



Ghost of Perdition

2.02

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

A moonlit forest greets us. The silent vigil of night and soft whisper of a night breeze seems to ease all other sounds. A blue moonlight shines through the canopy as we slowly pan down.

On the horizon and off in the distance we see fire. A town ablaze. The echo of gun fire and shouts begin to creep in as the smoke of ravaged homes blot out the moon. Our focus then centers on someone fleeing the chaos.

It's a girl, no more than ten years of age and has a head devoid of hair. She's in a white bed gown and no shoes on as her bare feet slosh through the autumn layer of leaves. The girl's eyes drip tears and her cries of fear now overpowering all else. We can clearly see a mob of people shine their lights into the forest, searching for her. She continues to run.

She looks back, gauging how far she's getting from the hell behind her. Unfortunately, her gauging doesn't allow her to see a large inclination in the forest ground in front of her. She loses her footing and begins to roll down the hill helplessly. She comes to a halt at the bottom, her white dress now botched with mud and grime. Her cries are excruciating, and she shouts loudly into the night.

MAN (O.S.)

Shh...

A quiet voice tries to calm her. It's a masculine voice. We see it is indeed a man coming to her aid. The girl doesn't look scared, but cautious of the approaching man.

MAN (CONT'D)

Quiet. It's going to be okay.

She's hesitant.

GIRL

Who are you? Are you one of them?

He bends down and wipes the tears from her eyes. We aren't able to see his face.

MAN

No, no. I'm not with those people.

GIRL

What do they want from me?

MAN

They aren't coming for you. It was your parents they wanted. You were just caught in the crossfire.

GIRL

Are my mom and dad going to be okay?

MAN

I don't think so.

Again, the girl erupts into tears of sorrow. We finally pan around to get a glimpse of the man. It's a much younger version of the man we simply know as "Him".

HIM

Like a siren in the night.

Suddenly, someone else's hand come up from behind SIREN and muffles her mouth, silencing her.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT - LATER

Now, a young boy traverses the same forest Siren did. He seems to follow her footsteps in the leaves. He too is clad in bedtime clothes. He too is teary eyed and bald. He too is fleeing from the rubble of his razed town.

BOY

Where are you?!

He comes across the same hill Siren fell and he quickly hobbles down it. He gets to the bottom and looks down at the unseen ground.

Bending down, he picks something up. Siren's mud stained dress.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. AVALON

The Avalon flies past at warp. Still afflicted by the usual symptoms, but donning a very noticeable Cult Red nacelle.

INT. AVALON - CONFERENCE ROOM

The room, which holds a single table, is occupied by the usual suspects. Pau'Zauric is front and center at the head of the table. Siren, Azel, Shera, Adele, and Isaac flank him. Ava is obviously present as well.

It's dead silent. It's very, very uncomfortable as Zauric seems to be being tortured by a cold quiet. The others glare at him with less-than-favorable looks, save Adele and Siren who seem indifferent. The tension in the room is palpable.

ISAAC

I say we blow him out the airlock.

Adele lands a mild slap to him.

ADELE

Let's try to be a bit more constructive than that Isaac.

ISAAC

I *am* being constructive. Keeps us flying to not have a Cult spy on board.

ZAURIC

I'm not a spy. I've told you already.

ISAAC

(coldly)

Right. You're just looking to get away from the terrible life of burning heretic planets by taking refuge on the most sought-after ship the Cult eyes. Pardon me to hell for not taking your word on it.

Zauric returns to silence and looks down, almost reverting inward.

ADELE

(ref: Zauric)

I know that look well. Someone who's left an important part of his life behind. He's not lying about leaving the Cult, I can tell you that much.

AZEL

Yeah, well, I think we all know the Cult are masters of deception.

ADELE

Collusion, maybe. They work to undermine societies, I have no doubt, but Pau'Zauric has returned Thomas to us. He saved Siren. Both of which were clearly against Sovari's mandate.

AZEL

Okay, answer me this then. What did you people want with a guy like Hatch to begin with? You took him and his shuttle.

ZAURIC

In case you didn't realize, the Cult knows Hatch is from the early days of the Federation, an organization the Cult has strong roots in. They wanted information.

AZEL

What kind of information?

ZAURIC

I really don't know.

AZEL

Uh huh.

SHERA

What about Siren?

Shera obviously takes the conversation elsewhere.

SHERA (CONT'D)

You said she's your sister.

ZAURIC

I wasn't lying about that either.

Shera turns to Siren.

SHERA
Well? Is he lying?

Siren seems very disinterested in speaking on the matter.

SIREN
I don't know.

ISAAC
(boisterous)
Well, he either is or he isn't!

SIREN
(steamed)
I don't remember! If I knew for sure, I'd tell you.
(a sad beat)
I barely remember anything from before my time as a slave.

All eyes are again on Zauric.

ZAURIC
Listen, you all have every reason to hate me and want me off of this ship. I'll take my leave of you people if you are so inclined.

ISAAC
(abruptly)
We're inclined.

ZAURIC
However, you all need to know that I'm not lying and I'm not Cult. I haven't been since Prime.

ADELE
Why since Prime?

ZAURIC
It was many things. The Prophet's decrees were more than what I wanted to be a part of. The deaths of billions of people in the past year, Sovari's increasingly militaristic command, and least of which: the personal anguish I've experienced while questioning my faith.

ISAAC
Can't see how 'personal anguish' would be bothersome when your kind kills for a living.

ZAURIC

(louder)

It's the killings that destroyed my faith. The fact that I ratted out the man who converted me...

Adele perks up.

ADELE

Rol'Gin? He converted you?

He nods. Adele is mildly shocked.

ADELE (CONT'D)

I remember you.

This odd twist piques the others' interest.

ADELE (CONT'D)

He spoke of you. You were conditioned to resist forced conversion by the Confederates. We couldn't figure out how the Confederates managed to condition you like that.

The way Zauric hangs his head shows this is a painfully true statement.

ZAURIC

Yes, and he's the only one to have managed to do it. As a matter of fact... he was something of a father to me.

ISAAC

Yet you sold him out. Good going.

ZAURIC

(striking)

Do you even think that was an easy thing for me to do? I managed to impede Sovari from killing Rol'Gin the moment I informed him of his betrayal, but my actions still resulted in his death. The very man who was the closest thing to a father and taught me the ways of being Cult had gone against every one of those teachings, thus my duty to the supreme commander took precedence... but it wasn't easy.

ADELE

(to Isaac)

Hatch and I were there when Zauric made the discovery. I can vouch for him.

Isaac scoffs.

ISAAC

That's all you're doing Adele. Defending his every word.

ADELE

I'm no more inclined to believe every word he says than you are to reject every word.

SHERA

I think we need to take a moment and figure out what we should do.

Isaac gets up from his chair.

ISAAC

You guys have my suggestion.

He exits.

ZAURIC

You all know that if I really am working for the Cult, I wouldn't be going through this much trouble to convince you otherwise. The Cult aren't that meticulous when it comes to renegade ships.

AZEL

Still, you haven't provided any proof except your word.

ZAURIC

I know. If you need proof, I'm willing to give you coordinates to a safe location. You guys need a place to hang low for a while, there's a planet-side base not 5 light years from here. They welcome anyone who can pay for the harbor.

SHERA

This harbor wouldn't be crawling with Reds would it?

ZAURIC

You already know my answer.

They all take a moment to consider his offer.

AZEL

We do need to set down for a while.
Ava needs some serious repairs and
I can't do them in-flight.

ADELE

Siren? You're the closest person to
"in charge" around here. What do
you say?

She considers.

SIREN

Let's go.

SHERA

Okay. If that's the decision then
we should set course. There's still
the possibility the Cult aren't far
behind us.

Clearly a sign that the meeting is over, they all get up.
Except Siren, who clearly looks like she wants solitude.
Everyone exits, but Pau'Zauric hangs back. The door closes
and it's only the two supposed-siblings in company.

ZAURIC

You really don't remember me?

SIREN

No, I do.

He's a little taken back.

ZAURIC

Then why didn't you say so earlier?

SIREN

I guess I didn't want to believe it.
It came to me in a rush when you
appeared to us in the shuttlebay.
It's like a veil was lifted and a
whole new life opened up to me that
I forgot I had. It was the
strangest thing. If I didn't
believe it, how could they?

He shrugs.

ZAURIC

Maybe you're over thinking things.
Maybe your word is all they need.
They are your family now.

His eyes turn to her pregnant stomach.

