



"SHATTERED HEAVEN"

PART THREE

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FADE IN:

BLACK...

Until a faint speck of light emerges from nowhere. A red flame now glows before us as we see a dark hand has lit a candle. The red of the flame is almost unnatural; haunting as a shadowy figure slowly mills around behind the fire. We hear the distant sound of whispering.

VOICE

... fire of the Prophet, guide me
to the sanctity of your ethereal
protection...

We quickly change views to another candle, just being lit.

VOICE

Free the bonds of my minds anguish
and hold me to the light of your
power...

The figure in the back is clad in a silky red dress that flows as though it's nearly the weight of air. We also see that it's a woman...

We see her knees sit on the floor, her dark, slender hands rested on her lap, and the red of the room covering everything.

VOICE

May those who walk in the light
find their path again. I pray your
guidance has given way to corruption;
that corruptive minds have seized...

A loud BANG.

INT. TEMPLE ROOM

A white light floods the room, is stark contrast with the dimness of before. We see that there are two items in front of the woman: what looks like a framed picture and a book.

Three figures cast shadows on the woman.

VOICE

Please... Close the door.

The door does indeed close, almost without hesitation. We look up to see the woman's face and an approaching man behind her. This woman is ADELE TIERNAN. The man: SOVARI.

ADELE

Sovari. I was wondering when I'd see you again.

Sovari, a very large man with red and white attire that looks almost like body armor, raises his head and smiles.

SOVARI

You look forward to my visits?

ADELE

Yes, but "looking forward" doesn't necessarily mean "anticipating".

(a beat)

What answers do you seek of me now?

SOVARI

The same answers you seek.

ADELE

The same?

SOVARI

Why would fellow followers go so astray from the teachings of the Prophet? And another thing...

(a tense beat, a bit more aggressive)

What have we talked about?

Adele sighs and opens her eyes finally.

ADELE

I'm sorry...

She attempts to get to her feet, but before she can, Sovari lands his large fist into the back of her neck, grabbing it in rage.

He leans in. His grizzled, strong face against her ear. Adele herself wrenches in pain, her smooth chocolate skin twisting in agony.

SOVARI

(angry)

You know you are no longer allowed the privilege of praying to the Prophet! I long for the next two days to fly by so I can finally see you hang!

Adele is clearly in much pain as the massive man thrusts his anger out on her.

ADELE

(strained)

I long that as well. At least I can finally be free of the pestilence you reek of.

SOVARI

I AM DEVOUT! No one can say the same for you...

Sovari finally lets her go and walks away. Adele crumbles like a doll to the ground.

ADELE

Is this what you came for Sovari? To threaten and subdue me? Yet again?

SOVARI

(still angry)

I came to let you know the Temple is finishing completion. By this time in two days your blood will line the Avatar of Light.

(beat)

But I'm beginning to think we're in need of new persuasion techniques to keep you from committing these travesties.

ADELE

Staying true to my faith is noted as travesty?

SOVARI

Don't play the ignorant angel. You know what I...

Sovari sees the book and picture on the ground and bends down to see them.

Adele tries to straiten her clothing.

SOVARI

Staying true to faith is one thing. Perhaps worthy of a degree of respect.

(looking at the picture)

But this is a true dishonor. I almost feel filthy just seeing it...

His face furrows as he drops it on the ground and crunches it under his heel.

He goes back to Adele and bends down to whisper to her.

SOVARI

I'll be back Adele. I'll be back,
and we'll make sure this nonsense
doesn't continue. Your last days of
life should preclude the pain
you'll endure after death accordingly.

He stands back up and walks back to the large doors he entered. They open and the three figures who entered now exit.

We see Adele's beautiful and elegant face washed in the red of candle. The doors slam closed, causing the flames to dissolve. Before black consumes us again, we get a glimpse of what the picture Sovari stepped on showed. Adele, smiling and cheerful, standing with two men: Sovari and Rol'Gin. Both are equally as happy... A past now shattered like the glass that once protected it.

Darkness once again...

INT. THE AVALON - EMPTY ROOM

The empty room is cold and dark. ZORIN, SIREN, HATCH, and the two stowaways, AZEL and SHERA, are present. Azel and Shera are bound by their feet and hands. Both of them look sullen, even worse as they look beat up. Azel has a black eye and both have bruises all along their bodies. Siren, dressed in a black jumpsuit type of outfit, stand with Zorin over the two.

AZEL

Shera, I'm starting to think we shoulda stayed on that planet.

SHERA

I know, at least that place smells better than here. And the local wildlife was far more intimidating than this...

ZORIN

(in a growl)

Be quiet!

The two Xindi do so, but keep their faces vigilant.

Zorin turns to Hatch.

ZORIN

You helped them on board *my* ship with out even asking me?

AZEL
(interjecting)
Tom Hatch has some decency, he
helped us get away from that rock.

Hatch is obviously very dumbfounded.

HATCH
They... uh, kinda took my words out
of context.
(a weak laugh)
I was only kidding when I made the
suggestion...

ZORIN
But you helped them onboard?

Hatch looks disappointed.

HATCH
Okay, I pulled them from the box
they hid in. But what kind of
decent person would I be if I
hadn't helped them? They were in
trouble with the Cult guys and I...

ZORIN
'Cult'? They're in trouble with the
Cult?

Azel and Shera both drop their heads in even more
disappointment. Zorin looks agitated.

Siren grabs Tom's arm and makes him pay attention.

SIREN
Hatch, "decent" would've been
leaving them on that planet.

ZORIN
If the Cult find out they are here,
our whole crew will suffer the...

HATCH
(interrupting)
Then we won't let the Cult know
they're here. I'm sure you guys are
brilliant at smuggling stuff.

ZORIN
No, I'm not taking that chance. I'm
going to contact Rol'Gin right now
and tell them these two have stowed
away...

SHERA
(desperate)
You can't do that!

ZORIN
(turning a cold eye)
Watch me.

Shera writhes in her bonds, twisting to find a physically more comfortable position to ease her growing anxiety.

SHERA
Mister... please. If you've spent any amount of time under the heel of those bastards, you'd know why we were so desperate to get on your ship. On ANY ship. The Cult do worse things than what I'm sure you've seen. They won't just try to convert you with verbal propaganda or force you and your ships to do menial work. Those people will kill for what they want, they will cause entire societies to turn against themselves and destroy any hopes for the future. The things me and my cousin have seen can't be described. Things you wouldn't wish on your worse enemies were subjected to those we loved the most.

There is a moment of silence in the room. Zorin turns to face the two Xindi completely and bends over to inspect their bruises up close.

ZORIN
I see Isaac had fun. Are you two from where I think you are?

Zorin rubs his scaly finger along Shera's face.

SIREN
It's pretty clear they're Duranon. The only remaining Xindi I know are from there.

HATCH
What are you two talking about?
What's Duranon?

ZORIN
(ignoring Hatch)
If you are citizens of Duranon,
then maybe you deserve what the
Cult has for you.

AZEL
(getting tense)
We had nothing to do with that damn
war. We were still kids back then.
Half our lives we've spent trying
to avoid the thought that we're
some back stabbing race of traitors.

SHERA
Just because that man who attacked
us is racist doesn't make us criminals.

Zorin starts to pace before them.

ZORIN
If you're in trouble with the Cult,
you must've done something wrong.
Something criminal.
(realizing something)
If you two are from Duranon, then
that means... Are you two Confederate?

AZEL
No! I told you, we're nobody. We're
just two people trying to get away
from the fuggin' Cult like everyone
else. Trying to live a life for a
change.

SHERA
We'd do anything to stay here.
Absolutely anything. We have
technical expertise, we can work.
You don't even have to pay us, all
we need is a haven.

Zorin takes a moment to consider what's been said.

HATCH
I don't think they'd bring trouble
here.

ZORIN
Hatch, you brought the trouble here.
Me and my crew have a hard enough
time living our lives without
people like this mucking everything up.

Siren comes up to Zorin and puts her hand on Zorin's shoulder.

SIREN

Zorin.

(signaling a private conversation)

Over here.

Zorin and her move to the other side of the room.

SIREN

What do you have?

Zorin looks back at the two bound on the ground, making quiet small talk with Hatch.

ZORIN

We've run across a lot of Xindi since we've been together. Every time they've done nothing but bring trouble to my ship. Liars and thieves every one of them.

SIREN

But they are in trouble with the Cult?

ZORIN

(coldly)

Yes.

SIREN

And... It's not a lie? Just trying to get sympathy like you said?

Zorin's eyes darken. He knows what Siren is doing.

ZORIN

I know when someone's lying, or holding something back.

(pause)

And they aren't holding anything back. They truly want asylum. But that changes nothing.

She nods.

SIREN

But if they're sincere...

ZORIN

Their intentions are not in question, Siren! It is the unwanted attention they'll bring to my ship.

SIREN

You know better than anyone that the greater the risk, the greater the profit. They said they know how to handle a ship, and we NEED new hands.

(beat, almost seductively)

We don't have to pay them.

Zorin takes a long beat to consider, growling as his mind works. After a tense beat, he breaks away and approaches the two Xindi.

ZORIN

(to Hatch and Siren)

Leave.

HATCH

What's up?

ZORIN

Don't make me repeat myself.

Siren grabs Hatch and pulls him toward the door. The door shutters open and we hear Hatch talking to someone off screen...

HATCH

What are you doing here?

The door slides shut. The room is dead silent as Zorin takes a look at the Xindi.

ZORIN

I see you two are very dependent on each other. Did you grow up together?

SHERA

Mostly.

ZORIN

Tell me, what were you doing during the war between Jushai Prime and Duranon?

SHERA

We lived with our parents on an orbiting space station. We had nothing to do with the war, despite popular theory.

ZORIN

Still, there's enough bad blood circulating to justify me throwing you off this ship first chance I get. Are you willing to weather the hardships of a life like the ones we have?

SHERA

Of course.

Zorin nods.

ZORIN

The bond of family is strong. Let's see how durable it is.

Zorin walks to the door. It opens as he nods to the unseen figure Hatch spoke with previously.

ISAAC SAROLA strolls in.

CUT TO:

INT. THE AVALON - DEVICE ROOM

Is there something wrong?

Hatch sits before the computer interface. Around him, the hundreds of crystals hanging from the arched ceiling are brightly shining various colors on the walls.

HATCH

Why do you think something's wrong?

Because, people like that question to be asked. They don't have to ask for someone's assistance, but will accept it once it's offered.

HATCH

You're one smart little computer. Seems like you're getting smarter by the minute.

Thank you. You are also getting smarter.

HATCH

Oh, you just lost it again.

I did not. Can you do me a favor Tom?

HATCH

What is it?

Can you sing me a song?

Hatch is confused.

HATCH

A song? I can't sing.

So? I want to hear a song. Not a performance.

HATCH

Why do you wanna hear a song?

So I can learn to sing too.

HATCH

How can...

Hatch looks at the computer interface... He seems to realize something he hadn't before.

HATCH

(to himself)

I'll be goddamned.

Any caring god wouldn't damn you.

HATCH

(with a smile)

There's more here than you're letting on, isn't there?

I'm sure there is. But what is it?

HATCH

A computer suffering from a kind of amnesia, I bet. I'm probably wrong, I usually am, but I have a hunch... Stay here, don't go anywhere. I'll be right back.

Hatch hops to his feet and runs out the door. There is a moment of silence before we read...

He has a nice behind.

EXT. SPACE

Before us is the mammoth Cult ship, still pulling a good 15 ships by its tractor in a way that makes it look like some kind of squid. Surrounding the ships is a much darker space than we are accustomed to. Stars don't dot the sky, only an occasional speck of light or a wisp of nebula. We start to glide toward the red Cultist vessel, forward to a single window.

