheering for: Rol'Gin!

This is his promotion ceremony.

Rol'Gin takes his place at a massive podium where an ancient
looking microphone half-masks his face. He looks over the
entire crowd with great joy.

ROL'GIN

I cannot express the joy I feel in my heart today. I truly cannot. I have spent the last sixteen years of my short life in service to the Prophet learning and training to go out into this wild and untamed galaxy, bringing His light to the multitude of worlds that are still mired in darkness. I can only hope that my, very small, person can make a difference and serve His word in any way possible.

The crowd goes wild! Adele, however, stays only slightly happy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TEMPLE -- CORRIDOR -- FLASHBACK

We find ourselves in a dark corridor of the same temple, where Rol'Gin and Adele walk slowly.

ROL'GIN

Ten years without a single note of correspondence. I was beginning to worry about you, Adele.

ADELE

Well, as you can see, my life here has been quite busy.

ROL'GIN

I apologize, then.

They walk for a few more moments.

ADELE

I hear Sovari has replaced Galti as governor of Cestus.

ROL'GIN

Yes, his career as a converter was very short lived. His interests have always lied in the administrative side of all things.

ADELE

Isn't it odd that even a religion devoted to worship and making the universe better still requires bureaucrats and their tedious meddling?

ROL'GIN
I'm afraid it's an evil the galaxy
will never be free of so long as
life exists.

They chuckle politely.

ADELE
It's been difficult without you two
here.

ROL'GIN
As has my life been.

ADELE
We depended on each other for
everything in our youths. We were
the closest of friends, vowing to
never be so apart from each other.
(beat)
And yet...

ROL'GIN
Here we are. Without lines of
communication and indeed moving
continually farther apart from each
other than ever.

ADELE
Will we ever find such cohesion again?

Rol'Gin looks very sad.

ROL'GIN
Possibly not. I will be gone for a
very long time in my first tour out
near the Delta system and Sovari is
in line to Lordship in a few short
years.

ADELE
We've lost each other.

ROL'GIN
I guess we have.

They both look on, suddenly depressed.

ADELE
Then I fear our future.

ROL'GIN

As do I.

CUT TO:

INT. CULT CRUISER - BRIDGE

Sovari stands proudly above the massive, massive window that facilitates the cruiser's forward view. The bridge itself is a flurry of activity as the crew complies with Sovari's numerous previous orders.

The General approaches after a moment of silence.

GENERAL

(unsure)

Penultimate, the scouting party has reported contact with Adele and her guard.

Sovari slowly turns, a cold look in his eyes. His knife glints in the firelight.

SOVARI

Why is this good news delivered with such an odd tone, General?

The General stammers for a moment.

GENERAL

F-forgive me, Penultimate. But a young acolyte, in a fervor to capture the traitor and comply with the Prophet's will... shot her.

SOVARI

What?

GENERAL

(quickly)

They're attempting to recover her as quickly as possible before she perishes. There is only one bodyguard present as the other one has apparently fled in panic. He will be killed and not converted for the sake of the mission.

SOVARI

So long as Adele is captured, General. Her capture will overshadow the finding of the object or the destruction of the Avalon by far.

The General nods and walks off.

EXT. XANTORAS CITY - STREET

Isaac stands firm as the thirty Cult soldiers slowly advance toward him, all of their guns ready to fire.

ISAAC
Bring it, you fuckers!

In a flash, Isaac raises his gun and fires six times in quick succession. Four Cultists drop dead while the other two drop to cradle wounded knees or guts.

But Isaac's good fortune lasts only as long as it takes for an anonymous member of the advancing group to take quick aim and shoot Isaac's left shoulder. Fortunately, it's just a shallow cut.

Isaac grunts in pain but does not drop down. Instead, he uses it to fuel his growing rage. He shoots three more times! Again, three go down.

By now, the Cult group has stopped about fifty feet away from Isaac. They make a half moon formation before raising their weapons in a firing squad position.

ACOLYTE
Lower your weapon or we will fire!

Isaac responds by shooting the Acolyte in the head.

A second one takes his place.

ACOLYTE 2
Fire!

The scene slowly goes into slow motion:

Isaac grits his teeth and slits his eyes.

The Acolytes cock their weapons.

Adele's eyes close fully.

Isaac drops his spent gun.

The Cultists aim at Isaac's chest.

Their red robes slowly glow blue.

We go back to normal speed just as...

Hatch's shuttle lands directly ON TOP of the entire Cult group! Any sound of broken bones or death screams are fortunately muted by the vessel's ancient engines.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Hatch, sitting at his pilot seat, has the widest grin on his face that's humanly possible.

HATCH
I've wanted to do that for so long.

The shuttle THUNKS one last time as it makes contact with the charred pavement. Isaac is up and has Adele on his shoulders a moment later. He enters the shuttle in quick order.

Isaac slowly lowers Adele onto the floor of the shuttle with as much gentleness as he can, tending to the shot wound and showing her the bedside manner only seen in the most dedicated of medical personnel.

HATCH
Avalon's gone and there's a Red ship in orbit... we ain't out of this yet.

ISAAC
I know.

HATCH
She gonna make it?

Isaac is silent for a moment.

ISAAC
She will. I promise.

Isaac gets to work with all of his available resources, tending to Adele as best he can. Hatch turns back around to pilot the shuttle out of danger.

Off this solemn scene, we:

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END