ZAURIC (CONT'D)

Speaking of family...

She catches on.

SIREN

In case you didn't know, a part of me almost would've preferred what the Cult would've done to me and this thing in my gut. And you're right, *they* are my family. Not this.

ZAURIC

What about... me? I know you don't know me and we're only related by blood, but don't you remember anything from your real family?

She sits back and stares into space.

SIREN

Father was a Cabinet member for the Meyallus government. Mother was an assistant to the President himself. Our family was well off. I knew the power they had over other people even as a child.

ZAURIC

They were very influential. Which is why they were the first targeted.

She nods.

SIREN

In a rebellion.

ZAURIC

In the fray, you were taken by men. I was taken by men who wanted to play with my mind. They were Confederates, and so was I for a time. Then I was Cult, now I'm nothing.

SIREN

Are you?

A moment of silence.

ZAURIC

(slightly angered)

Listen, we may not be related anymore, but I want you to know that I'm not a monster. Not Cult, not Confederate. Even if you don't want me around, know that I did what I can to help.

He waits for a response. When he doesn't get one, he promptly exits.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - SICKBAY

Zorin sits up from a medbed. He's still bandaged up, and probably more-so. With only a pair of pants on his body, we can clearly see the extent of his damage. Isaac sees the Hirogen awakening and goes to see him.

ISAAC

I'm glad I'm not you.

ZORIN

I heard you the last three times you said it. Albeit, I was barely conscious.

ISAAC

Uh huh, and did you hear what else I had to say?

Zorin checks his bandages and his wounds.

ZORIN

Not much.

ISAAC

You're a lucky fucker, in so many ways. That bullet demolished one of your stomachs but luckily missed any other vital organ.

ZORIN

One of my stomachs?

ISAAC

Yes. You're going to have to eat less food but more meals a day to keep your body in balance.

(MORE)

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Other than that, you're Hirogen
healing process is taking over from
what I did.

ZORIN
Well, thank you.

Isaac looks unhappy at this remark.

ISAAC
You know better than to thank me.

Zorin hobbles to his feet.

ZORIN
(straining)
I know. But I felt it was necessary.
The war ended years ago Isaac, you
need to move on.

ISAAC
A man can't move on from a war like
that. Just don't thank me and I'll
be fine.

Zorin goes to a food dispenser on a wall and gets water.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
You do know we're carrying a
Cultist, don't you?

Zorin's expression is one of deadly concern.

ZORIN
Why hasn't this person been thrown
out the airlock?

ISAAC
That's what *I* said, but they
wouldn't listen. He insists he's
not Cult anymore and is on the run.
They all believed him.

ZORIN
And you don't?

ISAAC
Hell no. You're the perceptive one
though, and the captain, so you decide.

Zorin downs the water.

ZORIN

So I will. He doesn't look dangerous, does he?

ISAAC

I could take him. If I recall, he got Rol'Gin killed back on Prime.

ZORIN

A Cult killing Cultist. No wonder he's on the run.

Zorin puts his cup away while Isaac tends to his medbed.

ZORIN (CONT'D)

It *is* a fair trade, Isaac.

The medic is confused.

ISAAC

Come again?

ZORIN

I save your life, you save mine.

He catches on.

ISAAC

I thought you said you were out.

ZORIN

I said barely. The way I see it, there are two kinds of people out there today: those who rely on instinct and those who rely on faith, neither of which are particularly useful when trying to better yourself. To better yourself, you need a partnership. The thing about you is that you were trained to be a soldier, trained to look past instinct and faith and lean on your partner. The galaxy is filled with people who want no partnership and would leave another person to die without giving it a second thought because faith or instinct tells them to. Us being partners however, we trade. You save my hide, I save your ass, and we live to see a better day.

(MORE)

ZORIN (CONT'D)

That's the cycle which keeping us flying.

(beat)

You don't approve of many of the decisions I make on this ship, but like the soldier you are, you follow my orders.

ISAAC

But doesn't following someone's orders constitute faith? What if you know those orders are wrong?

ZORIN

Then that cycle which keeps us flying must break...

They both linger on his words for a moment. Zorin goes back to the dispenser.

ISAAC

...divided we fall.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Silent and alone, Shera keeps a vigil over the brain center of the ship. Her arms are comfortably crossed as she sits at the forward nav station with her head slowly nodding off into sleep.

Suddenly, a hand slaps the back of her chair. She's shocked and sits up straighter. We see it's RIDEK.

RIDEK

Sleeping on the job miss?

She tries to hide the sleep in her eyes.

SHERA

Not much job to do. Ship's on auto and I can't do anything useful until we set down and do our repairs.

Ridek takes the seat next to her.

RIDEK

I know. Only joking.

He works on the console. Shera eyes Ridek for a moment.

SHERA

What are you up to?

RIDEK

Your cousin wants me to run diagnostics on Ava's brand spankin' new warp nacelle. He doesn't trust the thing and is running me ragged with his paranoia.

SHERA

Well, I've lived with him most of my life. His constant paranoia results from years of sleeping with one eye open from fear that the Cult will come knocking at any time. Kept us alive.

RIDEK

I've got no doubt.

A silent beat.

SHERA

We've been through a lot. Living everyday while straddling the line of life and death. Try not to be too freaked out, and I hope you don't think I'm crazy but -- do you ever hear voices?

Ridek sends her a blank expression.

RIDEK

Wait, do you mean a long, loud screeching sound followed by a series of random clicks?

Shera shares the blank expression.

SHERA

No. I mean actual voices.

RIDEK

Oh... Then no.

SHERA

Wait, do you actually hear a loud screeching sound...

RIDEK
 (interrupting)
 Huh? No, I don't think you're crazy.
 I'm red, you're blue. We're all
 different people.

SHERA
 But do you...

RIDEK
 (again)
 And we all have ways of coping with
 stress. If you hear voices, then
 let it be.

Shera joins his conversation of choice.

SHERA
 It's not so much hearing voices,
 it's more about what they say.

RIDEK
 Unless that voice is telling you to
 kill, burn, and plunder everything
 in sight, I'd call it normal.

She shakes her head.

SHERA
 Nothing like that. I just get this
 bad feeling when I'm "coping" and
 hear the voice. I just keep
 thinking that it's -- I don't know,
 warning me or something. Since
 Rosani, the topic of my own
 mortality had been bearing down on
 me. It just scares me a little bit.

RIDEK
 (sympathetic)
 If you want my advice, let it be.
 Rosani was a horrible experience
 and the ordeal with the Cult and
 that Phoenix thing didn't help
 either. I'd question my mortality
 too under the circumstances. A
 voice in your head is probably a
 normal thing.

For a moment, Shera looks satisfied by his guidance.

RIDEK (CONT'D)
 I'd probably hear voices too if I
 could... y'know, hear.

Her satisfaction dissipates to confusion...

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - SICKBAY

CARLISE enters the sickbay, holding her arm in an obvious sign of pain. We see she has a large gash on her forearm. Isaac is checking over THOMAS HATCH when she walks in. She stands next to Isaac.

ISAAC

(to Hatch)

Damn peculiar. Doesn't even look like you broke your arm.

HATCH

Broke my arm?

ISAAC

Yes. When we found you in your shuttle a year ago, your arm was broken. I've seen a lot of broken arms in my time, they usually leave some evidence but I can't see any...

Carlise, still bleeding and being ignored, breaks.

CARLISE

Hey! I'm fuckin' hurt here!

Isaac eyes her.

ISAAC

(disinterested)

Oh. Put some ice on it.

CARLISE

What?!

Isaac concedes and looks at her lacerated arm.

ISAAC

Gonna need my sewing kit.

CARLISE

Well, hurry it up grandma.

Isaac heads to a cart near the other end of sickbay to retrieve said kit. Carlise notices Hatch.

CARLISE (CONT'D)
 (still in pain)
 Hey Hatch. Wanted to let you know
 everyone's glad you're okay. You
 going to get back to scrubbing
 conduits sometime soon?

Hatch doesn't even acknowledge Carlise's question. She's
 angered.

CARLISE (CONT'D)
 Why the hell is everyone ignoring me?

Hatch realizes who she was talking to.

HATCH
 Oh! I'm sorry. I'm dozing off here.
 I think I need some more time to
 recover.

CARLISE
 Like hell, remember that time you
 had the flu and didn't do your job
 for a month?

HATCH
 Um... yeah.

Isaac finally returns and starts working on Carlise's arm.