In it, we can clearly see a dark figure is standing, watching space through the glass. We are still outside as we see it is Rol'Gin.

From behind him, we see a red, armor-clad from head to toe, Acolyte approach.

ACOLYTE

Lord?

ROL'GIN

Have you brought what I've asked for?

ACOLYTE

Yes, Lord. Waiting outside.

ROL'GIN

Don't waste my time. Bring it in.

INT. CULT SHIP - OBSERVATION ROOM

The observation room of the Cult ship is appropriately large, it's spined walls extending upward much like a Gothic Cathedral. We don't see a ceiling as it's shrouded in darkness. The floor is a very dark shade of red that glistens in the fire of wall mounted fire-lights. Footsteps and the scraping of armor echo as the Acolyte heads to the arched door to retrieve what Rol'Gin had requested.

We see the Acolyte usher in a person, draped in black cloth. Attached to the head of the shrouded figure is a large mechanical device that had obviously penetrated the skull and is circulating green fluids. The Acolyte stands with the figure as Rol'Gin turns to them both.

ROL'GIN

(to the Acolyte)

Leave.

The simple guard does. He walks out and closes the large mechanical doors with a loud BANG...

It's reverberates around the room until silence besets. Sheer silence. Not even the thrum of engine power.

ROL'GIN

You know who I want to talk to?

FIGURE

(distorted voice)

Yes Lord.

Rol'Gin nods.

ROL'GIN

Proceed.

From behind Rol'Gin, we can only make out the figure touching Rol'Gin on the head...

EXT. TEMPLE BALCONY - NIGHT

We are suddenly transported atop a large structure. We see it's a very large building with kilometers and kilometers of rolling grassland extending in all directions. On top of this mammoth steel and stone tower we see two figures now facing each other: Rol'Gin and Sovari.

ROL'GIN

I take it something urgent has happened?

Sovari looks around. He turns and puts his hands on the balcony ledge, gazing into the ongoing savannah as wind brushes his long black hair.

SOVARI

I've always loved this spot. I've always been reminded of home. The winds and the smell of nature. None of the bothers of technology or the call of duty that accompanies men that are in our position.

(he breaks a brief smile)

Or... men in my position.

ROL'GIN

Is this why you have asked to speak with me? To gloat?

SOVARI

That's not it at all. You see, I've loved this place because it takes me away from the impurities of the universe we live in. All the war, greed, pain, and suffering can be tossed aside. Unfortunately, that's about to come to an end. In more ways than I care to calculate.

ROL'GIN

End?

Sovari turns to Rol'Gin.

SOVARI

Those people you've ensnared, the work you've forced them to do; They're among the last we'll need before it's done. Once this temple has been completed, the Final Prophecy will be set into motion. I thought you should know how quickly, how faithfully, the Prophet's will is being done.

ROL'GIN

And... what of Adele Tiernan?

SOVARI

I knew you would inquire about that. You see, you're standing on the very spot her execution will take place. This place I venerate so will no longer be mine as the blood of the unfaithful will be spilled here.

(a beat)

Will you be attending?

Rol'Gin looks around.

ROL'GIN

I will have my duties to attend to.

A quick flash of anger hits Sovari.

SOVARI

I thought we were past this.

(firmly)

You ARE going to attend her execution.

ROL'GIN

Respectfully, I'm not.

Sovari takes a sudden step forward and gets right in Rol'Gin's face.

SOVARI

Remember who took the status of Penultimate all those years ago. I DID! That means you answer to me! You have the tongue of a devout believer, but your actions lead me to believe different. If you don't witness Adele Tiernan's death, you'll be right next to her as she dies, sharing her fate.

Rol'Gin stands tall.

ROL'GIN

Fine.

Almost mockingly, Sovari grins. He goes back to pacing and taking in the view.

SOVARI

The Final Prophecy is nigh, and I intend to be a large part of it. I'm going to make sure the universe heeds the call of the Prophet. I expect you to do the same.

ROL'GIN

(jaded)

I know my responsibilities.

Sovari nods and waves to him.

SOVARI

I'm done.

(mockingly)

Go back to your ship...

In an instant, Rol'Gin's body disintegrates into nothing and we are...

INT. CULT SHIP - OBSERVATION ROOM

Back.

The veiled figure pulls his hands away from Rol'Gin's head and falls to the ground. A beeping noise sounds and a group of Acolytes rush into the room.

Rol'Gin turns and wipes the look of distress from his face, as emotions seem to subside.

The Acolytes pull the figure from the ground and carry it out...

EXT. SPACE

We pull away from the window, much like how we went in, and glide away from it. We fly through space, pushing past several smaller ships being towed by the Cult's white tractor. We come up on the Avalon. We are able to see the insignia: USS Avalon on the hull. The hull itself is very tattered, bruised and blackened and with some large holes dug into it. We come up to a forward facing window to...

INT. THE AVALON - OBSERVATION ROOM

The Observation Room of the Avalon is not any different from what we'd expect. Bare, dull, lifeless. It's a long rectangular room with an arched set of windows looking out to the large Cult ship towing them. Standing alone is Zorin.

The doors open from behind him. Isaac walks in. Without turning or acknowledging Isaac's presence, he speaks...

ZORIN

How'd it go?

ISAAC

I did what you wanted me to.

Zorin twists around. He looks angry.

ZORIN

Don't act like that Isaac.

ISAAC

Like what?

ZORIN

Like you were just doing your job. You know you can't slip your feelings past me. Hell, you can't slip them past anyone. You enjoyed yourself.

ISAAC

Oh, but I did. Murderers deserve everything handed to them. If you had seen the kind of damage their kind had done, you'd be right in there with me, beating them to a pulp.

Zorin steps forward and grabs Isaac's arm roughly.

ZORIN

I may understand your anger, but I am not a blind racist. I've done many things I'm not proud of, but I've never sunk to beating innocent teenagers for the sins of their parents.

Isaac wrestles free from Zorin's grasp.

ISAAC
 Don't talk like they're even
 remotely innocent! Every fucking
 one of them is guilty. I'm
 mustering every ounce of strength to
 not go over and shove them into a
 plasma conduit and relish the sight
 of them burning alive.

Zorin turns back around.

ISAAC
 Besides, you ordered me.

ZORIN
 I ordered you to show them that
 their life on board my ship isn't
 going to be an easy one. That
 people like yourself will be an
 obstacle.
 (a sigh, looking at
 the Cult ship)
 They're probably better off converting.

ISAAC
 They say their on the run from the
 Cult. Call Rol'Gin. Tell him the
 two are here.

Silence.

ISAAC
 (firmly, pushing)
 Zorin! Trust me, it will be best
 for all of us.

ZORIN
 Don't tell me how to run my ship.

ISAAC
 Even if...

ZORIN
 Get out Isaac. And don't go near
 the Xindi.

Isaac pumps his fists and turns to leave.

The door slides open, and closes. Zorin is again alone.

Or so he thought.

SIREN(O.S.)
 I can't believe you.

The Hirogen turns around to see Siren coming out from the shadows.

SIREN

You let Isaac hurt Azel and Shera?

ZORIN

You're the only person in my entire life who's been able to sneak up on me. It's a rare gift.

SIREN

Zorin, please answer my question.

ZORIN

Isaac choose that course of action. And if you had been spying on us the whole time, you should know why I told him to do it.

Siren shakes her head, her dark black hair flowing behind her.

SIREN

Why? You are the commander of this ship, you could've just told them to get the hell off. Told them to go make it on their own.

ZORIN

If they still want to stay, let them. But they're going to have to deal with their problems if they do. I'm leaving the door open for them.

SIREN

When have you ever left a door open for anyone else on this ship?

Zorin doesn't answer. He seems to be out of answers.

SIREN

Zorin, if you don't want them on the ship, get them off. If you think they can help us here, keep them here. I'll take care of Isaac and his prejudices. You make the decision, don't be a coward and let bigots chase them away.

Siren has said all she needs. She makes her way to the door.

ZORIN

Rol'Gin made an announcement earlier.

Siren stops and listens.

ZORIN

We're heading deeper into broken space. Make sure we're ready down in engineering.

(a long pause)

You're also the only person who can freely call me a coward and walk away with your life.

She takes this in for a moment, then continues out the door...

INT. THE AVALON - CORRIDOR

The familiar corridor is occupied by only one person. A smallish alien with brown skin and ragged clothes. He walks by without a care in the world. As we pan to see the alien exit our view, we see Hatch come up from behind us. He sticks to the walls like a spy would, looking back and forth to make sure no one can see him. It's almost ridiculous.

He moves along, until he comes to a door. It reads:
Engineering Deck.

Hatch smiles and begins to enter... Two voices are heard approaching. He twists back around and walks away casually, acting like he belongs. Two humans walk past without even looking at Hatch.

He sighs and turns back to the door... but turns to see Siren instead.

SIREN

What are you doing?

HATCH

Uh... wandering.

SIREN

I think Zorin told you to stay put.

HATCH

He did? Oh, well... Ya see, I've been working on that computer interface thingy-ma-bob for a while and...

SIREN

Then go back to it. You shouldn't be around here.

HATCH
That's the thing though, I need a
mircodyne coupler.

SIREN
(bewildered)
A what?

Hatch thinks, scratching his head.

HATCH
A wrench? Something to adjust and
possibly fuse relays?

Siren sighs.

SIREN
Will you go a back to your hole if
you get it?

HATCH
(weird, stupid accent)
Oh, I'll hole m'self up real good.

Hatch notices something on Siren's neck that wasn't there
before. A shiny necklace with a spiral at the end.

HATCH
What's that? An heirloom?

Siren is quick to grab it, yank it off, and stow it in her
pocket.

SIREN
Follow me.

She walks through the doors and we are now in...

INT. THE AVALON - ENGINEERING DECK

Siren strolls in casually, but Hatch slowly takes everything
in. His mouth drops as he scours the room visually.

We see the room is possibly the largest we've seen on the
ship, though that doesn't say much. Walls are occasionally
lines with computer terminals. The most obvious feature is
the large orb in the center and against the farthest wall.
It's almost a singular globe of pure energy, jetting
tendrils of energy to various spikes below, above and behind
it. Around it are four stations that a person can stand on.
One person is... It's CARLISE.

Her head is surrounded by a holographic interface, her hands
touch invisible buttons, and we hear a constant thrum of power.

HATCH
 (in astonishment)
 Holy masticating cow...

We also see the walls to the right and left of the orb are glassed off. Behind the glass, there is nothing but solid crystal.

Overall, the T shape of the room is remarkable. Hatch doesn't hid is obvious naivete as his eyes consume as much as possible.

Suddenly, Siren slaps a large tool onto Tom's chest.

SIREN
 (matter-of-factly)
 Now go.

HATCH
 This place is incredible.

SIREN
 It gets old after a while.

Hatch takes the tool.

HATCH
 You're not a very happy person are ya Siren?

SIREN
 Who the hell asked you?

HATCH
 No-one, just sayin'.

She switches subjects quickly.

SIREN
 Have you ever thought of trying to find a way to get back to your own time?

HATCH
 How? Time travel is improbable under the best of conditions. I kinda figured I'm stuck here.

SIREN
 How the hell can you so easily accept it? You know Zorin's going to throw you off as soon as we end this mess with the Cult. And you've seen how unforgiving life these days can be.

HATCH

Hey, I know all this stuff. But I've looked at it like a blessing in disguise.

Siren doesn't buy this, and her expression shows it.

SIREN

You've been dropped off in the closest thing to hell and you call it a blessing?

HATCH

My life back in the 23rd century pretty much sucked Ms. Siren. My job sucked, my apartment sucked, and my love-life sucked.