CARLISE
 Not this time. Azel said that when
 we land at this base we're headed
 to, we need you to work double time.
 Just like the rest of... OW!

She pulls her arm away from Isaac.

ISAAC
 Don't move, dammit. I need to make
 sure this thing's disinfected. Or I
 could sew it up without cleaning it
 and have to chop it off in a
 month's time.

She gives the arm back. There's a moment of silence between
 the three and Isaac does his thing.

CARLISE
 So Hatch, I've been thinking about
 what you said.

HATCH
 Oh... yeah?

CARLISE

I know where *you're* from people don't resort to what I've resorted to to keep myself sane, but would one hit a day be so bad?

Hatch seems confused at her inquiry.

HATCH

I'm sorry?

CARLISE

My... habit. I've given it up since you talked to me about it.

HATCH

Oh! I see.

Carlise is confounded by Hatch.

CARLISE

Are you ok?

ISAAC

The Cult did a number on him I guess. He's seems like a whole new person, doesn't he?

CARLISE

I gues... OW!!

She pulls her arm away again.

ISAAC

Either suck it up or loose the arm Carlise. Your choice.

As expected, she gives it back.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon is at warp.

Quickly, the stars streaming by begin to slow and become stationary as the Avalon drops from warp speed. We track the ship as it heads to a red planet.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

On the bridge, Shera, Ridek, Azel, Siren, and Pau'Zauric stand as the ship approaches the planet.

AVA

I'm picking up the planet side base.
It's practically a city in size.
There's also a large fleet in orbit.

ZAURIC

Protective forces.

SHERA

Are you sure they won't try
protecting themselves against us?

ZAURIC

I'm sure. They won't attack us
unless they think we're...

Suddenly, the ship rocks with weapons fire! The ship sparks
and crackles at the shot.

COMM VOICE

Attention Cult Cruiser! Turn back
now or be destroyed!

A tense silence.

ZAURIC

... Cult.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. AVALON

The bridge jolts yet again from another weapons blast. Ridek looks terribly angry.

RIDEK

Damn it! He sold us out!

ZAURIC

I did not!

RIDEK

Then why do they think we're Cult
and about to kill us all?

ZAURIC

How the hell should I know?

Siren takes charge.

SIREN

Ava, hail them.

AVA

Been trying to. They aren't listening.

Another shot to Avalon.

SHERA

You said we'd be welcome here. Why
do they think we're Cult? We need
to turn back.

AVA

Guys, I think I know the problem.
It's that damn Cult nacelle. It's
giving off a Cult warp signature.

AZEL

Figures no one would think to look
out the window. I'm shutting warp
drive down.

The ambient sound of the warp engines slowly dies. The lights dim only slightly to signify the transition. All are silent as they wait for the next possible volley of weapons fire.

Nothing. Then the comm beeps.

COMM VOICE
Who the hell is out there?

Everyone breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon, now leaking some kind of gas into space, heads toward the red planet. The fleet of defense ships allow her to pass.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE

The Avalon is now in the sky. The red surface of the planet extends in every direction, the yellow sky offering the expected extra-terrestrial edge to the environment. Off in the distance and Avalon's intended direction, we can see a very large city made of dark steel.

INT. AVALON - SHUTTLEBAY

The shuttlebay doors are lowering as we arrive. Waiting in the bay is Zauric, Siren, Adele, Isaac, and Azel. Various crewmembers work to haul empty boxes around the bay.

The doors finally open fully and our crew heads down the ramp.

INT. BASE - DOCK

The dock area is a very large, open area. Avalon is one of many ships, large and small, landed on numerous, circular landing pads. Above them is a clear dome that's hundred of feet high and making the alien sky visible. Because of this, the whole scene is basked in a yellow/red hue. We can see the large city of steel is just beyond the docks, the docks themselves are teeming with people going about their affairs.

Our crew steps out onto the dock.

ISAAC
(to everyone, loudly)
Now, Zorin's still resting but we all know what he'd want. Or at least what we should do. We stock up on supplies, get some attention on our ship and wounded, and leave. We can't be here more than a day.

AZEL
Problem. We need to stock up on supplies... yet we have no money.

Isaac looks over to the Avalon's ramp.

ISAAC
(calling out)
Khrantic!

We see the balding Andorian KHRANTIC run down the ramp, holding a familiar silver briefcase. Khrantic is rushing with all his strength. When he steps off the Avalon's ramp, he loses his footing and hits the metal ground hard.

He's disoriented for a moment as Adele comes to his aid and helps him up. Isaac rolls his eyes while the others simply wait. The Andorian finally brings the briefcase.

Isaac bends down and opens this locked case. Inside, we see piles and piles of neatly stacked circles of paper. Money. He starts sorting it out.

The others are completely baffled by this large sum of money.

SIREN
(dumbfounded)
Um, Isaac. Where did this money
come from and why are you just now
bringing it out?

AZEL
That looks like Novograd money.

ISAAC
It would be best for all of you to
remain ignorant on this dough's
origins. It doesn't matter now,
what does matter is that we have
the money to patch our wounds and
get back into the sky.
(going back to the case)
More than what Zorin would've led
us to.

The others share nervous glances. Isaac gets up with several wads of the cash and hold them out to the others. Everyone takes them except Zauric.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Buy what we need. Maybe a little of
some want but *do not* splurge. We're
still not rich.

The crew acknowledges and take off in their respective directions.

Zauric, on the other hand, is stopped by Isaac.

ISAAC

Whoa there. Where are you going?

ZAURIC

I thought I was accompanying Siren.

ISAAC

Not right now, you're not. You've done your bit for the crew by leading us to a safe harbor, but Zorin wants to have a word with you before we let you wander off.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - ENGINEERING

The heart of the Avalon is unusually busy. The warp sphere is inert at the moment, crewmen rush from one end to another, and the sounds of work fill the air. Our view goes to Carlise, who's climbed up on a ladder and fixing a panel of circuitry high up on the wall. Barely muttered profanities are spoken under her breath. We see Thomas Hatch is standing at the foot of her ladder. She takes notice.

CARLISE

Hatchy boy. I didn't want to climb back down, can you toss me a coupler?

Hatch just stares at Carlise for a moment. He looks down at the toolbox on the ground. He picks up a random tool.

HATCH

This a coupler?

CARLISE

No, that's a thermal binder. A coupler has the two twisty things with a bar connecting them.

HATCH

Ohh...

Hatch seems unusually absent minded. He picks up the appropriate tool and throws it upward. Carlise picks it from the air and smiles.

CARLISE

Thanks.

Hatch goes to looking at the warp sphere. He seems transfixed on the device for a short period of time.

HATCH
Carlise, where are the dueterium
tanks for the core?

Carlise wears confusion on her face.

CARLISE
What the hell? The "what" tanks?
(thinking)
You mean the brown canister things?

Hatch nods. She's still perplexed at Hatch's behavior.

CARLISE(CONT'D)
We have to climb into a service
tube under the deck. You've helped
me with that dozens of times.

HATCH
Yeah, I know. I just... um...
wanted to make sure we were doing
it right.

Carlise rolls her eyes and climbs down the ladder.

CARLISE
Okay Hatch. Enough of this. You've
been on this ship for too damn long.
We're going out into the city and
we're going to unwind for a bit.

HATCH
Unwind?

CARLISE
(serious)
Yes Hatch. Unwind. You're acting
like a brain dead wierdo. Let's go
before someone wants me to help
them with something.

Carlise grabs Hatch's arm and leads him to the exit.

CUT TO:

INT. BASE CITY - STREET

Looking directly up, we see rather large dark steel
buildings towering up to a clear dome. The buildings
themselves are a brownish metal and are very close together.
We pan down to get a good look of the street as a whole. To
call it a street would be inaccurate as it's merely a wide
walkway roughly 15 to 20 feet across.

People struggle to get past each other and the sounds of chatter, shouts, crying, laughing, and material clanks form a full, yet cold sonic landscape.

Siren, Isaac, and Adele walk into our view. As they walk, they continuously weave in and out between people.

ADELE

(to Isaac)

It just doesn't make any sense.

ISAAC

It doesn't have to Adele. We've got money, we can afford to buy the things we need on the ship. Why does it matter where the money came from?

ADELE

I will not use the money if it was obtained through ill means. It's not morally right.

ISAAC

I don't think that now, in our time of need, we need to dwell too long on morals. In this case, the ends completely justify the means. No one was killed obtaining this money... at least no one that didn't deserve it.

Adele is serious in her expression.

ADELE

Isaac...