SIREN

And yet you're still so vein to believe that just because this life isn't the same one, it's going to be better. Let me tell you something Hatch, the reason I'm not a "happy" person is because of what my life in this universe has made me into. I know that at one point in my life, I wasn't in any danger or had any misfortunes. But when I was five years old, the universe caught up with me. I saw that I'd rather be anywhere but here. I'm sure your 23rd century was paradise compared to here.

HATCH

What happened to you when you were five?

Siren points to the door. Hatch is quick to catch on.

HATCH

Fine.

SIREN

And Zorin said not to be wandering around.

HATCH

Yeah, yeah.

Hatch hangs his head and broods toward the door, still clutching the tool Siren gave him.

CARLISE

I'm glad someone told him.

Siren turns to see Carlise, no longer attached to the engine interface.

SIREN

Surprising you'd say that... you and him have been rather buddy/buddy lately.

CARLISE

Don't get me wrong, I like him. But he's still got some issues.

SIREN

He's an idiot. A kid lost in woods darker than he knows.

CARLISE

I think he'll come around though.

Siren pushes past her and looks at the sphere in the middle.

SIREN

How are we doing with the engines?

CARLISE

A lot better than most everyone else getting pulled by the Cult. Most of them don't even have warp. See, the Cult ship is using its own warp power to keep a stable warp field around the others. How the hell were even traveling in broken space is a fucking mystery.

SIREN

Cult ships can always do something you never would've thought of before. Zorin says were heading deeper into broken space, it's gonna put a lot of strain on the engines. All those other ships without warp are going to be fine since they're in the Cult warp field, but we're on our own.

CARLISE

Do we have any idea where they're taking us now?

SIREN

Not a clue.

Carlise sighs.

CARLISE
 Figures. I probably should've
 joined that Confederate ship instead.

SIREN
 If you had done that, you'd
 probably be a sold off as food by now.

Carlise smiles and Siren exits.

INT. THE AVALON - EMPTY ROOM

As before, the empty room is cold and quiet. Except for Azel and Shera of course. It's almost a sad sight to behold as they are even more bruised and bloodied than before. Azel was clearly the target of Isaac's anger more than Shera was. He's passed out on the ground, Shera is tending to a wound on his head.

In a sudden motion, Azel snaps awake and grunts in pain. He grasped onto his side and cringes.

SHERA
 Cracked ribs. Three of them.

AZEL
 Uuugghhh.
 (delirious)
 Bastard.

SHERA
 Aw, he can't be that bad. He said
 he'd make our actual deaths quick
 and painless.

Azel puts his forehead to the ground in agony.

AZEL
 Y'know, if I wasn't so sure I was
 an inch away from passing out from
 pain... I still wouldn't find that
 funny.

SHERA
 Oh come on. Witty jokes like that
 kept me going through some hard
 times. That's one of your best
 qualities: to look past the
 grimmest of situations just enough
 to make some kind of joke.
 (a beat)
 A feel weird doing it myself.

AZEL

This reminds me of that Alkoan ship
we got aboard last year.

SHERA

Don't remind me.

AZEL

Glad as great news they took us in.
Gave us food and water, a nice bunk,
and even their equivalent to room
service.

SHERA

What's that phrase that human from
Uwveria used to say? "A snake with
an apple"?

AZEL

They sold us out.

Azel gets as much energy as he can to pick himself up. He
looks Shera right in the eyes.

AZEL

I mean, are we destined to be bound
to the fate of traitors?

Shera tries to ease Azel.

SHERA

Hey hey, don't sit up so fast.

AZEL

One of these days, someone's going
to come along and kill us just
because we're Duranon.

(an exasperated laugh)

Always on the verge of death...
What do you think our parents would
think if they saw us right now?

Shera tries to console Azel by touching his shoulder.

SHERA

I'm pretty sure they'd be proud as
hell.

There's a quick knock at the door, the two look over and
aren't sure what to do or say. They share nervous looks.

SIREN(O.S.)

(behind the door)

It's me, Siren.

The door slides open. She stands with two dishes of food, food that doesn't look particularly healthy. She comes in and stand there for a very uncomfortable minute.

SIREN

I thought you two'd be hungry.

AZEL

(sarcastic)

Oh, isn't that nice? I guess we can forgive and forget this whole ordeal now. She brought us food.

Siren simply takes it.

SIREN

Listen, I'm sorry this had to happen. If I were in your position I'd be just as angry.

AZEL

Oh, who's angry? Getting beat to a pulp is old hat for us. Hell, we just get onboard untrustworthy ships every month or so for recreational beatings.

SIREN

Zorin, our Captain Zorin, didn't tell Isaac to come in and beat you two. Nor did anyone else on this ship condone it.

SHERA

Still doesn't change what happened.

Siren puts the food down in front of them.

SIREN

Well, it's there if you want it.

Siren begins to leave...

SHERA

I take it you'd understand what we're going through the best.

She stops and turns back around.

SHERA

That medallion you're wearing. You weren't wearing it before.

We look to see she has again put on the spiral necklace that she once tried to hide from Hatch.

SHERA

Who was it?

Siren is reluctant to say anything. For once, she actually looks lost for words.

SHERA

How old were you?

SIREN

I was five. Just a kid, like you two. I'd rather not talk about it.

SHERA

You're the one going around showing the thing.

SIREN

Nobody knows what it symbolizes.

SHERA

I do.

SIREN

I can see that. I came by to apologize and to give you food. That's it.

BANG!!

Violently, the whole ship jars and twists. Azel, Shera, and Siren cry out as they are tossed about. Azel is thrown against the wall, crying out again as pain returns.

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

On the bridge, Zorin is holding onto the bit of railing around the command seat.

ZORIN

What the hell is this?

RIDEK

Something's tearing up our engines!

ZORIN

Broken space?

RIDEK

Dunno, looks like it. We're loosing warp power.

Zorin looks angered, Ridek scared.

RIDEK
Zorin, if we loose warp power...

ZORIN
(Loudly)
I know!
(quieter, ominously)
We die...

Off this grim scene we...

FADE OUT.

INT. THE AVALON - ENGINEERING DECK

In engineering, the warp sphere is obviously in a state of distress. Tendrils of energy spark downward to the spikes below it, the crystal walls pulsate with power surges. The ship still rumbles, several alien crewman try to keep from getting knocked over. Carlise is working on a console, furiously trying to fix the problem.

The doors slide open and Zorin runs in... stumbling more like it.

ZORIN
We have stabilizers that keep warp speed from liquefying us and artificial gravity to keep us from floating off the decks...
(louder, angrier)
Yet we still get thrown about when something's not right!

CARLISE
(from across the deck)
Damn thing's breaking out of it's nut! I can't figure out what's wrong!

ZORIN
You better find out what's wrong soon or we'll all be dead!

CARLISE
I know the warp field is mis-aligning, but that's it.

ZORIN
Mis-aligning? Doesn't the ship just fix that kind of stuff by itself usually?

CARLISE
Usually. But now it's...

A rather large spark blows a hole in the far wall behind them, near the door.

ZORIN
Are the Cult cutting us loose?

CARLISE
No, the tractor beam still has us.
Maybe they want us to die?

ZORIN
No, we're holding all that rock
they had us dig up.

Another eruption, much closer this time and causing Carlise to shield her face from the flying shrapnel. Zorin barely flinches.

ZORIN
Find a way to fix this now or
you'll be dead before this ship
explodes.

EXT. SPACE

We see the triangular Avalon slightly falling behind. The white tractor beam coming from the Cult ship fluctuates as it tries to keep it's grip. The green nacelles strobe off and on...

INT. THE AVALON - EMPTY ROOM

The ship still vibrates in turmoil, as before.

AZEL
Engineering troubles I take it?

SIREN
I need to get down there.

SHERA
Wait, take us with you.

SIREN
Why?

AZEL
We know ships. We can help.

Siren has a moment of misgivings.

SIREN
I'm sorry. We'll handle it.

AZEL
We're going through broken space
right now. Your people can't handle
it. We can.

SHERA
We've had to deal with it in the
past. We have some tricks. Let us help.

SIREN
It's not that. Zorin said to leave
you here.

AZEL
Fuck Zorin! We know how to save all
of our lives. If you're really
sorry about what your doctor did to
us, take us with you and let us help.

Siren resigns.

SIREN
Follow me.

INT. THE AVALON - DEVICE ROOM

Hatch clutches to a nearby console and grips the tool Siren
had retrieved for him in his other hand.

HATCH
I wish this wouldn't happen so often.

Maybe we need some kind of corporeal restraining device?

Hatch hears the beep that associates each message.

HATCH
I can't see what you're saying when
I'm on my butt. Sorry.

**Good. Then you can't see me say that you, in fact, have a
very nice butt.**

Hatch rolls his eyes and goes back under the console to
continue his vague work.

INT. THE AVALON - ENGINEERING DECK

As before...

We see Zorin holding his posture while looking intensely into a monitor.

ZORIN

Listen to me Rol'Gin, we know you need the material we dug out of the ground back on that planet. You just can't let us die.

ROL'GIN

I'm sorry Captain Zorin, we can't risk letting you go from our tractor.

ZORIN

You can't do a thing to help us? If our engines cut out, as they are about to do, we're dead. Along with all the minerals

Rol'Gin, smiling on the monitor, takes a moment to keep Zorin in a degree of anticipation.

ROL'GIN

We can beam you aboard our ship, doing that would require a full week of cleansing and fasting then a full conversion to the word of the Prophet.

ZORIN

You know I'm not going to do that.

ROL'GIN

Then I'm afraid we can't come to an agreement.

The ship still jolts... Another explosion from across the room. The warp sphere still sporadically lights on and off.

ZORIN

(shouting)

What's your problem?! Why can't you just deactivate your tractor? Why can't you help us, after all we've done for you?!

Rol'gin's expression hardens. He sits closer to the screen.

ROL'GIN

When the Hirogen migrated to this part of the galaxy, your kind was held in extreme disdain. And yet one race reached out to your people. A race from the planet we recently left: Qo'noS.

Zorin's expression is left in shock.

ZORIN
We were on Qo'noS?

Zorin is honestly lost for words.

ROL'GIN
The Klingons helped your people acclimate to these new civilizations... But what did your people do in return? Betrayed the trust of your allies, destroyed their civilization when it was at its weakest. And 50 years ago, your people finally hunted the remaining population of Klingons to utter extinction.

(a beat, he folds his hands)
So, as you can see, helping one another and building trust is never enough to justify letting one's guard down. For all we know, the minute we let you free you might exploit a weakness we had never noticed.

ZORIN
Don't be so paranoid. Can't you see our warp is...

Rol'Gin cuts communications. Zorin slams his large fist into the monitor, causing it to shatter and short out.

He turns to face... his crew. We see the six people assigned to handle engineering standing around Zorin, seemingly waiting for an answer.

CARLISE
I take it he's not going to help us?

ZORIN
And you people aren't even going to try to sort this mess out?! What am I paying you for?

A lone crewman, with scraggly hair and an unkempt beard steps forward.

CREWMAN
(sincerely)
To not die?

Zorin shakes in anger and moves to act on his extreme rage, but an immense sigh finally calms him down. The crewman takes the opportunity to run.

ZORIN
(to himself)
We're not going to die. Not like this. Find something, ANYTHING, to sever the tractor.

SIREN(O.S.)
I think these two can help Zorin.

Everyone turns to see Siren, Azel and Shera walking in. Another explosion...

AZEL
I take it we have less than 10 minutes before we're a cloud of warp dust?

ZORIN
What are they doing here?