ISAAC

Listen, we have...

Their voices trail off as we slowly pull back to see Siren standing in the middle of the street. Her hand is on her stomach and seems to be utterly lost in her own mind. She then realizes that Adele and Isaac have proceeded without her and have disappeared into the crowd. She starts walking again, clearly trying to catch up.

Her walk gives way to a light jog as her eyes scan the busy street for a familiar face. We do not see either crew mate in the waves of pedestrians.

Suddenly, her eyes fix on something near a building. Children.

Sitting in nothing more than rags, children on different ethnicities, races, genders, and stature are lined up against the building. None appear to be older than 12 and they look scrawny enough that their bones are predominantly showing. They hold their hands out to passers-by, their expressions locked in an eternal sadness.

Siren's eyes are then focused on a bald girl, clearly Deltan, in just as bad shape as the others. Siren then looks across the street from the girl and other children to see two men. Both men appear to be looking at the very Deltan girl with hideous intent in their eyes. One man brings out a wad of cash to the other, the other nods.

Too much for Siren, she turns away and covers her mouth in fear. She stumbles to the street corner and leans against a building, her eyes now starting to shed tears of sorrow. Picking up all the courage she has, she looks over again.

Both the Deltan child and two men are gone.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - ZORIN'S QUARTERS

Outside the window in Zorin's room we can see the circular landing pads of the harbor. Looking out through the window is the Captain himself. He's still shirtless and bandaged, still recovering and leaning his arm against the wall. There is a knock at the door.

ZORIN

Come in.

The door opens. It's Zauric.

ZAURIC

Your doctor said you wanted to speak with me.

The Hirogen doesn't turn from the window.

ZORIN

You the Cultist?

ZAURIC

No.

(pause)

Well, I guess it depends on who you're talking to on this ship. I used to be.

ZORIN

Turn your red robes in for something a little less bloody?

ZAURIC

You could say that. I'm much like Adele in that sense, the violence carried out in His name was more than I could stomach.

Zorin turns to the former Cultist.

ZORIN

It's good that you're straight forward.

ZAURIC

It's a trait I've had to learn.

ZORIN

Have you learned honesty?

There's a slight tension when this question enters the conversation.

ZAURIC

You believe me to be lying?

ZORIN

I believe you to be holding something back. We all hold something back; it could be good, could be bad. It doesn't matter as much as you might think but what does matter is the act of withholding true intentions. It's the exact opposite of building trust when you lie.

Zauric is like a statue as Zorin starts to pace.

ZAURIC

Very stirring Mr. Zorin. A lesson to us all, but what gives you the impression that I'm lying?

ZORIN

I deal with liars day in and day out all my life. In particular, I deal with Siren.

ZAURIC

My sister is a liar?

ZORIN

She's always got things on her mind that she doesn't speak of, and I've learned to recognize it. I respect her privacy because we've built a trust between us and I know she wants her privacy. You, on the other hand, are not nearly as trustworthy and you exhibit many of the same signs of deception as your "sister". You and I don't have a trust, what's keeping me from following through with Isaac's suggestion of tossing you out the airlock?

ZAURIC

Okay, so you think I'm a liar. What do you want me to say? Confess that I'm a Cult spy here to take you all down from the inside? Say that I'm a lone pirate taking advantage of people's trust for spare parts and moldy bread? How will that help me in anyway? I've got no home anymore. No faith, no family, and no one to lean on. I don't ask for your sympathy, but I certainly ask for a chance to prove myself and pick the pieces of my life up.

ZORIN

And I'm to put my crew at risk so you can have your second chance?

ZAURIC

The secrets I hold, that you're so intuitive to see, are ones I won't dare divulge to you or you're crew without fear of consequences.

ZORIN

In that case, you better start talking or there will be harsher consequences due to your silence.

ZAURIC

There are people in this city who may want you dead.

Zorin is flustered, perhaps fighting off an unseen anger.

ZORIN

You brought us to an unsafe harbor?

ZAURIC

What other choice did we have? I saw no alternative because we were in such bad shape. These people won't bother you unless you seek them out.s

Zorin remains steadfast in his anger. He gets close to Pau'Zauric.

ZORIN

You will not leave this ship for as long as we're here. You will stay confined to whatever room you're staying in. If you so much look out the window, I'll have your ass.

CUT TO:

INT. BASE CITY - SHOP

The shop is very quaint, very small, and very full of items and trinkets for sale. They are strewn across shelves and tables. Two vendors are manning the store while Hatch and Carlise browse through the seemingly useless junk. Carlise sees something which catches her eye.

She smiles and picks up a cylindrical tube made of glass. Inside it, we can see a silver tube and hundreds of little lights floating in it.

CARLISE

Check it out Hatch. I've always wanted another one of these.

HATCH

What is it?

CARLISE

They call it a "chroniton keep". Most people use it as a night light for kids or larger versions for clubs, but it shines a really pretty light into the room when the lights are down.

HATCH

Why's it called a chroniton keep?

CARLISE

Well, if you break the glass and let the chronitons out, you might have a brief encounter with your past self. Trust me on that, I'm about five seconds older than I should be.

She sets the keep down and continues to look around.

Hatch mosies around the shop for a short time before he greets one of the shopkeepers, a dark haired woman of middle age.

SHOPKEEP

Can I help you?

HATCH

What kind of parts do you have for ships?

SHOPKEEP

Only trinkets, nothing bigger than coils. They're in the back.

HATCH

Do you have any S-EMP emitters?

SHOPKEEP

We got a few.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - ADELE'S QUARTERS

We see Adele's quarters haven't been touched since we last saw it, the Cult left the place alone. Adele stumbles in carrying a stack of rather large books. She throws them onto her bed and recovers from a mild workout.

AVA

Adele, what's this?

ADELE

Books.

AVA

B... books?

ADELE

Yeah. They hold information not unlike your computer core.

AVA

Then why aren't they made of silicon or burodium?

ADELE

Well, they're not exactly like a computer core. You open them up and read the words.

AVA

Oohh... I think I see.

Adele seems to be amused by Ava's quaintness.

AVA (CONT'D)

What are the books about?

Adele starts to forage through them.

ADELE

Prophecy.

AVA

I thought you knew all the prophecies by heart.

ADELE

Cult prophecies, yes. These are prophecies of races and ages past. Ones of them is an ancient Romulan text, another is Milosian, others are Deltan, Bajoran, Trill, Spiran, and this one in particular: Terran. I read it at the shop and noticed amazing parallels to Cult prophecy and prophecies of the other races. Many of them describe similar events but through different interpretations.

AVA

What, do you think there might be a connection between all these prophets and the prophet guy from the Cult?

ADELE

I don't know yet. I'm gonna try and put the pieces together -- assuming there are pieces to work with.

(reading a book)

This prophecy especially caught my eye.

(MORE)

ADELE (CONT'D)

It tells of the rise of a great power and how it's thwarted by the child of an enslaved mother and demonic father.

AVA

Ouch.

ADELE

In all these instances, and in Cult canon, they're accompanied by a trickster. In Earth mythology, his name is Loki, the assassin of virtue. What's so intriguing about these stories are how similar they are once you take a step back and compare them.

AVA

What does that mean?

ADELE

I don't know. It could mean absolutely nothing. However, it might be possible that whatever source of knowledge the Prophet tapped into might be the same source as the prophets of other civilizations.

(a beat of concern)

If that's true, I can't imagine the new prophecies we could unearth and interpret. It could mean there's something larger out there than any one religion can perceive.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE - DOCK

The dock is as it was earlier. Standing on the dock is Zorin, finally out and about. With him is Isaac and Ridek. Ridek is holding a padd and reading over it.

RIDEK

(mid-sentence)

...and their engineers were gracious enough to throw in a new power relay for the busted one on deck 2 for the low-low price of 150 dcs.

ZORIN
150 dcs?! Why's you have them do that?

RIDEK
Well, they kinda installed it
without my or Azel's knowledge and
expected us to pay up. Not to
mention they expected our gratitude.

ISAAC
Sneaky bastards.

RIDEK
But the bottom line to this is that
Ava's pretty much back to her
normal self and we can haul anchor
anytime.

ZORIN
I'd prefer that time to be now. Is
everyone onboard?

RIDEK
We told them all to be back an hour
ago. They should be back.

The three up the Avalon's ramp.

INT. AVALON - SHUTTLEBAY

They walk into the shuttlebay.

ZORIN
Ava, are all hands present and
accounted for?