SIREN
You left the door open for them to make a decision whether or not to stay. I think this is an obvious indication as to what their choice is.

Azel looks at all the equipment surrounding them and takes a moment for it to sink in.

AZEL
You guys are running through warp with a polycrystalline setup?

ZORIN
Hurry! Can you fix this?

Azel runs up to the warp sphere and looks at the console. He smiles a bit.

AZEL
Shera!

His cousin runs up next to him.

AZEL
Take a look at this.

She looks.

SHERA

Oh my god. There are enough relays, converters, and power pathways on this ship to handle the amount of power the Cult ship puts out.

SIREN

Can we use that to our advantage?

SHERA

Not unless you have an extra warp sphere lying around somewhere.

Zorin scowls at her. Around them the ship still jolts. People are having a hard time keeping their feet on the ground.

A male crewman from an upper level calls out...

CREWMAN

Zorin! I take it we have three minutes before the Cult loose their lock on us! After that we're dead!

Zorin focuses his attention on the two Xindi.

ZORIN

This is growing tiresome! Do something now!

INT. THE AVALON - DEVICE ROOM

Back in the room, we see Hatch is still tinkering away. For a moment, it seems as though he's oblivious of the violent rattling of the ship.

A huge shock send Hatch flying up. He smacks his forehead on the console.

He comes up from under the console and cringes in pain.

HATCH

What the hell. What's going on?

Hatch comes up to look at the computer monitor.

The ship is having problems.

HATCH

I see that. I know it's a long shot, but can you do something about it? Maybe turn up the inertial dampers here in the room?

I'm afraid I don't have those kind of abilities.

HATCH
 Figures. You're just an independent
 program.

**No, I mean my circuitry hasn't integrated into those
 pathways yet.**

Hatch takes a moment to think about this.

HATCH
 (hesitant)
 Well, what have you integrated into
 so far?

**Mostly engineering subsystems and a few of the main systems
 such as warp and life support.**

HATCH
 You're taking over the ship?

Don't be goofy. I am the ship.

Hatch looks astonished.

HATCH
 Um... then could you fix what's
 wrong with the ship right now?

I thought you'd never ask.

In a flash, the whole room is swamped in blinding light as
 the crystals adorning the room illuminate.

INT. THE AVALON - ENGINEERING DECK

As before, Azel and Shera are still working futilely on the
 console.

The warp sphere, previously firing bouts of electricity to
 the spikes below it, stops. Goes dead. Ends. The lights go
 out. Bites the bullet. Kicks the bucket.

Silence.

CARLISE
 Oh shit guys. We're dead.

On cue, the crystalline walls light up, silhouetting the
 people still standing in a green light. The sounds of
 electricity crackling growing ever more prevalent in the air.

EXT. SPACE

Outside the ship, the Avalon's green shaded nacelles have faded to near black. It begins to slip, the Cult tractor beam looks like it's about to give its one last heave...

Until the engines spark back to life again, sending a pulse up the tractor beam. The Avalon seems to climb back up the beam, as if hauling its own dead weight. Then engine lights come back, and now the ship is finally at a safe location.

INT. THE AVALON - ENGINEERING DECK

The lights spring back to life...

Confusion sets in on everyone's face, clearly replacing their former expression of fear. The ship no longer rumbles, the warp sphere is slowly coming back online and settling into a regular mode. The crew is speechless.

SIREN

What did you do?

AZEL

Not a damn thing.

CARLISE

Did it fix itself again?

Azel turns a curious head.

AZEL

Is that what you people do around here? Let things fix themselves?

CARLISE

That's all we EVER need to do.

SIREN

We figure it's some kind of backup. An automated system repair.

SHERA

While that's all well and good that you have a ship kind enough to do all the work itself, but it might help if you had a real couple of people who know how to repair and operate this stuff.

Zorin walks up to both of them, his demeanor every bit as intimidating as ever.

ZORIN
 You're still willing to put up with
 the hardships of our kind of life?

Shera is somewhat bewildered at the intimidating manner Zorin speaks to her.

Azel butts in.

AZEL
 Mister Zorin. I can speak for both
 of us when I say you have know idea
 what hardships are.

EXT. SPACE

The not so majestic Avalon now glides in synch with the Cult ship now, the tractor beam now a whole lot brighter than before.

INT. THE AVALON - DEVICE ROOM - LATER

A smiling Hatch greets us. His almost child like grin fails to break as he fiddles a knob on the wrench like tool Siren had given him.

Suddenly, the door opens behind him. Siren's head pokes in.

SIREN
 Hatch. Get out of there and up to
 the bridge. Zorin needs to talk
 with everyone.

HATCH
 Siren! Hey, come here a second.

SIREN
 No.

HATCH
 Come on, it'll take three seconds.

Siren rolls her eyes and takes a few steps into the room, which is more of a big closet than a room.

Hatch sits up, back straight, with pride.

HATCH
 Ms. Siren, I'd like you to meet the
 Computer.

A moment of silence.

SIREN
 What the hell is wrong with you Hatch?

HATCH
 (surprise)
 Oh! Hang on a tic.

Hatch pushes a few random buttons.

A static comes over the speakers, then nothing.

HATCH
 Okay, NOW meet the computer.

SIREN
 Screw this. Hatch, get up to the br...

COMPUTER
 Hello Siren.

Siren looks at the computer interface. The female voice that came through the speakers failing to shock her.

HATCH
 Pretty cool, huh?

SIREN
 Is this what you've been working on these past few days? Getting a little computer to talk?

COMPUTER
 I'm not little.

SIREN
 Be quiet. No one's talking to you.

COMPUTER
 It's because I'm silicon, isn't it?

SIREN
 (to Hatch)
 Hatch, are you so desensitized to not realize our lives have been on the line the moment the Cult ensnared us? The ship almost blew up less than an hour ago and you still sat right through it.

HATCH
 That's not necessarily true.

SIREN
 I'm not in the mood to debate this though. Just... get up there.

She huffs and walks off, leaving the door open.

HATCH

Don't mind her. She's a little prickly.

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

ZORIN

Here's the situation.

Gathered on the bridge, in a rough circle, is Zorin, Siren, Azel, Shera, Isaac, Carlise, and two other crewmen.

ZORIN

Rol'Gin is going to have a 'meeting', as he calls it, about what they're going to do with us. He's made it clear that the Cult have no further interest in us as long as we do their momentary bidding. But the further we get into broken space, the more I feel we're not going to get out of this situation so easily.

The crew stirs at this.

ZORIN

From the moment I saw those people back on Tyvor, I knew they wanted us for something more than just slave labor. The Cult has the single largest fleet in the quadrant, they really don't need people like us to do their work.

SIREN

What do you think they're going to do?

ZORIN

I don't know.

(a beat)

But we need to keep our heads up.
And I'm...

The bridge door opens. Tom Hatch comes in holding a small communications device, though he isn't using it. Everyone turns to look at him.

HATCH

Sorry I'm late.

SIREN

(to Zorin)

I told him to come up immediately.

Hatch squeezes into the circle.

ZORIN

I'm sure you all know the ordeal with our warp sphere. We don't know what happened, but Rol'Gin had no interest in helping us.

SHERA

(under her breath)

As if that's any surprise.

ZORIN

I don't think he had any compassion for what happens to us, or anyone else in this situation. Thirteen ships remain of the original fifty seven. We should count our blessings.

HATCH

(loudly)

Oh! Can I say something?

ZORIN

Not if you can help it.

Hatch hold up his communication device. He smiles with pride.

HATCH

I've, uh... been working on that computer interface a lot since I came aboard. It's been tough but I think I might have triggered something.

ZORIN

(deadpan)

Great. If there's nothing else...

HATCH

(louder)

I think that that room I'm working in is of great importance to you guys. I checked the power relay map. That room has power relays coming out the wazoo. In fact, there's probably enough power going through there to power a small ship's warp reactor.

ZORIN

What are you getting at?

HATCH

I think that computer I've been talking to is the Avalon's computer. As in it's running the ship. For example, the problems you guys were having with the warp sphere. I just asked the computer nicely if it could fix the problem and she did.

Zorin furrows his forehead in confusion.

ZORIN

You saved the ship from exploding?

HATCH

No, not me. Avalon. Y'see, at one time that room was the brain. But there are obviously parts missing. So it's not as advanced. But it's finding new pathways, expanding it's mind so to speak.

ZORIN

When we found this ship, it was adrift in a nebula. It had been raided many times over. I'm sure the computer was one of the first to go.

HATCH

But like I said, it's coming back. Every time I go back there, the computer knows more and can do more things. It's integrating back into the Avalon systems, like engineering. Just recently, I got her to talk.

ZORIN

Talk?

Hatch clicks the communicator.

HATCH

Say hello Avalon.

COMPUTER

Hello. How are you?

There is dead silence in the small bridge, the small group of people look wholly uninterested in this display.

HATCH

Well, I'm doin' good. These guys are a mite ornery today.

COMPUTER
Understandable.

Siren goes to Hatch.

SIREN
Hatch. Go back to your hole. Don't
bother us with this again.

Hatch looks heartbroken. Obviously unable to grasp why his
work is so easily negated.

HATCH
(pushing)
But I...

SIREN
Just go.

Hatch gives in. He huffs and pockets the communicator.

HATCH
I'm only trying to be useful.

He doesn't say another word as he exits the bridge. Azel
comes up and speaks.

AZEL
Where is he from?

ZORIN
We don't know.

SIREN
He says that he's from the 23rd
century...

AZEL
23rd?! He's a time traveler?

SIREN
So he says.

AZEL
But you don't believe him?

Zorin goes to Azel.

ZORIN
We can't be sure of anything right
now. You of all people know how
devious the Cult is. It's possible
he's here under their will.

AZEL

I can't believe that for a second.
He helped us.

ZORIN

He helped you... Possibly into a trap. What a perfect setup, the Cult storms our ship when we least expect it to find two of their enemies under our roof. They take you as well as us. They execute us, or even worse: forcibly convert us. All because Hatch helped you.

Azel goes back next to his cousin and leans against a wall console.

ZORIN

I need you all at whatever stations you normally man.

The group disperses. Most of them exit the bridge, though Azel and Shera obviously staying clear of Isaac. Zorin goes to the very front of the bridge to check something ambiguous on a console as Siren trails him.

SIREN

Zorin.

ZORIN

Not now. I have to get a secure comm line set up.

SIREN

But what about that computer that Hatch talked about? He said it was taking over the ship.

ZORIN

That all seems well and good. It saved our hides.

SIREN

Yeah, but if it takes over too much, it could go haywire. Who knows what it would do.

ZORIN

Why are you suddenly so concerned about it? You're the one who rushed Hatch off the bridge when he started on it.

SIREN
He raised a good point.

Zorin looks Siren in the eye.

SIREN
Do you still plan to throw Hatch
off ones we get the chance?

ZORIN
Yes.

SIREN
I've known you a long time Zorin.
You're the only person I've ever
been able to call my friend. I've
grown to know that you can look
anyone in the eye for just a second
and know more about them than
anyone else can. When you talk to
Hatch, when you look HIM in the
eyes, do you see Cult?

ZORIN
It's not that simple. It's possible
he might not know he's Cult. The
Reds know how to deceive better
than anyone else in this galaxy,
even using bumbling fools like
Thomas Hatch. I'm suspicious that
he's the one who helped Azel and
Shera onboard, two people who will
condemn us for good if the Cult
find them here. All things
considered, he might be using the
computer to take over this ship. So
yes, he's going.

SIREN
Then why are you keeping the Xindi
on board?

Siren only watches Zorin as he turns back to work on the
console.