AVA
(unsure)
Well... yeah.

ZORIN
What's wrong?

AVA
Well, if you mean "is the crew of
the Avalon onboard", then yes. If
you mean "is everyone onboard that
was onboard when we arrived", then no.

ZORIN
Who's missing?

AVA
That guy behind you.

Zorin turns to see Pau'Zauric walking up the shuttlebay ramp. Almost in a fit of fury, Zorin lunges at the Deltan male and tosses him to the ground!

ZORIN
What in the hell do you think
you're doing?

ZAURIC
(struggling)
Returning!

ZORIN
I can see that! I told you not to
leave the ship!

ZAURIC
There was business I had to attend
to that doesn't concern you.

ZORIN
When a Cultist in on my ship, when
that Cultist takes us to a
potentially unsafe harbor, then
it's my business!

ZAURIC
You have no right.

Isaac comes up on the debacle.

ISAAC
Zorin has every right to have you
pinned on the ground Red. Who's to
say you weren't selling us out to...

ZAURIC
I'm not selling anyone out!

ZORIN
How do we know that?!

ZAURIC
(desperate)
You don't! Okay? You don't, but
your near-empathic sense of
judgment should look into my eyes
and know that I'm not lying!

Zorin seems to stew on his words, maybe even heeding them. He lets Zauric go and stands up. Isaac rushes to Zorin's side.

ISAAC
 Zorin, don't do it! Leave him here.
 Don't give him the chance to betray us.

ZAURIC
 I will not betray you.

Zauric doesn't move from his spot on the ground; Zorin thinks.

ZORIN
 (to Zauric, coldly)
 Get on board.

Pau'Zauric follows the command as Isaac's face turns red.

ISAAC
 Why the hell didn't you leave his
 ass here?!

ZORIN
 (calming down)
 Don't tell me how to run my ship Isaac.

ISAAC
 I'm not telling you...
 (furious)
 I'm STATING THE FUCKING OBVIOUS!

Isaac throws a padd across the room in rage. He's practically steaming. Zorin seems unphased at Isaac's outburst.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
 He's up to something and you know
 it! I don't care about your sixth
 sense about people or your so-
 called compassion. He disobeyed a
 critical order and he doesn't need
 to be on this ship!

A moment of pure intensity as several Avalon crewmembers watch on. Zorin is still motionless.

Without a word, Zorin ignores Isaac completely and walks off. At this, an unseen leviathan of anger boils within the medic.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE

We see the Avalon take to the yellow sky and dart into space. Her wounds are healed and the mood cools.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - LAVATORY

The never-before-seen room of Avalon opens before us. There are a row of toilet cubicles in a long, narrow hall. At the end of the hall is a wider area with a row of sinks and a large mirror which is slightly cracked at various points. Standing in front of the mirror is Zorin, shirtless and covered in bandages. Also with him is Azel, his face covered with shaving cream. Zorin tends to his wounds as Azel shaves.

AZEL

I can't say I disagree with him. Isaac certainly isn't the most trusting man onboard, but he had a valid point about Pau'Zauric. He disobeyed a very important order and who's to say he isn't a Cult agent? I know you didn't detect any deceit in his eyes, but it isn't deceit if you don't know you're a sleeper agent.

ZORIN

Isaac had a point, you're right. Unfortunately, one thing was barring me from tossing Zauric onto the dock and leaving him: Faith.

Azel is completely lost.

AZEL

I thought you don't believe in faith.

ZORIN

I don't. But you can disbelieve a great number of things and still be haunted by its presence. We've been through a lot in this past year; a year comparable to hell. The consequences which arise from that year of perdition is the desire to succumb to your instincts and your faith. Feeling completely helpless to make the situation better and falling back onto the feral instincts and unabiding faiths.

(a beat)

Unfortunately, I succumbed. I had faith in Zauric that he's not a Cult agent and let that drive my decision to let him remain onboard.

Azel is irked.

AZEL

So, do you regret your decision?

ZORIN

I try not to regret anything. Live with them, deal with them, and move on.

AZEL

Well, do you think you may have made a decision you'll have to deal with?

ZORIN

I'm sure of it.

A moment of silence.

AZEL

I've never seen someone so against faith.

ZORIN

Faith and instinct are two words which simply mean "to not think". If you have faith in something wrong or have an instinct which can be tricked, then the consequences can be disastrous. Hirogen hunting methods teach us this from childhood.

AZEL

I don't know if I agree. If it wasn't for those two things, I don't know if Shera and I would be alive. We held out the belief that we'd find a place to lay low from the Cult. We had the instinct to force Hatch to get us onboard. Look at what faith got us.

ZORIN

Maybe. Maybe it worked out for you. But it was always your will, determination, and your mind which culled you away from death.

Azel wipes the remaining shaving cream from his face.

AZEL

Maybe.

Suddenly, Ava beeps.

AVA
 (distressed)
 Zorin! Get to Siren's quarters now!
 Hurry!

ZORIN
 What is it?

AVA
 Zorin, just go!

The two gives each other nervous glances and rush out of the lavatory.

INT. AVALON - SIREN'S QUARTERS

The door to Siren's quarters is wide open as Zorin and Azel sprint in.

Within her quarters, we see Pau'Zauric wrestling with Siren on the ground. Siren is in tears, crying for Zauric to unhand her but he won't. She kicks and shouts.

Zorin runs and grabs Pau'Zauric, pulling him away from Siren.

ZORIN
 What the hell are you doing?!

ZAURIC
 She's lost it Zorin! She was trying...

ZORIN
 What the hell were you doing to her?!

ZAURIC
 I was trying to save her life! Her life and her child's! Look!

Zauric points to a large knife on the floor. Siren, amidst the chaos of the scene, is huddling with her pregnant belly in tears.

ZAURIC (CONT'D)
 She was going to kill herself Zorin.
 For God's sake, I couldn't let her do it!

Zorin lets Zauric go as this new evidence comes to light. On this, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. AVALON - SICKBAY

Siren. She sits on a medbed with her face, hair, cloths, and overall appearance in complete disarray. She looks like an uncouth melding of anger, pain, sadness, and madness. Isaac is holding a scanner to her stomach as Zorin, Pau'Zauric, and Adele are gathered around. It almost appears that she's on trial.

ISAAC

Well, the thing's alive. Can't say what state it's in with this equipment but it looks fine. But I can't imagine what the stress of all this is doing to it. Why the hell would you try such a thing Siren? To deny a life the chance to...

ZORIN

(loudly)

Isaac! Not now.

Isaac sends him an evil glare and walks away. A tense beat passes.

SIREN

It was the only way.

ZORIN

The only way to solve your problems is to murder yourself?

SIREN

The only way to escape. My problems onboard this ship are inconsequential. I don't care that I'm stuck on a ship that's on the Cult's most wanted list. I don't care that the universe seems to grow more decadent by the day. What I care about is my slavery. Mentally and physically, I'm still His slave.

ADELE

Is that why you're so determined to end this child's life? Because of what it represents? A ghost from your time as a servant?

SIREN

If I let this child be born, I'll be allowing the travesty of my slavery and the bonds of all slaves to remain.

Zorin scoffs and rolls his eyes.

ZORIN

Since when did you start believing in that symbolic tripe?

SIREN

It's not symbolic. It's perfectly real. When we were docked at the base...

Siren truly struggles with her words.

SIREN(CONT'D)

I saw a little girl. She was begging with a group of other children for anything that could be spared. Just skin and bones, asking for a fraction of what most people call change. Then, two men took her in the middle of the street, in the middle of the day, with people all around. Sooner or later, those other children and this one in me will come face to face with that evil. If I let it be born, it will forever stand for that evil and it will add to it. To let her be born without knowing a world of peace or happiness is unacceptable; to be born from a world of pain and slavery *into* a world of pain and slavery.

The others are silent.

ADELE

Zorin, can I speak with you for a moment?

Zorin follows Adele to a secluded spot.

ZORIN

Don't tell me that you, of all people, are siding with her.

ADELE

I prefer to remain as impartial as possible regarding her decision. But I should acknowledge that there are significant emotional tides flowing within her that shouldn't be disregarded. You may easily toss aside those emotions within yourself, but her words are very true to her.

ZORIN

I know.

ADELE

But I should also point out something else. The man who raped her was a Nausicaan, a race who's genetic makeup may prove fatal for Siren if she does proceed with the birth. Isaac said he doesn't have the equipment on board to scan the child well enough to see if it's a threat to her well-being or not.