INT. CULT SHIP - COMMAND CENTER

At last, we get a glimpse at the command center of the
voluminous Cult ship. Clearly, it's architecture is as
ornate as the rest of the ship. Unlike most vessels, this
center is not symmetrical. The viewscreen is in a corner,
large windows line the slightly octagonal shape of the room.
There are several large doors that exit out, most are open.

The ceiling extends upward like a temple hall, several balconies are visible above the main level. The whole room seems to reflect the various fires burning on wall mounted lamps. Acolytes, guards for the Cult, stand at attention at every doorway, their bodies covered in red armor. Other Cultists mill around, working incessantly.

Rol'Gin, along with three guards around him, walk into the room.

ROL'GIN
Bring up the link!

He walks up to the side mounted viewscreen and stands tall. On the screen, 15 different faces appear. Obviously all the commanders of the ships.

All at once, they all start to talk. A jumbled mess of vocabulary.

Rol'Gin raises his hand, they all slowly bleed into silence.

ROL'GIN
I understand you all have questions.
I understand you all are mostly
angry, in spite that we have taken
over your lives to serve our
bidding. But I want to assure you
all, your help and your
determination to complete this
mission will not go down in vain.
You will all be handsomely rewarded.

A very alien looking commander speaks up with a temper hotter than fire.

COMMANDER
I bet! You'll convert us! You Reds
know nothing past your religion!

ROL'GIN
Correct you are, in saying we know
nothing past our religion. But we
are not shallow enough to realize
there is more to value in your
lives than what we hold so venerably.

COMMANDER
(confused)
What?!

ROL'GIN
(tired)
Money. We're willing to offer you
all a fortune for your services here.

The crowd starts to speak up again.

INT. THE AVALON - ZORIN'S ROOM

As before, Zorin's room is dark save the light from the monitor he watches.

ROL'GIN

Commanders, please. The harder we make this communication, the less likely the things that need to be said will be said. The Cult of Those Who Walk in the Light will not forget the contributions you have given. Many of you are concerned that we are traveling through "broken space", as you call it. Space that cannot be traversed by any normal vessel.

Another Commander is heard, this time a female.

FEMALE COMMANDER

Then how is your ship able to get through it unharmed?

ROL'GIN

Because the will of the Prophet guides us to safety. May this be a testament to his power, and why we follow him.

COMMANDER

Superstitious nonsense! I heard they're always savaging long dead civilizations for technology...

ROL'GIN

Please. The Cult keeps tabs on rumors like that constantly. Suffice it to say, our technology is given to us from a higher source, for the sole reason of serving the higher purpose. But enough about this.

(a beat)

If you all look at your respective scanners, you'll see we're coming into a clearing. A solar system that's been untouched by broken space.

Zorin switches displays, seeing a diagram of space around them. They are indeed approaching a clearing.

ROL'GIN

We're headed to the only planet in this system, a planet simply known as "Prime". While there, you'll be treated to complete hospitality. However, I strongly caution against any aggressive action you may wish to take. Prime is... our homeworld.

Again, the crown can't contain their voices.

EXT. SPACE

Empty space surrounds us. Complete silence until the Cult ship exits from warp in front of us. It's form does not stretch from decelerating from the faster than light travel, it only stops. We follow the ship as it heads toward a planet in the distant. A sparkling jewel, set against it's star that's even further back.

EXT. PRIME

In the perfectly clear blue sky, we see the ship descending through the air, ships still in tow.

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

On the bridge, everyone is present, minus Isaac. Zorin stands in front of his chair, his arms crossed. Siren is at his side, behind both of them stands Hatch and Azel.

ZORIN

How's it coming?

We see Zorin is speaking to Shera, who's at the helm.

SHERA

Standard layout for controlling a ship this size. I've flown ships half the size of that Cult ship with ease.

ZORIN

Still, it would be a shame if something unexpected came up you didn't know how to deal with.

Thomas goes in between Zorin and Shera.

HATCH

(enthusiastically)

Guess what? We have just the person to handle that kind of development.

ZORIN

Who?

HATCH

(matter-of-factly)

Avalon!

COMPUTER

I'm afraid Tom Hatch forgot to mention that my program has been extended into more systems.

Zorin looks awkward, talking to the computer.

ZORIN
How many more systems are you going
to integrate your systems into?

COMPUTER
As many as I can.

ZORIN
Are you sure that's a wise decision?

COMPUTER
They are my systems. I've just been
away for a while. I suppose you
could say I'm taking back what's mine.

Hatch smiles.

HATCH
See? Everything's working out.

Zorin, nor Siren, is happy about this.

ZORIN
(to Hatch)
Go to the bay. Help Carlise dump
the cargo.

HATCH
Sure. My pleasure.

Hatch, happy as can be, walks out.

Siren and Zorin exchange very concerned glances.

SIREN
This can't be good.

ZORIN
I don't like what Hatch has done.
We're leaving him on this planet.

Azel and Shera take notice.

AZEL
You can't!

ZORIN
(stubbornly)
He's doing nothing for us. In fact,
he's probably messing everything up.
This is my ship, I make the calls.

Azel rolls his eyes.

AZEL
You still think he's Cult?

A moment of silence.

ZORIN
Every second.

On this we...

FADE OUT.

EXT. PRIME

BLINDING LIGHT...

Until the Cult ship blocks out the sun for good. It slowly descends, the tractors finally freeing. The fifteen ships that have made it land on their own. Clearly, our focus is drawn to the Avalon.

Finally, we see the ship in the best light. The holes carved into the hull, battle scars, etc.

The cargo bay door opens downward. Strolling out are Zorin, Siren, Isaac, and Hatch. Those who we'd expect.

Hatch stretches his arms out and breathes in.

HATCH
God, it feels so good to get out of that ship finally. I was getting a little claustro...

Hatch is shoved out of the way by Isaac, who's lights up a dark cigarette.

HATCH
Y'know Isaac, it's surprising that... someone like yourself would smoke. It's bad for your health.

Isaac takes a long look at Thomas.

ISAAC
Who the fuck are you to talk to me like that? It's my own damn life and you're the last damn thing in this universe from my mother.
(beat)
You know what, back in the war...

We cut away to Zorin and Siren, letting Isaac's voice fade into the background.

Siren is dressed in lighter clothing, obviously adjusting to the warmer climate.

SIREN
He asked for it.

ZORIN
Isaac will always bring up the war to scare off people he doesn't like.

SIREN
Being proud of a personal history with such bloodshed in it. Scares me sometimes.

Zorin puts his hand out, stopping Siren from walking. He sees something.

Rol'Gin is walking towards them.

ZORIN
Act normal.

SIREN
Always do.

They go to meet the Cultist.

ROL'GIN
Crew of the Avalon!

He extends his arms. Zorin and Siren look very confused.

ROL'GIN
I'm so glad your efforts to stay with us have been determined ones.

ZORIN
You should thank my crew for that.

ROL'GIN
(with a smile)
I just did. Seeing your determination, are you positive in your stance that you won't join our ranks within our sacred religion. Seeing your devotion, I'm sure we could find a glamorous role for you and your followers.

Zorin seems to gauge Rol'Gin.

ZORIN

We'll pass.

ROL'GIN

In any case, we'll get your cargo loaded first and you'll be on your way.

ZORIN

So we're free once this is all done?

Rol'Gin starts to walk away, his back turned to them both.

ROL'GIN

Free as a bird.

Suddenly, a bolt of light comes in from the side, heading right for Rol'Gin! Fortunately, he seems to see it in time and the bolt quietly impacts a personal forcefield around the man, ricocheting into the air.

Calmly but shaken, Rol'Gin points to the direction it came from, and four Acolyte guards march forward.

In the background, the four guards are joined by possibly hundreds of similar men and women, their red robes almost glistening in the sunlight. Though they all keep an uncharacteristic calm about them, the crews and captains of the other ships begin to succumb to the alarming turn of events.

Back to Zorin and Siren, they are now walking back to the Avalon, trying their best to avoid complicating the rapidly growing confusion around them.

SIREN

What's wrong Zorin?

ZORIN

Everything. He's not done with us.

SIREN

What? He just said he's...

ZORIN

That man knows I have the ability to see through his lies. That's why he turned and walked away, so I couldn't see his face. He knows my kind too well.

SIREN

Are you sure?

ZORIN

Am I ever not? There's something else going on there. When he smiled, it was empty. Like something else is on his mind, something personal.

SIREN

God knows what it can be... literally.

ZORIN

Gather the crew. We might need a plan to run.

SIREN

This is the Cult's homeworld. I doubt we'll get very far if we run Zorin.

Zorin nods.

ZORIN

Then it seems we have a choice. Convert or die.

Siren halts in her tracks, not able to believe this.

A huge ship flies over head. The gust from it blows Siren's hair about. She looks up and follows it as it approaches a structure in the distance. A huge tower stands that juts up toward the sky. Made of rock, steel and glass, the sun reflects off it brilliantly. It's a magnificent view, unparalleled in beauty.

INT. TEMPLE ROOM

The soft sun illuminates the room through it's several large windows. Like most Cult rooms, it's large and reaches upward in the typical Gothic style. Windows show nothing but sky, various types of plants are situated around the room. Walking along the glistening floor is Sovari, still as tall and intimidating as we remember.

SOVARI

This room is so open.

An unseen voice echoes through the room. A deep voice....

VOICE

If you don't like it, leave. I never invite you anyway.

SOVARI

You're so quick to invite yourself into someone's company but never invite others.

VOICE

I don't like people. I don't like it when they're around me.

SOVARI

Yet you revel in them not knowing you're around them.

VOICE

Stop trying to examine me Sovari. It's one of your qualities that makes me glad I don't go near people.

SOVARI

Then perhaps we should get down to business. You do know I want to talk to you? Not the plants.

We see a figure start to form from nothingness. Right in front of Sovari, a man in a black suit appears. His hair is an extreme red, very shiny. Overall, he's clearly an attractive man with sharp features and a face not-soon-forgotten. His whole body is in a suit that's black, clearly an invisibility suit.

For a moment, Sovari is shocked this person was so close.

SOVARI

You never fail to surprise me Pau Zauric.

This is PAU ZAURIC

ZAURIC

That's my job.

(a beat)

I take it this isn't a social visit?

SOVARI

Of course not. Have you heard about Adele?

ZAURIC

I've heard of her capture and that she's here. I assume she's to be executed?

SOVARI

A correct assumption. She's committed the worst acts against our religion in recent years, and yet she still insists on holding prayer vigils, looks to the Prophet for guidance despite the deaf ear he's turned to her.

ZAURIC

You clearly misunderstand her plight. Her acts were never against the religion we follow, it was against US.

SOVARI

She defies the faithful?

Zauric fiddles with some planets, his hands gliding across their green surfaces.

ZAURIC

She believes WE'RE the unfaithful, twisting the Prophet's will to fit our own desires.

Sovari's face looks tighter, clearly holding in anger.

SOVARI

If that's what she believes, then she doesn't believe in what we do. Our entire order comes straight from the Prophet. When she defies us, she defies HIM.

ZAURIC

I won't argue that but...

Suddenly, he disappears into thin air.

ZAURIC(O.S.)

...her convictions are sound. She'll die for what she believes in. Now, I'm sure we're both very busy planning for the Prophet's arrival. Perhaps we should return to our respective duties?

Sovari scans the room, finding nothing.

SOVARI

Stay here. I may require your services in the near future.

With that, he turns and walks away into the brush.

INT. THE AVALON - ENGINEERING DECK

In Engineering, Azel is getting acclimated to systems with the help of Carlise. They are in front of a console across from the warp sphere.

CARLISE

This is the...

AZEL

Carbine filtration system. I recognize the setup, Lyrillian ships have this same configuration.