ZORIN

Her child could kill her? Does she know that?

ADELE

I think she might.

We do not linger on their conversation as we cut back to Siren and Pau'Zauric. She doesn't seem to acknowledge his presence for a while.

SIREN

If you're going to repeat the same thing Isaac and Zorin said, you might as well leave. I've heard enough.

ZAURIC

Not at all. Personally, I think it's your decision to end the pregnancy or not.

SIREN

Yet you're the one who kept me from doing just that.

ZAURIC

You were going to kill yourself,
not just the kid. How could I let
you do that?

Siren is spiteful at his explanation.

ZAURIC (CONT'D)

Do you hate me Siren?

SIREN

(indifferent)

Why would you think that?

ZAURIC

For one, I've never heard you truly
speak to me as family.

SIREN

(defensive)

I don't know you, no matter what
bloodline we share. I have no
reason to love you. You don't even
remember my real name!

(a pause)

You're just a fucking Red trying to
screw everything up.

ZAURIC

I don't ask for your love. In fact,
I'd prefer you not to grow too
attached. However, I don't think I
should be despised for being a
former Cultist.

Silence from Siren.

ZAURIC (CONT'D)

That's the haunting which sticks
with me no matter where I go. The
Confederates saw me as an inferior
Deltan meant to be sold off for
money. Those Who Walk in the Light
saw me as a Confederate abomination.
You all see me as a double crossing
reptile. It's why I prefer to
remain outside the circles of
sentient life forms. They'll only
judge you and cast you aside.

Siren seems to follow his words.

SIREN

Look at who you're talking to. The only ones who never looked at me as property are the people onboard this ship. No one's here to judge me on what I represented. That's how people should live.

Zauric conjures up a thought.

ZAURIC

Maybe that's why they want you to keep your child? Maybe the same courtesy should be extended to your baby? To not be judged and cast aside for what it represents?

She acknowledges Zauric with reluctance, as she can't escape the reality of his words.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

SHERA

I'd definitely say it was the winters. I know that everyone else loves summer, but winter on Duranon was so majestic and beautiful. With rolling white hills extending to the horizon to meet the blue and gray sky. Anytime I picture that in my mind, I'm always reminded of mother making us cups of steamy *kollo*.

(reminiscing)

I can smell it now. That was definitely the best part of Duranon.

On the bridge, Shera sits alone with Ridek at the forward stations.

RIDEK

Sounds nice. Xantoras didn't have winters. Nowhere except the poles.

SHERA

Are you...

(struggling with her words)

Are you, at all, bitter about what the Cult did to your planet? I mean, I know you hated where you grew up, but isn't there the least bit of anger in you over the matter?

RIDEK

No. Why should I be? My "family" hated me. So did everyone else. The government looked down on Trill, treated us like filth. Even gangs with Trill members hunted Trill. I have zero remorse.

(pause)

Fuck 'em.

SHERA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bring up bad memories.

RIDEK

You didn't. You asked a simple question anybody would have. I brought up the bad memories. That's what makes me different from someone who had a bad life like Isaac, he had people who cared for him where he's from, I didn't. Maybe it's for the better though. At least I don't have a constant racism guiding my every motive.

SHERA

Maybe. In more ways than what Isaac has shown, I know the horrors of discriminate people. But then again, not having anyone to care for you gets kind of lonely.

RIDEK

Certainly lonely.

A long pause.

SHERA

Did you ever have anybody? Someone who was more than just a friend?

Ridek scans his memories, almost like that part of his life hasn't been probed in a long time.

RIDEK

No. Never had the chance I guess. Came close a few times, but they didn't seem to want to take it seriously.

SHERA

Did you want to take it seriously?

Ridek seems to be approaching uncomfortableness.

RIDEK

Sure. But it's mostly the woman who controls the fate of a relationship, at least in my experience.

(a beat)

What about you?

SHERA

No. I never had the opportunity. I left my planet when I was too young to think about such things and the rest of my life was spent with my cousin.

RIDEK

Well, some culture endorse that kind of family love.

Shera looks at Ridek in a combination of horror and humor. She hits him on the arm with a weak laugh.

SHERA

Don't be gross.

Ridek shares in a mild chuckle when Ava beeps in.

AVA

Hey, if you two would stop flirting for a minute, I need you...

SHERA

(quickly)

What? We're not 'flirting'!

RIDEK

Yeah, what the hell Ava?

AVA

Ugh, whatever. I need to to take a look at the sensors. Aft quadrant.

They do so, shifting to all business. They seem to witness something on the scans to induce worry.

RIDEK

What is it?

AVA

I don't know. Doesn't look good though.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - GALLEY

In the galley, we see Pau'Zauric sitting alone with a bowl of blue soup. He simply sits in front of it, possibly afraid to try the food. The door opens and he's joined by Hatch.

HATCH

Oh. It's you.

Zauric doesn't respond. Hatch goes into the pantry and ruffles around for a bit. He comes out with a pastry, a pastry he gives odd glances to as if he'd never seen one before.

ZAURIC

How'd they treat you?

HATCH

Who?

ZAURIC

The Holy Ones.

HATCH

What can I say? After a year of Cult hospitality, you start to get used to it.

Hatch takes a bite from the pastry. Contrary to past enjoyment of the food, he now looks rather disgusted with the food and throws it away.

ZAURIC

Were you hurt?

HATCH

A few times. It was for the best though.

ZAURIC

What about the ship. Sovari's battle cruiser Hringhorni. What was that like? Scary?

HATCH

Um... I wasn't on any Cult ship.

Zauric seems to come to that same conclusion.

ZAURIC

Oh, that's right. You wouldn't remember.

Suddenly, a beeping is heard.

AVA
 Hey everybody. Get to your
 positions, we're being followed!

Ava's cautionary announcement sends a smile across Zauric's face as he gets up and runs out of the galley. Hatch takes Zauric's place at the table and starts to sip the blue soup. This he likes.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

An almost forgotten sight, Zorin strides onto the bridge with confidence.

ZORIN
 Give me the situation.

Ridek, Shera, and Carlise are present.

RIDEK
 Ava saw it first. Whatever or
 whoever it is, it's been following
 us for a couple of light years.

ZORIN
 No ID?

RIDEK
 Negativo.

ZORIN
 Carlise, did we pick up any new
 muscle at the base?

CARLISE
 Bet your scaly ass we did.

ZORIN
 Good. Ready to drop out of warp and
 turn about. Prepare to fire at my
 command.

Carlise rushes to another console to do this.

SHERA
 Zorin, what if they aren't hostile?

ZORIN
 Then they wouldn't be following us.
 Can you get me anything on that ship?

SHERA
 Um, not much else. It's about the
 same size as Avalon. That's about it.

ZORIN
 An equal opponent.
 (a beat)
 Shera, take us out.

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon streaks from nowhere into space. She quickly turns her whole body around and faces the approaching enemy.

Moments later, another ship drops out of warp. It's a very boxy, brown, and dirty looking ship. We can barely make out a yellow insignia on the hull indicating affiliation.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Zorin is now in his chair.

SHERA
 They're following us alright. No weapons are powered up that I can see, but they are armed.

RIDEK
 Who are they?

ZORIN
 Not us. Which gives us every right to blow them to pieces. Get ready to fire. Ava, send them a message. "Depart now or face a few dozen missiles."

AVA
 Sent.

A tense moment of nothingness.

ZORIN
 Anything?

AVA
 Nada. They got your warning Zorin.

SHERA
 Hey, I'm picking something up on sensors. An energy surge.

ZORIN
 I'm not waiting to find out what it is. Fire the missiles.

Carlise nods and fires.

EXT. SPACE

A half-dozen missiles fly from the Avalon's launchers.

Before they reach the halfway point between the Avalon and the mystery ship, their path becomes extremely erratic. They veer off into black space, never to be seen again.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

ZORIN

What the hell?

RIDEK

What kind of ship has the ability to knock out our rockets like that?

Ava beeps loudly.

AVA

Zorin! I just detected three energy spikes within the Avalon.

ZORIN

What is it?!

AVA

Oh my god. A transporter. They transported three people off!

Shera recognizes Ava's description.

SHERA

Only one group left in this whole galaxy still has transportation technology.

ZORIN

Carlise, fire at will! Ava, who'd they take?

AVA

Your friend Pau'Zauric... Siren... and Adele.

ZORIN

Damn it. Take them out!

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon fires it's missiles and other projectile weapons at the invading ship. It seems to be of no use.

The mystery ship launches into warp.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

They see the ship leave.