CARLISE

Very good. I thought you'd have a harder time figuring this out.

AZEL

No way. I can just figure stuff out just by watching everyone else. One time I came across a HUGE ship that had crashed on a planet. The weather was horrible, imagine sandstorms of glass in the middle of a freezing winter. Awful. I had to get life support working on the ship...

HATCH(O.S.)

I thought we were supposed to unload the cargo?

The two engineers turn to face Hatch. Carlise shakes her head.

CARLISE

The Reds want to do it themselves. Something about unholy hands touching sacred grounds or some nonsense. How are you doing?

HATCH

Not so good actually. I'm getting a little paranoid.

CARLISE

It's about time.

HATCH

Eh?

CARLISE

A little paranoia could mean the
difference between life and death.

Carlise smiles at Hatch and returns to the console. But Azel
looks concerned. He slowly walks to Thomas.

AZEL

Tom, can we speak alone for a second?

Hatch raises an eyebrow, then nods.

AZEL

(to Carlise)

Hey, I'll be right back.

Carlise doesn't turn.

CARLISE

Got it.

INT. THE AVALON - ENGINEERING DECK - ROUTER ROOM

The router room is relatively small, about the size of the
device room. Devices running lights and computer readouts
adorn the walls. Hatch and Azel walk in.

AZEL

I don't think you should be
surprised by this bit of news, but
I do think it's the decent thing to
do, to bring it to your attention.
Since you helped me and Shera off
that planet.

HATCH

Oh man, are you coming out to me?
God, they ALWAYS come out of the
closet to ME!

AZEL

What?! No, I'm not...

(stuttering)

Not about me. It's about Zorin.

Hatch is even more shocked.

HATCH

Zorin's coming out...?

AZEL
 (seriously)
 He thinks your Cult Tom. In fact,
 he thinks your conspiring to bring
 this ship down from the inside.

HATCH
 You mean... Red? Why does he think
 that?

AZEL
 (a shrug)
 Timing I guess. He finds you adrift
 in a shuttle, the next day this
 ship is taken by a Cult vessel. And
 I don't think he buys your story
 about being from the... what, 23rd
 century?

HATCH
 But I am! I enrolled in Starfleet
 Academy in 22... uh...
 (a beat)
 Well, do you believe me?

Azel's face is blank. He leans up against a pipe.

AZEL
 I don't know. I knew you were
 different. Your mannerisms aren't
 what I've seen... anywhere before.

HATCH
 You know, all I hear about that
 Zorin guy is "Oh, he can know
 someone just by talking to them. Oh,
 he's so in tune with everything. Oh,
 he can pick up a bus, throw it and
 hit a nun a kilometer away". Yet,
 all this time he's been talking
 with me and interacting with me,
getting to know me, he still thinks
 I'm Cult.

AZEL
 It's not that simple. See, you
 might not know your Cult. There've
 been stories of them... changing
 people's minds...

Hatch nods knowingly.

HATCH

My ex-girlfriend had that ability.

(a beat)

Look, I'm not Cult. The fact that I'm so acclimated to this place so quickly is the fact that I'm not scared. So far, I've seen nothing to scare me into fearing this universe of yours.

Azel nods. He puts his arm on Hatch's shoulder.

AZEL

You will. Soon I bet.

He stands up and walks back out to engineering, leaving Hatch to look dismayed.

A moment of silence as Tom soaks in his quiet time.

COMPUTER

I'm sorry Tom.

HATCH

Oh, it's okay. Did Zorin really say those things about me?

COMPUTER

It goes against my ethical subroutines to listen into private conversations. However, I haven't found those subroutines yet, so I did hear him mention it.

HATCH

Wonderful. What does he plan to do?

COMPUTER

I believe he's going to throw you off the ship.

He nods and looks down.

HATCH

(saddened)

Well, I guess it would be a lot easier if I threw myself off first. I mean, there are other ships parked here. Maybe I can go with one of them.

COMPUTER

That may have to happen. Zorin isn't convinced your not Cult.

Again, Hatch is silent.

COMPUTER

If it's any consolation, I don't think you're Cult.

HATCH

Thanks.

(a beat)

I guess I should go now.

COMPUTER

Okay. Thanks for bringing me back.

HATCH

No problem. It's been fun.

He goes to walk out.

The door opens and right in front of him stands Isaac Sarola. Hatch halts in shock. The large doctor throws a needle into Hatch's stomach... And Hatch faints.

EXT. PRIME - NIGHT

Nighttime on Prime is just as gorgeous as daytime. The star twinkle, the verdant forests around the parked ships look lush as they sway in the breeze. Two moons are visible, one gray and the other is very blue. Obviously a water world. This makes the ambient light in the area skewing toward blue.

We focus on the Avalon, the cargo ramp slowly descends. It stops without opening all the way. Quickly, Thomas Hatch's body starts to roll down the ramp. It falls off and hits the ground hard, kicking up a minute amount of dirt.

We look into the ship from the outside. Isaac.

ISAAC

Good luck fucker.

The doors, just as slowly, close. This leaves only the silence of wind and nature.

Quickly, our view starts off across the savannah which holds the various ships. We go over grass and trees, past several Cultists working in the field. The moonlight and planet-light slowly dim as we approach in the shadow of the massive Cult tower. The Cult Temple.

We move inward, straight through a window.

INT. TEMPLE ATRIUM

The atrium is the lavish entrance to the temple. It's long and high, fires burning to give natural light. Along the room are two rows of pillars extending up, beside each pillar is an acolyte standing at attention.

But two other Cult stand, speaking with each other. Rol'Gin and Sovari.

SOVARI

Do you remember a young lad, named Zauric?

ROL'GIN

Zauric?

SOVARI

Pau Zauric. He lived his previous life in the Meyallus Star System.

ROL'GIN

(aggravated)

I'm a converter, Sovari. I've meet thousands of people. Why would I remember this person in particular?

Sovari reaches into his clothing, behind his flowing robe, to pull out a data pad.

SOVARI

I think you'll remember him. You converted him, but there was something special about him. He was the recipient to a numerous amount of Confederate bio-engineering tests. His brain was built to withstand conversion. His skin, replaced by synthetic suit that could bend light.

ROL'GIN

I remember. He wasn't easy to convert.

SOVARI

(smiling)

Yes. You were quite proud of yourself, being able to crack what the Confederates saw as uncrackable.

ROL'GIN

(quickly)

What do you want, Sovari?

Sovari grins as he realizes the pleasantries are over.

SOVARI

There's been a substantial change of plans. The Prophet spoke with me. His arrival is immanent, he'll be here the same day we execute Adele Tiernan.

Rol'Gin doesn't look enthused.

ROL'GIN

What are the substantial changes in our plans?

SOVARI

It's time to put those conversion skills of yours to work.

Suddenly, the mood darkens. Even Rol'Gin is surprised by this.

ROL'GIN

You mean...

SOVARI

Yes. The Final Prophecy is happening much faster than we had intended. The Prophet thinks the End will come within the span of a few short years. We aren't sure when, but when the day comes when every living soul in the universe is mauled, we need to be sure every person we're able to convert is one of us. By their choice or not.

There is a long moment as both men bow their heads in the mention of the Prophet.

SOVARI

Just because simple minded defects in our religion, such as Adele, condemned converting souls forcibly doesn't mean we aren't entitled to do so when necessary.

(a beat)

These are the end of times, the end of all life in the universe. The Cataclysm that annihilated societies and civilizations long ago was the precursor. The Prophet sees the final crescendo and wishes us to save whoever we can.

(MORE)

SOVARI (CONT'D)

Anyone not a part of our religion
MUST be saved. We have to help them.
We have to convert them.

Off this dire scene, we cut away.

INT. THE AVALON - SICKBAY

The sickbay has only a few people under Isaac's care, two
laying in a bed and one other eating in a table.

Looking over at the other end of the sickbay is Isaac,
typing on a console.

ZORIN(O.S.)

Well...?

Sarola is surprised at Zorin's unexpected entrance.

ISAAC

Well what?

ZORIN

Did you do what I asked?

Isaac's face turns to one of disdain.

ISAAC

Yes I did. He's not on the ship any
more.

ZORIN

Good.

He turns around and begins to exit.

ISAAC

Shallow coward.

With fury, Zorin throws his body back to Isaac and grabs him
by the neck! Even regarding the fact Isaac us a muscular man,
he's a mere rag doll in Zorin's grasp.

ZORIN

(growling)

Say that again.

Isaac remains strong, even though his hands try to free
Zorin's hold.

ISAAC
 (struggling)
 You know good and well Hatch isn't
 among our problems. Those two Xindi
 are!

ZORIN
 My reasons for kicking him off the
 ship were sound! I couldn't think
 for a minute Hatch was from
 thousands of years in the past.

ISAAC
 Yet criminals run free?

Zorin drops Isaac. He tries to regain himself.

ZORIN
 (calmer)
 What's done is done. I don't want
 to here any more of this. Azel and
 Shera have proven they're
 willingness to help us and I've
 come to terms with that. I won't
 turn valuable workers away. And you
 are to ignore them while they are
 on this ship, understood?

Isaac makes no noise. In response, Zorin tightens his grip.

ZORIN
 Understood!?

Isaac nods.

As he does, Zorin drops the human and walks away.

Isaac's angry face shows his true answer.

ISAAC
 Whatever.

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

Siren, Ridek, and Shera sit at various stations in the small
 bridge.

SIREN
 (to Shera)
 How're you doing?

She lifts her hands and looks at the layout to the console.

SHERA

Good. I'm not having any problems figuring your systems out.

SIREN

Not talking about the systems.

Shera is struck silent for a moment.

SHERA

A lot better now that you've asked that question. No one seemed to want us on board just a day ago... now you're asking how I feel.

SIREN

I hope you understand that our resistance to you was called for. We don't just let anyone on our ship. Zorin was testing you guys... maybe to a point of obscenity. Point is though, you've proven your determination.

SHERA

Captain Zorin made a pretty big deal about throwing us off. Sure he still won't do that?

SIREN

It's just Zorin. He doesn't like to use ranks. Like I said though, we was testing you.

SHERA

Hope we passed.

Siren smiles.

SIREN

Yeah. Zorin's a tough man to get an apology out of, but he'll come around.

SHERA

Guess it's not Zorin I'm worried about.

SIREN

And I'll make sure Isaac doesn't hurt you. Ever. He's not an easy person to get along with in the first place, but he's pretty vicious when he holds a grudge.

Shera nods, as if the obvious couldn't be more apparent. A beat passes by while Shera checks her console and swipes her short, brown hair out of her face.

SHERA
I noticed your glove. If I'm not mistaken, we're both in the same boat.

SIREN
How's that?

SHERA
We're both victims of circumstance.

Siren's face hardens.

SIREN
I gave up being a victim a long time ago.

SHERA
Yet that medallion you wore earlier and those hand implants beg to differ.

SIREN
I'd appreciate it if you didn't mention what the significance of those things are to anybody else. I don't parade this 'circumstance' around.

A crewman walks into the bridge. Their voices grow even quieter.

SHERA
I won't say a word.

Someone else enters: Zorin and Azel.

ZORIN
(rushed)
Turn the viewer on.

Shera responds quickly and does so. The face of Rol'Gin appears.

ROL'GIN
...and I'm especially thankful for all your cooperation.

SIREN
(drained)
More of this?

ROL'GIN

As you all might know, that large temple in the distance is what all your work has been going toward. I want you all to fully appreciate it's completion. We estimate the final brick to laid tomorrow evening.

(insincere, almost sad)

We would very much like you all to witness this event, for the blood of the unfaithful will be spilled on the top, soon replaced by the coming of the Prophet we venerate so.

SHERA

I don't like the sound of this.

ZORIN

(deadly serious)

Neither do I. I need to speak with you all. Right now.

INT. THE AVALON - OBSERVATION ROOM

ZORIN

We're running.

All four regulars are present. Siren looks worried.

SIREN

Is that a good idea? I mean, this is the Cult's stronghold, their homeworld. If they're up to something, we don't stand a chance.

Zorin turns to Azel and Shera.

ZORIN

I assume you two have had experience getting away from Cult.

AZEL

Scouts, yes. Even some big cruisers like the one that towed us here.

SHERA

Yeah, but never from an armada this size.

AZEL

We agree with you though. They don't plan to let us go at all. Back were I'm from, if you so much as look at a Red the wrong way, you're subject to whatever punishment they have in mind. Being on their most sacred soil is... unthinkable. I know it's a trap.

ZORIN

What we need is an escape plan. This ship can't outrun or outgun a Cult ship. We can't make it out of broken space in one piece.

Siren shakes her head.

SIREN

I know you Zorin. We're not going down without a fight.

ZORIN

Indeed. This is a drastic situation, it calls for a drastic solution.

Zorin seems to have a plan, but doesn't let it slip right away.

ZORIN

(to Azel)

How much do you know about Cult technology?

AZEL

More than most. Not a lot, but I've gotten into their systems before.

ZORIN

How would you feel about commandeering one of their cruisers?

Azel's face is flat.

AZEL

Huwha?

SHERA

That's a little absurd. No... that's a LOT absurd. It can't be done.

ZORIN

That's only true because no-one's tried.

SHERA

No, I'm sure people have tried.
They just don't live to tell anyone
about it.

ZORIN

Do you two want to die at the hands
of those you've spent most of your
life evading?

AZEL

Of course not.

ZORIN

Then help me with this.

COMPUTER

(suddenly)

Excuse me.

All three, minus Zorin, jump with surprise at the computer's
voice.

ZORIN

(to Siren)

Why hadn't that thing been
disconnected?

SIREN

I thought it was!

COMPUTER

Sorry folks. If you disconnect me,
you'll power down the ship. That's
simply because I am the ship.
Though, I think I can help you with
this Cult problem.

All of them are cautious.

ZORIN

How so?

COMPUTER

They don't do a very good job of
hiding their short range
transmissions. Actually, it's coded
so normal people and normal
computers can't decrypt it. But I
can, therefore they didn't do a
good enough job.

SIREN

Why would you be so gifted?

COMPUTER

I just am. I just heard that they're decommissioning three Cult ships because there were some battles on them when they went to look for 'recruits'. Since unholy blood was spilled... well, you get it. Anyway, these ships might be easily commandeered if we hurry. I think they're going to ignite them tomorrow sometime.

Azel and Shera still looked very unconvinced.

AZEL

This is crazy.

Zorin grunts. He's not happy and his distaste is almost edible.

COMPUTER

Don't worry about me. I'm not influenced by the Cult.

AZEL

No, it's crazy to think we can steal one of their ships from their homeworld.

Zorin takes some steps to Azel.

ZORIN

If I recall, I let you stay here on this ship under the condition that you help us. If you think this plan is crazy, then it's due time you throw your sanity out the window because being on Avalon means taking the road no one's willing to go.

Azel cannot fathom Zorin's words, rightfully so it seems. But the hulking Hirogen is dead serious.

AZEL

Well then, if that's the case...

(searching for words)

Hell, I guess I've always wanted to get back at the Cult in some way or another.

SIREN

(with a smile)

Trust me, you might get more than one chance at doing that.

AZEL
 If we're going to do this, we'll
 need a fool-proof plan.

For a moment, a feeling of determination is apparent in their attitudes.

SHERA
 "Fool-proof"? Isn't that kinda
 contradictory since we're the fools
 proofing the plan?

They all look at her.

AZEL
 Way to kill the moment Shera.

FADE OUT.

INT. TEMPLE ROOM

We see Hatch.

On his back and asleep, his face is mottled with dirt and sweat. A flickering flame illuminates his body, around him is only darkness. We are again in the room in which we saw Adele Tiernan, the prisoner.

A brief gust of wind wafts over his body, evident by the waving of his hair.

His eyes open and he takes a deep breath as his new surroundings take him by surprise. Thomas jolts up like awaking from a nightmare. He reaches down and feels his stomach, lifting his shirt to see a syringe entry point.

HATCH
 Isaac, I am going to kill you.

He looks around. Nothing but marble walls reflecting a few fires burning.

HATCH
 Were am I?
 (louder)
 Hello!? Is anyone here?

Someone steps up to Hatch from behind. He hears the person and twists around in fear. It's Adele.

A slight regression of fear from Hatch, now his completely taken by Adele's presence as her white robes flow in the air and give her a vaguely ethereal look.

HATCH
 (bluntly)
 Hi.

She doesn't respond. Her eyes only stare at Hatch.

HATCH
 Umm... you gotta name?
 (a beat)
 Oh, I'm Tom.

ADELE
 I'm not supposed to talk to you.

Adele tries to slink away but Hatch won't turn his gaze.

HATCH
 Wait, are you Cult?

ADELE
 Most would wish me not to be, but I am.

He starts to look frightened again.

HATCH
 You gonna hurt me?

ADELE
 Not unless the sight of the unholy
 were visual poison.

He now looks dumb struck.

HATCH
 Uh...

ADELE
 They put you in here with me to
 prove a point. I'm no better than you.

HATCH
 Hey now, I take that as a diss.

Adele kneels down to Hatch.

ADELE
 But I don't see things in such
 black and white concepts. They
 think it's torture to be kept with
 the unholy. Since the holy cannot
 converse, see, or even occupy the
 same room with the unholy, this is
 a punishment. But it's not. You're
 just as holy as I.

Hatch is just lost...

HATCH

Uh... what'd you do to deserve punishment?

ADELE

Followed my heart. Followed my faith the way I believed it was leading me.

HATCH

Bummer. Stuck between a rock and a hard place, huh?

ADELE

In a manner of speaking.

HATCH

How did I get here anyway?

ADELE

They didn't tell me. I assume you were taken in the night, against your will.

He nods.

HATCH

Yeah. Someone on my ship drugged me and through me off. I swear if I ever see him again, I'll wrap my hands around that fuckin' neck of his... he'd... he'd... Well... he'd probably just slap me away. But not before I slap him back! I don't care how many wars you fought, I once... saw a Naussican boxing match. I've got some moves.

Surprisingly, Adele doesn't shut Hatch up or go insane in any way. She simply riles up uncomfortably.

ADELE

You said his name when you woke: "Isaac"?

HATCH

Fucking guy. He got me into this mess.

Adele looks concerned.

ADELE

What a... coincidence. I mean, we don't believe in coincidences but the similarities are disturbing.

Hatch finally gets to his feet, regaining his balance.

HATCH

They going to let me go? I mean, if I'm not holy then they don't have any reason to keep me, right?

ADELE

It's not an easy task to predict the Penultimate's decisions, but I can't help but think you probably won't be set free.

He's clearly shocked.

HATCH

Ah crap! What are they going to do?

ADELE

Most likely, be done with you. If not, then something about you interests them. Then they'll convert you.

Adele finally slinks into the shadows, her worried look covering her whole face.

HATCH

I certainly hope I'm interesting.

CUT TO:

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

ZORIN

So, this is the plan.

On the bridge, we have Azel, Shera, Siren, Carlise, Isaac, and Ridek standing around Zorin.

ZORIN

It's not fool proof, but we've been in worse situations. I know we can pull this off as long as we stick to the plan and stick to our timing. We'll only have a single shot at this and we can ill afford to sully the opportunity.

He looks at them all, unable to see trust or confidence.

SIREN

We all know the Cult have something up their sleeves. As to what, who knows? I'm betting they're just going to bomb us all. However, we do know they aren't going to make their move until this ceremony they're going to have is finished tomorrow. That gives us a good twenty ours to get this plan done.

AZEL

Right. We can't get out of broken space without a Cult ship to tow us out, they have the technology and we don't. So, we're going to steal one of their ships they're going to destroy and use IT to drag us out.

ZORIN

Shera, Carlise, Ridek. You three are going to be the team we send up. We can't send more than three due to limited space.

RIDEK

Space? How we getting there again?

SHERA

The same way we got onboard Avalon. In crates.

Ridek seems sullen.

ZORIN

The Cult like fire, a lot. They also like meticulous procedures. They want those ships to burn, but to do that there needs to be oxygen.

RIDEK

Ah, so they're going to burn it down here then. Why do we need to go UP?

ZORIN

They're burning them in the sky. They don't want the remnants to touch holy ground.

RIDEK

Christ these people are confusing.

SHERA

We have to get in the boxes the explosives are in and let the transports take us up. We'll be armed so...

(a beat)

We'll have to kill whoever gets us out.

CARLISE

Don't think any of us will mind that.

Zorin chimes in.

ZORIN

Good. This is the tricky part. Once they're on board, the Avalon will have to rendezvous with the Cult ship and get out as fast as mortally possible. We still have a good armament of nuclear devices in our weapon stores. Hopefully, that will be enough to surprise some landed Cultist ships and we can run.

SHERA

This ship has the ability to outrun Cult ships as long as they're behind us a ways. But if we catch a snag, ANY snag, this plan goes down. We die.

ISAAC

Wouldn't mind that one bit.

He says his cryptic words and promptly exits.

Azel throws a smile out to the small gathering of people.

AZEL

Warm and fuzzy, isn't he?

ZORIN

Are we all set on this plan? If there are ANY objections... well, I don't want to hear them.

SHERA

We'll do everything we can to make sure this works. No matter how crazy it may seem.

AZEL

You do know that "kerzie" in ancient Deltan means "brilliant"?

A minute beeping is heard from one of the stations. Siren checks it out.

SIREN
Looks like the Cult are making
another announcement.

ZORIN
(quickly)
Put it up.

INT. TEMPLE ROOM

As before. Though now, Hatch is feeling one of the large pillars extending up to the large ceiling.

HATCH
So, why aren't there any lights in
here? Just fire.

ADELE
Light is one of the Sacred Elements.
We don't allow it to be artificially
created, only by the natural
process of fire.

HATCH
Ah. Is that what you did to deserve
an execution? Use a flashlight or
somethin'?

ADELE
Not in the least. Using artificial
light only results in twenty lashes.
(Hatch is shocked)
My crime took place 5 years ago,
during the end of the war.

HATCH
War? I hear people talking about
this war, but no-one's explained it
to me.

Adele is perplexed.

ADELE
How have you not heard of the war
between Duranon and Jushai Prime?

HATCH
I wasn't here. See I...

He catches his self.

HATCH

I wasn't here at all.

ADELE

I see. Well, to summarize, Jushai Prime made a pact with Duranon. Duranon betrayed Jushai and allowed several attacks to cripple Jushai Prime's economy. As a result, Duranon allowed Jushai's rivals and their followers to annihilate that planet.

HATCH

Oh. So there's obviously a lot of bad blood between those people?

ADELE

Precisely. I made the unfortunate decision to uncover the Cult's part in Jushai Prime's destruction. Our religion has grown corrupt from people like the Penultimate Sovari. They seek to undermine entire societies. When I made this information public, I was deemed nothing less than a heretic.

HATCH

Hmm... Isaac said he was a Jushai Prime medic in the war. That Azel and Shera were Duranon...

Suddenly, Adele's mood turns to extreme interest, almost shock.

ADELE

Wait, Isaac the medic? Isaac SAROLA?

HATCH

You know him?

ADELE

At first, I didn't think it could be the same Isaac.