ZORIN
Pursuit course!

SHERA
On it!

Suddenly, the ship is rocked and rattles by a distant explosion! The lights go out completely, then return several seconds later.

ZORIN
What now?!

Ridek chaotically searches the console.

RIDEK
What the hell? An energy pulse from main engineering. An S-EMP device was set off!

ZORIN
We don't have any S-EMP devices onboard! Where does that leave us?

A short silence.

RIDEK
Dead in the water.

Zorin stands up. He seems completely calm and cool under the news that the Avalon is dead in space... until he twists around and pulls the captain's chair from the deck and tosses it into the wall!

EXT. SPACE

Slowly and methodically, we pan away from the Avalon stuck in the vastness of space.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. MYSTERIOUS SHIP - MEDICAL BAY

The medical bay of this ship matches the exterior and our expectations. It's very dark and we can see a few black-clad practitioners milling about the rusty looking room. We pan over to see Siren laying on a table, on her side, and donning large silver rings on her neck and arms. She's in clothes which fully expose her belly.

A PRACTITIONER hovers over Siren and uses a hand scanner over her stomach, obviously scanning the child. Siren's eyes creep open. Despite our expectations, she doesn't attack but simply lays. When the practitioner departs, she sits upright.

VOICE(O.S.)

Here she is.

A woman's voice echoes in the steely room. Siren looks over to see a woman of asian decent standing near her bed. She is adorned in brown leather and dark hair. Beyond this, she's an unremarkable woman. This is the CAPTAIN.

SIREN

Who are you?

CAPTAIN

I'm the commander of the ship you're on and a crusader in my own right.

SIREN

Crusader? Are you Cult?

CAPTAIN

(with a laugh)

No, no. Just the opposite in fact.

SIREN

What do you want with me?

CAPTAIN

Funny enough, exactly what the Cult want from you. That little bundle of joy in your stomach.

SIREN

If you're not Cult, what do you want with it?

She laughs again and paces.

CAPTAIN

The Cult have a very interesting view of the universe. Specifically, they aren't a religion per se because of the truthfulness in their teachings. In fact, their teachings are followed by those who aren't Cultists. The Prophet's foretellings are especially subject, since they have all come true in some fashion or another. What we're interested in is his First Prophecy and you're child. You see, that child, as you may know, will bring the end of the Cult. I'm here to see that happens.

Siren doesn't know what to make of this.

CAPTAIN(CONT'D)

In our hands, and not theirs, we'll ensure their downfall.

SIREN

I should expect this from people like you. Confederates.

She smiles yet again at her.

CAPTAIN

Right on the nose.

SIREN

How did you find me? How did I get here?

CAPTAIN

Oh, we have a mutual friend.

From the shadows, Pau'Zauric steps out.

Siren, finally bursting forth like a dam, lurches toward her brother! The Captain then holds up a remote control and Siren falls to the ground as the metal collars on her begin to shock her. She writhes on the floor for a moment.

CAPTAIN(CONT'D)

I'd sit back down on the bed if I were you Siren. I'd hate if that bun in the oven were to get burned.

Siren stares a hole through Zauric, with spite we haven't seen since... since...

SIREN

(to Zauric)

How could you? You fucking traitor. All this time, I was starting to trust you. Starting to realize the good and that people can change.

(approaching tears)

And it was all a lie?

CAPTAIN

News flash little girl. We lie. We're the Trickster. To get what we want we lie, cheat, and swindle. You see, Zauric here was one of our greatest achievements. He led the way to creating the Cerebrum, which is a chip we put into people to resist Cult conversion. It's pretty much in our entire civilization nowadays. We managed to fool even the most powerful organization this galaxy has ever seen. The Cult believed they had converted Pau'Zauric, and they did for a short time. But about a year and a half ago, his Cerebrum came back and realized where his true faith lies. With us, the Confederates. He found his way back to us and told us the Tale of the Omega. Intrigued, we told Zauric to save you from the Cult and bring you to the City Base you recently visited. There, he contacted us and gave us all the info.

SIREN

(to Zauric)

They were right. You were an agent. This whole time.

CAPTAIN

I heard you tried to kill yourself. Tsk tsk, that would've been bad for us, but Zauric managed to save his mission despite any other motivations he may have told you. From what I also hear, your medic almost busted the whole plan too. Good thing your captain was dumb enough to believe Zauric.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
 (an ungracious smile)
 But now, Zauric has come home to his true calling in life with a new weapon. We'll interrogate and maybe experiment on your Cult friend Ms. Tiernan and we'll all be happy as can be.

Siren, shedding tears, climbs back onto her bed. She doesn't look at two Confederates.

CAPTAIN(CONT'D)
 Well, this was fun. Siren, you better stay as placid as you are now, otherwise we'll have to induce an early labor and do away with you. Come Zauric. Let her be.

The Captain walks away, but Zauric remains for a moment. He eyes Siren's huffing body, then leaves.

ADELE(V.O.)
 Siren...

The voice is almost distant, but Siren turns to see Adele in another bed. Adele certainly seems sedated but she's fighting it.

ADELE(CONT'D)
 Siren, it's going to be alright. Just hang in there.

Siren almost brushes the words aside.

ADELE(CONT'D)
 Be strong.

It's almost undetectable, but Siren gives Adele the slightest of nods.

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS SHIP - BRIDGE

The bridge is only slightly bigger than Avalon's and resembles the medical bay in many ways. It's manned by four crewmen when the Captain and Zauric walk in. The Captain keeps the ever-constant grin on her face while Zauric remains emotionless.

CAPTAIN

This really is a great day. Lesser plans have failed due to their complexity yet ours succeeded in all the right ways. Tell me Zauric, what was the Cult like?

ZAURIC

It was...

He can't scrounge up the words. A long moment as the Captain waits for a response. It doesn't come.

CAPTAIN

No matter. What does matter is our success. You're in need of a reward. I have something for you.

She goes to one end of the bridge and returns with a device no bigger than a pack of gum.

ZAURIC

(re: the device)

Dream Sequencer?

She nods.

CAPTAIN

Any fantasy you want. Put it on and let the grand illusion of your mind take you to Heaven's shores.

Zauric pick up the device. The Captain pats him on the back and walks off, leaving us with a concerned image of Pau'Zauric.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHORE - TWILIGHT

The evening setting of a white-sanded beach, the orange/red sun setting on blue water, and a starry night overtaking the blue sky is serene in every facet of the word's meaning. Standing on the beach is Zauric. Standing with him is a red clothed man. We slowly pan up on the two to see Zauric is with none other than ROL'GIN. He looks as we remembered him, but much more at peace.

ROL'GIN

Is this heaven?

ZAURIC

For me.

ROL'GIN

I would think for anyone. Certainly
is for me.

ZAURIC

But Those Who Walk in the Light
don't believe in heaven. Life ends
with the ceasing of the heart and mind.

Rol'Gin smiles.

ROL'GIN

Maybe so, but we do live on. In
others. In their memories. And I'm
am a memory. And I am in heaven...
as long as you'll have me.

Zauric shares the smile.

ZAURIC

You belong. You belong here because
of what you did.

ROL'GIN

What I did?

ZAURIC

You saved the Avalon crewmates on
Prime. Believed in non-violence and
the Prophet despite going against
orthodox doctrine. You faced the
Penultimate and gave your life for
what you believed in. You deserve
heaven. Much more than I do.

(a sad beat)

I sold out the one man who I felt I
connected best with because at the
time I didn't know where my
loyalties were. Then I tricked my
only blood relative left alive into
a death not fit for the lowest of
animals. On top of it all, I don't
know what my faith is. I feel like
I'm already in hell. Why do I
deserve any of this?

The two stand silent for a moment. Zauric looks up to see a
couple of birds flying towards the fleeting sun. Rol'Gin
notices the birds too.

ROL'GIN

Whether you believe in a god or divine spirit or a master at foretelling the events of tomorrow, there will always be forgiveness. Faith in general is flawed because the wrong belief can be your downfall. To believe something as evil is subjective, but there is always forgiveness. Forgive yourself. Free yourself and move on to a better life. And if you don't know where your loyalties lie, then follow the only true faith: your heart and mind.

Pau'Zauric truly takes this to heart as he embraces Rol'Gin in a hug.

ZAURIC

I'm sorry.

Just then, the sun on the horizon gradually grows brighter... and brighter... and brighter to a blinding light.

ZAURIC (CONT'D)

(slightly scared)

What's going on? What is this?

ROL'GIN

Forgiveness. Freedom.

The light overtakes all...

INT. MYSTERIOUS SHIP - ROOM

Zauric snaps his eyes awake as the device attached to his head starts to spark! He yells in pain and pulls the thing off his forehead and throws it to the ground. The device known as the Dream Sequencer explodes in a shower that would've killed any user wearing it.

Zauric lays in a bed in a dark room. Starlight pours in on the sweating man. We see that thin lines of blood are seeping from Pau'Zauric's eyes, nose, and ears. He feels his blood.

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS SHIP - BRIDGE

On the bridge, the Captain is leaning on her chair. She is no longer wearing a smile but a scowl as she's joined by the medical Practitioner.

PRACTITIONER

Siren is fully awake and aware now.
Her child's alive and well.

CAPTAIN

That's good to hear.

Her mood is much less cheery, much darker than before.

PRACTITIONER

What of Pau'Zauric?

CAPTAIN

I was ordered to kill him. I gave
him the rigged Dream Sequencer
which would've overloaded his
Cerebrum and blown his head off.
He's dead now.

Suddenly, a beeping is heard. The forward viewscreen flashes on to show a tactical map of the area around them. We see a blip rapidly coming up on their ship.

CAPTAIN

What is that?

The blip hits their ship and the whole bridge jolts as the sound of an explosion is heard!

EXT. SPACE

The mysterious ship drops out of warp with a nacelle trailing gas.

Following behind the ship is the one and only Avalon! Our ship fires several more shots and hits the supposed Confederate ship point-blank.

INT. MYSTERIOUS SHIP - MEDICAL BAY

In the medical bay, Siren is being probed by a doctor when the ship is attacked. Siren is clamped to the table now, unable to move. The doctor, upon realizing the ship is under attack, puts his equipment down and walks away...

Until Pau'Zauric stabs the doctors in the heart. The doctor falls to the ground and Zauric grabs the collar remote from his equipment. He presses a button and the collars unlock from Siren. She's free.

Zauric moves and tries to help Siren up.

ZAURIC

Come on. We don't have much...

Siren suddenly pushes Zauric to the metal ground and grabs a medical knife, which she presses up against Zauric's spine. She looks ferocious.

SIREN
You cowardly fuck.

ZAURIC
Siren! It's me! I'm not... not
under their control anymore! You
have to believe...

SIREN
BELIEVE?! No sane person would
believe you again!

ZAURIC
Cerebrum, it's gone!

SIREN
You're a fucking liar!

ZAURIC
They... tried to kill me! Please!
Please... believe me!

Siren shakes her head. Zauric sounds truly fearful for his life.

ZAURIC (CONT'D)
Launal! Launal. That's your name.
Your real name is Launal.

Suddenly, Siren's eyes widen.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Siren is running through the woods, town ablaze behind her.

BOY (V.O.)
Launal! Where are you?!

We quickly see Pau'Zauric again as a young boy. He's calling to his sister.

INT. MYSTERIOUS SHIP - MEDICAL BAY

Quickly, Siren stands up and backs away. She covers her mouth at this revelation. Zauric is still down and sweating with fear. He manages to speak.

ZAURIC

It's a trigger in your mind. If I were to tell you your real name, you'd know it to be true. That's part of what He did to you. They told me not to tell you as part of my mission... because they were afraid I might remember my life too.

(a beat)

You're name is Launal.

Siren slides back onto the cold bed and cries.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Carlise jumps up in a hoot of joy.

CARLISE

Got another one! Right to her ass!
She's not going anywhere Zorin!

Zorin watches as the Avalon batters the mysterious ship.

ZORIN

She disabled enough to dock with her?

Shera checks her console.

SHERA

Barely. I suggest we make it submit a bit more.

ZORIN

Keep firing.

Suddenly, two pillars of swirling energy appear on the bridge. Siren and Adele have been transported back onboard! Adele is out, but Siren is wide awake.

SHERA

Siren! Adele!

Ridek and Zorin rush to their aid.

ZORIN

Siren! What's going on?

Siren doesn't answer immediately.

SIREN

Zauric. He was working for the Confederates.

ZORIN
 Figured that much. We're going to
 kill the mother...

SIREN
 He saved us though! He saved Adele
 and I. He didn't know...

Her voice trails off, as if her thoughts did the same. There
 is silence among all.

CARLISE
 Z. We have our girls back. We
 should blow them to hell now!

ZORIN
 (ignoring)
 Ava, get Isaac up here to take
 these two!

AVA
 Right.

CARLISE
 What about the Confederates, Zorin?

He takes a moment.

ZORIN
 Waste them.

SHERA
 Wanna waste them in a second?
 They're hailing us.
 (reads console)
 It's Pau'Zauric.

ZORIN
 Put it up.

The tiny viewscreen lights up to show his face. Zauric is
 obviously in the ship's engineering room.

ZAURIC
 Zorin. I'm glad I got to talk to
 you before...

ZORIN
 (loudly)
 Before we blow you to hell?

ZAURIC
 Before I save you the ammunition
 and do it for you.

Silence.

ZAURIC (CONT'D)

I've gotten to the warp core. I'm going to overload it. These people don't deserve to live any more than I do. For what I've done to you and yours, I'm sorry.

ZORIN

Now you're sorry?

ZAURIC

Yes, *now* I'm sorry, because now I'm able to be. Now I'm able to think for myself and realize how stupid and how much of a slave I was. Now I can realize that I don't need the faiths shoved upon me to live my life. All this time I didn't know what to believe in when I should've seen my true faith: my family. Those closest to me. I'll be dead and rid of soon enough. All I ask is that someday, you'll forgive me.

Zorin doesn't know what to make of this. Zauric sees Siren through the viewscreen.

ZAURIC (CONT'D)

Siren... Launal. I hope you can forgive me as well. But above all else, please forgive yourself. Forgive your past and the child inside you. We've all had things in our past which we hate, and you're entitled to hate me. Minutes ago, you hated me to the point of wanting me dead, but you forgave me for coming clean. You forgave me. Please, do so for your child.

Suddenly, an explosion is heard from behind Zauric. He stays for one final moment before cutting the communication.

On the viewscreen, we see the Confederate ship self-destruct.

Everyone is silent on the bridge. Isaac runs onto the bridge and goes to Siren and Adele. Everyone remains silent.

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon turns around and jumps to warp.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - SICKBAY

In sickbay, Isaac is looking over Siren and Adele. Zorin is with them. They all look much better overall, but remain somber in mood.

ISAAC

Those doctors on that ship didn't harm you much. That shock collar didn't really leave any marks. You, Adele, and the kid are fine.

SIREN

Thanks Isaac.

He takes off.

ZORIN

Tricksters.

Siren nods.

SIREN

They tried to kill him. But instead they knocked out his Cerebrum or whatever was controlling his faith in the Confeds.

ZORIN

Still, I refuse to believe this was all just a case of mind control.

SIREN

It wasn't. He truly believed in his deceit. He just didn't see how wrong it was until...

Zorin touches Siren's arm. He's affirming that everything's okay.

ZORIN

His words aren't gospel. The child in you... it's your decision.

SIREN

I know.

ZORIN

And you do know that there is still the possibility that it's birth may be hazardous to your life?

SIREN

I know. And, it'll probably end up looking like a little Nausicaan imp... But I can't let Zauric's words die so easily. I don't see it as a ghost of perdition anymore. It could be a new beginning. If I just forgive.

Zorin nods.

ZORIN

As long as you make a choice.

SIREN

That's my choice.

Silence. Siren lays down and places her hand on her stomach. Zorin does too for a moment. He then exits.

Adele is in another medbed.

ADELE

So, what is it? Siren or Launal?

Siren smiles toward Adele.

SIREN

It's still Siren. It will always be Siren.

The two are silent.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Zorin walks back onto the bridge. Shera is there with Ridek. Once again, the two appear to be 'flirting'.

Ava beeps in.

AVA

Zorin. I need to tell you something.

ZORIN

This isn't another one of your silicone woman jokes is it?

AVA
No. In fact, this is pretty serious.

ZORIN
What is it?

AVA
Do you remember Phoenix sending me
a message after his tussle with the
Cult saying that he'll be looking
for me?

ZORIN
Yeah.

AVA
Well, Mr. Zauric did something very
similar. Just before he blew the
ship up, he sent out a really brief
message.

ZORIN
What'd he say?

AVA
You're not going to like it.

Zorin braces himself for the bad news.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END