The large doors to the room slam open. Both look to see Sovari and three Acolyte guards walk in.

SOVARI

I see your heresy deepens as you choose to converse with the unholy.

HATCH

Hey dude, I'm sick of this...

Without a second's passing, one of Sovari's guards LEAPS faster than the eye can see and SLAMS his shoulder into Hatch's chest. Tom flies into a nearby pillar and collapses to the ground.

SOVARI

Speak to me again and the next one will tear your torso into pieces.

Tom clutches his chest in agony, coughing uncontrollably.

ADELE

What are you here for?

SOVARI

Your announcement is going out. Come, let's show the people the face of heresy.

He grabs her by the arm and starts to lead her out.

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

As before, all are watching the screen with attentive eyes. On the screen is Rol'Gin himself, as if that's a surprise. However, much to everyone's surprise, his speech is not as passionate as it usually is.

SIREN

Is it just me, or has he lost his edge?

AZEL

Might be he doesn't need it. We're all dead, he doesn't need to spew any more propaganda.

ZORIN

Something's bothering him.

ROL'GIN

Though today will be seen as the last day of your servitude, tomorrow will usher in a new era. Rather, it will set forth a motion that will not stop until the stars no longer shine in the sky and life exists only on an ethereal plane. Tomorrow, we welcome the Prophet to our world. Tomorrow, the Prophet will wipe away the blood of the unfaithful.

INT. THE AVALON - SICKBAY

Sitting in a chair, Isaac is watching a viewscreen.

ROL'GIN

Today, however, we will show you
the face of a traitor.

The view changes to that of the towering Cult temple that's just about complete. Atop the tower is a shining metal device unrecognizable from this distance.

The view changes again, closer now to the device.

Closer again...

Closer...

Closer...

We are now right on it. We see Sovari and his three Acolytes.

SOVARI

Those Who Walk In The Light will
not tolerate Those Who Bring Forth
Darkness.

Another Acolyte brings Adele into view, her white form a mere puppet conducted by the guard.

ISAAC

NO!!!

Isaac stands in amazement.

ISAAC

Adele! It can't be!

The guard straps Adele to the large metal device. The device is grotesque looking. Several boring drills are attached to the top, pointing down towards Adele's head.

ISAAC

Oh my god...

SOVARI

As you can plainly see, a corrupt
mind will always be the root of
evil. To destroy evil, one must
root out the source.

Adele struggles in the straps that hold her in place.

SOVARI

As you can see, this device was designed for death. Anyone who allies against Those Who Walk In The Light must be put to death while on our world.

Without a moments hesitation, Isaac storms out of the sickbay.

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

Still attentive, the crew doesn't stray from the screen. Sovari is still going on about Adele and her imminent death.

SHERA

They're going to kill that poor woman with that thing?

AZEL

Is that a surprise Shera? I'm surprised they aren't pulling her eyes out with her own chopped off fingers.

ZORIN

Quiet.

Back to Sovari.

SOVARI

We have made a promise to you all, that once your work here is complete you will be freed. We keep our promises... However, we cannot let you leave in good conscience without seeing this historic event.

AZEL

Didn't they say this already?

ZORIN

We should all take comfort in the fact that we won't be here when all this takes place.

(louder)

Let's get moving. I don't want to waste time. Those explosives are going to go up in an hour.

Shera gives a concerned look.

SHERA

Uh, Zorin?

ZORIN
What is it?

SHERA
How did we get that information?
About the crates.

ZORIN
I...

COMPUTER
(loudly)
It was me! Give credit where it's
due Zorin.

Zorin, in his constant gaze of stone, doesn't answer. Shera smirks and nods.

SHERA
Oh, I see how it is.

ZORIN
(long sigh)
Indeed, this was the source of the
information.

COMPUTER
Though, if I were influenced by the
Cult this all might be a trap.

Silence. Everyone is momentarily stunned.

A Beat.

COMPUTER
Hah! Just kidding guys. Go get 'em.

An angry sigh of relief from most of the crew as they exit the bridge. Ridek and Carlise remain to work.

INT. THE AVALON - CORRIDOR

Siren and Zorin are walking together through the narrow halls of the Avalon.

ZORIN
The fact of the matter is I don't
trust the thing.

SIREN
This computer is the same one we've
had for six long years, only now it
has a voice. Maybe we should have
listened to Hatch-

Quickly, Isaac comes up to both of them from behind.

ISAAC
Hey! We have a problem!

ZORIN
What is it?

ISAAC
That woman, Adele. Adele Tiernan.

SIREN
Yeah, she's dead meat by the looks
of it.

ISAAC
No, we have to save her!

Blank stares from both Siren and Zorin. And only silence...

In unison, they both turn from Isaac and walk off.

ISAAC
Hey! I'm serious! I know her, she
knows me.

ZORIN
Did you catch the part where that
man said if we try something funny,
they'll kill us in that very same
machine.

ISAAC
We're already planning on stealing
one of their ships, why can't we
rescue her while we're at it?

SIREN
Isaac, we're running FROM the Reds.
It's not on our agenda to get
closer first.

He's angry, very evidently.

ISAAC
In all the time I've been on this
ship with you, have I EVER asked
for anything? In fact, have I ever
really complained?

SIREN
Uh yeah. All the time.

ISAAC

Well, my point is is that I've stuck with you guys through all your trials and tribulations. I get paid and I have a loyalty to you. All I'm asking is this one favor.

(a beat)

We're already doing something to royally piss the Reds off, this wouldn't be any different.

ZORIN

I'm not taking any unnecessary risks. Go back to sickbay.

They both leave Isaac standing all alone in the corridor.

Isaac's muscles tense, then he slams his fist into the wall.

INT. TEMPLE ROOM

Silently, Tom sits next to a pillar sullenly fiddling with his fingers. He seems unhappy, though not disturbed by his predicament.

The doors open again. Adele is shoved into the room and the doors shut.

HATCH

Hey! Are you okay? Did they hurt you?

She slowly walks to him.

ADELE

Every time they speak of me like that, it hurts me.

HATCH

I'm sorry.

ADELE

Don't be. Your regrets won't change my future.

HATCH

What about my future? Hell, I'm getting sick of future as a whole. First I'm teleported through an ion storm thousands of years into the future, and now I'm...

ADELE

(interrupting)

What? Teleported? What happened?

HATCH

I don't even know. I WAS starting to think it was just a dream until recently.

ADELE

Still, I'd like to hear.

HATCH

Not much to say I guess. I was a shuttle pilot for Starfleet...

(exaggerated)

In the 23rd century....

(normal)

With a shitbag of a life. I was transporting cargo when I hit an ion storm. I was knocked out and here I am.

ADELE

Wait, you said Starfleet? Are you referring to the Federation?

HATCH

Yeah. Apparently, that's gone too. Something called the Cataclysm did it in.

ADELE

(truly in awe)

My goodness. You are divine.

Hatch rears back.

HATCH

Last time I heard that, I was with my friend Byron in a seedy bar on Coridon.

ADELE

You don't know? The Federation gave birth to the Cult.

HATCH

Huh?!

ADELE

It's a complicated story, maybe you should read some of our writings.

HATCH

I'm not much of a reader. Last book I read was "Sluggish Sloth and the Panda Brothers Save the Zoo" when I was... uh, last month.

She nods.

ADELE

(still awed)

I see you are more alien to these stars than the most distant of extraterrestrials.

EXT. AVALON LANDING RAMP

On the ramp, Carlise, Ridek, and Shera converse with Zorin, Azel, and Siren. The three heading out have on black clothing and tool belts full of various devices.

ZORIN

Those dampers on your belt will keep the Cult sensors from picking up your life signs. Other than that though, stealth is of the utmost importance.

SHERA

Siren gave us some good tips an hour ago. I think we'll make it.

CARLISE

'Think'... yeah.

SIREN

We'll be watching the ship. When we see you descending, we'll fire off a nuke to throw the Cult off and meet you mid-sky. If this works, we'll be out of here before the Cult move on their plans.

They all nod.

Zorin steps up.

ZORIN

Good luck. Come back alive.

CARLISE

(with a smile)

We'll try, can't guarantee anything.

Zorin and Siren go back up into the ship. Azel goes to his cousin.

AZEL

Do what he says. I can't imagine not having you around to keep me in check.

She smiles and embraces Azel into a hug.

INT. THE AVALON - ENGINEERING DECK

Engineering is completely devoid of people. Until Azel walks in. He walks slowly, with worry obviously in his mind more than anything. He isn't sad, but emotions are overwhelming him.

He moves over to the warp sphere as he watches the tendrils of light pulse and crackles over the surface.

A loud CLANK is heard. Azel turns suddenly.

AZEL

Hello? You drop something?

No answer. He goes to investigate, looking around the devoid room. Nothing but consoles and equipment strewn about the floor and walls.

The large form of Isaac Sarola BURSTS from behind a wall and tackles Azel to the bulkhead. Azel shouts in terror as Isaac trains a large pistol to Azel's head.

AZEL

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

ISAAC

Shut up Xindi! I've watched the only people I've ever cared about get slaughtered by your people, and their bodies dismembered and thrown in the streets when the war was over. My friends, my family, they're all gone because of you!

AZEL

I didn't do shit! You're just taking your frustrations out on the first person you...

ISAAC

Not anymore! No more!

AZEL

Then just kill me!

He shakes with anger, Azel using all his strength to keep some pressure off of him from Isaac's large arm.

ISAAC
How are you with these systems?

AZEL
What?

ISAAC
(shouting)
HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THESE SYSTEMS?!

AZEL
I know them well enough! Why?

Isaac thinks for a second.

ISAAC
I need you to do something...

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

As before, the bridge is occupied only by Siren and Zorin. And the ever present computer.

SIREN
Zorin, isn't that a little much?

ZORIN
Not in the least.

SIREN
These nukes aren't a toy. They'll utterly disintegrate anything within half a kilometer. Why do we need 12 loaded?

He's reluctant to say anything.

ZORIN
Siren, we have to prepare for the possibility that the team won't make it. If they fail, we'll have to run. Those nukes will be our only hope of catching the Cult off guard.

SIREN
Twelve nukes will kill a lot of innocents.

ZORIN
We've faced bigger moral challenges
than this. These people's lives
over ours, that's the way of the
universe anymore.

She sighs in disbelief and hangs her head.

COMPUTER
Excuse me. There's an incoming
transmission.

ZORIN
Rol'Gin?

COMPUTER
Huh... no. It's coming from within
the ship. Engineering.

Zorin looks confused.

ZORIN
Put it up.

On screen, Isaac's determined face appears.

ZORIN
Isaac? What's this about?

ISAAC
I don't think I'm being taken very
seriously. In fact, I'm starting to
think my presence on this ship
isn't very well respected. All I
ever wanted was a crew, friends to
rely on.

SIREN
Isaac, we rely on you as much as
you rely on us.

ISAAC
Bull. If that were true, we'd go
after Adele like I asked.

ZORIN
We've already been over why we
can't get her.

ISAAC
Unacceptable. I'm sorry, but this woman is the only person left that I truly care about. I'll be damned if I have to watch her brains get bored out.

Isaac touches an unseen button. Violently, the ship SHAKES.

ZORIN
Isaac, what are you doing?!

ISAAC
I'm saving the only thing my life has. The only person my life has ever meant anything to. I got out Xindi friend here to rig the warp sphere to meltdown and detonate. I have a code to release the rig, but unless we go to that Cult temple and rescue Adele, I'll have no choice but to let this ship go down in flame.

Zorin is searingly angry, Siren is overcome by shock.

ISAAC
I'm sure the Cult would love the nuclear explosions to follow...

On this grim, dire scene, we...

FADE OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED