

Avalon Pilot Episode
Shattered Heaven

by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

A CUP

A beat-up, gritty, almost rusted over mug fills our view. Its entire round surface is covered by dents both small and large, and a crack sealed by a white epoxy scars the entire vessel. A sudden gentle breeze catches the steam, sending it to the sky in tiny intricate patterns before gently resuming its more ordered wafting. Our focus slowly pulls back to find the cup resting on a clear glass table, packed with dozens of actual paper magazines and clear Starfleet PADDs.

Behind the dingy cup, a pair of shadows flit back and forth at a rapid pace. A feminine shadow runs a bit faster than the masculine-formed one, moving from a hidden room off screen to another on the opposite side of the modestly sized room.

MELAINIE (O.S.)

Tom, will you stop it!?

Our backpedaling continues past the clear table to a blocky sofa covered in various garments in wildly different stages of cleanliness. Only the tiniest slivers of the sofa's original upholstery can be seen under the clothing, there are so many different piles.

HATCH (O.S.)

But, please! Melanie! I'll get better!

Behind the sofa, a larger table is overloaded with dinner plates, most of them covered with food only half eaten. Some plates near the bottom of several piles are beginning to cover over with a black mold. An insect of indeterminate origin runs out from under an overturned mug and over a plate covered with steaming waffles before running out of frame directly ahead of us.

MELAINIE (O.S.)

You said that last time, Tom. And now look where it's got us!

HATCH (O.S.)

Oh yeah? Well I wasn't the one sleeping around with that pretty boy from the *Enterprise*!

There is a long pause between the arguing human voices. Our focus continues backward, over a sink packed with so many dingy dishes that any water sprayed into it would immediately splatter onto the floor. And the rusty faucet continually drips water at a regular pace.

MELAINIE (O.S.)

And I guess that bra I found under
the bed last week was yours?

We finally stop behind the tiny kitchen and make a complete turn around. Directly ahead of us is a tiny room, where the shadows have finally stopped moving.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX A -- HATCH'S BEDROOM

Standing on opposite sides of a bed barely large enough for a single person, two people stare each other down. One is an average looking man with straight black hair and an unimpressive build. He wears a simple white shirt and black shorts, both of them wrinkled and unkempt. This is THOMAS HATCH.

His opposite is a human woman completely different from the man. Tall, beautiful, and sporting gold streaked red hair down to her shoulders, MELANIE MOURICK is an icon.

HATCH

I told you, that was a present I
bought for you!

MELAINIE

A present, huh?

(pause)

Where was the wrapping? The receipt
of sales-

HATCH

(interrupting)

In my pocket!

MELAINIE

(shouting)

YOU WEREN'T WEARING PANTS WHEN I
FOUND THEM!

Hatch pauses and looks around the tiny bedroom. Around him, more clothes are strewn about, including a Starfleet uniform but with the infamous red jacket sporting a rather large pink stain.

HATCH

THEY WERE IN MY OTHER PANTS!

Melanie stops arguing and packs more of her belongings into a standard-looking duffel.

MELAINIE

You know what? I'm tired of arguing, Tom. I'm tired of trying to show you a better life. You're a damn slob and a loser, and you'll always be one.

She stops throwing items into the duffel and zips it shut.

MELAINIE

You spent what, two months on a starship before they kicked you off?

Hatch's average face goes red.

HATCH

You promised not to bring that up.

MELAINIE

Well what can I not? You couldn't even survive on a ship for longer than a couple of months before they saw the truth of you. You're nothing but a little loser who loves to be stepped on.

HATCH

That's not true!

Melanie begins to step out of the small room.

MELAINIE

Oh really? And whose dream was it to become a ship captain one day?

HATCH

(points to uniform)

But I AM!

Melanie suddenly bursts with laughter.

MELAINIE

That tiny little piece of flying crap? You gotta be kidding me.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX A -- HATCH'S ROOM

The woman steps around piles of clothing and garbage on her way to the apartment's door.

HATCH (O.S.)

Melanie!

She turns, but her face is already slackened with disgust.

MELAINIE

Tom, grow up.

(looks at room)

No, first clean up this mess. And THEN grow up.

(beat, wistfully)

I really used to believe in you, you know that? I really thought you'd rise up to meet all those goals you set yourself up for.

Hatch tries to walk closer to Melanie in the quiet moment, but she slowly heads for the door. His eyes are already swelled with tears. Hers are bone dry.

MELAINIE

But all you did was sit down and fail. You're a failure, Thomas Hatch. And I can't stand to live with a man who won't try to fix himself.

Eventually, she's standing outside the door.

HATCH

(crying)

Melanie, please. I just need time... I just need you...

MELAINIE

(like ice)

Nice try. You should have said that six months ago when I would have believed you.

She reaches around the door's threshold and taps a hidden button. As she does, a tiny picture slowly falls to the floor. She does not retrieve it.

MELAINIE

I won't be seeing you.

The door closes and Hatch is left alone in his tiny, filthy apartment.

Slowly, very slowly indeed, Hatch sinks to his knees and begins to let the moisture fall from his eyes to the floor.

HATCH
(quietly)
Melanie...

As he looks down, he notices the small picture touching the door. When he picks it up, his tear-reddened eyes immediately harden.

It's a picture of Melanie and a smug looking Starfleet officer in front of the U.S.S. Enterprise museum in New York.

HATCH
You bitch.

Slowly standing, ignoring the painful cracks his knees make, Hatch stalks to the window and small balcony his room sports. The warm San Francisco air buffets his loose hair and clothing, seeming only to spur his tumultuous feelings.

HATCH
YOU BIIIIIIIIITCH!

Five stories under him, the unmistakable form of Melanie takes one last look at Hatch's apartment before walking toward a sleek Federation shuttle. In fury, Hatch throws the picture at her.

Unfortunately, the angry wind picks the paper image up and sends it flying. Hatch watches it for a moment before running back to his apartment, not bothering to close the door to the outside.

We follow the fluttering picture up into the sky, skirting past some birds on its way up.

We see a faint glimmer of an orange structure.

A white hill pokes out from the bottom of our vision.

Finally, the picture begins to gently descend, and we get a very familiar panoramic view.

At the bottom of the screen, plain letters appear: **San Francisco. 2289.**

Dozens of shuttles and small craft buzz about in the pristine skies as we continue to pull back from this panoramic shot. Very slowly, the city comes into its full and perfect view.

In the background, the shuttle Melanie boarded slowly takes up more and more of the screen, eventually becoming large enough to force us to:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. LOW EARTH ORBIT

In all her glory, the capitol world of the Federation twirls in perfect serenity. Hundreds of small shuttles and dozens of larger vessels flit about in orbit and on the surface.

Immediately ahead of us sprawls the massive mushroom-shaped spacedock facility, spinning in stark contrast to the world it hovers above.

HATCH (V.O.)

You did WHAT!?!

INT. SPACEDOCK -- DOCKING PORT 5 -- PORT OFFICE HALL

In fitting with its efficient Starfleet mandate, the offices that house the various officials and pencil-pushers of the facility all have the same gray, dull configuration. Long halls full of exactly identical rooms mark this office space, and we follow a good number of them before winding up at the door of one of the thousands of small offices.

Standing at the door of this specific office is Hatch, dressed in his pink-stained red jacket and black pants, both of them ripped open at the knees. His hair is just as mussed as it was before, and his eyes now support two large, red circles around them. In all, he looks like total hell.

In the office, a portly PORT OFFICIAL sits behind a gray desk covered with gray PADDs. His face is impassive and a bit strained. It's clear he doesn't much tolerate Hatch's presence.

PORT OFFICIAL

(plainly)

I'm sorry, Tom, but your schedule's been changed again.

HATCH

And there's no way you can negotiate with them?

PORT OFFICIAL

Negotiate with the Starfleet?

(whistle)

Boy do you have some funky ideas.

HATCH
 (whining)
 But I've got a meeting with the
 Starfleet recruiters tomorrow...

PORT OFFICIAL
 Reschedule it.

HATCH
 I've already rescheduled three times.

PORT OFFICIAL
 Then you're out of luck, son.

HATCH
 Can't you... I dunno... put my ship
 out of commission for a week?

The official looks up at Hatch with dull eyes.

PORT OFFICIAL
 No.

HATCH
 What about singing that document
 that says I'm unfit to fly?

The official goes back to his PADDs for a moment, but an
 impatient cough from Hatch brings him back.

PORT OFFICIAL
 I could sign it, but then you'd be
 out of a job. And you'd never meet
 with your recruiter.

HATCH
 (exasperated)
 Fuck...

PORT OFFICIAL
 (sigh)
 Watch your language.

HATCH
 (childishly)
 Make me.

Hatch immediately goes red with embarrassment after the display.

HATCH
 Sorry...

PORT OFFICIAL

(sighs)

Just get your things together and prepare your ship for departure. You'll meet with the U.S.S. Diadem in sector zero-zero-three in ten hours.

(beat)

I trust you got those shielding upgrades for your ship?

HATCH

(obviously lying)

Uh... yeah... last week...

PORT OFFICIAL

Either way...

The large man turns around for a moment and then turns back to Hatch with an oversize PADD in hand.

PORT OFFICIAL

Give this to the captain of the Diadem when you get there, and the next part of your assignment will be downloaded onto it.

Hatch takes the device with an awed expression.

HATCH

Ooh! Must be classified stuff.

PORT OFFICIAL

Or dangerous.

Hatch laughs.

HATCH

Why would they get a private ferryman to ship dangerous...

(realizes, stops laughing)

...cargo...

(beat)

Shit. It was that damn pretty boy... I shoulda saw that coming.

PORT OFFICIAL

Well, whoever assigned this expects you out at sector zero-zero-three in ten hours.

(looks at chronometer)

I suggest you get going.

HATCH

Yeah, yeah. I'll get right on it.

Hatch exits the office, leaving the official to finally get back to work.

INT. SPACEDOCK -- SUBSPACE DISTORTION BAR -- REAR BOOTH

The Subspace Distortion bar is what you would expect from a 23rd century recreational room. People stand tall and proud in their perfectly clean uniforms and civilian garbs, talking and chatting happily. Pleasant music wafts out of hidden speakers in the room, giving everything a very pleasant feel.

Except for a single booth in the back. The light hovering over the small space is shattered and smoking, giving a dangerous ambiance. The music generator is broken and emits only faint sounds of white noise.

In this gloomy scene sits Hatch, his eyes glazed over with the dull look of boredom. His fingernail idly scratches the dirty table he rests on, making a sizable indent in its surface. Sitting next to his idle hand is a tall glass full of a green liquid that gently emits steam.

As Hatch sits, a shadow slowly covers his limited light, almost bathing him in perfect darkness.

BYRON (O.S.)

Damn, you look like hell, Tom.

Hatch slowly looks up, and our focus follow him.

Standing above Hatch is a male of Slavic descent, sporting a beard that extends past his neck and an authentic bomber jacket. His look just exudes the aura of the classic adventurer, and he lets everyone know it. This is ANTON BYRON.

HATCH

What's it to you?

Byron sits opposite of Hatch, taking a moment to check out the various females that walk by the shoddy booth.

BYRON

I'm just saying, when a guy looks like hell, something's bound to be up.

(beat)

Or he's just a lazy slob who never cares about how people see or smell hi-

HATCH
 (interrupting)
 Shut up.

Byron chuckles and holds his fist up, getting the attention of the waitress on duty. She smiles and appears next to the table with a small glass filled with a brown liquid. Hatch watches her leave before turning to Byron's beverage.

HATCH
 What the hell is that?

BYRON
 (takes quick drink, grimaces)
 Deltan vodka... at least their
 equivalent.

HATCH
 I never knew Delta Four had potatoes.

BYRON
 (drinks, groans)
 They don't.

Hatch watches Byron finish the drink and sniff back tears.

HATCH
 What's it taste like?

BYRON
 Like rotten chicken.

A dead-pan expression from Hatch.

HATCH
 So why do you drink it?

Byron smiles and holds his hand up for another glass.

BYRON
 Wakes me up and clears the senses.
 (beat)
 But enough about me. Why'd you call
 me over here, Tom?

Hatch brings out the PADD from before, this time covered with smear marks and fingerprints.

HATCH
 I need a copilot.

Using some of the lining of his jacket, Byron wipes the PADD clean. He studies it for only a moment before his eyes go wide and he slams the device down on the table.

BYRON
Hell no.

HATCH
What?

BYRON
Get someone else, 'cause I ain't going.

Hatch's expression slackens.

HATCH
What?

BYRON
You heard what I said. I've got too many things on my plate to go... there.

HATCH
It's just the U.S.S.... uh...

Hatch tries to reach for the PADD, but Byron stops him.

BYRON
Yeah, captained by the worst asshole in the history of universe. He busted me a year back for smuggling a tribble. A damned TRIBBLE for my girlfriend.

HATCH
Which one?

Byron stops for a moment.

BYRON
I don't remember...
(beat)
But that's not the point. I'm not getting near that ass.

HATCH
C'mon, Byron. You're the best pilot out there.

BYRON
And don't you forget it.

Hatch smiles.

HATCH
So you'll go?

BYRON
(quickly)

No.

Byron stands and Hatch follows. Their motion knocks over a group of drunk patrons.

PATRON 1
Hey!

PATRON 2
Watch it!

HATCH
Sorry about that.

Hatch runs after a rapidly retreating Byron, making sure to completely evade the wrath of the tousled patrons.

HATCH
Wait!

Byron slips into a massive crowd just outside the Bar's door. Hatch steals a drink from a passing server's tray and downs it before exiting the establishment.

INT. SPACEDOCK -- PROMENADE

The sheer number of people inhabiting the massive promenade is truly astounding. Thousands of different people of different species mull about in perfect harmony, content in their perfect lives and wonderful pastimes. Hatch lumbers through the throngs, keeping his eyes on a rapidly retreating bomber jacket.

HATCH
Byron!

Hatch shoves his way through the thick crowd, bowling past groups of red-jacketed Starfleet officers and brightly dressed, perfectly content people milling about.

HATCH
BYRON!

Still running forward, Hatch gains just enough ground to grab the fuzzy neck lining of Byron's jacket. With all of his strength, he yanks it back.

BYRON
HEY!

With a monumental clatter, both Hatch and Byron, with a dozen other shocked people, fall to the promenade's floor.

Byron gets back to his feet instantly.

BYRON
All right, who the hell did that?
This thing cost more than your
children on the Orion market...

Hatch stands an instant later, holding up his hand to stop the offensive comment.

HATCH
Hey, shut up.

BYRON
Tom? What the fu-

HATCH
(hushed whisper)
Byron!

Still exasperated, Byron tries to turn and get back on his way, helping up a couple of attractive females along his path.

HATCH
Wait!

Without turning back, Byron replies to Hatch's questions.

BYRON
I told you, Tom. You're alone on
this one.

Hatch moves to a foot behind the retreating adventurer.

HATCH
But I need a copilot. Desperately!

BYRON
Too bad.

HATCH
(whining)
But Byron!

Finally, with a long sigh, Byron turns to face a pleading Hatch.

BYRON
Look, Tom. I told you that I'm not
going to face that jackass again,
and I'm sure as hell not going to
face him next to the guy who drove
his fiancée to tears.

Hatch's face goes blank.

HATCH
Fiancee...?

Byron blushes brightly.

BYRON
(almost giggling)
You didn't know?

HATCH
But... this morning...

BYRON
She left your apartment. Yeah. It's
all over the gossip channels.

HATCH
(breathlessly)
Gossip channels...?

BYRON
Tom, you've been screwed over.

Byron looks at a chronometer hidden on his wrist.

BYRON
(cheerfully)
Well, I gotta run. Hot date with a
Vulcan priestess.

Byron once again shuffles off into the crushing crowd,
leaving Hatch alone with his thoughts.

HATCH
Melanie?

Just as his eyes begin to well with tears of sadness and
rage, the starbase's massive wall chronometer suddenly
chimes. The pleasant bell tone hits Hatch like a sledgehammer.

HATCH
I'm late!

Hatch runs through the crowd toward a gigantic window with
hundreds of smaller starships docked in a perfect order. One
such ship, a pitted, broken hulk of crap, is his obvious
destination.

EXT. OPEN SPACE

A majestic starship of the venerable Excelsior class floats
in space.

She is a gleaming example of the Federation's might and power, her perfect hull shines in the light of a nearby star, perfectly illuminating her pristine registry number:

NCC- 2654

U.S.S. Diadem

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM -- BRIDGE

The starship's perfectly ordered bridge is a marvel of efficiency and cleanliness. Officers and enlisted people move back and forth on pre-ordered paths along pre-ordered time schedules. In the background, information is passed verbally with near robotic ease.

Sitting in the opulent center seat of the massive bride is a man who looks more bred for command than trained for it. A shock of perfectly groomed blond hair sits with perfectly combed grace on his head. His perfectly blue eyes seem to see all, while his perfect teeth in his perfect, square jaw, gleam in even the faintest of light.

This is captain JAMESON, GRANT JAMESON.

An aide approaches the pretty-boy captain with a clear PADD and a small microphone, prompting him to speak.

The captain's accent is stereotypically middle-American, with no flaws in his speech and with a military air.

JAMESON

Captain's Log, stardate 9613.4. We have been at station in this sector for over six hours, waiting for our courier to arrive and transport this forsaken engine equipment liberated from an unknown archaeological site.

(beat, sigh)

However, I have orders to wait as long as it takes, fully against my wishes and better judgment. It seems Starfleet knows what's best for me and my ship at all times...

Into this scene comes Melanie, fully decked out in a Starfleet uniform, with a commander rank pin on her shoulder.

MELAINIE

Still late?

Jameson smiles warmly at Melanie as she enters, but he quickly smothers it with false professionalism.

JAMESON
(venomously)

Yes.

MELAINIE
Not surprising.

JAMESON
Just why did you recommend this man,
Melanie. I understand a past
history but...

MELAINIE
Trust me, our 'history' is the last
thing on my mind.

JAMESON
Then... why?

Melanie smiles almost devilishly as she brings a PADD out from seemingly nowhere and shoves it in Jameson's face.

As he reads it, his face lights up in a full demonic grin.

JAMESON
That's good.

MELAINIE
He needs to be taught a lesson in
responsibility.

JAMESON
(false warmth)
How did I get so lucky with a woman
like you.

The captain moves to embrace Melanie, but an outstretched hand stops him.

MELAINIE
Not on duty, dear.

Jameson sits back, an obvious rage barely kept in check.

JAMESON
Of course.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

The interior of Hatch's shuttle is just as the outside. Entire consoles are open and exposed to the elements, some of them faintly smoking. Food wrappers cover most of the floor surface, and small bits of broken technology and other useless knickknacks cover almost every inch of open space.

Hatch sits in the left of two ratty-looking seats, his eyes closed in bliss as he munches on an unhealthy-looking chocolate bar.

HATCH
(mouth full)
Hmm... that's good.

Unfortunately, his mastication perfection is quickly broken by Jameson's loud voice over the comm.

JAMESON'S COMM VOICE
Diadem to courier shuttle. Explain your tardiness.

Hatch's last bite goes down like an un-chewed apple.

HATCH
(to himself)
Damn pretty boy...
(slowly, out loud)
Uh... this is courier shuttle...
uh... Gamma. I'm... uh...
experiencing technical... uh...
malfunction...s...

There is a loud sigh over the comm, as well as a few muttered offensive slurs.

JAMESON'S COMM VOICE
Just... orient yourself at the prescribed coordinates and we'll get this over with.

HATCH
Will do.

Hatch rolls his eyes as he works over the shoddy controls. Even as he touches the buttons, the console wobbles dangerously.

EXT. SPACE

The dinky, battered shuttle slides up next to the massive, sparkling starship.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Hatch sits slumped in his chair as a monotone voice runs over a dull checklist. To his rear in a relatively clean storage area, several gray canisters beam in and rest heavily.

MONOTONE COMM VOICE
Canister A113?

Hatch sighs and opens another chocolate bar.

HATCH

Check.

Another beam-in.

MONOTONE COMM VOICE

Canister A114?

A big bite.

HATCH

Check.

Beam in.

MONOTONE COMM VOICE

Canister A115?

Chewing.

HATCH

Check.

Big bite.

Beam in.

MONOTONE COMM VOICE

Canister A116?

Chewing. Sigh.

HATCH

Check.

A final, extremely large canister beams in, rocking the shuttle violently. Several consoles spark.

MONOTONE COMM VOICE

Final canister transfer complete.

The comm. shuts off loudly.

HATCH

Finally...

Just as Hatch reaches behind him into a small refrigeration device to pull out a beverage in a metal can, Jameson's voice filters in again.

JAMESON'S COMM VOICE

You have it all, Hatch?

Hatch takes a long drink before replying. He savors the tiny revenge.

HATCH

Yes.

JAMESON'S COMM VOICE

Good. I'm sending you the coordinates of your destination.

HATCH

Alright.

The familiar PADD, now almost completely obscured by fingerprints and other stains, lights up with new information. Hatch uses a black-stained cloth to clear the image up.

HATCH

Got it.

JAMESON'S COMM VOICE

Good. They expect you there in four hours.

HATCH

Got it.

Again, the comm shuts off loudly.

Hatch takes one long look at the PADD before tossing it aside and going back to his food.

HATCH

I got it.

INT. U.S.S. DIADEM -- MELANIE'S QUARTERS

Jameson walks into the standard quarters like a triumphant soldier, his chest puffed and his mouth curled in a diplomatic smile.

JAMESON

He's on his way.

Melanie slip from behind a small partition wall clad in only a small towel. While no water drips from her, her post-shower state is apparent.

MELAINIE

Good.

They both smile before running toward each other and embracing in a passionate kiss. Eventually, Melanie breaks it off.

MELAINIE

And you're sure he's headed for it?

JAMESON

The best my ops officer can get it.
He'll be cruising through that ion
storm before he knows it.

MELAINIE

And he doesn't know about it?

Jameson smiles and looks out Melanie's window, where Hatch's broken shuttle moves off after sputtering and stopping several times.

JAMESON

Not in the slightest.

Melanie smiles and slips down out of our view, dragging Jameson with her.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE

Hatch's tiny shuttle flies through open space at a slow, leisurely pace.

Ahead, just barely large enough to see, a small glowing patch of... something grows slowly larger. It's faint orange glow resembles a newborn star.

And it's apparent the shuttle is headed right for it.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

The cockpit is dark and serene as Hatch falls into view. His eyes are closed in the bliss of a good dream while his mouth barely whispers with whatever he is speaking in slumber land.

HATCH

(whispered)

You can count on me, barney.

(beat)

No, I've had enough beef juice, thanks.

As he shifts about in the shoddy chair, it makes stifled squeals in protest.

HATCH

(same)

That Vulcan mugged me.

As Hatch sleeps, his hands pass blindly over a small table absolutely covered with snack wrappers and empty mugs. His hands knock every item to the floor with a barely audible thump.

HATCH

(same)

Sito, you so crazy.

Soundly lost in his dream world, Hatch is completely oblivious when a red warning light begins to flash rapidly behind him.

EXT. SPACE

The shuttle continues its trek forward, this time almost completely engulfed by the same orange glow we saw before.

As our focus shifts slightly to follow the small vessel, we see the source of the glow.

A plasma storm, easily a light-year wide, blows wildly directly in front of us. Dangerous bolts of energy and power crackle furiously and currents of plasma stream lazily around.

And still the shuttle moves onward.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Hatch still sleeps even in the face of the maelstrom before him.

HATCH

The parrot owes me a drink.

But he is shaken awake when the shuttle suddenly LURCHES forward from a massive impact!

HATCH

What the hell?

EXT. SPACE

Still moving blindly forward, Hatch's beaten-up shuttle is suddenly slammed by a large, powerful bolt of plasma.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Warning klaxons blare mutely against the chaos of the moment. The cockpit is awash with smoke and flaming consoles.

And one very freaked out Hatch.

HATCH

OH MY GOD!

Another powerful JOLT. Hatch is thrown from his chair and onto the console before him.

HATCH

Goddammit!

After a painful burst of static from the comm system, the shuttle's nearly elderly female computer voice pipes up.

COMPUTER VOICE

Warning. Severe plasma storm ahead.
Course change recommended.

Hatch sits up from the console, his face twisted with anger and fear.

HATCH

Thanks a lot.

JOLT! Hatch is again shoved forward, but this time he shoves his right arm forward. The resounding thud and unmistakable sound of a bone snapping overpowers even the storm.

HATCH
AUGH! SONOFA-

JOLT!

Hatch is brought to his knees in pain and the loss of footing.

COMPUTER VOICE
Warning. Severe plasma storm ahead.
Course change recommended.

Hatch can't reply, but whimpers in frustration.

JOLT!

Visibly delirious from pain, Hatch falls to the floor of the shuddering, battered vessel.

JOLT!

Every artificial light in the shuttle is suddenly extinguished. Only the menacing orange and white flashes light the small space now.

JOLT!

Hatch is thrown to his right, directly onto his broken arm. He cries out again.

As the shuttle is continually rocked over and over by powerful jolts, Hatch staggers under a nearby smoking console. Sparks from a nearby shorted circuit land on Hatch's exposed neck, making several tiny burn marks.

COMPUTER VOICE
Warning. Structural integrity
failing. Evacuation recommended.

In his mask of pain, Hatch looks to the rear of the shuttle, where the escape pod hatch rests. Unfortunately, it's blocked by the pile of Federation crates.

HATCH
(whispered, terrified)
I'm so screwed...

Almost on cue, Hatch's expression causes another powerful JOLT! One powerful enough to knock the crates over. Hatch watches powerlessly as their weak seals pop, sending thousands of tiny little technical chips everywhere.

Some impact Hatch's injured arm, which he tries to weakly shield.

Suddenly, a ceiling conduit pops, slowly bathing the entire scene in a thick fog.

Alone, under the console and in near perfect darkness, Hatch curls into the best fetal positions he can muster.

The shuttle jolts over and over again. The hundreds of tiny chips rub against the few larger crates that resist to expel their contents.

The atmosphere gets thicker and thicker, and Hatch slowly closes his eyes. Too weak to resist, Hatch simply succumbs.

As he does, another jolt forces a crate much larger than any other to suddenly BURST open. Its contents, a weird array of black metal and blue pipes, lands on the floor and stops after on bounce.

After another impact sends the shuttle reeling, the device suddenly seems to activate. A faint glow begins to grow around the object and everything around it.

EXT. SPACE

As the storm rages, the tiny shuttle slips into its plasma folds. The same faint glow radiates from the vessel's small cockpit.

FADE OUT.

SLOW FADE IN.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE -- LATER

The cockpit is still and serene. All traces of the thick smoke are but thin wisps on the floor. The area is dark and cold, but still.

And still under the console, the injured Hatch sleeps.

EXT. SPACE

The storm is long past and the area around Hatch's broken shuttle is as calm and empty as space normally would be.

Except for a small dot of motion in the background.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Hatch slowly begins to stir back into consciousness. His right arm delicately held by his left and his neck burned badly by the spark shower, Hatch is very much a physical mess.

Hatch's eyes move under his eyelids rapidly, slowly gaining speed until he GASPS back into his waking state.

HATCH

I'm alive...?

Still holding his arm, Hatch slides out from under the console, making very sure to push all the chips out of his way.

Slowly, he stands, weathering the loud POPs his bones make in protest to his actions.

HATCH

How long was I out?

Hatch stumbles around the cockpit, crunching dozens of chips left and right. He sneezes after taking in a long breath.

As he moves forward, Hatch stumbles on the small device. He's too injured to pick it up, and his neck won't allow him to look straight down, so Hatch has to back up almost to his scorched chair.

HATCH

Hello, what's this?

The device is now dead, a black lump of metal on the floor. Hatch immediately forgets it and turns to the console behind him.

Still weak and in pain, Hatch struggles to find any semblance of functionality in his ship.

HATCH

...Computer?

He gets no response.

HATCH

Computer, status on the warp core?

No response.

Hatch stands silently for a moment, hopeful for a response, but of course, gets none.

Slowly readjusting his weight, Hatch moves to his chair, prodding it lightly with his knee.

Though a good amount of soot and black material falls off, it convinces Hatch it's sit-able.

In sitting down, Hatch cries out again from both his arm and his neck sliding along the neck rest. But he does slowly sit.

Holding his right arm in his lap, Hatch brushes the blackened console before him roughly. To his disappointment, every button is dead.

In the face of the completely lifeless shuttle and the vastness of space before him, Hatch does the only thing he can: sit there.

HATCH

...At least life support works.

EXT. SPACE

As the shuttle lists dumbly in space, a tiny speck of motion slowly grows larger.

It's approach is almost sickeningly fast, and the dot quickly coalesces into a definite shape.

A ship not longer than 200 meters suddenly orients itself above Hatch's shuttle. Her triangular hull slowly opens along the bottom and completely swallows the smaller vessel.

INT. UNKNOWN BRIDGE

Our P.O.V. is behind the bald head of a large male entity sitting in the bridge's center seat. The lights are down to an almost pitch-black level, so no truly discernible traits of anything can be made out. In fact, the only thing we can really make out is the bridge's minuscule viewscreen, which only displays an empty starfield.

CAPTAIN

Do we have it?

FEMALE VOICE

We got it. Bay doors closed... now.

The captain stands and reveals his face: he's Hirogen!

CAPTAIN

And the lifesign aboard?

The Hirogen turns to the source of the previous female voice. She stands when she sees him on his feet. Though we can't make out any facial features, we can make out a slim body frame and a long head of flowing hair.

FEMALE VOICE

Stable.

The Hirogen grunts.

CAPTAIN

Then let's get rid of it.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Hatch is once again holed up under the console, holding a fire extinguisher between his legs in the most pathetic attempt at weapon-holding ever.

HATCH

(to himself)

It's all right, Tom... it's just a
Catian freighter that went off
course... yeah... they saw me and
are going to give me a ride home...

As he speaks, the shuttle rocks lightly as if someone kicked the hull. Hatch's expression sinks.

HATCH

Oh, who am I kidding? They're gonna
kill me!

(beat)

Why does this always happen to me!?

Hatch brandishes the foot-extinguisher as best he can, preparing for the inevitable. After a moment of silence, he sobs a little.

INT. HANGAR DECK

The dimly lit hangar deck of Hatch's captors is small and completely bare of any decoration or panels. A odd feature near the rear of the area we can see is a staircase on the floor, which seems welded completely down.

Into this room enter the Hirogen captain and his female second. In the brighter light, we can see his battle-scarred face and bulging muscles and her sensual body. Her face, however, is blocked by a fearsome-looking helmet and mask.

FEMALE

Atmo reading from the shuttle is
normal. Its hull composition is
standard but... primitive.

CAPTAIN

What do you think we'll get for it?

The female is silent for a long while, studying every inch of Hatch's vessel.

FEMALE

Not much.

CAPTAIN

Enough to get to the next port?

Another pause.

FEMALE

Maybe.

After a sigh, the Hirogen walks up to the shuttle and kicks it with all his might. The shuttle actually sways several feet.

CAPTAIN

What if we chop it?

FEMALE

According to this, we'd get more cash...

CAPTAIN

How much?

Pause.

FEMALE

Honestly, it'd be more profitable to just let it go.

(beat, suddenly)

WAIT!

The Hirogen turns to her.

CAPTAIN

What?

FEMALE

The lifesign... it's human.

CAPTAIN

And?

FEMALE

Don't you get it? It's a HUMAN shuttle. They pay up their gas-holes for Earth ships.

The Captain's face perks slightly.

CAPTAIN

But how can we be sure it's human?

The female walks behind the Captain and smashes the helmet down atop his head. She remains completely hidden by his massive frame.

FEMALE

Check out it's hull construction.
Only the rarest ships have that
kind of metallurgy in this galaxy.

CAPTAIN

(awestruck)

Human ships...

(disgusted, gruffly)

Worthless piles of junk...

FEMALE

(calming tone)

Come on, any source of money is
good enough, right?

After a long, powerful sigh, the captain relents.

CAPTAIN

You're right.

(beat)

Let's flush the vermin out of our
new boat.

The hands vanish behind the Hirogen and we soon hear muffled footsteps behind him.

Only a moment later, they return with two old looking revolvers in each palm. The captain takes one in hand and pockets the other.

INT. HATCH'S SHUTTLE

Hatch's face is streaked with tears as he weathers the creepy sounds of the two people outside pounding their way in.

His face crunches into its tightest possible grimace when he hears the unmistakable crunch of a powerful metal jaw turned onto the hull. The voices of the people outside are warped and muffled, giving them all the creepier tone.

HATCH

(to himself)

Alright, Tom. You can do this. You
can beat 'em off like all those
girls back on Risa...

The whine of the intruding machine quiets, replaced by the deafening thud of a massive hull section slamming to the floor.

HATCH

They're comin' in. And they're gonna get a face full of my... feet.

Nursing his arm, Hatch waits.

The Hirogen steps into the shuttle first, brandishing the revolver cautiously.

CAPTAIN

Where is he?

The female enters on the heel of the Captain, keeping a massive rifle between her arms.

FEMALE

Front section. Under a console.

CAPTAIN

Like a rat.

The duo shuffles forward, crunching heedlessly over the spilled chips. As they approach, the Hirogen captain stamps heavily on the device, crushing it completely.

CAPTAIN

Damned mess in here.

FEMALE

What do you expect? It's been out here for years.

Hatch scrunches himself tighter under the console, trying to hide in the dim shadows. Unfortunately, he forgets his arm and he smashes it under his legs.

HATCH

ARGH!!!

With one bound, the Hirogen jumps on Hatch and yanks him out from under the console. The female comes up behind him in a good jog, bringing a suddenly bright light to bear on Hatch's face.

CAPTAIN

Who are you!?

The Captain shakes the stupefied Hatch about, causing him to wince in pain.

FEMALE

Look at his arm.
(beat)
And his neck.

Hatch stays stock still as he's looked over.

CAPTAIN

Must have been a pirate raid. Shoot
him up and send him to Isaac.

FEMALE

You got it.

The Female walks over to Hatch, suddenly producing a gigantic needle attached to a small vial of medicine. In doing so, she drops the light.

In the moment before the drug is forced into his body, Hatch sees the face of the most beautiful woman he had ever laid eyes on. Even surpassing Melanie by many factors.

Unfortunately for him, the drug takes full effect seconds later and Hatch faints dead away.

CAPTAIN

And get someone in here to clean
this mess up.

INT. SICKBAY

As with the rest of the ship, the sickbay of this vessel is badly lit and almost barely functional. Only one operating table sits in the small medical ward, but it's obvious from the two other broken stumps on either side of the room it used to be able to handle more.

The Hirogen enters first, carrying the unconscious Hatch easily in his arms. The woman follows his heels.

CAPTAIN

Isaac! Get in here!

From behind the partition slips a human almost matching the Hirogen in muscle mass, and obviously much more advanced in his attitude. His dark skin reacts with the dark lighting, giving him a wraith-like appearance all around. His bright eyes and brighter, slightly crooked teeth only add to his creepy-looking persona. This is ISSAC SAROLA.

ISAAC

What is it?

FEMALE

Human. Broken right arm and burned neck. Smoke inhalation damage.

Isaac steps completely from behind the partition, revealing a traditional long medical coat, but this one uniform black. He produces several small scanning devices and syringes from the jacket's pockets.

ISAAC

Put him down and get out. I'll call when he's awake.

The Hirogen displays uncharacteristic gentility in putting Hatch down, but is quickly covered.

CAPTAIN

Not a moment later, Isaac. I'll be outside.

Leading the woman outside, the Hirogen stomps out of the sickbay.

The moment he leaves, Isaac goes to work. He quickly passes two devices over Hatch's burns and broken arm. While they don't immediately heal, the burns look considerably better and the arm loses much swelling.

Dropping the devices, Isaac then shoves a syringe into Hatch's neck, causing him to gasp in the pain of consciousness.

HATCH

OW!

Isaac suddenly moves to Hatch's right and effortlessly RIPS his entire right sleeve off, ignoring Hatch's girlish whimper of pain.

The two stare at each other for a second, sizing up the man across from him.

Hatch suddenly lunges forward, using his drug-induced clarity to attempt escape!

But Isaac is much faster than Hatch, and he simply reaches forward to grab Hatch's injured arm. After another girlish cry of pain, Hatch relents and goes back to his previous position.

HATCH

Who are you?

ISAAC

Your doc. Now shut the hell up.

With no bedside care, Isaac produces a lime green fabric from under the medical table and begins wrapping it around Hatch's arm.

HATCH
OW! Hey! A little bedside manner
would go a long way.

Isaac ignores Hatch verbally, but does roughly squeeze the injured arm.

HATCH
DAMMIT!

It only takes a minute to wrap Hatch's arm completely. Isaac then moves to the other side of the sickbay and produces a clear container of water. He moves back to Hatch.

ISAAC
Dip.

HATCH
What?

ISAAC
In the water.

Not waiting for Hatch to move, Isaac grabs the injured arm again and slams it into the basin. The wrapping hardens into a full cast immediately.

HATCH
Hey, cool. And it doesn't hurt.

Isaac's eyes roll even in the dim light.

ISAAC
Don't thank me. I mean it.

Isaac puts his equipment away in a shadowed corner and raps roughly on the sickbay's door.

ISAAC
He's done.

The doors squeal open to emit the flustered Hirogen and the woman.

CAPTAIN
How is he?

ISAAC

He's fine. The drug I gave him'll keep him awake but painless for a while.

The Hirogen moves over to the stunned silent Hatch.

CAPTAIN

I'm Zorin, the captain of this vessel. Who are you and what were you doing out here?

Still stunned by the recent events and ZORIN'S manner, Hatch doesn't speak for a moment.

All it takes is for Zorin to flash his firearm for Hatch to speak, however.

HATCH

I'm Thomas Hatch. I'm supposed to deliver a shitload of Starfleet... stuff to a colony in this sector... I think. I was caught in a plasma storm and knocked out.

ZORIN

Starfleet?

Hatch looks confused.

HATCH

Starfleet!? You know, most powerful group in space? Based offa Earth?

Every occupant of the sickbay is suddenly flustered.

FEMALE

Earth?

ZORIN

(quickly)

What do you know of Earth?

Hatch is obviously now more perplexed than frightened.

HATCH

Uh... home of Humanity... seat of the Federation... blue skies and bitches...

ZORIN

Stop.

Zorin takes Isaac and the woman aside out of the sickbay.

INT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Zorin's face is twisted in confusion.

ZORIN
What the hell is he talking about?

ISAAC
I have no damn idea. Must be space-sick. I vote we space him.

FEMALE
Isaac!

ZORIN
(ignoring the banter)
He's not making sense. Starfleet?
The Federation?

Zorin's eyes narrow.

ZORIN
Cultist?

The other two suddenly strike very uncomfortable positions.

ISAAC
Damn good possibility.

All three share worried looks.

FEMALE
(weakly)
He... could have read something recently. It doesn't look above him.

ZORIN
Unlikely. He seems too familiar with the stuff he's saying. Almost like he's been taught to say it.

Zorin's heavy eyebrows furrow, staring into sickbay.

FEMALE
So what do we do with him?

The woman and Isaac slowly look with Zorin, where Hatch sits on the table, staring at back them with interest. In a gesture of friendliness, he meekly waves at them.

INT. SICKBAY

Hatch watches the trio enter the room once again. The woman takes point.

HATCH

Uh... what's going on?

Diplomatically smiling, the woman offers her arm for Hatch to take. As he does, his eyes wander to her hand, which causes him to scream.

In the light, her hand looks to be covered with dozens of open, black holes! Some even large enough for him to see the bones underneath.

She, however, seems to ignore Hatch's expression.

FEMALE

I'm Siren. Welcome aboard the
Avalon, Thomas Hatch.

Even though her face is the pinnacle of beauty, Hatch is so focused on her mutilated hands that he quickly faints.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN.

INT. AVALON -- HATCH'S ROOM

Hatch wakes up on the floor of a room completely devoid of any furnishing or decoration. His arm still bound in the instant-cast, it takes several minutes for him to stand.

HATCH

What the hell is going on?

As he does, Hatch looks immediately around the room, noticing first a gigantic brown stain on the wall closest to the door.

HATCH

Ew.

As he looks about, Hatch stares out the window, where the stars streak by lazily.

HATCH

We must be at low warp.

As he looks, however, the stars suddenly revert back to normal, becoming the familiar pinpoints of light.

And then the ship suddenly LURCHES forward!

HATCH

NOT AGAIN!

Thrown to the floor loudly, it takes a moment for Hatch to stand. As he does, the entire room begins to rattle violently!

HATCH

We're under attack!

As he comes to this decision, Hatch moves to the small window the room still has.

As he gets there, Hatch's eyes widen to their full capacity.

HATCH

My god...

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon, in all her glory, sails through open space. Slowly, however, her brow begins to point downward.

We follow the ship down, all the way into the atmosphere of a gorgeous blue planet!

As she impacts the air, her hull begins to glow a faint red.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The nearly pitch-dark bridge is a flurry of activity as the ship descends, intermittently shaking softly from atmospheric bumping.

ZORIN

Hull status?

A crewman, GOR'TIEN, Orion, turns from a console to the left.

GOR'TIEN

Uh... heating up.

Zorin sighs and leans forward in his large chair, obviously made just for him to replace a previously existing chair.

The tiny viewscreen displays a wild pattern of flames above everything else.

ZORIN

Time to land?

The same woman, SIREN, turns from a front console, easily readable as the helm.

SIREN

Just a few more minutes, Zorin.

EXT. ATMOSPHERE

The Avalon goes into a brief nose dive, breaking swiftly through thick clouds to finally see the first hints of land masses.

As she slows down, Avalon's hull quickly cools, but several scorches still mar her surface.

INT. AVALON -- HATCH'S ROOM

Hatch stares out the window as the ship easily twists and turns in the planet's pristine sky.

HATCH

Oh wow.

From his point of view, the ship suddenly makes a sickening turn left, causing Hatch to cough up some non-existent lunch up.

When the turn is complete, Hatch's window is overtaken by a massive city.

EXT. TYVOR CITY

Tyvor city is a jewel among jewels. Most buildings shine in the sunlight, their whitewashed sides kept perfectly bright. The few towers that dot the skyline are as natural looking as any spire, and there is no spot of pollution anywhere.

In the near distance, a perfectly blue ocean sparkles.

The Avalon flies slowly over the buildings, weaving past other departing and landing vessels on her way to a massive circular space port.

EXT. TYVOR LANDING PAD

A smooth circle of flattened earth serves as the Tyvor landing pad. Already, a good dozen ships sit at various places on the area, none of them more than a few hundred meters long. Avalon slips into the crowd easily, landing as close to the center of the ring as possible.

INT. AVALON -- CORRIDOR

In a dark corridor much like all the other ones on Avalon, Zorin and Siren walk intently forward.

SIREN

What did you say you were doing?

Zorin flashes a gun in a hidden pocket at his hip.

ZORIN

I'm taking him with us.

Siren is silent for a moment.

SIREN

Why?

ZORIN

Because I fully intend to get him off my ship right now.

SIREN

But we could use him.
(serious, whispered)
If he's really Cult...

Zorin stops.

ZORIN
I know. I know.

SIREN
He's too dangerous to just let loose.

ZORIN
(firmly)
And he's too dangerous to be kept here.

They continue on, quickly turning a corner. After a moment, they have to swerve to avoid a large pile of dark debris.

SIREN
Then let's just kill him.

ZORIN
And risk having a dozen hunters on us?

Siren's face lights as she gets it.

SIREN
Dump him with Vellik?

Zorin sighs lightly.

ZORIN
Dump him with Vellik.

The duo finally stops at a door sealed by a massive metal bar. Though it looks to weigh several hundred pounds, Zorin hefts it easily, throwing it to the floor.

The thud is powerful enough to rock the entire area.

We follow Zorin's gaze as he begins to pry the door open.

INT. AVALON -- HATCH'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Hatch is still staring out his small window when his door suddenly squeals open.

HATCH
The hell?

Before Hatch can turn, Siren and Zorin are standing behind him.

ZORIN
Come with us.

HATCH
I don't... I don't understand. What do you want with me?

Zorin grunts and grabs Hatch's shoulder, throwing him toward the door.

ZORIN

Move!

With no choice, Hatch exits his bare room.

INT. AVALON -- CORRIDOR

Still closely followed by the two powerful beings, Hatch tries to hide his anxiety.

HATCH

(to himself)

It's all right, Tom. It's nothing.
They're not gonna kill you... yet.

The three continue onward, they pass several crewmen in regular clothing doing routing maintenance.

HATCH

Um... they the crew?

It takes a long moment before Zorin replies.

ZORIN

People who join us for a cut of
whatever profit we make.

HATCH

I see. How many you got?

Siren glances at Zorin with a worried look, mouthing "no" to him. Zorin nods a negative nod.

ZORIN

Thirty two.

After several seconds of silent striding, they arrive at a larger set of doors. Hatch stops.

HATCH

So what do you do out here exactly?

Without wasting a moment, Zorin walks in front of Hatch into the room beyond, replying off his shoulder.

ZORIN

Waste disposal.

INT. AVALON -- SHUTTLE BAY

The shuttle bay is exactly the same as it was before, with only one exception: Hatch's shuttle has been moved to the farthest end of the room closest to the back wall.

A group of twenty people mull about in the bay's center, quietly waiting.

HATCH

So what's going on? Party? Welcome the new guy celebration...?

As Hatch yammers on, Siren goes to a console near Hatch's shuttle, tapping in a short sequence.

HATCH

This better not be some sort of hazing ritual among you weirdos-

Interrupting Hatch is the horrible squeak of metal rubbing against metal. Hatch stops on a dime at the noise.

HATCH

The hell?

But that is not the end. Hatch is suddenly tripped off his feet as the floor drops from under him!

HATCH

Oh shit!

EXT. TYVOR CITY -- LANDING PAD

While the Avalon rests on the soft earth, her bottom bay suddenly begins to drop at a slow pace. It takes a moment, but eventually there is a sizable ramp leading directly to the ground from Avalon!

We tighten onto this image until we again see Hatch, struggling to keep his footing on the new incline.

HATCH

Well, that was cool.

As he stands in awe, the group standing on the ramp easily descends, each of them jovial at the sight and feeling of the turf. As they disembark, Hatch is quickly left alone.

Until Zorin, Siren and Isaac appear behind him.

ZORIN

Let's go.

Prodded by his powerful shove, Hatch almost runs down the rest of the ramp. The other three lazily stroll down.

When everyone is on solid ground, Zorin retrieves a small remote from a pocket at his left sleeve and presses its single button. The Avalon's ramp snaps up suddenly and loudly.

Eventually, all four begin to move from the ship and toward the city.

HATCH

So... um... how'd you guys meet?

Isaac paces Hatch and intentionally smashes his shoulder as he passes.

HATCH

Rude!

After glancing back at Zorin, Siren moves next to Hatch.

SIREN

You can call us...traveling
business partners. We go where the
work is.

Hatch nods absently, staring at the wide variety of ships assembled around. None of them look very sturdy or powerful, most of them seeming to be held together more on hope and faith than anything else.

HATCH

So... where are we, anyhow? Are you
taking me to a Federation envoy or
something?

Still in front of Hatch, Isaac's eyes roll mightily.

ISAAC

For your information, little man,
we're here to make sure you don't
get your head full of ideas of escape.

HATCH

For *your* information... shut up.

Hatch seems to enjoy the ribbing, but Isaac continues onward.

Eventually, the group winds its way out of the landing bay and into a massive open space full of wandering patrons and vendors selling their wares.

EXT. TYVOR CITY -- MARKETPLACE

The marketplace is a chaos of people of all species trying to pass their wares onto others. Voices of all pitches and tones shout their prices into the atmosphere while streamers and confetti flutters about like snow.

Hatch walks forward slowly, his mouth agape in awe at the entire spectacle.

HATCH

Wow...

Still enthralled by the area, Hatch doesn't notice a garishly dressed merchant sliding up next to him.

MERCHANT

(very quickly)

Excuse me, fine sir. You look like a human who needs only the finest in life. I've got the whole collection of ancient Risan dinner plates.

(half a beat)

Don't like dinner plates? Fine, I got the entire Hirogen battle order scroll in my other pocket. All seventeen thousand distinct orders and smells for you, the discriminating customer.

HATCH

What?

To keep Hatch out of the loop, the merchant begins to circle like a vulture, his bright clothing making an entrancing aura.

MERCHANT

That's right, all the ancient items from across this universe. Need a diamond all the way from M106 to give to your sweetie? Just gimme a ring and you'll have in in your hold by tomorrow. That not enough, you say? How about filmbook programs from across the stars, even from the human territories? That good enough for ya?

HATCH

(slow, dumbly)

I... I don't... know...

As Hatch stays completely disoriented by the merchant, he fails to notice a second being of the same species approaching, this one less decorated, but holding a nasty looking gun in his hand.

MERCHANT

Fine, I can see you're not the type to fall for all these petty schemes. Tell me, do you believe in the seven pantheons of Rigel? Of course you don't, but I can get on in on a scam on those who do.

(reveals a large bead)

I'll sell you a good hundred of these for a reasonable price, and you gouge those suckers for all you can. Good deal?

The alien behind Hatch slowly raises his gun against Hatch's dumbfounded head.

HATCH

Um... no... thanks.

Just as the accomplice is about to blow Hatch away, a silvery flash suddenly smashes THROUGH his wrist!

ACCOMPLICE

AUGH!

Our focus turns around to see the accomplice in full view, holding his perforated wrist in a gentle hand.

Standing behind him is Siren, her face curled in anger and pain. And her hole-filled palm full of small, silvery tentacles! Hundreds of them, all protruding from said holes. Small droplets of blood drop from those that were previously inside the arm of the alien man.

It takes a moment for Hatch to catch up.

HATCH

Siren?

In a split second, Zorin is before the merchant, grabbing his bright clothing and ripping it open!

ZORIN

Damned thieves!

Under the merchant's robes are an array of various small items of artificial construct, and even more oozing organic... things.

MERCHANT

Now, now, sir. I'm just a
businessman. Put me down!

Zorin nods, and begins to lower the merchant.

MERCHANT

Thank you, kind sir. Can I interest
you in some Tarkalean-

Zorin PUNCHES the merchant's lights out before stooping down
to take his money pouch.

Hatch has to shake himself back to reality.

HATCH

What the... hell just happened?

Zorin looks over the injured accomplice before answering Hatch.

ZORIN

Thieves. Known for baffling targets
before they're killed.

HATCH

But what did I have?

Zorin snorts a laugh at the joke.

ZORIN

Does it matter?

HATCH

I would think so. Where are the
security personnel? Shouldn't the
planetary authority be involved in
this?

Zorin stifles laughter as he tosses the captured cash to Siren.

ZORIN

(whispered to Siren)
Keep him under your sight.

SIREN

(sigh, whispered)
Fine.

Amazing to Hatch, no one in the crowd around him seems to
notice the recent commotion save a few interesting glances
around and a few disparate people taking every item off of
the unconscious merchant.

Eventually, Hatch's gaze goes to Siren's hand, where her 'tentacles' slowly revert back into her flesh. We can tell it's incredibly painful, but she doesn't cry out.

HATCH

Oh my god...

He watches as the tendrils completely integrate back into Siren's skin, making the faintest sucking sounds as they settle in.

HATCH

Does that... hurt?

Siren sighs a cleansing breath, willing the obvious pain away.

SIREN

Not a lot.

HATCH

How'd you get 'em?

Siren looks Hatch in the eye, her own eyes colder than even space itself.

SIREN

If you ask that again, I'll send them through your neck.

HATCH

Oh... okay.

At this moment, Isaac shows up with a mouth full of some kind of pastry.

ISAAC

What'd I miss?

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TYVOR CITY -- ALLEY -- LATER

Very much later into the day, the same group wades through the crowded city, avoiding potential scalpers and thieves through intimidation and slipping through empty walkways.

Bringing up the rear is Hatch, his arms overloaded with dozens of containers of various sizes. The strain is incredible on him, but he endures it.

As they pass into an empty alley between two shining buildings, everyone stops, even Hatch.

HATCH
 (straining)
 Hey, guys, I appreciate you letting
 me help you, but
 (shouting)
 Can we take a break for a minute!?

Zorin and Isaac sigh heavily.

HATCH
 I'll take that as a yes.

Hatch drops the items without a single ounce of care for their contents. Loud cracking and smashing sound reverberate through the alley.

HATCH
 Oops.

ISAAC
 (whispered)
 Fuggin' idiot.

Finally relieved of his burden, Hatch rests on a building's side. As he does, another figure arrives from the shadows. This is VELLIK.

VELLIK (O.S.)
 What you got for me this time,
 Zorin? Something bright, I hope?

ZORIN
 Come closer and you'll see, Vellik.

From the darkness, Vellik shuffles forward. While his features are mostly humanoid, a horrible scar covers his entire right side, almost completely obscuring it. The most striking feature, though, is his right eye socket. Where his eye should be, a glowing orb that pulsates faintly takes its place.

Siren moves to Zorin as the man shuffles about.

SIREN
 (whispered)
 Zorin, tell me you're sure about this.

ZORIN
 (whispered)
 Best way to get him off our backs.

ISAAC
 (whispered)
 We'd better get a damned big payoff
 for this.

When Vellik sees the bundle Hatch had been previously carrying, his face droops.

VELLIK
 Not the normal crap you lay on me
 again, Zorin. You know how much my
 clients hate that.

Zorin is not intimidated.

ZORIN
 I see your clients weren't happy
 with your last exchange.

Vellik smiles and looks into the Hirogen's eyes.

VELLIK
 (short laugh)
 Yeah. They took my eye for those
 busted circuit chips.
 (beat)
 You ever seen a Bo'trin spice
 addict angry? Violent shits they
 are. Broke my left hand before I
 shot him.

HATCH
 That's horrible!

Vellik moves to Hatch in a sudden, terrifying move.

VELLIK
 What's it to ya?

Even more sudden is Vellik taking in a long whiff of Hatch's body!

VELLIK
 You know what it feels like to have
 your eye pulled out while you're
 held down by two guys bigger than
 that ship you flew in on?

Hatch backs up further onto the wall he was resting on.

VELLIK

(beat, scoots closer
to Hatch)

Hmm... maybe I can sell you on one
of the lesser markets. Maybe
Groe'kir. Yeah, maybe get enough
cash to buy some ointment for my eye.

Hatch looks around desperately, looking for any help he can get.
Unfortunately for him, Zorin, Siren and Isaac are walking away!

HATCH

Guys!? HELP!

As he cries, Vellik suddenly grasps Hatch by the neck.

VELLIK

Scrawny fella probably can't take
much work. Probably have to sell
you to the Ereth'lanar lords first...

Zorin and Isaac continue forward, but Siren takes one look
back, her face clouded with indecision.

HATCH

HELP! PLEASE GOD HELP!

Vellik's grip tightens, shutting Hatch up.

VELLIK

Ain't no one gonna help you now,
kid. You're mine.

Off Hatch's terrified expression, we.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN.

EXT. TYVOR CITY -- ALLEY

Hatch is still held by the throat against the wall. Vellik only smiles a predatory grin as he looks over his new ware.

VELLIK

That's right. Show me your strength.
Gimme all you got! Might even get
you sold to the labor camps...

Hatch's face begins to turn purple from the pressure. His eyes roll back slowly, giving him a horrible look.

HATCH

Help...

With one last ounce of strength, Hatch tries to raise his arm to reach for the still retreating trio.

HATCH

Please...

VELLIK

Ain't got a good voice. You'll do
no good on any showboat...

(beat)

You're one tough sumbitch to place,
you know that? Ain't got no strong
back or pleasing face. Shit, I
don't think I'll get much for you
anywhere. Damn Zorin.

(turns to Zorin)

DAMN YOU! Damn cheat.

(to Hatch)

He cheats me all the time. Always
dropping his useless shit on me.
Gets me hurt. Real bad. Sometimes,
I just want to hurt him back, you know?

Vellik's grip suddenly increases dramatically!

VELLIK

But seeing as he's not here, and
I've got a useless turd of a
specimen... I'll just hurt you.

Gasping in terror and pain, Hatch begins to weakly pound on Vellik's arms with his un-casted arm, to no avail.

VELLIK
That's right... fight back. Show me
your strength.

Nearing blackness, Hatch weakly raises his cast-wrapped arm
and drops it on Vellik's head!

VELLIK
OW! Dammit!

The man releases Hatch, dropping him to the ground. Hatch
gasps and coughs loudly.

VELLIK
Son of a bitch!

From a pocket, Vellik suddenly reveals a short, rusted knife!

VELLIK
I'll kill you!

Hatch reels weakly, trying to stay awake as Vellik grabs his
hair and yanks it up, exposing his neck.

Laughing in sick joy, Vellik moves the knife down slowly,
relishing the moment.

VELLIK
Here we go, just as I like it.

Just as the knife touches flesh, Vellik drops the tool
silently, his heavy weight following quickly onto Hatch.

It still takes several minutes for Hatch to get up and see
clearly what happened.

Blood oozes from a dozen holes at the top of Vellik's burned
skull, and standing right before him is an awestruck Siren,
her hands quickly returning to normal.

HATCH
(coughing)
You... saved me...

Zorin and Isaac show up a moment later.

ZORIN
(fleeting anger)
Fully against what I ordered.

HATCH
Why?

Siren moves to help Hatch up, and talks to both Zorin and him simultaneously.

SIREN

Look at the way he resisted Vellik, Zorin. Look at how he fought him off with his own injured arm. This guy isn't any Cultist.

HATCH

Cultist?

Zorin ignores the question.

ZORIN

He hit Vellik with a duranium-hard cast on the head! And now we don't have a middleman!

ISAAC

You sure screwed up this time, Siren. Nice knowin' ya.

SIREN

You think so? Look at this.

Siren makes sure Hatch is fine before stooping down and yanking a concealed necklace from Vellik's still neck. The emblem on it is a vaguely avian form with deadly looking corners and spines.

ISAAC

Goddammit!

ZORIN

He converted.

SIREN

And he was going to sell us out through him.

Siren points at Hatch for emphasis.

HATCH

Wait... why am I so important? What did I do!?

Zorin's face wrinkles in pure anger at Siren, but when she slams the offending necklace into his hand, Zorin relents.

ZORIN

Let's get back to the ship.

They all begin to walk.

ZORIN

But pick that up, we'll sell it
somewhere else.

EXT. TYVOR CITY -- LANDING PAD

Siren, Isaac, Zorin and Hatch move ever closer to Avalon on a suddenly clear landing pad. Hatch is again loaded with containers, but the pile isn't nearly as big.

HATCH

Hey, why's the pad empty?

Isaac looks around quickly, brushing his hand over a concealed weapon.

ISAAC

This doesn't feel right.

ZORIN

Keep going. Probably some prospector
found some minerals in a nearby
lode. That's all.

As they walk forward, Hatch notices several humanoids milling around the perimeter of the ring, each of them wearing bright red clothes of different styles.

HATCH

Hey, guys, you see those...

SIREN

Shut up and keep moving.
(to Zorin)
Think they see us?

ZORIN

It's impossible not to.

HATCH

Who are these guys?

SIREN

SHUT UP! Keep walking.

Unfortunately, Siren's outburst brings the attention of a few people around the edge of the ring.

ISAAC

Shit.

ZORIN

Move, don't run!

Though they continue walking toward the lonely Avalon, the group's pace is markedly faster.

HATCH

Why don't we run? What the hell is going on? Who are they?

No one answers him, they just keep running.

Until...

PLEASANT VOICE

Excuse me.

While Isaac, Siren and Hatch continue to move, Zorin suddenly stops.

PLEASANT VOICE

Please stop.

ZORIN

Do it.

They stop and turn.

Standing right behind them is an extremely tall man, human, and with thinning golden hair. This is ROL'GIN.

ROL'GIN

Thank you for stopping. I trust you know what organization I represent?

While Zorin, Siren and Isaac nod affirmative, Hatch says:

HATCH

No.

Rol'Gin looks genuinely surprised for a moment, but buries it.

ROL'GIN

Why, I represent those who will save this galaxy.

Rol'Gin flashes a necklace around his neck, and it's the exact same as the one Vellik wore.

ROL'GIN

We are the children of truth and the light, sir. We represent the last vestiges of good and honor in this galaxy.

Hatch looks awed at the spectacle, but Siren and Isaac look more ready for instant combat than anything. Zorin is impassive.

HATCH

Interesting. Do you know where the Federation is?

Suddenly, everyone's eyes glue themselves to Hatch. While Zorin, Isaac and Siren seem to be trying to will him dead, Rol'Gin and his cronies again look shocked.

ROL'GIN

Sir, you seem to have us at a disadvantage. We didn't know the... Federation was around here.

Hatch nods almost knowingly.

HATCH

Oh, thanks anyway.

Rol'Gin smiles as the matter finishes and turns back to Zorin.

ROL'GIN

I trust you own the nearby vessel?

ZORIN

I do.

Rol'Gin looks at the Avalon for a moment, not hiding a look of disgust.

ROL'GIN

Have you ever considered trading it for something we can provide?

(beat)

Something possibly less likely to fall apart at the seams?

Though he appears cowed, Zorin's anger rises again.

ZORIN

Unfortunately, I've grown attached to my vessel. I thank you for your offer, however.

Rol'Gin nods deeply before looking at his aides.

ROL'GIN

Very well. Know this, a fleet of those loyal to the people I represent is in orbit at this very moment, and they expect every able ship to join them before this city falls into night. Refuse, and we will have no choice...

HATCH
 (nervously)
 No choice but to what?

ROL'GIN
 Why, this entire city will burn.

Rol'Gin waits one second before walking away, leaving the foursome alone.

HATCH
 Who the hell does he think he is?

SIREN
 You really don't know, do you?

Astounded, Siren and Zorin share a look.

ZORIN
 Get back to the ship and we'll talk.

INT. AVALON-- EMPTY ROOM

A small room is suddenly aglow with artificial light as Zorin takes his first steps into it. From a mysteriously empty pattern on the floor, this used to be a conference room of sorts, but that time is long past.

In the full light, it is easy to tell that the inside of the Avalon is not well maintained, but neither is it completely corroded.

Siren and Hatch walk in last, Isaac just avoids the room.

ISAAC
 I'll be in my room.

When Hatch finally sets the bundle of things in his arms, Zorin turns to him.

ZORIN
 All right. Talk. Where are you from?

Hatch is taken aback, but replies in turn.

HATCH
 Um... from Earth. Where most humans come from?

ZORIN
 Fine, you won't say where you're from. What were you doing when we found you?

HATCH

I don't understand! I told you, I'm from Earth! I've got an apartment in San Francisco.

SIREN

(tiredly)

Just answer his second question.

HATCH

I told you that before. I was transporting some things for Starfleet before I was caught in some kind of plasma storm. I got knocked out and I found myself here.

ZORIN

You swear by this?

HATCH

Why wouldn't I?

Siren moves next to Zorin.

SIREN

Thomas Hatch, the last records of the Federation or the Starfleet disappeared over one thousand years ago.

Hatch suddenly stares at Siren and Zorin... and laughs.

HATCH

Oh man, that's rich. Me, a time traveler? You've got to be kidding.

Zorin looks at Siren for a moment.

ZORIN

Fine, don't believe us. In the future, the next time you run into a Cultist like the man we ran into, you keep your hole shut. Understand?

This shuts Hatch up.

HATCH

Cultist? Those guys we met back there?

ZORIN

Yes.

(pause)

What do you know about them?

HATCH

Other than the fact they're a bunch of guys who love to dress in red and threaten to burn cities... not much.

SIREN

Have you heard of the Cataclysm, then?

HATCH

Uh, can't say I have.

Zorin sighs loudly.

ZORIN

You mean you don't know ANYTHING?

Hatch is still innocently inquisitive.

HATCH

Should I?

SIREN

(patronizingly)

Before the Cataclysm that shattered the galaxy, one single group rose above the chaos of the time to give a promise of hope for the future. Unlike the Federation of old, this new group, lead by The Prophet, promised genuinely that the future would be glorious for all species... provided they joined them.

HATCH

(disbelieving)

Okay... why do you call them cultists?

ZORIN

Because they're the Cult of Those who Walk in the Light. Religious fanatics who live only to add more members to their fold and rape and plunder those who aren't.

HATCH

But... but that's... impossible. The Federation...

ZORIN

Is DEAD, Hatch. Dead and buried like everyone else who fought the cult.

Hatch falls back to a nearby wall and collapses onto the floor.

HATCH
That's... not true. You're lying!
You have to be lying!

ZORIN
And why would I do that?

HATCH
You... you're just PIRATES! You
took my ship and took me somewhere
else... it's still 2289... IT HAS
TO BE!

In an instant, Hatch is on his feet and out of the room.

INT. AVALON -- CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Hatch runs as fast as his legs will carry him through the Avalon's corridors, his eyes filled with tears of pain and anger.

HATCH
It's a nightmare... I'm still
asleep in the storm... I'll wake up
any minute.

Hatch stumbles forward, avoiding random crewmen who pass by, trying to get into any door that will take him.

CREWPERSON
Hey, you lookin' for something?

HATCH
Leave me alone!

Hatch turns and sprints in the opposite direction of the crewman. Eventually, he passes by the same corridor he was previously in.

HATCH
What is this?

He continues to run, always going forward. Eventually, Hatch's breathing goes shallow, forcing him to slow down.

HATCH
Can't be...

Hatch keeps moving, eventually slowing down to a slow walk, forcing him to hold his side in pain.

HATCH
It can't...

Eventually, Hatch is exhausted enough to have to hold his side and the wall for support.

As he walks, one door suddenly opens on its own! Unfortunately, it's the very one he throws his weight on at that moment.

His landing into the room is loud.

INT. AVALON -- DEVICE ROOM

Hatch remains on the floor for a moment, catching his breath.

As he stands, however, his forlorn mood is suddenly covered by a look of awe.

HATCH

Wow...

We slowly turn to see what Hatch is looking at.

Whatever this room used to be, it's nothing more than a burned wreck now, but that still doesn't seem to dull its mystery. Globes and platforms of what looks like glass shine in the dull light, each of them making the room seem to dance.

In the center of the beautiful chaos is a blackened column of machinery that used to have obvious importance based on the amount of readouts and shattered displays surrounding it. Most of the external machinery is either blackened by some fire of the past or simply gone, most likely stolen.

HATCH

What is this?

INT. AVALON -- EMPTY ROOM

Back in the same room as before, Zorin and Siren stand quietly.

SIREN

He took that well.

(beat)

Still convinced he's a Cult spy?

Zorin nods.

ZORIN

I can't be sure of anything right now.

They stay silent for a moment.

SIREN

What about the Cultist back there?

What're we going to do?

ZORIN
The only thing we can. Let's go.

Zorin begins to move to the door.

SIREN
What about Hatch?

ZORIN
So long as he keeps quiet, we'll
ignore him.
(beat)
Now let's go.

Siren sighs and follows Zorin out.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The lights on the bridge are a little brighter than before, giving us a good view of the room. It's small, not particularly well kept or comfortable, but it is busy. People go back and forth between barely functioning consoles to report some new status or kill time.

The only two empty spaces on the bridge are the helm console and the center chair, which Siren and Zorin take respectively.

ZORIN
Prepare for liftoff, helm.

SIREN
Yes, Zorin.

Siren gets to work diligently.

EXT. TYVOR CITY -- LANDING PAD

The pad is completely empty save for Avalon now.

Slowly, a small whine begins to build from the rear of the ship. A small whine that becomes a rumble. A rumble that becomes a roar.

Slowly, ever so slowly, the Avalon lifts off the ground, first retracting her front landing legs and then her rear.

After several seconds, the Avalon suddenly orients her nose skyward and blasts off into space!

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The tiny viewscreen comes to life with a beautiful panorama of stars.

SIREN
We're in low orbit, Zorin.

ZORIN
Prepare to receive communications.

The crew settles into a dull rhythm. They've done this before, and no one is happy.

Eventually, the comm suddenly activates in a painful shriek of static.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
Welcome up here, Avalon. Please
join us at these coordinates. That
is all.

Zorin looks to a woman manning a console to his right.

FEMALE CREWMAN
We got 'em.

ZORIN
Set course.

Siren doesn't reply as she works.

EXT. SPACE

Avalon lazily flies forward. In the distance, about sixty ships of various sizes and shapes all congregate together with no organization or pattern. Most are easily recognizable as ships that were on the landing pad earlier.

But hovering above this little fleet is a massive vessel easily six hundred meters long. Its hull is the same blood red of the cult clothing earlier, giving it all the more dangerous look.

Dutifully, the Avalon enters the fleet under the huge Cult vessel, sliding into the group like any other lowly vessel.

INT. AVALON -- DEVICE ROOM

Hatch studies the contraption with all the analytical skill he can muster.

HATCH
Now what were you?

He tries to tap some consoles, but everything is dead.

HATCH
Come on...

As he works, Hatch doesn't react to Rol'Gin's voice as it filters over the comm.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
Welcome, all loyal vessels, to a
great endeavor.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The bridge crew is silent as the message continues to play.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
We stand at a crossroads of history,
good citizens of life. The time of
order has passed long ago, and
chaos has reigned long enough.

EXT. SPACE

The fleet is suddenly all set upon by dozens of tractor beams! Each of them emitting from the Cult vessel. No ship does so much as move.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
So, with all of your agreement, we
will take you to a world to gather
a most holy of substances to be
used in this, our greatest hour of
need.

The Cult ship and the tethered ships all move as one, eventually gaining a good amount of speed.

INT. AVALON -- DEVICE ROOM

Hatch studies the strange machine as Rol'Gin continues to ramble.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
We are very pleased to see this
much support for our cause. It
warms the heart of every member in
the fold to see the galaxy united
on this common front.

(beat)

Indeed, the citizens of Tyvor city
shouted with joy as we razed their
homes for the future good,
harmonious in their praise for all
of you brave ship captains.

Hatch stops cold.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

No one reacts to the news.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
So now, be as joyful as the people
below you as we journey forward!

The comm goes dead only a second later.

ZORIN
Those bastards...

EXT. SPACE

The tractor fleet suddenly jumps to warp speed.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

To Be Continued...

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

The super-massive Cultist ship sails through warp speed with little or no grace. It's easy to tell its engines are struggling and its power waning.

As they fly on, one very small ship tractoried near the rear of the vessel suddenly loses its connection to the ship. The explosion is brief but powerful.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

Everything is exactly the same as before. The bridge is completely silent save for the omnipresent thrum of the engines.

ZORIN sits in the center seat, brooding like a defeated man.

ZORIN
How're we doing?

No one responds for a long moment, lost in their own dark reveries. Eventually, a young Trill male replies.

RIDEK
I think we're okay as long as our engines keep firing like they are.

ZORIN
Anything out there to tell us where we're going?

Siren turns from her console for a moment. We get a glimpse of what looks like an extremely advanced readout, but it seems to be covered by a crude manual control rod.

SIREN
No. I think we're going too fast for us to identify any landmarks before we're out of range.

The Hirogen sighs deeply. This is not going well at all.

ZORIN
And Hatch?

SIREN
Still holed up on the fourth deck.

Suddenly, before Zorin can get any more information, ROL'GIN's voice booms over the comm.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE

To all those vessels still
journeying with us to this greatest
of endeavors, I salute you again.

(beat)

We are just a handful of hours away
from our ultimate destination. A
world of bounteous riches we will
harvest to ensure the survival of
this galaxy and her future.

There is a pregnant beat.

Another ship falls behind and explodes. There are about
thirty left from the original sixty now.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE

So be brave as we venture onward to
these new frontiers!

RIDEK

I'd give half my share if he'd shut
the hell up.

There is a quiet chuckle, interrupted by Zorin standing. He
looks about and toward Siren for a moment, sharing a glance.

ZORIN

I'll be in my room.

He exits.

On the viewscreen, yet another weaker ship falls behind
under the tractor beam and explodes, taking two others with it.

INT. AVALON -- DEVICE ROOM

In the room primarily occupied by a large piece of broken
and burned machinery, Hatch continues to poke around.

The majority of the floor is covered by waste of all kinds.
Empty cases of various sizes, food containers, spent
cartridges, the whole works. There are no PADDs, papers, or
any information-holding devices around.

HATCH

What I'm thinking right now is that
you're a computer... storage...
thingy. If I'm right, beep twice.

Of course, the room remains dead silent.

As he stares, Hatch blinks his eyes heavily. He is obviously exhausted from the recent events.

HATCH
 (giant yawn)
 Well, whatever you are, you'll be
 here tomorrow, right?

No response, duh.

After a beat, Hatch exits the room. Before the doors close, however, he takes one last, long look at the device.

INT. AVALON -- CORRIDOR

Zorin walks off the bridge and into a long corridor, weaving past small piles of debris and various crewmen doing work. His presence fills the small space, sometimes forcing the physically smaller people to move out of his way.

As he moves forward, Zorin suddenly stops when he runs flat into a rapidly moving Hatch!

Hatch bounces back with his eyes closed tight. In his exhausted state, his chest is out and Hatch holds a strong attitude.

HATCH
 Hey, watch it, ya sack of shi-

Hatch's attitude drops when he looks up.

ZORIN
 (harsh)
 Sack of what?

HATCH
 (extremely flustered)
 Uh... sack of... giant... strong...
 armed...

ZORIN
 Shut up.

Zorin moves forward, nearly smashing Hatch into the wall. After taking a moment to recover, Hatch begins to move in the opposite direction.

ZORIN
 Don't go that way.

Hatch stops, confused.

HATCH

Uh... why?

Zorin turns to the human.

ZORIN

(no nonsense)

My ship. My rules. You go where I say.

There is a moment of silence, Hatch considering the Hirogen's words. After a moment, it's broken by an intense yawn from the human.

HATCH

Fine. Whatever.

Hatch tries to push his way past Zorin like had been done to him, but it only winds up with him stalled on Zorin's gigantic shoulder.

ZORIN

Where you going?

HATCH

Dunno. I thought I'd wander around.

Zorin begins to walk again, followed closely by Hatch. The few people in their way quickly move. Hatch has to stagger lest he fall over in his sleepiness.

They walk down a tight curve in the hall before slowly coming up on a metal ladder welded into a crudely blasted hole in the floor. Without missing a beat, Zorin begins the descent down into the lower deck.

Hatch looks at his delicate palms and then the cold metal ladder before following Zorin down. We follow him into:

INT. AVALON -- CORRIDOR (DECK 2)

While Zorin looks comfortable jumping onto the deck plates, Hatch takes a moment to hold his weight and shove himself off. He once again smashes into Zorin.

HATCH

Sorry about that.

Zorin sighs and moves onward.

ZORIN

I would advise you to stop doing that.

Hatch nearly trips on a piece of discarded conduit.

HATCH
 (childishly)
 Or you'll what?

Zorin doesn't stop moving.

ZORIN
 Have you ever experienced sudden
 decompression?

HATCH
 (not getting it)
 Nope, can't say I have.

Zorin suddenly turns and grabs Hatch, easily picking him up by the front of his stained shirt! Hatch cries out pitifully at the display of wild strength.

ZORIN
 (angrily)
 You are only on this ship because
 we're caught in the Cult's grasp at
 warp. Do not think for a SECOND
 that you'll be here any longer than
 that. So take into advisement that
 my survival instinct prevents me
 from opening our bay doors and
 throwing you into subspace. And
 don't think I haven't thought about
 it. It's one of the few pleasant
 thoughts I have that keeps my mind
 off this situation.
 (beat)
 Which I also blame entirely on you!

With the faintest grunt of effort, Zorin throws Hatch into the nearest door. Hatch smashes into it heavily.

HATCH
 Ow.

ZORIN
 That's your room until we stop.
 Don't leave it.

Zorin walks away as Hatch stands up painfully.

As he gains his bearings, Hatch stands in front of the door, waiting for it to open.

Nothing happens.

INT. AVALON -- ZORIN'S ROOM

Zorin stomps into his quarters slowly, taking in the air of his newfound lonesome self.

Though the lights are dim, we can make out one very important detail of this room: emptiness. Zorin's room is almost completely empty save for a small desk with it's own (ancient looking) computer terminal and a military cot that has seen better days. There are no hunting trophies or weapons to be found in here.

Another odd thing about this room is its cleanliness. Where the rest of the Avalon seems to have a universal dinginess, Zorin's room is as close to perfectly clean as anything in this universe.

Zorin walks further into the room, surveying its perfection. Out the very small window at the far wall, we can see a ship similar in size to Avalon, her rocket engines struggling for dear life. After a titanic struggle, she, too falls apart in the sudden loss of warp power.

ZORIN

Damn waste.

As Zorin moves to lay down on his burdened cot, trying to shut the worries of the current situation from his mind, the terminal at Zorin's desk begins to beep and whine in earnest.

With an exasperated grunt, Zorin moves to it, nearly smashing the console with his powerful fist.

ZORIN

What do you want?

First beset by static and a loud screech, it takes a second for the monitor to clear up with a barely comprehensible image.

Through the static and interference, a woman's face appears, her profile completely overtaking the small view space.

SANDREI

This is Sandrei of Typhon to Zorin of Avalon. You hear me over there?

ZORIN

Yes.

There is a pause as the screen once again falls into white noise.

SANDREI

Oh, so we could reach you on this piece of shit computer.

(beat, interference)

Anyway, one of my boys said they figured a way to use some of the radioactive parts of some of our acquired cargo to get out of these... whatever's Cult's got us in.

ZORIN

(quickly)

What does this have to do with me?

SANDREI

Well, Typhon's got no weapons and you're the last ship standing that could even bloody the cult's lip a bit. My boy says we can give your hull a nudge when we're 'charged', or however the hell he called it, and get you free. Then all you'd do is launch a few of them missiles to distract the cult and we're home free.

ZORIN

I take it you have warp drive?

SANDREI

(laughs)

Goddammit, why would I be sayin' this to you if I didn't? I think I'm starting to see why no one'll deal with you anymore, you cold sonofabitch.

ZORIN

What you're proposing could get us all killed.

SANDREI

I expected you to say that. But you know just as good as me that we could be caught under their damn heels for months doing their slop jobs. And I don't know about you, but I got shit to do that don't involve them.

There is a pause.

SANDREI

You in or out?

ZORIN
 (quickly)
 Fine. I'll do it.

Pause.

SANDREI
 You'll what?

ZORIN
 I said I'll do it. Charge your hull
 and get us out of here. I'll have
 my launchers ready.

Sandrei laughs loudly and produces a bottle of some illegal liquor from off the screen.

SANDREI
 Well, maybe we'll have a chance
 after all. Hey, when we're out of
 this shithole I'll put in the good
 word with some of my suppliers.
 Hell, we could start up our own
 trade franchi-

ZORIN
 You also realize that there is only
 one outcome when this is done. They
 won't let us go easily. Even if we
 run, they'll go after us. We won't
 have any option but to fight.

SANDREI
 No shit. That's what I got you for,
 idiot.

Zorin quickly cuts the link and stares out his window. Indeed, not fifty meters away is a very small ship with four of the ugliest warp nacelles in history splayed on its back, all of them slowly building a less-than-healthy glow.

With a sigh, Zorin stands and moves past his cot, heading back again to the bridge.

INT. AVALON -- CORRIDOR (DECK 2)

Zorin walks forward, passing Hatch who is still stupidly standing in front of the closed door. Upon closer inspection, however, it's easy to tell he is asleep. And snoring.

With a disgusted sigh, Zorin presses an almost invisible button on the door's frame, waits for it to slide open, then pushes Hatch into the room. The doors close again not a moment later.

As he begins to move forward, a muffled "Thank you" can be made out from behind the wall.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The bridge is just as Zorin left it, every seat taken by someone dutifully manning their stations. The viewscreen is alight with the remaining ships of the convoy.

ZORIN
Cut comm. lines to the Cult ship.

No one responds, but there is a loud BEEP to announce the cut line.

ZORIN
Power the warp engines.

Siren turns to Zorin.

SIREN
Wait... what's going on?

Zorin doesn't reply.

ZORIN
Prepare to engage warp engines on my command.

SIREN
Zorin?

Siren begins to stand to confront Zorin.

ZORIN
Sit down.

Suddenly, the viewscreen goes active when the Typhon's hull momentarily flashes with a bright lightning, pulling away from the cult ship. Her warp nacelles then burst with energy, keeping her still intact!

RIDEK
I'll be damned. They got out of it.

Staring at the action on the screen, Zorin moves to his center seat.

Everyone's eyes widen when the Typhon suddenly moves toward them!

ZORIN
Brace for impact.

EXT. SPACE

The smaller Typhon makes a straight path to Avalon, just barely passing a few ships still loyally tractored.

Almost immediately, the Typhon SMASHES directly into Avalon's hull! Both ships shudder mightily, even as the lightning flashes over both hulls once more.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The bridge is a chaos of rattling equipment, warning klaxons and people thrown to the floor.

ZORIN
ACTIVATE ENGINES!

The only person still at their seat is Siren, held in place by nothing other than the metallic tentacles jutting from her hands! Her face is marked with tears of pain, but she shrugs it off as her splayed fingers do their work.

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon's green nacelles flash brightly as she enters warp speed on her own. The Typhon breaks off not a moment later.

Very quickly, both vessels drop from warp speed, orienting their bows toward each other.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The chaos has quickly died down. The calm is extremely eerie.

RIDEK
There's no way that should have worked.

Before anyone can retort, the viewscreen activates with the drunk face of Sandrei, who is already in the process of shouting a loud whoop of joy.

SANDREI
My god, Zorin. You got one tough ship there. Half expected ya to fall apart as soon as we tapped ya.

Zorin doesn't share in the revelry.

ZORIN
Activate your defensive measures.
We won't be alone for long.

Sandrei's face darkens.

SANDREI

See, that's what I hate about you alien cap'ns. You must've sold your sense of humor for those muscles.

ZORIN

(interrupting)

Arm your defenses. We'll speak again when this is over.

Annoyed, Zorin cuts the comm lines.

Immediately after, Siren's console goes wild with a shrill cry.

SIREN

They're coming!

ZORIN

Get a firing solution as soon as you can.

EXT. SPACE

The Cult vessel oozes out of warp more like a silent predator than a starship. As it decelerates, the few dozen ships still tractorred are freed, but they all don't move so much as a meter.

A few kilometers away from the Cult ship, the Typhon and Avalon brace for the coming violence.

Instead of either ships closing in to face each other down or engaging in wild maneuvers, the Cult ship simply explodes with the launch of well over twenty missiles, all of them quickly orienting themselves toward the two runaway vessels.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

Alert klaxons run wild as the Cult ship unleashes its fury.

ZORIN

(calmly)

Activate countermeasures and prepare to return their fire.

The tension on the bridge builds as the weapons continue their trek forward.

Siren keeps her eyes glued to her console, where a dial retrofitted onto its surface counts down the range of the missiles.

SIREN
 Warheads at one kilometer...
 (beat)
 Five hundred meters...
 (shorter beat)
 Two hundred...

ZORIN
 Fire countermeasures!

EXT. SPACE

The tiny-by-comparison Avalon suddenly orients her nose 'up' and shoots forward! From the back ends of the two crudely-constructed tubes welded to the side of her, the Avalon launches several glowing specks of metal.

Not an instant later, fully half of the missiles veer away from the Avalon and impact the chaff, exploding harmlessly.

Unfortunately, the rest of them continue pursuit of both the Typhon and Avalon. The former ship is a little slower than the latter, and two of the missiles make contact, cracking one of the four nacelles clean off!

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The viewscreen changes to a view of Sandrei and her chaotic bridge. Behind her drunk face run several people in wildly different clothing styles try to put out fires and repair major structural damage.

SANDREI
 They got us good, Zorin. I'm gonna
 pull us out until you can convince
 'em to leave.

Zorin's face tightens in anger. Without responding to the female captain, he turns to Siren.

ZORIN
 Launch missiles the instant we're
 in range. Full payload!

EXT. SPACE

The extremely nimble Avalon does a tight barrel roll to avoid another missile and slows to get her own firing solution.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

Not a second later, Siren's console beeps a pleasant tone.

SIREN
 Got a solution. Their topside power
 system.

Zorin stares at the very non-majestic cult ship bearing down on them. Several more missiles come their way, but Siren pilots the ship gracefully enough to avoid them.

ZORIN
 What're you waiting for? Fire!

EXT. SPACE

Bearing down quickly on the cult ship the Avalon's massive torpedo tubes light up with a dangerous red light.

A moment later, two missiles almost exactly alike to their cult counterparts fly toward the red vessel.

Too big to move away like the Avalon could, the Cult vessel is knocked backward by the powerful impact! The lights and nacelles flicker with the sudden damage and two holes open in its hull, but the weapons do relatively little damage.

And it doesn't take long before the cult vessel responds again.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

Everyone is quiet and calm in the chaos of battle.

SIREN
 We're out of countermeasures, Zorin.

ZORIN
 What did our missiles do?

Siren simultaneously flies the ship through the sea of missiles while looking at instruments.

SIREN
 Nothing.
 (beat)
 Hang on!

The viewscreen suddenly goes white with a powerful impact not a meter before the bridge itself!

The sound of rent metal and shattered equipment is ear shattering. The already dark bridge goes fully black for a long moment.

ZORIN
 Get us out of here!

EXT. SPACE

Still reeling from the impact too close to home, the Avalon's movements are sluggish.

Not a second later, several more weapons strike the ship in different areas. Though they don't bore into the hull like the Avalon's own weapons, they do cause the ship to spin dangerously out of control.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

Still chaos.

SIREN

The engines are falling apart!

RIDEK

The targeting computer's down!

Zorin sits in his chair through the wildly bucking chaos of the battle, his fingers stuck firmly into grooves exactly matching their widths.

ZORIN

What about the Typhon?

SIREN

I can't see it on the screens. Must have slipped behind something.

The bridge is thrown around once more as another missile strikes! Zorin sits calmly as Ridek takes a face full of plasma and falls to the floor dead.

ZORIN

Contact them!

Siren works for a moment.

SIREN

I think their comms are down. They may be dead in space.

Zorin sits tensely for a long beat, weathering another crushing impact. The Cult vessel is so close, the entirety of the viewscreen is nothing but a blood red field.

ZORIN

Contact Rol'Gin! Tell him we surrender!

Siren nods and gives up on her monitoring.

SIREN
 Rol'Gin, this is Avalon. We
 surrender! Stop shooting. We surrender!

EXT. SPACE

The Cult vessel is directly over Avalon now, every single one of her missile turrets pointed directly at the small ship.

From seemingly nowhere, the damaged Typhon slips into view, her damage proudly displayed.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

Siren presses a button to turn the ship's attention away from the Cult vessel to the Typhon.

ZORIN
 Nice of them to join us.

SANDREI'S COMM VOICE
 Zorin, what the hell are you doing!?
 Shoot them!

But as Sandrei rants on, Rol'Gin's voice overtakes hers.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
 My friends, the Prophet is very disappointed in your actions this day. Where we expected you to fulfill your duties to us and to the future, you squandered that opportunity in a futile effort at resistance. It will take our engineers, who should be seeing to this great project, weeks to repair the damage you have so indiscriminately inflicted upon us.

(beat)

While custom dictates we make an example of you, the words of the prophet are clear: "When faced with those without faith, your task is not to destroy them, but to show them the light."

Rol'Gin stops to take a breath.

SANDREI'S COMM VOICE
 (taking the moment)
 But... but they coerced us to escape! THEY fired on you! It was the AVALON's fault.
 (MORE)

SANDREI'S COMM VOICE (CONT'D)

They should be punished, not shown the truth.

(beat)

Which I also FULLY believe in. My whole crew does.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE

Spare us your pitiful words. We monitored your communications from the moment you contacted the Avalon. If fault resides with anyone, it would be you.

SANDREI'S COMM VOICE

But... but that's not fair! We were merely trying to uproot those not truly loyal to the cause. We were inspired by the Prophet himself!

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE

(angrily)

Never speak His name in such form again, or there will be nothing to save you from our wrath. We know, Sandrei, where your loyalties truly lie.

(very dark)

We know who you represent. You blasphemous heathens will soon learn the message of the prophet or burn under his banner. It is no wonder you wanted to run. You could never hope to see the truth of his message!

Zorin walks over to Siren during the exchange and calmly taps a few buttons on her console.

ZORIN

(quietly)

Prepare for my order.

SIREN

All right.

SANDREI'S COMM VOICE

You know nothing of the truth, cultist. One day you will fall like the mountains you build in perversion!

Just before the two arguers begin to shout, Zorin interjects:

ZORIN
 (whispered)
 Launch!

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon, not turned to face the Typhon, suddenly launches two missiles into open space.

And it doesn't take long for them to curve around and make a direct path to the Typhon!

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The argument dies down immediately.

SANDREI'S COMM VOICE
 Avalon!? What the hell did you do!?

ZORIN
 Ending the argument before it gets us all killed.

SANDREI'S COMM VOICE
 By destroying us? Zorin, we could have paid you more in a day than what you've seen in your whole miserable life!

ZORIN
 (shrugs shoulders)
 Live and learn. Cut the signal.

SANDREI'S COMM VOICE
 Zorin! Zorin! Stop this! We can't-

Sandrei's voice cuts off in a violent burst of static.

We have a silent beat.

SIREN
 The Typhon's gone.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
 Excellent work, Avalon! I knew the Prophet's influence would reach even out here. I thank you from my own heart for your service to us.

The bridge lightly rocks with the impact of another tractor beam.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
 Welcome back to the fold.

EXT. SPACE

The Cult ship lumbers back to the fleet of STILL waiting loyal ships, all of them hanging together in perfect harmony.

Keeping up the rear but still tractored to the bigger ship, the Avalon simply rides along.

As we pull in closer to her newly battle-scarred hull, we notice something very peculiar...

Her hull is repairing itself.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT SIX

FADE IN.

EXT. SPACE

The cult vessel slowly drops out of warp, dragging along the remains of the fleet under it. The Avalon is still bringing up the rear, her hull almost as we saw it was before the battle. Only a dent or two remains.

As the ships fly onward, we slowly turn away from them to see the ultimate destination of this rag-tag fleet:

A planet, slowly spinning alone against a bright red star.

As the massive ship gets closer, we begin to see the faintest details of small oceans, rugged mountains and wild, immense jungles. While other biomes can be made out, the first three dominate its entire surface.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE

My friends, we have arrived. The Prophet, indeed, the universe, smiles on your continued courage and dedication to the cause. I feel nothing but the deepest love for all of you in staying with us, ensuring our continued survival. You have kept my faith in life strong. Be assured I will send my best wishes to the Prophet the next I pray.

The ship slowly comes into a low orbit over the serene world.

Suddenly, the cult vessel's familiar torpedo tubes activate!

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE

Now let us show you your purpose to us!

Dozens of torpedoes, all of them flying from the cult ship, suddenly are let loose on the world!

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The calming chaos after the battle is just as hectic as before. Several people mill about doing cleaning work and minor repairs while still others tend to those wounded and the now very dead Ridek.

Zorin stands finally from his chair, his massive frame sending painfully loud pops from strained muscles and tight bones.

ZORIN

Get your work done and get out of here...

(the crew stares at him)

NOW!

Some more idle people slither away with rude comments while others keep to their work.

Zorin moves to Siren.

ZORIN

Where are we?

SIREN

It's hard to tell. These screens won't say anything before showing something else. Like the computer's trying to read too much too fast.

ZORIN

(annoyed)

Well, what have you been able to read?

Two clumsy crewmen bump into Zorin from behind. He makes a very loud sigh before turning back to Siren.

SIREN

I think they took us to the edge of broken space, Zorin.

ZORIN

Broken space? The place where only sublight works...

SIREN

That's it. The good thing is that this is the border, so we can still run if you want.

Zorin looks at the devastated bridge for a moment.

ZORIN

I'll keep it under advisement.

(beat)

How far does broken space go?

SIREN
Nobody's mapped it. I've heard
stories it's about two hundred
light years across.

An eavesdropping crewman whistles.

ZORIN
(ice cold)
Get back to work.

CREWMAN
Sorry.

Tense beat.

ZORIN
(to Siren)
Try to calm the computer down and
see if you can find a route for us.
For now, we'll stay where we are.

SIREN
Under THEIR heel?

ZORIN
We'll live longer. Once the Cult is
done molesting us to do their
bidding, they'll let us go. Keep
working. We'll free ourselves of
this shit eventually.

Zorin moves back to his seat, bringing up comm. systems.

ZORIN
Isaac, you there? How are my
wounded coming?

There is a short burst of static, but Isaac's voice comes
through clearly in the end.

ISAAC'S COMM VOICE
Yeah, I'm here. You got four
people's heads split open, Zorin.
Three broken arms. And someone had
the good fortune to be impaled by
bulkhead through the throat.

ZORIN
Stop.

ISAAC'S COMM VOICE

Oh. I just thought you'd like to know everyone who keeps getting their ass handed to them because of you.

ZORIN

(annoyed groan)

I'll ask when I want to know that information.

ISAAC'S COMM VOICE

Fine. I'll get back to work.

ZORIN

See that you do.

The comm. goes off with another hiss.

ZORIN

And somebody fix the damn comm.!

EXT. SPACE

The cult ship stops firing. On the surface directly below her, a very large circle is burning with the collected bursts of a good twenty mushroom clouds.

INT. AVALON -- ROOM

On the floor not two feet away from the closed door, Hatch lies flat on his stomach. From his nose emits a faint but nasal snore and his mouth drools profusely.

From the slight damage the room has taken, it's easy to tell he slept through the entire battle.

Fortunately, we don't have to endure seeing him asleep for long, as Hatch suddenly wakes up the instant he sees the flash of explosions on the planet's surface.

HATCH

Huh? Wha...?

Standing slowly, his bones popping louder than Zorin's, Hatch makes his way to the window. From his point of view, the destruction is spectacular yet strangely beautiful.

HATCH

(dispassionately)

Who's being slaughtered this time?

Still stretching his muscles, Hatch turns from the window to scope the room.

In one corner sits what might have been a replicator unit, but its cannibalized parts tell of it's now junk status.

With a sigh, Hatch tries to stretch his muscles and move around, but he only causes himself pain.

HATCH
That's it, I need breakfast.

Walking stiffly, Hatch exits.

INT. AVALON -- CORRIDOR

Hatch walks slowly through the corridors of Avalon, looking sullenly at the various people and objects that pass by. As he moves, a low growl emits directly from his slightly larger-than-healthy gut. Hatch sighs in frustration.

Keeping mobile, though the sounds from his stomach grow louder, Hatch approaches a passing crewman who is loaded rather comically with gigantic boxes and repair equipment. He obviously does not want to be disturbed.

HATCH
Where d'ya keep your food around here?

The crewman just passes by.

HATCH
Yeah, thanks, jerk.

Keeping his trek forward, Hatch begins looking left and right to see any marked doors.

Unfortunately for him, his wild eye movement prevents him from seeing another, rather attractive female, crewman with blonde hair and blues eyes, as she literally runs into him! This is CARLISE.

CARLISE
Ow!

HATCH
OW!

Both humans fall to the floor spectacularly. Fortunately, Carlise's better reflexes make her landing far less painful than Hatch's.

CARLISE
(quickly)
Oh my god! I'm so sorry. I wasn't
watching where was going and...

HATCH
 (sitting up)
 S'alright. I enjoy being knocked on
 my ass every few hours.

Carlise chuckles as she grabs Hatch's arm to bodily lift him up. Her effort is visibly strenuous.

CARLISE
 No problem. It's one of my secret
 joys to knock people over by body
 slamming them.

There is a light beat...

Before they both begin to laugh.

But it's not for long. Eventually, the two stand in an awkward silence.

HATCH
 Well... want some grub?

CARLISE
 First we smash into each other then
 you offer food.
 (beat, cutely)
 We must be soulmates... Wait,
 you're that new guy onboard aren't you?

Hatch stumbles a bit, flabbergasted.

HATCH
 (stammering)
 Well... uh... yeah...

CARLISE
 C'mon, I'm just jerkin' ya. I'll
 show you to where we eat.

They begin walking.

HATCH
 You won't go with me?

Carlise suddenly looks uncomfortable.

CARLISE
 Nah. I've got... stuff to do.

She points to a distant door.

CARLISE

There.

(beat)

Well, I need to get back to what I was doing.

She begins to leave.

HATCH

Wait!

(beat, shy)

You happen to be the first person I've met since I came... uh, here, that hasn't tried to rape, sell, or enslave me. Can I at least know your name?

CARLISE

Carlise, Mr. Hatch. Anything else you'd like to know?

HATCH

Can we see each other again?

Carlise smiles and stifles a laugh.

CARLISE

What are you, twelve? This ship ain't one-fifty meters long. I'd be surprised if we don't smash into each other in the future.

HATCH

I'll keep my ass padded.

Carlise laughs as she exits.

Hatch walks forward and enters the door he was shown, taking a quick look back at Carlise, who also happens to be glancing back...

INT. AVALON -- GALLEY

Hatch walks into the galley, which really isn't much of anything. Only half a dozen small, wooden tables are arranged in neat rows at the opposite end of a makeshift kitchen, which is eternally bathed in steam and smoke itself.

Only about three people occupy the small room, one of them is our very own doctor: ISAAC, who is sitting alone picking at a large bowl of blue soup. Hatch makes his way forward.

HATCH

Hi.

Isaac barely makes the effort to look up.

ISAAC

What?

Without the invitation, Hatch sits down.

HATCH

So... what's up?

ISAAC

(slurps soup)

Get out.

HATCH

Aw, c'mon. I still gotta thank you for healing me up back in the day.

ISAAC

...And I told you not to thank me.

Hatch is confused visibly.

HATCH

Why not?

ISAAC

Because little shits like you used to... used to...

(sighs)

I just watched three people die this morning. Get out before it's four!

Hatch is taken aback.

HATCH

Geez... something twisting your underpants?

Isaac brandishes his spoon like a knife.

ISAAC

I just told you what's fucking bothering me. Get out of this room. Now.

HATCH

(oddly unaffected)

Not before I get some food.

Isaac rolls his eyes and grabs another bite. Hatch still doesn't move.

HATCH
Anything good?

Isaac plays the ignore game. A rather large vein sticks out from his forehead.

HATCH
Fine.

Standing from the creaky stool he sat upon, Hatch walks the ten or so meters to the steaming kitchen.

Inside is a cacophony of pots, foodstuffs and liquids, all of it a mess. Hatch stares for a long moment, but quickly grabs a loaf of some kind of bread and goes back to his seat.

ISAAC
What are you doing?

HATCH
(duh)
Sitting down.

ISAAC
Why?

HATCH
Why not?

ISAAC
Because I just told you to fuck off.

HATCH
Well, I don't know anyone else here,
so I'm sitting with you.

Isaac chuckles.

ISAAC
You're damn lucky keeping all those
casualties alive got me so exhausted.

As he laughs, he tries to eat, but both quickly fail. Eventually, Isaac violently smothers his head in his palms.

HATCH
Want to talk about it?

Silent beat accentuated by the constant white noise of the room.

ISAAC
You've got no idea.

Hatch takes a large bite of his bread.

HATCH

Well I won't until you tell me.

ISAAC

No... you've never seen what I have. Hell, I bet you never seen a good fight.

HATCH

Nope... can't say I have. Though I did see some nasty stuff with the Klingon conflicts last week on holonetwerk...

(beat)

Never mind.

ISAAC

Whatever. You ain't never heard the sound of grown men and women at the end of their lives... ain't never seen that last breath...

HATCH

Well... being a doctor... I guess it's an occupational hazard-

ISAAC

(interrupting, shouting)

Don't you ever fucking talk to me like that! You weren't there on Jushai! You didn't see your own fucking brother's legs suddenly fly away from a mine. You never saw your own home burned and robbed by cowards who ran from your own side!

HATCH

I... take it you... saw it.

In a particularly violent moment, Isaac stands and throws the bowl across the room! The blue liquid flies everywhere.

ISAAC

Yes, you sonofabitch! I WAS! I was a combat medic on my own home when... when it...

HATCH

When it was destroyed?

ISAAC

Plowed under the goddamn dirt!

HATCH

...By who?

Isaac doesn't reply but instead moves to exit the room.

ISAAC

Just shut up about it. And never
talk about it again in front of me.
I got no problem turning people
into corpses that deserve it.

Hatch gulps as Isaac exits.

But his growling stomach soon takes over and he gets back to
the bread.

HATCH

Would'a tasted better with some
butter...

As he eats...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The bridge is noticeably much cleaner and repaired, but it
is still far from pristine. Zorin and Siren sit at their
stations listening to Rol'Gin give yet another long sermon.

On the viewscreen, the large swath of burned ground still is
washed by black smoke, curling out like long tentacles over
a massive area.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE

...And so it was not the man from
Frol'gala who sold the sacred wine,
but the very Guide of the Prophet
himself. And when Torreth spoke, he
spoke not to the wine seller, but
to the very Guide himself. "Fear
not," said he, "For I bring tidings
of joy and peace for the future.
Your choice is wise." And Toreth
proved his newfound repentance by
killing the sinful wine seller with
his own blasphemous wares.

(beat)

And thus proved to all that the
words of the Prophet guide all.

(MORE)

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE (CONT'D)

His message guides all of our actions from simple steps to monumental decisions. He has seen all and knows all. Blessed be who knows the Prophet's word, for he knows the very route of destiny.

SIREN

(to herself)

If I hear much more of this, I'll find some sacred wine...

Zorin nods from his seat. His focus is concentrated on the small viewscreen where the small fleet and the burning world are prominently displayed.

As she speaks, Rol'Gin continues his sermon:

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE

This leads me to another aspect of the wonders of the Prophet's words. From his emergence so long ago to deliver us from the strife of our time, to us working each and every day to bring his vision to fruition. It is us, those who cannot share in the Prophet's wonders, who must simply trust in his message, that truly enjoy his message. We live knowing his words but not what they mean. We only trust they will bring us to the glory and prosperity of the future.

(beat)

Now, join me in a moment of reverence for the message I have imparted to you. Let us bow our heads in joy and wonder for his crushing truth!

Finally, Rol'Gin's voice goes silent. There is a loud sigh of relief bridge-wide.

ZORIN

How's my ship looking?

A few people look around and mumble positive remarks.

SIREN

Looks good from here, Zorin.

(quieter)

If you wanted to punch it...

Zorin moves to a repairman's work and easily removes some heavy panels while talking to Siren.

ZORIN

(same)

When the opportunity comes.

Siren nods.

The work continues in peace for a moment.

Before it's shattered by a slightly burned and hysterical crewman, JARESH, running right before Zorin!

JARESH

Zorin!

(beat, takes breath)

The engines...

(breath)

Burning...

(clutches chest)

Had to close the blast door!

Siren suddenly looks up in alarm.

SIREN

What!?

Jaresh is calmed for a moment to speak.

JARESH

In the fighting... a cult torpedo hit the right side engine... Hories had to shut down the reactor before it blew. But now... something popped and the entire room is burning! I had to...

(beat, moan of regret)

Close the blast door. Hories and Vrell are... dead.

Some react with horror. Zorin takes the flood of news in stride, keeping his cool for everyone else.

But a careful look at the throbbing muscles in his temple and neck show that he is one unhappy Hirogen.

ZORIN

Get Isaac over there when the flames die. How do the engines look now?

Jaresh is calmed somewhat further by Zorin's cool demeanor.

JARESH

Well, we've always just let them...
fix themselves after we screwed up
before. But... I don't know about
this time...

Jaresh looks down in shame.

JARESH

I'm sorry, Zorin. Looks like we're
royally screwed this time.

Siren's face sinks.

SIREN

When do you think we could go to warp?

JARESH

I don't even know how this ship
powers itself! I just put out the
fires and replace the broken stuff,
you stupid bit-

ZORIN

That's enough!

(beat)

Get back to work, Jaresh. I'll give
you new commands if and when I see fit.

JARESH

(defeated sigh)

Fine. I'll just... go.

Jaresh exits slowly, his emotions still on the edge.

SIREN

We need warp engines Zorin. When
the Cult start tractoring us again
and we don't have warp engines to
follow suit...

ZORIN

I know. We blow, just like all
those others. We fall behind, the
tractors rips us to shreds.

Unfortunately, just as there seems to be a moment of peace...

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE

Well, my dearest friends and
comrades.

(MORE)

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE (CONT'D)

My people have told me that the world below us has calmed enough to allow our holy feet to touch down upon. Be joyful and prepare your minds, as this moment will be the first of many that sees his word come to fruition!

EXT. SPACE

The Cult ship suddenly angles downward, beginning a slow and easy descent down into the atmosphere of the empty planet.

INT. AVALON -- DEVICE ROOM

Hatch walks confidently into the familiar room, his head clear and stomach quite full of food.

Now energized, Hatch immediately begins to investigate the strange device yet again. He pokes, prods and sniffs areas around the strange thing. It's clear this is his mission.

HATCH

Okay... you don't seem to affect any power systems...

(beat)

And you gotta be important if you've got a whole room to yourself...

Hatch presses his palm to a dark, flat surface, obviously hoping to activate a touchscreen.

HATCH

C'mon... gimme just one hint! Spark! Blow a fuse! Let me know I'm just not completely wasting my time.

As expected... there is no reply.

Hatch sighs and slumps to the floor, sitting cross-legged in front of the black device.

HATCH

I spend my whole time on this damn ship looking at this pile of... whatever. You know, I could go back to my shuttle and get out of here. But where will I go? There's a big ass "Cult" ship out there that just murdered an entire planet for no reason. I doubt they'd let ol' Tom go just for kicks.

(MORE)

HATCH (CONT'D)

I could hitch a ride on another ship bound for Earth, get out of this whole nightmare. Go back to my little apartment... clean it up a bit... Then try to get my life back together.

(beat)

I could sue that bitch and her boyfriend for their little prank and get them fired. God knows they deserve it. I could even play the sympathy card and get chicks way hotter than Melanie...

(pause, laugh)

Is that all I can think about? I just had my life handed to me at the ass end of a gun, and here I am talking about picking up some tail. What kind of man am I?

Hatch looks to the device for something, but gets nothing.

HATCH

Well? What the hell am I!?

Grabbing a piece of heavy metal littering the floor, Hatch THROWS it at the device!

HATCH

ANSWER ME!

Suddenly, surprisingly, the room suddenly bursts into life! The few remaining glass globes suddenly glow with a multitude of color and previously dark, crystal-glass devices thrum with power.

And in that same screen Hatch tried to push before... a text message suddenly appears:

Hey, Tom.

Off Hatch's dumbfounded and astonished expression, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT SEVEN

FADE IN.

INT. AVALON -- DEVICE ROOM

The message displays bright and clear on the screen, a small testament to the great power running through the rest of the room.

And Hatch is still on his backside, staring at the screen in wonder.

HATCH
What the hell...?

The screen blinks off for a moment before a new message appears.

Why did you throw that at me?

HATCH
Uh...

Do I make you mad or something?

Hatch is completely stunned.

HATCH
Um... no. Not really.

Well, you seemed really mad. Want to hear a joke? Jokes always make me not mad.

HATCH
(weak smile)
Sure. Tell me a joke.

After he speaks, Hatch slides closer to the screen, enthralled by it.

What do you call a targ in a Terran wedding dress?

There is a long, silent beat. Hatch runs his fingers slowly over the screen, studying its every activated detail.

HATCH
What?

REALLY MAD.

Hatch doesn't pay attention to the screen, looking beyond and around it.

HATCH
 What is this? Gotta be some kind of
 interactive... program... thing.

Program? Is that all you think of me?

The message is compounded by a rude electronic beep from the device.

HATCH
 (still snooping)
 Well... what else would... you?... be?

Hatch stumbles behind the device, somewhat clumsily due to his still cast-sealed arm.

As he moves, another screen facing him activates.

I could be anything I want to be. A pilot, an engine person, even a captain.

HATCH
 Sure, if you say so.

Rude.

HATCH
 (to himself)
 I wonder how this stayed here so long?

Nobody was interested in me.

HATCH
 How very interesting.
 (beat, looks about)
 Looks like someone threw crap
 around like I did.

It hurts when they throw things.

HATCH
 Probably tried to sell you, didn't
 they. Some kind of entertainment
 program would probably do pretty
 good in this hellhole.

Rude.

HATCH
 But I guess you never talked to
 them... did you?

No. They were mean. Not like you, Tom. You are very nice.

HATCH
Yeah, thanks.

Hatch looks for once not past the device, but right at the screen.

HATCH
You know... you're the first one to say that in a LONG time.

Why wouldn't anyone else say that?

HATCH
Well... there was Melanie... Byron... everyone who saw me different. A whiny loser... asshole... lazy... All of it...

Nobody saw you for you?

Long beat.

HATCH
No... I guess not. But it was mostly true. It was me.

Not true.

HATCH
(sarcastic laugh)
Yeah, you must be programmed for feel-goodness. Whoever built this ship must have had one bruised ego.

Let me show you who you are.

The screen goes black...

...For a very long time.

HATCH
Huh... must have shut itself off.

The screen suddenly reactivates.

No, I'm still here. I just can't seem to find anything.

HATCH
I don't understand.

I can't find anything. Nothing about you. Or me. Or anything.

The ambient noise around the device suddenly increases dramatically.

Some of the loose debris around Hatch begins to vibrate rapidly.

HATCH
What's going on?

Going down!

EXT. SPACE

In the atmosphere of the burning world, the fleet slams into the air roughly, turning the entire sky into a rolling fireball.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

The viewscreen is red with tongues of flame.

ZORIN
Status of the hull?

SIREN
We're still holding together, Zorin.

ZORIN
Distance from surface?

Siren goes back to her console after the bridge rocks from a nasty impact.

SIREN
Not too long.
(shudder)
I hope.

Zorin looks resolutely forward as the viewscreen calms down, giving us a great panoramic view of the world rapidly coming toward them.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE

Looking up from under a particularly lush alien tree, we watch the entire rag-tag fleet land on the scorched ground just barely beginning to cool.

Each ship sets down one at a time, finding a relatively flat landing surface before touching down. Several ships sink a few meters into the ground, their immense weight too much for the weak soil.

The Avalon is one of the last ships to touch down, far outside from the center of the group but not too far away.

And hovering above them all, the Cult ship slows and begins a slow circle over the entire area, keeping a dark vigil over their enslaved quarry.

As the ships settle in and people begin to disembark, a familiar voice filters not over a comm. system, but over a plethora of massive speakers stuck on the ugly ship's underside.

ROL'GIN'S VOICE

My friends, welcome to our destination! I promised to you previously that I would reveal the reason for our long journey here, and as the Prophet minds his words, for they are true, I will tell you. This world is rich in the very materials needed to build a firm foundation for the future. Strong stone and thick mortar will be what you will quarry for us here. I know your hearts are strong with the words of the Prophet, and your backs should not fall behind.

(beat)

We will stay aloft, offering words of encouragement and keeping the prophet's blessings in our prayers. The Prophet himself wishes you good fortune.

As we pan down to get a good look at the plethora of people cautiously stepping out of their ships, we see the general look of hopelessness and apathy that seems to have pervaded this entire galaxy. Not a one looks defiant at the cult message or their looming vessel. They simply begin to unload tools and clear the burned ash over the ground.

As they work, our focus turns to the Avalon, her ramp extending painfully slow either as a byproduct of her recent damage or a simple unwillingness to work.

INT. AVALON -- DEVICE ROOM

Hatch is sitting cross-legged before the blackened device nursing his cast.

HATCH

So you really don't... know... anything about what happened to you before a few years ago.

Yes.

HATCH

Not even a serial number?

No.

HATCH
(getting bored)

Huh.

But I know you.

HATCH
But you just said you didn't know
anything.

Don't be a smartass.

Hatch's head jerks up in surprise.

HATCH
What?

Someone is coming.

HATCH
Wait... how do you?

But before he can get a response, all the activity, the lights and sounds, in the room dies at once, suddenly leaving Hatch alone in the dark.

HATCH
...Hello?

Just as suddenly, a rap on the door startles Hatch to his feet.

CARLISE (O.S.)
Hey, you there, Hatch?

In the dark, we can get just a hint of smile from Hatch.

HATCH
Yeah.

CARLISE (O.S.)
C'mon, Zorin told me to find you
and take you down to the bay.

Hatch suddenly gets very nervous.

HATCH
Why?

CARLISE (O.S.)
The hell would I know? He gives
orders, we follow, we get paid. Not
that complicated. Now get outta
there before I pop that cast of
yours off.

Hatch takes one last look at the now completely inactive room before moving to the door.

And it doesn't open.

HATCH

The hell?

CARLISE (O.S.)

Oh yeah, we got plenty of time to sit here and talk about our personal lives, Hatch. It's not like there's a gigantic cult ship over our heads that just nearly kicked our asses into space dust or anything.

As Hatch tries to pry the door open with his good hand, the portal suddenly opens, ejecting him into the hallway almost as violently as his first entrance into the room previously.

CARLISE

So glad of you to join me.

HATCH

Sorry, I just had... computer troubles.

CARLISE

Sure, that's what you probably always say. C'mon, we may get there just in time to have Zorin shoot us.

HATCH

(deadpan)

What?

CARLISE

But he won't be mad about it.

As Carlise walks away, Hatch obediently, albeit shakily, follows.

INT. AVALON -- SHUTTLE BAY

The shuttle bay is full with just about everyone who works on board Avalon present. People of very mixed races mill about fine-tuning bits of equipment, polish things to perfection or just loiter about and look busy.

Isaac walks between them all, his face a stone mask, passing out water containers and first aid packs.

ISAAC

Watch it out there. Keep drinking
and don't wind up on the fuckin'
ground. I ain't helping anyone
today if they wind up in my sickbay.

Hatch follows Carlise closely, nearly walking on top of her
to keep from being drawn into the crowd.

Hatch points to Isaac as discreetly as possible.

HATCH

Whassup with all these outbursts?

CARLISE

He gets like that when we have
wounded. Whenever he has to patch
up a skinned knee he remembers his
painful days of the war.

HATCH

War...?

Oddly, their path ends just before she runs into the very
cross-looking Isaac.

CARLISE

Here he is, just like Zorin said.

Isaac passes out a few more kits before turning to here.

ISAAC

Good.

Without saying a word, Isaac moves to Hatch and grabs his cast.

HATCH

Hey! What the hell are you-

With a sickening SNAP!, Issac smashes the cast with a sharp
blow with his leg. Hatch cries out in agony.

HATCH

What the.... the fuck... was that for?

ISAAC

Arm's healed. Didn't need to keep
it on anymore.

HATCH

You lunatic! I only had it on for A
DAY!

To Hatch's surprise, however, he notices quickly that his arm is indeed perfectly healed.

HATCH
Oh... whaddaya know?

Isaac rolls his eyes and shoves a water/aid kit into Hatch's chest.

ISAAC
Keep drinking and don't wind up in my sickbay, all right?

HATCH
Yeah... sure.

Isaac moves on.

CARLISE
You two've hit it off pretty good.

HATCH
(failed sarcasm)
Yeah. He's my best bud in the whole world.

CARLISE
Okay...

She moves to an unoccupied corner of the bay, somewhat close to Hatch's ignored shuttle. Propped up on a wall is a stocky machine covered with more rust than any kind of instrumentation.

CARLISE
C'mon, this is what Zorin wants you to do.

Hatch moves up and takes a long gander at the thing.

HATCH
What is it?

CARLISE
(duh)
Laser drill.

HATCH
Oh... so what does it do?

CARLISE
Mows lawns to perfect size. What the hell do you think it does? Drill. You're going to be part of the primary quarry group.

This time, Hatch keeps his mouth shut, simply following Carlise's hands and words.

CARLISE

This button here hovers you to your location, just lean in the direction and you go there. This one activates the drill. Just make for damn sure it's pointed down before you do it, m'kay?

Hatch points.

HATCH

And this button?

Carlise is silent for a long moment.

CARLISE

Probably best if you ignore that one.

HATCH

Gotcha.

(beat)

Any reason I'm doing this and not being handed a shovel and pail or something?

Carlise stifles a laugh with a concerned look.

CARLISE

This piece of junk's exploded the last three times we've tried to use it.

As Hatch gulps a long swallow, Carlise exits.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE -- WORK SITE

Obviously several hours later, a good portion of the burned ground has been carted away in favor of a hole comparable in size to the Cult ship hovering above, but only a meter or so deep. Several burned hulks of metal that previously were laser drills dot the landscape, leaving only three in active service. Hatch is, fortunately, one of the lucky ones.

As he works, Hatch has to wipe copious amounts of sweat from his brow just to see the people working around him.

Crewmen both uniformed and not, alien and human work in tandem loading gigantic crates full of stones and smaller pebbles and hauling them into the cargo bays of every ship. Some of the smaller vessels are already full, but larger ones like Avalon still have a lot to go.

The only disturbing thing about this scene is the now very common appearance of Cult members milling about, shouting prayers to the Prophet and just being general nuisances. Some of the more physically imposing cultists walk calmly around the edges of the work site, keeping a constant, armed to the teeth, vigil on the place.

Taking a sip from a nearly empty water container, Hatch slowly gives up on work and sits heavily upon his floating machine.

HATCH

This is nuts.

CARLISE (O.S.)

You got that right.

Hatch looks directly behind him to see a sweat covered Carlise approaching.

HATCH

Hey, what brings you to my humble corner?

CARLISE

Believe it or not, constantly shoveling dirt and rocks into giant containers can really tire a girl out.

HATCH

I would have no idea.

CARLISE

It's true.

HATCH

Wow.

Hatch notices Carlise looking at his water cup.

HATCH

(handing it over)

Here.

CARLISE

You don't mind?

HATCH

Nah, I can tough it out.

CARLISE

Thanks.

She puts it away in a pocket somewhere on her person.

HATCH

So... what brought you aboard this ship of fools?

CARLISE

(no nonsense)

The money. I won't lie. I used to be a runner on some godforsaken junk transport before we were shot down by some pirates. I found Zorin in a spaceport, he offered me more money to work for him, and the rest is history.

HATCH

Money, huh?

CARLISE

What, you don't care about cash? You some kind of monk or something? Your clothes seem stupid enough.

HATCH

(small laugh)

Nah, it's just that... where I'm from, stuff like money just doesn't really matter. Not a whole lot really did.

CARLISE

Spoiled life, huh?

HATCH

Yeah. Looking back, it really was.

There is a long silence here, accented by the suddenly setting sun.

HATCH

Never saw a sunset like this before.

Carlise doesn't reply but simply reaches into her pocket to remove Hatch's water and a strip of what looks like well dried jerky.

HATCH

Little snack before you get to work?

CARLISE

You wish.

With a quick motion, Carlise dunks the strip into Hatch's water, listening to a sudden sound of boiling liquid.

HATCH

The hell?

CARLISE

Intestinal tissue of a Tarkalean
rabbit. Dissolves in water to make-
(takes a drink)

The best stuff out there.

Carlise's upper lip is stained with a brown sludge as she offers the canister to Hatch.

CARLISE

Want to try? It can make a whole
day of work feel like a minute with
a Pleasure slave.

Hatch sniffs the bottle before jerking away in revulsion.

HATCH

Oh hell no! That's disgusting!

Carlise's expression suddenly darkens.

CARLISE

What the hell? Take it!

HATCH

I said no, that's why.

Carlise tries to force the water into Hatch's face, which he quickly slaps away.

CARLISE

What's wrong with you?

Hatch has to knock the canister to the ground.

HATCH

Leave me alone!

Carlise reaches to grab the water.

CARLISE

(venomously)

Pathetic. I thought you were a good
guy.

Carlise walks away as she sips the gross concoction. As she moves, her steps become increasingly erratic.

Unfortunately, it's at this very moment when a Cultist, armed with a rifle forged seemingly of pure black metal, approaches Hatch.

CULTIST

You there. Why are you not working?

HATCH

(thinking quickly)

Uh... engine overheated. I'm cooling it.

CULTIST

By talking with that woman?

HATCH

She, uh... has a very calming demeanor?

The Cultist raises his weapon to Hatch's chest.

CULTIST

Refusing to work is a violation of the Prophet's most high of commands. You have blasphemed and insulted him.

HATCH

Oh shit.

CULTIST

In accordance with His law, all blasphemers must be shown the light.

Fortunately, before the man with the gun can do anything, Rol'Gin's booming voice roars over everyone on the ground.

ROL'GIN'S VOICE

My friends, I commend you for all your effort this day. Our prayers did not go unanswered as you have all performed beyond even our wildest imaginings. For a reward, I command all of you to halt your machines and enjoy one night of rest as we anoint your vessels with the blessings of the Prophet.

(beat)

But before we go, I implore you to pray with me.

The Cultists work site-wide all bow their heads in unison, followed by several of the more cowed workers. Hatch notices that those from the Avalon, Isaac, Siren and Zorin specifically, keep their heads high and proud.

ROL'GIN'S VOICE

"All-knowing be he the Prophet who chose to enlighten us with his wisdom and message that we may join in his light."

The people around follow the words as best they can, turning the field-turned-hole into an audible mess.

ROL'GIN'S VOICE

Thank you.

Very quickly, people from every ship throw their tools down and move toward their own homes. Hatch watches for a long moment, keeping vigil over the cultists still milling about. Some of them seem to carry around large containers full of some thick liquid.

ZORIN (O.S.)

Hatch! Get back here!

Startled back into reality, Hatch abandons the drill and moves to the Avalon.

But just before he gets there, a rustle in the un-burned jungle behind the ship catches his eye. He moves around the ship slowly.

ZORIN (O.S.)

What the hell are you doing?
(barely audible)
Siren, get him.

As Hatch stares into the shadows beyond the vessel, he can barely make out the outline of a humanoid shape. Two large eyes, wide and unblinking, stare right at him. The image is, of course, quite unnerving.

SIREN

Hatch? What is it?

Hatch can barely take his eyes off the humanoid.

HATCH

Don't you see it?

SIREN

See what?

Though Hatch doesn't see it, Siren gives a hand signal to Zorin, to which he nods and boards the ship.

HATCH

Over there... those eyes.

SIREN
Listen, we have to get inside now.
You can show us later.

Hatch slowly peels his eyes away.

HATCH
You didn't see that?

SIREN
No, now go.

Hatch takes one last look into the jungle, only to find the
shape gone.

HATCH
Yeah... whatever.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT EIGHT

FADE IN.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE -- WORK SITE -- MORNING

The sun of the empty world is just barely peeking over the horizon, bathing everything in a dull red light. Already, a few dozen people from various ships are hard at work tilling more ground for quarry while several others loiter about waiting for more light.

And above, the Cult vessel still hovers over them all, both her speaker and weapon ports aimed straight down.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE -- AVALON RAMP

Sitting at the edge of Avalon's still extended ramp, Hatch sips from a new water container. Above him the rest of the crew sits and cleans equipment and eats a meager breakfast.

As he sits for a long moment, he's suddenly surprised by a gentle hand on his shoulder.

HATCH
(surprised yelp)

Hey!

CARLISE
Hey yourself.

Carlise sits close to Hatch. He obviously is quite uncomfortable.

CARLISE
Look, about what happened yesterday.
I just... um... I'm just not used
to anyone...

HATCH
S'alright. Just don't use that
again... with me around at least.

CARLISE
Fine.
(beat)
Just... I gotta know why. No one's
ever said no to it before.

HATCH
But it's the... the... What the
hell is that?

CARLISE

It's just the intestinal tract of a-

HATCH

Yeah, exactly.

CARLISE

What's so bad about that?

HATCH

Nothing... except how it's totally ew.

CARLISE

The hell's your problem? You can't say you don't have anything like that where... wherever you're from.

Hatch cringes at some uncomfortable thoughts.

HATCH

Yeah... there's a few things back home. But I just... don't like 'em is all.

CARLISE

Why not?

Carlise looks genuinely interested, a very odd change. Hatch has to smile at the sincerity.

HATCH

Well, there was one time when I was at the academy. Some other students brought in some herbs from some other planet. Let's just say, it didn't go over well with me.

She leans in closer.

CARLISE

What do you mean?

HATCH

(very uncomfortable memory)

When my friends gave some to me, um, how can I say it?

(beat)

There was an explosion from my person? Let's just say I now tend to say no to any kind of stuff.

Carlise laughs loudly.

CARLISE
 (between hearty chuckles)
 That's the funniest... my god...
 That bad?

HATCH
 Yeah.

CARLISE
 Okay, I'll just keep it away from ya.

Carlise slips an arm over Hatch's shoulder.

CARLISE
 I'll see you later.

As she walks away, Rol'Gin's familiar voice booms once more.

ROL'GIN'S VOICE
 Arise, children of the universe!
 Arise and complete the task the
 Prophet has laid out before you!
 Whisper a prayer and gather your
 strength. We will continue watching
 you from on high with hope in our
 hearts and love on our words.

With that eerily nice comment, the entire camp suddenly explodes with activity, mostly also helped with the sudden arrival of the same dozens of Cultists from before, dragging people out of ships and forcing others back to their equipment.

As the Avalon's crew descends, Zorin stomps to the top of the ramp to get a good look at his ship. He seems extremely interested in the hull itself. Hatch looks up.

HATCH
 What'cha lookin' at?

Zorin barely looks down.

ZORIN
 Get to work.

Hatch shrugs and walks away.

Siren and Isaac move up to Zorin a moment later.

SIREN
 What did they do last night?

ISAAC

I heard something like someone tapping the hull from my room for a couple of hours.

ZORIN

So did I.

Zorin descends the ramp and into the field to see his ship in greater glory.

As he does, Siren's jaw drops.

ISAAC

My god...

All atop the Avalon and every other grounded ship is a thick layer of a quickly drying substance, though almost impossible to see in the red morning.

SIREN

What is that?

As she speaks, a small trickle of the liquid drips to the ground, staining the grass red.

ZORIN

Blood. They painted my ship with blood.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PLANET SURFACE -- WORK SITE -- EVENING

Once again drenched with sweat, Hatch staggers back to Avalon after another day of hard labor. Several people lie on their backs or stomachs at random points of the camp, all dead or dying. The schedule is getting brutal.

As Hatch makes it to the ramp, where a group of more muscular crewmen load a few of the massive containers of stone and dirt into the cargo hold, his head turns to the sudden sound of a twig snapping. He misses the ramp and walks to the edge of the burned ground.

HATCH

Okay, this is nuts.

(louder)

Who's out there!?

No reply. No sound.

HATCH

I saw you last night. I know
someone's out there. Prove to me
I'm not insane!

Quiet.

Zorin peeks around from the ramp.

ZORIN

Hatch, get in here or I'll leave
you out!

Hatch walks up to the edge of the ground slowly, keeping a
keep watch.

ZORIN

Enjoy the outdoors.

Zorin's head disappears and the ramp begins its ascent into
the ship. Hatch keeps walking forward, his knees brushing
against the foliage.

Suddenly, the sound of rustling grass startles Hatch.

HATCH

What the?

A humanoid figure, slightly smaller than the one seen before,
suddenly SMASHES past Hatch and runs into the camp!

HATCH

HEY!

Hatch turns to pursue, but is suddenly stopped by a hand
reaching out from behind him and grabbing the neck of his
shirt. Hatch is pulled bodily to the ground.

Though he isn't knocked out, Hatch is dazed from the impact
with the ground. His vision goes blurry at the now two
humanoid figures approach and lean over him.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE -- JUNGLE -- NIGHT

Hatch comes to well into the night, though that is a little
difficult to tell through the thick plant life.

Directly in front of him lies a very small shuttlecraft just
barely larger than a standard escape pod. Its dented and
blackened hull shows both its age and state of total
disrepair. To his right, a small lamp glows before a pile of
fried electronics and a plate of very unappetizing food.

As he looks around, Hatch quickly notices that his hands are firmly tied behind his back.

HATCH

Um... hello? Anyone out there? Look, I'm sorry if I pissed you off or something. If you let me go I promise I won't say anything about you to anyone.

In response, the rear end of the tiny craft suddenly opens, emitting two figures of the exact proportions of before. In the very dim light of night and the small lamp, Hatch can make out strong facial ridges and bone protrusions on both the male and female aliens. Ridges distinctly Xindi primate in origin.

The male approaches Hatch with feigned toughness. The female holds a worried look.

AZEL

Who are you?

HATCH

I'd rather know the names of my very nice hosts if I could.

The male produces a tiny knife easily intended for food and shows it to Hatch.

AZEL

It doesn't matter. You won't live long enough to care.

As he tries to act tough, the female suddenly sighs and approaches Hatch.

SHERA

I'm Shera and this is my idiot cousin Azel.

HATCH

And I'm Tom Hatch. Nice to meet you both. Now, about these little ropes here? I've got an itch on my chin and I'd like to scratch it at any time.

(no response)

Any time you like.

Long beat.

AZEL
Why do we always pick the most
annoying ones?

SHERA
(to Hatch)
We'll untie you when we get what we
want.

HATCH
(duh)
And that is?

AZEL
(more mock tough guy)
Get us off this planet and we'll
think of not killing you.

HATCH
Well, see, that's gonna be a
problem. It's not my decision to
leave anything. Well, except the
ship, but Zorin closed that by himself.

AZEL
Told you. The annoying ones.

Shera sighs.

SHERA
You see, we're on the run from... them.

HATCH
(quickly)
The cult?

SHERA
Yes, the cult. We've been on the
run for a few months.

HATCH
Why?

SHERA
Will you shut up for one little
second!?

HATCH
Shutting up.

SHERA
Good. But our shuttle is out of fuel.

AZEL

We thought we'd be safe at the edge of broken space... but then you all showed up escorted by that huge monstrosity.

HATCH

Well I wouldn't call it so much of a monstrosity as a bigass... yeah. You're right.

SHERA

So we need anyone's help in getting on their ship and flying out of here. We can't pay but Azel's a good mechanic.

AZEL

And Shera here can fly just about anything built.

HATCH

While I appreciate the sales pitch, it's just not my decision. I'm sorry. I'm just as stuck as you two.

AZEL

Dammit.

Azel reaches around and, with the tiny knife, cuts the rope around Hatch.

SHERA

Can you at least sneak us on your ship or something? If we can sleep in a glorified escape pod for a few months, we can manage any space you can get us.

Hatch rubs his wrists.

HATCH

Are you that thick? I just said it's not my choice.

Azel whips out the knife again.

AZEL

Then we'll just kill you and find someone else.

Azel's knife slowly reaches Hatch's cheek...

HATCH

Go ahead. I still said I can't do a thing for you.

SHERA

At least suggest something and let US do the work. We just need SOMETHING.

Hatch stays still for a long time, his eyes darting about from the dull knife to both aliens.

HATCH

I've never been much of an idea man either.

SHERA

Not even a suggestion?

HATCH

If you're fucking desperate enough to kidnap me, you gotta be good enough to sneak aboard any ship you want.

SHERA

Not really. This is the first time we've tried anything like this.

HATCH

Well, it shows.

Azel drops the knife.

AZEL

She's right, man. We just need something.

HATCH

Fine... fine. But I'm gone after this.

(beat)

You could try to sneak onto the ship when the work detail comes in tomorrow evening. Try to blend in.

AZEL

That sounds good!

HATCH

Wait! No... Zorin stands there all day, he'd notice you.

(he thinks)

Hey... wait a minute. Just tell me one thing. Why're you running?

Shera takes a step forward.

SHERA

Long story. Now think of something else.

He seems to drop the question.

HATCH

(smirks)

You could always jump into one of those dirt containers and hope they take you aboard.

AZEL

Sounds good!

SHERA

It'll have to do. Thanks, Tom Hatch. Just follow the cut grass to get you back to the clearing. We'll see you on your ship.

Azel and Shera move into their craft.

HATCH

Hey, wait! I was just joking! It won't work!

SHERA

But we've got nothing else. You don't understand how desperate this is. If the Cult catches us...

HATCH

Say no more. I understand death threats. I've gotten more than a few recently.

SHERA

Go back to your ship and try to keep some containers close to the back of the ship. We'll take care of the rest.

Shera walks into the craft.

HATCH

This is completely insane. I have to be dreaming.

AZEL

I could poke you a few times to wake you up.

Hatch turns around.

EXT. PLANET SURFACE -- WORK SITE -- NEXT DAY

As Hatch struggles to walk back to the ship, obviously dehydrated and weak, he notices the same two burly crewmen struggling to load another crate onto the ship.

FRELNIK

Damn this one's heavy.

GRUNCH

Got that right.

Both of them grunt and moan as the crate is heavily placed into the now full hold of the Avalon. Hatch's shuttle is crammed as far into the back as possible, but even it is covered by crates. Only a very narrow path to the only door out of the cargo bay remains crate free.

Zorin walks up the ramp from an unheard conference with another captain and a Cultist guard.

ZORIN

Avalon crew to me!

Elsewhere, other captains make similar calls.

The small crew assembles extremely quickly, all of them as soaked and tired as Hatch.

ZORIN

I've been told that we've finally hit quota and we'll be out of here soon.

GRUNCH

Where're we going, Zorin?

ZORIN

That's the only mystery. They're not saying.

ISAAC

That's insane! They could take us anywhere!

ZORIN

And we won't stop them. Sandrei put us on their black list already. We won't run. Trust me Isaac, when they're done with us, they have to let us go. Just a little longer.

ISAAC

You better be right about this, Zorin.

Before Zorin can make a reply, the Cult ship's speakers suddenly roar with a loud squeal of feedback. Most everyone covers their ears.

ROL'GIN'S VOICE

As your noble captains have informed you, your hard toil has finally filled our quota of building material from this world. My heart sings with joy for you, one and all. You poured your blood and tears into this labor with nary a complaint. The Prophet's words have come true this day. Blessed be they. Now, I implore you to board your vessels and prepare to leap into orbit. From there, we will escort you to the next step in this monumental journey.

The crews of all ships slowly file on board, almost all of them resigned to their fates.

INT. AVALON -- SHUTTLE BAY -- LATER

A few hours later, Hatch sits alone in front of his shuttle, using a dirty cloth to try and wipe off some of the grime stuck to the hull of his shuttle.

As he works, the muffled voices of Azel and Shera can be clearly heard from a crate at the other end of the bay.

AZEL (O.S.)

Hello? Tom Hatch? Anyone?

SHERA (O.S.)

Shut up! Anyone could be outside.

AZEL (O.S.)

But I got dirt in my-

SHERA (O.S.)

Will you shut up!?

Hatch chuckles.

HATCH

Need some help?

AZEL (O.S.)
That you, Tom Hatch? Can you get us
outta here?

Hatch wades his way over to the crate.

HATCH
Just give me a moment.

With a violent motion of his own, Hatch slaps the small
locks on two sides of the crate. Azel and Shera spill out
clumsily, both of their bodies completely covered with dirt.

AZEL
Thanks. I was beginning to suffocate.

HATCH
No problem. I'm surprised you did it.

SHERA
It wasn't easy. We had to stay in
there for a few hours.

AZEL
Speaking of that, got any food?

HATCH
Sorry.

SHERA
A place to hide?

HATCH
Not really.

AZEL
Then what are we going to do?

Hatch smirks.

HATCH
You could go back in there.

AZEL
Absolutely not!

Shera looks away from the men to Hatch's shuttle.

SHERA
What about that?

HATCH
 What?
 (turns)
 My ship?

AZEL
 It's yours?

HATCH
 Yeah.

Azel takes a long look at the vessel.

AZEL
 Sorry to hear that.

SHERA
 Please, let us stay there.

HATCH
 I don't know... it's a real mess in
 there.

AZEL
 (enthusiastic)
 We'll clean it up.

HATCH
 And it doesn't really work anymore.
 I kind of... it's not important.

SHERA
 He can fix it.

AZEL
 (a smile)
 Sure can.

Hatch looks about, especially when the sound of heavy
 footsteps approach. But when they fade, he sighs.

HATCH
 Fine. Come on.

The trio slowly moves through the crates and into the
 shuttle through the hull still gaping at its side.

EXT. SPACE

The Cult vessel takes the Avalon and all the other ships
 under its wing once again.

INT. AVALON -- HATCH'S SHUTTLE

As Hatch sits in the very same seat he was in before, Shera easily takes the other. Azel pokes around the extremely messy back.

AZEL

You're damn right it's a mess in here. How can anyone live like this!?

As he moves, Azel crunches dozens of small chips.

HATCH

I wasn't living like this... not exactly.

Hatch snatches a magazine of ill repute from Shera as she reaches into side pockets of the cockpit.

Azel makes it to an engineering console in the back and pops it open. He whistles.

AZEL

Man... this is an antique! Shera, come here! Look! Not even a biopack or anything!

HATCH

Yeah... antique...

Shera follows her cousin's word and leaves the chair. As she sees what Azel sees, she too whistles.

SHERA

This thing must be a real bitch to fly. No neural interface at all.

HATCH

That hurts you know.

Hatch pokes around a bit as the aliens look over his shuttle. As his head bows, he is oblivious to Isaac walking in.

AZEL

Hey, I can see one of your problems right here. A power coupling's fused. I'll just...

(beat, technical sounds)

there.

Hatch's shuttle suddenly roars to life! Lights activate everywhere and the nacelles begin to glow a healthy blue.

SHERA

Told you he could fix anything.

In the bay, Isaac stumbles back and onto his rear by the shock of the shuttle, knocking him out of view.

But Hatch's attention is locked at the main console. It's flashing like mad.

COMPUTER VOICE

Warning. Klingon territory breached.
Warning.

Hatch looks up in true horror.

HATCH

Klingon...?

COMPUTER VOICE

Warning. Qu'onos orbit. Advise
immediate warp drive activation.
Treaty violation in effect.

HATCH

Qu'onos?

(beat)

No. It's just a dream... no.

COMPUTER VOICE

Warning. Klingon territory breached.

The console below Hatch shows a map of nearby space, the neutral zone between the Federation and Klingon empire clearly shown. And Hatch's shuttle is indeed in direct orbit over the Klingon home world.

HATCH

It can't be!

In an instant, Hatch is gone from the shuttle and out of the cargo bay.

AZEL

What's gotten to him?

SHERA

Dunno.

Unfortunately, it's at this moment that Isaac gets up and leaps over to Hatch's shuttle to investigate the disturbance. Thanks to the hole in its side, the human's eyes make immediate contact with the Xindi's.

Both parties are silent for a moment. Isaac's eyes suddenly twitch wildly.

ISAAC
GODDAMN MURDERERS! ON THIS SHIP!

Isaac is in the shuttle in seconds. As we pull away, sounds of horrible violence filter through.

INT. AVALON -- BRIDGE

Zorin is at his seat as the ship rocks from another activation of the Cult tractor beam. The viewscreen shows motion not a moment later.

ZORIN
Projected course?

SIREN
Can't tell yet.

The comm squeals again, though not a horrendous as before.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
Dear captains, I must ask you to brace your crews for a particularly rough voyage, as this final leg is stressful for vessels not equipped for travel in this area.

ZORIN
(nervous)
What is he talking about?

SIREN
He can't be serious.

ROL'GIN'S COMM VOICE
Please brace... now.

The viewscreen suddenly shifts beyond the planet into the empty space behind it.

SIREN
He's taking us into broken space!

ZORIN
He can't. We'll be trapped with no warp.

SIREN
I don't think so...

Indeed, the viewscreen suddenly lights up with a powerful blast of light, followed by the familiar tunnel of entry into warp speed!

ZORIN
What the hell?

But before anyone can make any kind of observation, the bridge suddenly ROCKS with a powerful impact!

SIREN
Something's really, really wrong!

ZORIN
You think?

As the bridge crew struggles to work and stay in their seats, Hatch stumbles into the small room. Zorin notices him quickly.

ZORIN
Get him off my bridge!

Amazingly, Hatch retains his footing as two people responding to Zorin's order fall to their faces.

ZORIN
What the hell are you doing!?

The bridge lurches again!

Like a broken man, Hatch looks to every wall, looking for something specific.

ZORIN
Answer me!

Hatch suddenly looks at a vaguely rectangular shape on one of the walls and moves toward it.

SIREN
Hold on!

The rock is powerful enough to finally knock everyone to the floor!

On his knees, Hatch finally sees his objective, resting with him as if it had always been there. A simple rectangle of dark metal. One side is completely blank while the other...

HATCH
Please... don't be what I think you
are. Oh god please...

Hatch grabs the blank rectangle and flips it, even in the face of the violent warp speed.

...And he faints when it's flipped over. Hatch drops the object.

Our focus suddenly is over the prone Hatch, pulling up from close all the way up to the ceiling. We get a faint glimpse of the object and the vaguely familiar arrowhead symbol etched at the top...

EXT. SPACE -- CONTINUOUS

We pull back from the bridge to the outer hull of the vessel. As we gradually see more and more of the ship, her name, displayed proudly even in this storm, can finally be made out:

U.S.S. Avalon.

END OF ACT FOUR

To Be Continued...

ACT NINE

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. I intend to get you and these two off of my ship as soon as it's convenient, teary stories of lost family aside. 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!

(MORE)

SOVARI (CONT'D)

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.

(MORE)

SIREN (CONT'D)

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.

(MORE)

SHERA (CONT'D)

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.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TEN

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 it's 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.

INT. THE AVALON - OBSERVATION ROOM

SHERA

(shocked)

Their homeworld?!

Shera steps past Azel, also looking quite shocked, to face Siren and Zorin.

AZEL

It bears mentioning again: Maybe we should've stayed on that planet.

ZORIN

Siren and I have been talking. To be honest, I've been impressed with you two since you've come aboard. We're willing to let you stay here, to be a part of my team, if you two serve as engineers.

SHERA

That's all fine and good, thanks so much but their HOMEWORLD?!

SIREN

What Zorin isn't mentioning is that we don't let people take advantage of our crewman. We look after those under our roof.

Emotions seem to subside as Siren and Azel hear this.

ZORIN

We have a plan to keep you in a...
(reluctantly)
Cell, that we use to smuggle various properties, that can't be penetrated by scanners. Even if the Cult are looking for you on our ship, they won't find you.

AZEL

I don't think that's the problem though. If you even go on one of their ships, it means you've seen their dwellings. That means you HAVE to be converted. Otherwise the unclean have been there... If you were to go to their homeworld, there's no way.

ZORIN

Rol'Gin made it clear that he's going to let us go once we drop off...

Azel once again interjects.

AZEL

That's how they get you. We can't get out of broken space on our own, and they won't help us. So either, we join them or we die.

ZORIN

I understand that we're headed towards an uncertain future. But that doesn't quite differentiate this from any other time in our lives. We'll do what we have to to survive. Don't think I'm going to let this crew go down without a fight.

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 cargo 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.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT ELEVEN

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. 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 is 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.

(MORE)

ZORIN (CONT'D)

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 where 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
Huwaha?

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.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT TWELVE

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

Would this someone possibly be named... "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.

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.

(MORE)

ZORIN (CONT'D)

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 by 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 medic in the war. That Azel and Shera were Duranon...

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

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 FUCKING 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 warheads 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.

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 our 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.

END OF ACT FOUR
TO BE CONTINUED

ACT THIRTEEN

FADE IN:

EXT. PRIME - NIGHT

The beauty of Prime greets us. It's night as the multiple moons hang in the sky, the lack of stars letting only moonlight consume the sky. In the distance of the rolling grassland is the Cult's masterful Temple: The Avatar of Light.

Wind blows as we hear the commotion of people working. Loudmouthed laborers shouting and giving orders. We pan down to see a LANDING PAD and a small building next to it. Boxes and crates are simply sitting next to the metal platform, several non-cultists work. The landing pad is patrolled by three red Cult Acolytes, each holding massive looking weapons, while the other people haul crates onto the pad.

From a different view, we pan across a close up of the crates that are off to the side, not on the landing platform. We see words like "CAUTION" and "EXPLOSIVES" written on the sides. Finally, three familiar people enter our view. Crouched down and well out of view are SHERA, CARLISE, and RIDEK. All still clad in their black clothing.

CARLISE

(whispering)

Tell me why I agreed to go on this mission again.

Shera hushes her.

SHERA

(same)

Shh!

RIDEK

I'm with Carlise, we can fit into these crates sure enough, but we'd have to empty them out. The guards will see the explosives lying on the ground.

SHERA

What's that again? Blatant pessimism?

(changing moods)

Don't worry about that. They'll probably just assume a crate broke or something.

RIDEK

Yeah, three crates.

CARLISE

He's right. These Cult guys are meticulous enough to notice. That's their forte.

SHERA

This plan has some rough edges. It's not perfect. Nothing is. But we have to work with what we...

ACOLYTE(O.S.)

Hey!

An off-screen guard shouts, clearly not at the three Avalon crew, but at a man hauling a crate. Shera peaks around a crate to see the Red talking with the man.

She goes back.

SHERA

(even quieter)

Whatever, we just do what we need to do.

RIDEK

Well, maybe we can use this to our advantage.

He points to a device Shera has.

RIDEK

Lemme see that corder thing. I have an idea.

EXT. PRIME - NIGHT - LATER

A silver and red shuttle descends from the sky, it's engines only slightly kicking up ambient dust. It's not loud, and looks much more graceful than the larger Cult ships. It slowly and steadily sets down as civilian workers and red acolytes watch on.

The mild disturbance the shuttle brings dies down. A landing ramp extends down and out walks an Acolyte guard without a helmet on and with white medallions pinned across his chest. This is a GENERAL.

The General is greeted by a single guard.

The guard bows to his knees and raises a sword his carries.

GENERAL
 (raspy voice)
 Are we done here?

GUARD
 (standing)
 Yes, General. The Unfaithful have prepared everything and will load the cargo.

GENERAL
 The Unclean won't touch holy ground?

The guard peers over at the motley crew of unfaithfuls, out of earshot.

GUARD
 They, uh... don't know.

GENERAL
 You didn't tell them?

GUARD
 Penultimate Sovari told me himself to withhold the information about the particulars of their duties.

GENERAL
 That sounds like him. I had wondered why we had so many volunteers for a job that means the end of their immediate lives. They didn't know.

(a beat)
 Give them the choice. Convert and serve our religion or be executed.

The general turns to return to his ship.

GUARD
 What of the other ships? The ones that landed with the ore to finish the Avatar of Light.

The guard nods toward the shining tower in the distance.

GENERAL
 I heard they were to left alone for the time being.

GUARD
 'For the time being'?

GENERAL
Take it as you will.

The General leaves the guards sight, who almost shamefully looks over to the crew of unfaithfuls.

GUARD
(to the crew)
Alright, get those crates stored on
the shuttle.

We see a small lift come down from the shuttle as the crew begins it's less-than-exciting work.

ACOLYTE
(in the distance)
Sir!

The guard looks over to the Acolyte. The Acolyte is waving the guard over to his location.

Focusing elsewhere, We look over to see a bearded man and a clean shaven man hauling a particular crate.

BEARDED MAN
(angry)
Would you hold your end of the box!

CLEAN SHAVEN MAN
I AM! You're jerking it around!

BEARDED MAN
It's not me.

CLEAN SHAVEN MAN
It feels like something's rolling
around in this one.

The clean shaven man puts the box down, leaving the bearded man still holding his end.

BEARDED MAN
What are you doing?

CLEAN SHAVEN MAN
I'm checking it out. Seeing what's
in here.

BEARDED MAN
No! Don't!

CLEAN SHAVEN MAN
Why not?!

INT. BOX

Inside the wooden box, we see Carlise curled up, holding her legs to her chest with one arm and holding a pistol in the other. Her face shows a look of shock as she listens to the conversation raging outside.

BEARDED MAN

(muffled)

If the Reds find us snooping in their stuff they'll probably kill us.

CLEAN SHAVEN MAN

(same)

It's a wonder they haven't done that already! I'm looking.

Suddenly, the other end of the box drops with a bang. Carlise smacks her head on the bottom of the crate.

She cringes in agony, mustering all her strength to stay quiet.

EXT. PRIME - NIGHT

The clean shaven man points to the crate.

CLEAN SHAVEN MAN

Don't drop it like that! It might explode!

BEARDED MAN

If you're so confident that there are bombs in here, why do you want to check it out?

(a beat)

Let's just get these things on the shuttle and get out of here. Don't make it any harder than necessary.

The clean shaven man drops his head.

CLEAN SHAVEN MAN

Gods damn it, fine. Get your end.

INT. BOX

Back in the box, Carlise rubs her head and lets out a sigh of relief.

EXT. PRIME - NIGHT

At the end of the landing platform, the Acolyte guard is joined by the head guard.

GUARD

What is it?

The Acolyte points his silver finger to the ground, where we see several boxes worth of explosive containers has been strewn down the slight hill the landing platform sits on. As expected.

GUARD

What happened?

ACOLYTE

We don't know. Shall I get a clean up...

GUARD

(quickly)

No. Not yet.

(a beat)

Get me a Seer.

ACOLYTE

Yes sir.

The Acolyte runs off briskly as the guard glares at the explosives on the ground.

Back to the two bickering men, their conversation hasn't let up.

CLEAN SHAVEN MAN

I'm just saying, maybe it's not explosives in these crates. Who knows what we're really hauling? Maybe bodies!

BEARDED MAN

Doesn't feel like a body.

CLEAN SHAVEN MAN

Well, you never know.

Finally, they get to the shuttle and set it on the lowered platform.

BEARDED MAN

If it was a body, it would probably stink by now.

A fairly loud sneeze is heard from the crate they were just hauling. The two men look at each other quizzically.

The clean shaven man starts to say something, but the bearded man grabs his arm.

BEARDED MAN

You didn't hear a thing! Let's go.

We pan over to the small building next to the platform. Three Acolyte guards escort a cloaked figure out of the building. We've seen this kind of person before, a black shroud and a mechanical device attached to the skull.

Some of the unfaithful workers turn to see the person, but two Acolyte train their weapons on the people, who promptly return to their work.

They escort the figure, the Seer, to the head guard.

ACOLYTE

This Seer just recently suffered a near fatal cerebral hemorrhage, but he should be good for at least one more reading.

GUARD

Ask it what happened.

The Acolyte nods, and turns to the Seer. He bends down to let the Seer hear him better.

ACOLYTE

What happened here? What do you see?

There's a slight pause while it tilts its head to look at the acolyte.

Our view CHANGES.

We now see from the perspective of the Seer. Everything is blurry, he's standing in one place yet the world races in circles and colors everywhere intensify and bleed together.

ACOLYTE

(distorted, echoing)

What do you see?

Slowly, as if arising from another reality, the Seer begins to view three people kneeling behind crates.

Our view RETURNS.

Nothing is said by anyone. The Seer remains still and silent for a long while. The head guard turns to look at them.

GUARD

Are you sure it's still alive?

ACOLYTE
Last we checked...

SEER
(raspy)
It's the...
(a beat, a breath)
Unfaithful.

Suddenly, the Seer erupts into convulsions. The machine on its head starts to stutter, the green fluids circulating begins to turn black.

Just as quickly, the Seer falls to the ground. The machine stops completely. It's clearly dead.

ACOLYTE
Surprised it made it that long.

GUARD
Unfaithfuls? Does that...

They all turn to see the shuttle is already taking off.

GUARD
Stop the shuttle! Get it back here!

INT. BOX

Back in one of the crates, we see Ridek holding onto a hand held device. He punches a button and smiles.

EXT. PRIME - NIGHT

A huge EXPLOSION from the explosives on the ground erupts! All the Cult guards standing near it are engulfed in the blaze.

INT. SHUTTLE COCKPIT

In the cockpit, a pilot and the Cult general look mildly shocked at the event.

PILOT
Should we turn around?

GENERAL
Looks like the unfaithfuls are taking a dangerous turn. Don't land, just wipe them out.

PILOT
Yes sir.

EXT. PRIME - NIGHT

The shuttle arches around and begins firing its weapons, each pulse of light igniting large plumes of fire from impact.

INT. SHUTTLE CARGO HOLD

We pan over the multitude of boxes laying lazily about as the sound of weapons is heard outside.

SHERA

(muffled)

Ridek, you're smarter than I expected.

CARLISE

(same)

It was really my idea!

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

On the bridge, ZORIN and SIREN are alone. Zorin paces back in forth, his face riddled with anger and his fists clenching.

SIREN

(worried)

He's not serious is he?

ZORIN

I don't care. Even if this is a joke, however elaborate, I WILL rip his head off.

SIREN

Do you know who he's talking about? This Adele woman?

ZORIN

I'll rip her head off too.

Siren gives a look as if that response was unsatisfactory.

SIREN

He really hasn't told us anything of his personal life during the war, only the gruesome stuff. Maybe we should help him.

ZORIN

If I had...

The door opens. ISAAC SAROLA is standing there.

In a quick, cat-like motion, Siren rushes in front of Zorin and places her hand on his chest.

She speaks softly so Isaac can't hear them.

SIREN

Remember what he said. Don't go
after him. God knows what he'll do.

She moves back out of the way. Obviously, Zorin is heeding her advice. As he walks forward, Isaac brandishes an extremely dangerous gun in one hand and a small, beeping device in the other. It's visibly counting down. Rapidly.

ISAAC

Sharing secrets?

ZORIN

(through clenched teeth)
What are you doing Isaac?

ISAAC

Zorin, you know that I have respect
for you and what you've done to
keep us out of trouble...

ZORIN

That's not what you said earlier.

ISAAC

...But I don't believe my presence
on this ship is much appreciated.
I'm the only one on this ship who
can heal a broken arm, yet I'm
stuck on the lowest deck doing all
the dirty work like dealing with
Hatch, or murdering that Sciran who
snitched us two years ago.

ZORIN

You think you're not appreciated?!

ISAAC

I need that woman, more than you
could know. She's been the only
thing I've ever cared about and I
just need her... and I think you do to.

SIREN

What the hell would we need her for?

ISAAC

She can help us.

ZORIN

You aren't talking about her
religion are you? Converting?

ISAAC

No, of course not. I'm talking about getting and staying away from the Cult. She can help with that.

He slowly enters the bridge.

ZORIN

Why should we believe that? You're threatening to blow up the ship if we don't comply!

ISAAC

That's right. And according to this baby

(taps device)

We've only got a minute for you to decide before we all go up in a blaze of glory.

(beat)

Tick tock.

ZORIN

You've always been impulsive Isaac, but this is obscene!

ISAAC

What's obscene is what's going to happen to that innocent woman tomorrow!

ZORIN

It's not OUR place to interfere!

ISAAC

Maybe we should make it our responsibility! When was the last time we EVER helped another person in need?

SIREN

(with a laugh)

You're one to talk about morality Isaac.

ISAAC

Just because I choose to be the grunt around here doesn't mean I don't know what's morally right. I choose to ignore some morals, yes. But right now I'm looking at morals from another angle. From an innocent's eyes.

ZORIN
I can't believe this selfish,
diluted garbage!

Isaac stands tall. The device goes down to less than 40 seconds.

ISAAC
Still, my instructions stand. We
HAVE to save her.

35

ZORIN
And then what? We go and if we
don't get killed we come back and
make it to safety? Do you think
everything's going to go so
perfectly? When has anything ever
gone perfect?

Isaac doesn't say a word. There is a long, tense silence.

SIREN
There has to be a way to resolve
this. Isaac, just think of US.
Think about how improbable this
whole idea is. You'd be risking ALL
of our lives.

ISAAC
What about that woman and the Typhon?

Confusion from Zorin.

20

ZORIN
What about her?

ISAAC
You let her carry out one fucked up
plan to get us free from the Cult
and what did it do? Got us deeper
into trouble.

ZORIN
We're still alive aren't we?

ISAAC
The point is, you took a risk
without even talking with your crew
about it. I think its time someone
else decided to make a call.

SIREN
You think that person should be you?

15

ISAAC
Yes! Fuck, ANYONE!
(aggravated)
I think that's enough conversation
for now. I'm sticking with my plan,
and if I'm not helped along...

He wiggles the device.

10 seconds. Isaac begins to count down.

ISAAC
Nine... eight... seven...

By now, even Isaac is sweating.

ISAAC
Six... five...

SIREN
ZORIN!

ISAAC
Four... three...

ZORIN
YES! We'll do it!

Isaac smiles genuinely and taps a button on the device,
halting the countdown.

ISAAC
That's better. Just so you know,
this don't mean the core's safe.
Just one tap of another button and
she still goes up. This time
without all this damn drama.

Zorin is literally shaking with rage, though he knows he's
powerless to do anything but listen to the madman before him.

Isaac still smiles and puts his gun away.

INT. TEMPLE - TEMPLE ROOM

We are again greeted by the familiar sight of ADELE and
HATCH sitting. Hatch is lazily perched on a pillar's ledge,
Adele looking over a scroll.

There is pure silence in the room, Hatch is very uncomfortable and looks tired. He stands up.

HATCH

So, what are they gonna do? Burn us alive? Stake through our hearts? Spiders in our minds?

ADELE

Nothing quite so primitive. We have... something of a fondness for executing the unfaithful by rooting out the source of their heresy.

HATCH

What, their hearts? Eyes?

ADELE

The mind.

Hatch cringes.

HATCH

Damn. From my position on things, that's pretty primitive too.

ADELE

What's it like?

HATCH

I wouldn't particularly know what having my brains squelched out feels like.

ADELE

The Federation. What's it like? Is it wonderful?

HATCH

Wonderful? Um, not quite. They've screwed me over enough times for me not to care about them any more.

ADELE

You feel there is some corruption in the way things are handled?

HATCH

Kinda. Unfair is the best way to describe it I guess.

ADELE

Such is life.

HATCH

I know. That's what everyone says,
"It's you Hatch, not everyone else."
Everyone thinks I'm being selfish.

ADELE

I know that very feeling.

He sits down and crosses his legs next to Adele.

ADELE

Everyone believes I'm selfish for
thinking of the Cult as becoming
radical. That just because I was
growing less and less pious doesn't
mean I should force that belief as
truth on everyone else.

HATCH

Well, if you believe it to be true,
why can't you just leave the Cult
and start up your own religion?

Adele looks at Hatch with offense.

HATCH

(regretful)

Sorry. See, in my time I really
didn't have much of anything...

ADELE

No possessions?

HATCH

(slightly taken back)

Well, I mean as far as faith.

ADELE

No religion, too?

HATCH

Not at all.

ADELE

That's hard to imagine.

HATCH

Well, it's easy if you try Di...
Adele. I mean, it was something we
had moved past.

ADELE

How could the religion of Those Who
Walk in the Light spring from...

HATCH

(quickly)

That's just the thing. I don't know!
It's so...

Hatch is lost for words.

HATCH

What do your writings say about the
rise of the Cult or whatever?

ADELE

The scriptures speak of a time of
chaos deep in the sands of history.
Men murdered their brothers and
tyrants ruled over every world.

(beat, reverent)

In this time of terror and
destruction, a select few peoples
banded together with the desire and
will to save this galaxy from
itself. From their hearts sprang
the very will of the Prophet, whose
words formed the very foundation of
our scriptures and the beginning of
the cleansing of worlds.

(another beat, darker)

But something kept him from
completing his holy Crusades...
Siepra.

HATCH

Sie-wha?

ADELE

Our texts are vague as to what
Siepra is and what it did to thwart
the Prophet's will, unfortunately.
But it was enough to halt his
immediate efforts and force the
creation of the very... civilization
you see now.

HATCH

Now wait, the Prophet? Is it the
same guy that Sovari guy is so
excited about seeing in a few hours?

ADELE

I don't know. Only those high above
me know.

HATCH

Oh! That's efficient. Ya know, this stuff is so whacked up.

ADELE

Do not blaspheme the most holy of prophets! His will has saved the lives of countless individuals across this galaxy and thwarted the needless and petty wars that were tearing our civilization apart. Though we do not see him... the prophet has always been that channel to that one thing common in every being in the galaxy.

HATCH

(smug bastard)

The Heart?

ADELE

The Light.

Hatch sends a smug expression across.

HATCH

Right-O.

After a moment, Hatch shutters suddenly and violently.

HATCH

Whoa. Did you feel that?

ADELE

No. What?

Hatch turns around to see the rest of the darkened room. Nothing.

HATCH

Nothing. Just drafty in here I guess.

INT. THE AVALON - BRIDGE

Siren, all lonesome and by herself, is pacing across the bridge. Arms folded in worry, she looks like she hasn't had sleep in days.

COMPUTER

That's starting to hurt, you know.

SIREN

Huh?

COMPUTER

I can feel every step you make.

SIREN

Well, turn that part of you off or something. You never complained before.

COMPUTER

I wasn't awake before. Not since Thomas Hatch came aboard.

Siren doesn't answer, just continues to pace.

COMPUTER

I can tell by your heart rate and perspiration that you are nervous. Is it Zorin's meeting with Isaac or the plan they are concocting?

SIREN

(angry)

What, are you scanning me?

COMPUTER

It's merely a safety/health precaution, to make sure you're still on the ship or didn't suffer a severe hammer blow to the head.

SIREN

Oh that's kind. Just, cut it out. I don't care if you scan me, just don't let me know about it.

(a beat)

I don't know if this is going to work.

COMPUTER

From what I can tell, it sounds like it's the best plan one could come up with in this situation.

SIREN

Are they done?

COMPUTER

Here's Zorin now.

On her mark, Zorin marches into the room. His large form remains commanding but looks worried himself. Siren greets him.

SIREN

We ready?

ZORIN
He's a lunatic.

SIREN
Well duh.

ZORIN
But a lunatic with an agenda. His
plan isn't foolproof but it might
be possible to pull it off.

SIREN
"Might"?

Zorin shoots her a cold glare.

ZORIN
What, you actually expected to be
able to do this and live to tell
about it?

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT FOURTEEN

BLACKNESS

The faint sound of breathing is heard. One can only assume it's someone very close. A grunt is heard, the only other thing audible in a blistering silence.

The faint sound of a gun cocking is heard... then a scrape. Like something large is being dragged. The breathing intensifies as it becomes laced with worry. The scraping stops. Creaks are heard, and finally a slight pop.

INT. BOX

The top of the box opens as we see a Cult worker, dressed in peasant robes, appears before us.

Shera trains her large pistol to the Cult worker's head and FIRES. The silenced weapon causes the worker to collapse. Shera takes a brief moment to hint a smile and gets up from the crate.

INT. SHUTTLE CARGO HOLD

The cargo hold is not big at all, barely enough room to stand up in.

SHERA
Carlise? Ridek?

CARLISE
(muffled)
In here!

RIDEK
(same)
Me first!

Shera steps over some boxes to look for them.

SHERA
Say again.

CARLISE
(as before)
In here!

RIDEK
Here!

Shera locates where Carlise is: in a crate at the bottom of a very large stack. Ridek however, is by himself near the exit. She goes to Ridek's aid first.

INT. BOX

The box lid is flipped off. From Ridek's perspective, we see Shera. She smiles.

SHERA

Hurry up, get Carlise out while I
hide the body.

Ridek gets out of the box and looks to where Carlise is making a minor amount of noise. He sees the daunting pile of boxes with disgust.

EXT. CULT CRUISER

We get an external view of the bird-like Cult ship. It's much sleeker than most we've seen. It floats in the night sky of Prime, set against the blue moon.

INT. CULT CRUISER - CORRIDOR

Shera, Carlise, and Ridek fill the frame as they stand motionless in a doorway.

Shera looks rather sick, the others are just shocked at something. Slowly we begin to pull back.

CARLISE

Maybe it would be better to let
this place burn.

It's very dark, but through the shadows we can see the walls of the corridor are soaked in blood. Resting on the ground and against the walls are Cult and alien corpses alike. Limbs and obvious entrails dot the ship's hall. The hall continues into darkness.

RIDEK

Yeah, I'm thinking that's an idea.

CARLISE

Ugh, that smell.

Shera immediately steps forward.

SHERA

(retching)

Let's go.

CARLISE

Are you crazy?

SHERA

We scanned the ship, this is the only way to the lifts. If we want to get to the bridge, we have to go.

Shera keeps walking, carefully avoiding the first few bodies.

Ridek leans over to Carlise.

RIDEK

(whispering)

One thing Xindi know how to do is to avoid a mess like this, even though they're more used to causing it.

Carlise looks at him with furrowed eyebrows. She isn't amused.

CARLISE

Dick.

Ridek lowers his head.

RIDEK

Sorry.

Carlise follows Shera's lead and cocks her weapons as she walks. Ridek takes a moment to compose himself.

RIDEK

God, people don't have a sense of humor anymore.

He begins to walk too.

They turn on their flashlights, shining beams of light into the grotesque hallway. Shera, who is still leading, carefully balances watching her tricorder and watching where she steps with her flashlight.

SHERA

There's no one on this ship.

CARLISE

On this ship or on this deck?

SHERA

Well, on this deck but I don't think the Cult would even set foot on this ship. Unclean ground and whatever.

There is the faint sound of squishing. No one wants to look down to see what it is...

RIDEK
(sarcastic)
Oh, that's freaking beautiful.

SHERA
Over here!

She shines her flashlight on a door in the distance.

CARLISE
The lift?

SHERA
Yeah.

They slowly make their way through the dark and silence hallway. We hear their breathing and not much else besides an occasional squish.

There is a long silence as they don't speak and continue to walk. There is an intensely eerie feeling about at this moment.

But they make it to the lift door. Shera pushes a button and the door slides open. Inside, it's a square lift with a single wall flame burning. They step inside.

INT. CULT CRUISER - LIFT

The door then shuts. They finally stand in descent light. They stand still, not speaking. Clearly, they are very effected by their voyage.

CARLISE
Right, let's not speak of this ever again.

SHERA AND RIDEK
Yeah.

SHERA
Let's not.

RIDEK
Never again.

Relief. Shera starts looking over the simple interface near the door.

SHERA
(to herself)
Hmm, bridge. Bridge...

She taps a button. The lift slowly starts moving. Then, suddenly stops.

RIDEK
Crappy Cult Crap.

CARLISE
You think they're powering systems down?

SHERA
No, if they were the power would already be down.

It starts up again... then shutters to a stop.

It JOLTS! The wall mounted fire lamp comes out of it's holding place and lands on Ridek! Immediately, his black clothing catches ablaze!

RIDEK
(in shock)
FUTHERMUCKER!!!

He twists and turns, hitting the flames trying to put them out.

CARLISE
Ridek!!

She takes off her coat and smothers the flames as Shera picks up and holds the torch.

SHERA
Is he okay?

RIDEK
(angry)
Goddamn Cult Crap! Can't even put in lights!
(angry/sarcastic)
Hey!! How many Cultists does it take to screw in a light bulb?

He rubs his legs, which look burned but not severely. Carlise tries to comfort him.

The lift continues to stutter upward, the unreliable thing shutters all around them.

INT. THE AVALON - HANGAR DECK

We quickly pan around the room to see no one is in the hangar, then we witness the main door open from the corridor.

Zorin, Isaac, Siren, and Azel step into the room. They are silent, an obvious tension as to the recent developments impedes any conversation.

SIREN

Are we sure about this guys?

ZORIN

About as sure as we can be.

(a smug glare to Isaac)

But, I guess that's up to our medic here.

ISAAC

Listen, you won't be disappointed. Adele WILL help us. Call it a premonition.

ZORIN

It's not that, it's the whole breaking into the Cult's most sacred and well guarded temples.

SIREN

We've done crazier things. Remember the day we escape that Confederate Slave Ship?

ZORIN

Don't remind me.

(to Azel)

How is everything?

Azel folds his arms and leans against the wall. He's not happy.

AZEL

The computer's been bitching at me about how much the core overload hurts. She only just stopped when you released the overload.

ISAAC

(turning)

Tell her I'm sorry but I still have my finger on the button if something goes...

(suspiciously)

goes wrong.

Azel rolls his eyes in serious disdain. He leaves in a huff.

Isaac presses a few buttons on the nearby control pad and the landing ramp falls.

Outside, a storm is raging. Lightning and torrential rain hammer down as wind whips the precipitation up into the ship.

COMPUTER

You guys are going out there?

ZORIN

It's the only way to get into the Cult temple without them seeing us on their sensors. It's a highly electrical storm.

COMPUTER

Is it safe to even go out there?

ZORIN

Of course not. But Isaac needs his woman.

Sarola turns and cocks a semi-large gun.

ISAAC

You're not one to talk. I met Adele in the last battle of Jushai Prime against our enemies. That day was the worst day of my life, and the one who drug me out of that hell hole alive is about to be crucified. She's the only person who's ever respected me.

Quickly, Zorin rushes his hulking body over to Isaac and punches... the control pad that brings the landing platform up. The room is silenced as the sounds of storm cease.

ZORIN

(in Isaac's face)

This whole time you've been threatening us, saying you'll destroy Avalon if we don't cooperate.

(through his teeth)

This whole time we allowed you to lead us through your designs. You know me well enough to know I would kill anyone else who would dare do that to me. Don't go saying no-one respects you on this ship because if we didn't, I would've killed you long ago. It's out of respect for you that I'm doing this.

He again punches the button and the ramp lowers again. He and Siren walk out into the maelstrom, leaving Isaac to ponder Zorin's words for a moment.

INT. TEMPLE - HALLWAY

Within the illustrious Avatar of Light, the holy temple, the corridors are very triangular in shape. Red silk stream from the ceiling as candles and lanterns light the way. Outside, the storm presses on.

ROL'GIN(O.S.)

Given the complexities of our civilization, I won't be surprised to see people fall upon their baser instincts and learn to embrace the feral instinct of wanting to be part of a larger community. To be love by someone higher than thyself.

GENERAL(O.S.)

Though, while most people today are arrogant and uncivilized, most are stubborn enough to keep away from us.

In our view walks ROL'GIN and the Cult General from before.

ROL'GIN

If you ask me, the universe is heading toward a sizable crossroad. Not just prophecy, but in terms of the people act. The war that ended years ago that gave birth to the Confederacy leads me to believe things will only degrade until...

(they stop walking)

Only the faithful are left.

GENERAL

Are you saying we should stay out of the affairs of everyone else?

Rol'Gin nods.

GENERAL

I suppose you don't think there is much room for my kind in the Cult, if that is your line of thinking.

ROL'GIN

I don't believe...

(pause)

The prophet speaks of Holy Hands. Hands can create, destroy, twist, or recover. Hands are used to pray, hands are used to pull triggers. The Prophet says, "An open hand is an open heart, receiving the blessings and giving forth to those who lack faith. A closed hand is a closed heart, an instrument in which one strikes... and destroys".

GENERAL

The Prophet made those statements centuries ago, before the war and before the degradation.

ROL'GIN

But does his point not withstand?

GENERAL

Does the Prophet not also say, "One's life is the sum of their time"? We all live our lives by what our surroundings dictate. He was referring to the influence of a changing structured society changing the meanings of people's lives. There is no society today, only chaos. We must adapt to society today to survive and to live life.

(a beat)

Not only that, but Penultimate Sovari speaks directly with the Prophet, does he not?

ROL'GIN

He does.

GENERAL

And Sovari, therefore the Prophet, willed my services into being. It's by Holy Design that I, and the Cult military, are. To deny Holy Design would be...

ROL'GIN

Yes, I know. Heresy.

The General nods.

GENERAL

I have much to do.

ROL'GIN

I understand. I will retire.

They give slight nods to each other and walk away.

INT. TEMPLE - ROL'GIN'S ROOM

Rol'Gin's room is not much different than the architecture of the rest of the building. Flame, red, and stone. Though, it is fairly spartan with just a bed, a night desk, and a single book of Prophetic Teachings.

Rol'Gin, completely unannounced, enters our view. He lays on his bed and picks up his book. For a moment, he only glares at it. No life seems to flow through his eyes as he does. He opens it and a slip of paper falls out.

He picks it up and looks at it. The same picture Adele had... Sovari, Rol'Gin, and Adele smiling.

INT. TEMPLE - SOUTH ENTRANCE

The south entrance room is not very big. It's just a small soldier outpost with a door leading outside. Very disappointing. Three Acolyte soldiers sit around a wooden table, their weapons set to the side and an odd looking card game takes place before them.

ACOLYTE 1

I don't have any more fives.

ACOLYTE 2

(a slight laugh)

I'm sorry. That means your on a hold.

ACOLYTE 1

Yes, I know what it means!

ACOLYTE 3

Maybe we should quit for now.

ACOLYTE 1

Hey, don't worry. The Guard Foreman doesn't ever check up, and he's even less likely to check up on the SOUTH wing.

ACOLYTE 3

No, it's not that. It's just that he's loosing all his credits.

Suddenly, there's a knock at the door.

The three guards stumble out of their chairs and grab their rifles. The first Acolyte pushes up against the door.

ACOLYTE 1

Who is it?

VOICE

Perimeter guard! Quick, open up. My friend's hurt!

The Acolyte looks at his two companions, both shrug at this.

The Acolyte opens the door... No one's there. Just the slight concrete ramp leading up to ground level as rain pours down. Thunder and lightning.

ACOLYTE 3

Close it!

ACOLYTE 1

Who's there?!

ACOLYTE 2

Yeah, just close the door!

The first Acolyte does. He slams it shut and turns to his friends...

Siren stands behind the other two guards!

ACOLYTE 1

GIRL!!!

As the guards turn to shoot, Siren tosses a grenade-like device and she dives away. An explosion of energetic swirlies fills the air around them and they fall to the ground in lazy plops.

Siren gets back up and looks at the guards. She smiles.

EXT. TEMPLE - SOUTH ENTRANCE

Outside the south entrance, Isaac and Zorin wait in the rain.

The door opens and Siren looks out.

SIREN

We're in.

INT. TEMPLE - SOUTH ENTRANCE

Zorin and Isaac walk in. They both see the Cult guards splayed on the ground.

ISAAC
They didn't put up much of a fight?

SIREN
They tried.

ZORIN
We can be sure they're not the last.
We need to find our way through
this place without being...

Siren holds up her hand to silence him. She bends down out of view for only a few seconds.

SIREN
Way ahead of you.

She comes back up holding one of the Acolytes helmets.

SIREN
No one will suspect it.

Isaac looks down at the unseen guard.

ISAAC
No wonder they all wear helmets.
That's sick.

SIREN
I hear it's a big problem among the
Cult nowadays.

Siren gives Zorin the helmet as she goes back to undress the rest of the guards with Isaac.

The large Hirogen tries to put the Red helmet on, but the thing is much too small.

ZORIN
How am I supposed...

Without a second's notice, Siren holds up a red cloak, one that will effectively cover Zorin's head.

INT. TEMPLE - HALLWAY

Through an expansive hallway, lined with columns and adorned with banners, our three heroes briskly walk.

ISAAC
My feet are starting to hurt.

SIREN
Shut it up, Isaac. We'll turn
around if you want to flake out.

ISAAC
Do we know where we're going?

Zorin, holding the tricorder, waves it around at his waist.

ZORIN
The next level. If this is accurate,
that's the jail center.

ISAAC
And if it's not accurate?

GENERAL(O.S.)
HOLD!

From off screen, we hear the familiar voice of the Cult General. Our three heroes turn and imitate Acolytes to the best of their knowledge. They kneel.

The General stands tall above them.

GENERAL
What are you doing? Are you not
supposed to help with the
preparations for Prophet's arrival?

ISAAC
No... uh, sir. Lord... mister.

An angry look from the general, Zorin and Siren peer over to Isaac in silent disappointment.

ZORIN
We were told by... Rol'Gin to
oversee some prisoners.

GENERAL
Rol'Gin? What were his orders? Exactly.

ZORIN
Just to help the current guards
keep an eye out.

GENERAL
You wouldn't be lying?

ISAAC

No way!
 (a beat)
 I mean, no sir.

The General starts to pace before them.

GENERAL

Sounds like something he would order. He has... a loathsome interest in the well-being of prisoners. Did he at all mention Adele Tiernan?

Isaac raises his head ever so slightly.

ZORIN

(quickly)
 No. No specifics.

Suddenly, the General smiles and leaves. Without even so much as a goodbye.

Zorin looks up to see the General walking away.

In a single fluid motion, Zorin uncovers his weapon, points it at the General, and FIRES.

The General falls dead, Siren stands up in shock.

SIREN

Why'd you do that?!

ZORIN

Why not?

Stunned silence from both Isaac and Siren. Then relief.

SIREN

Oh ok.

ISAAC

Good call.

They look around.

SIREN

We should go, any minute this place will be crawling with Cult if they heard that gun shot.

In agreement, they head out.

EXT. CULT CRUISER

Once again, we see the lone Cult Cruise in the sky of Prime, awaiting its fiery end.

INT. CULT CRUISER - CORRIDOR

Once again within the darkened Cult ship, Shera leads the way as Carlise helps Ridek along. His legs don't appear to be in the best shape, but he's walking.

CARLISE

Shera... how we doing on time?

SHERA

We're ahead of schedule

RIDEK

Are we there yet?

SHERA

The bridge is just up here.

They keep walking. The hall is not as filthy as before, but it's still dark.

CARLISE

Shera!

SHERA

WHAT!

CARLISE

How do we know it's safe in there?

We see they're right up to the bridge door.

SHERA

Come on, no one is on this ship besides us. The Cult don't want to even set foot here cause of this Unholy Ground bull...

She walks into the bridge...

We see a good 15 armed Cult Acolytes in the bridge... all turned to see our three people.

They raise their weapons.

SHERA

...Shit.

A lead Acolyte comes up to Shera.

LEAD ACOLYTE
WHO ARE YOU?!

No one answers this guards questions. It's as if their eyes are fixated on the other 14 guards who are threatening them with weapons.

Ridek takes a few limps forward.

RIDEK
(strongly)
I'll tell you! We're here to
commandeer this ship!

SHERA
Ridek!

RIDEK
And if you fucks don't do as we say,
you and the Prophet will be one in
the sky.

CARLISE
Ridek, don't give them any ideas!

A moment's silence.

LEAD ACOLYTE
Are you threatening us?

RIDEK
Damn right. See this?
(holding up the tricorder)
I have this wired to blow all the
explosives on this ship either on
command or on my death. You don't
do what I say, we all die. Kill me,
we all die. Get it?

LEAD ACOLYTE
You would kill us all for this ship?

RIDEK
We need it.

LEAD ACOLYTE
You won't get away with it.

RIDEK
Yeah well, that's mostly up to you
guys. Now, put down the guns, or we
all go... boom.

He touches a button on his padd... Almost every Acolyte in the room flinches.

He smiles. They all comply and set their weapons to the ground. Shera takes charge.

SHERA

Now everyone. Get into that lift over there.

LEAD ACOLYTE

Are you crazy? That lift isn't big enough for...

SHERA

DO IT!!!

They move at her command, all of the acolytes stuffing themselves into the lift. They disappear a moment later, though the lift does sound as if it is way past its normal tolerance.

Ridek, reveling in his endeavor, leans over to Carlise.

RIDEK

Pious my ass. I've got another idea.

A wry smile.

INT. TEMPLE - HALLWAY

BANG!!!

A large explosion erupt from around a corner, debris and pieces of wall go flying.

Isaac and Zorin comes around that very corner, guns blazing. Unseen Cult fire bullets into the walls around them, conveniently missing our heroes. Zorin dodges some shots and Isaac rolls.

ISAAC

This is working our better than I had hoped!

ZORIN

At least we're not skulking around anymore. I hate that!

Another eruption.

ISAAC

Where's Siren?!

Three Cult guards rush around the corner, aiming their very large rifles at Isaac and Zorin.

Quickly, Siren rushes out from behind a nearby pillar and slaps one guy over the head. The other two look to see Siren and she throws her leg to trip them both.

She pulls a grenade out and drops it next to the downed guards and RUNS.

BOOM!!

INT. TEMPLE - HOLDING CELLS

Through the large doors come barreling our crew. All three lunge at the doors to shut them. Siren pushes a single button next to the doors which initiate a loud CLANK. Locked.

ISAAC

The Cult never surprises me how stupid they can be. People can so easily lock them out of their own rooms.

They turns around to see...

More Acolyte guards patrolling the holding cells, now intent on the three.

ZORIN

Well, this is all according to plan.

SIREN

Where are all the prisoners? Adele?

We see no one is being held in the cells.

ISAAC

Well, all these fine Cult guards about to shoot us do have one use to us.

ZORIN

WHAT?!

Isaac throws down his guns and puts his hands up.

SIREN

What are you doing?!

ISAAC

We've desecrated their temple!
They'll take us to where Adele is...
'cause she pretty much did the same
thing.

Isaac has a grin stretched across his face.

Siren and Zorin cover their face in humiliation as the Cult guards move in. They all drop their guns and surrender to the ever growing amount of Reds.

INT. TEMPLE - TEMPLE ROOM

Hatch's face greets us. He looks almost like he's been crying. As before, both him and Adele sit across each other.

ADELE

I'm actually glad they put you in here with me Thomas. You are a decent man. Though, maybe a bit eccentric.

HATCH

Thanks for that. I have to ask...
(a beat, he fiddles
with his hands)
Exactly, what year is it? I know it's quite a bit into the "future", but how far? I didn't even take a temporal theory class back in my day.

ADELE

I take it your measurements of time are the same as the archaic ones?

HATCH

Archaics? You calling me a name?

ADELE

No, it means old.

HATCH

Oh.

She thinks for a moment.

ADELE

So much has taken place. Records have been lost so it's impossible to really tell. Though, if I were to use the human standard scale... it close to the year 4427.

HATCH

Wonderful.

ADELE

Though, current time records indicate this year as 1450.

HATCH

Whatever. Say, do you think they'll get us something to eat? I haven't had food in days.

ADELE

Days?

HATCH

Well, A day. But still.

ADELE

We're scheduled to die in a few hours Tom.

HATCH

What, you guys don't believe in last meals?

The doors open...

They both look over with an amount of fear as it's probably Sovari. Alas, it is not. The door closes and Rol'Gin rushes in. Adele gets up and greets him with a smile.

HATCH

YOU!!

ADELE

Calm, Thomas.

(back)

Rol'Gin, what are you doing here?

ROL'GIN

Adele, I'm so sorry for not doing this sooner. I can't keep it a secret any longer. I've been a follower of yours for a very long time. Sovari knew this, but he thinks I've renounced my devotion to you, but I haven't.

Hatch raises an eyebrow.

HATCH

Huh.

ADELE
 Rol'Gin, you don't have to...

ROL'GIN
 Yes I do. I'm getting you out of here.

HATCH
 (loudly)
 And ME?!

ROL'GIN
 (to Adele)
 Is he worth it?

She smiles.

ADELE
 Yes. He is.

Rol'Gin nods to Hatch.

ROL'GIN
 If Adele believes it, it's good
 enough for me.

Hatch's confusion takes a mild step back.

HATCH
 Thanks. Appreciate it.

There is a beat.

ROL'GIN
 We'll have to wait. I'm expected
 elsewhere right now. But when the
 time is right, I'll make the first
 move. Goodbye.

ADELE
 Goodbye.

HATCH
 Adios muchachos!

An odd look from both of them. Hatch looks sheepish.

He takes off toward the door...

Suddenly, PAU'ZAURIC appears in front of Rol'Gin.

ZAURIC
 Rol'Gin. Wonderful to see you again.

Rol'Gin is in a state of shock.

ROL'GIN

You...

Hatch leans over to Adele.

HATCH

Who's that?! Was he here the whole time?

ZAURIC

Quiet! Sovari knew this would take place. He knew your faith is merely a coating on your tongue. Nothing more.

ROL'GIN

You were spying on us?

ZAURIC

That's my function. To watch people. Though, it's a job I'd rather not have. Sovari is going to love this...

The doors bang open.

Siren, Zorin, and Isaac stumble in the room. Acolytes lead them in, though more like shoving them in.

Thomas rears back.

HATCH

HEY YOU GUYS!!

Immediately, all three new inductees try to turn and run at the sight of Hatch. But the guards block them.

ISAAC

Great, hell before death.

On this, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT FIFTEEN

FADE IN:

INT. TEMPLE - HOLDING CELLS

As the trio is roughly thrown into the holding cell, Hatch can't help but look extremely happy. But he smartly keeps from rushing forward until the Acolytes retreat and lock the heavy door.

HATCH

Oh man, you don't know how glad I am to see you.

(sees Isaac)

Well, with HIM here, I guess you can tell.

Siren, though visibly shaking with anger and humiliation at the surrender, does look glad to see Hatch.

As Siren, Zorin and Hatch converse, Isaac begins to slowly close on Adele, his eyes wide in pure joy.

SIREN

To be honest, it's a surprise to see you here.

Zorin is less than enthused.

ZORIN

Yes. It is.

HATCH

So how did you get here? A valiant rescue? For little ol' me?

(tears well)

I've never been so happy.

Zorin grunts in annoyance.

ZORIN

We did not come for you by any means.

(points to Adele)

We came for her.

HATCH

Adele? What's so special about her?

SIREN

It's not important. What we need to discuss is how to get out of here.

HATCH

Believe me, I've tried. If you can bust down the door, they shoot you. If you can survive them shooting you... they shoot you some more.

ZORIN

Thank you for the recap. What is the food and waste cycle in this room?

HATCH

If by that you mean the time they give us food and take our... yeah, never.

SIREN

What?

HATCH

Yeah, I haven't seen anyone besides Adele since my grand tour of this place. Not to mention no food.

(his stomach growls loudly)

See?

ZORIN

This complicates things.

HATCH

Hey, come on. If you came all this way, it should be easy, right?

SIREN

Not without our weapons.

Hatch's face slackens.

HATCH

Yeah, that may make things a bit less easy...

We cut away from this scene back to the lovestruck doctor, who is closing on the silent Adele, who is watching the other conversation with bemused disinterest. She somehow doesn't notice Isaac until he gently places his hand on her knee.

ISAAC

Hello, Adele.

She barely turns to acknowledge him.

ADELE

Yes? Shouldn't you be talking with them?

Isaac's eyes don't move from Adele, not even to blink, making him look all the creepier.

ISAAC

They can talk all they want. I just need you.

ADELE

Excuse me?

Isaac looks puzzled.

ISAAC

Don't you remember me? Jushai Prime? The last day? You helped me...

Isaac cuts off with small tears of pain and joy at seeing Adele again.

ADELE

You must be mistaken. I helped no one during that battle.

ISAAC

But you did! You dragged me out of the rubble...

ADELE

I did nothing but watch my brethren take up heathen arms against others in the Prophet's name, killing in his name. Destroying in his name!

Isaac isn't listening to her rant.

ISAAC

You don't remember... medic second class Isaac Sarola? We met there... You helped me.

Isaac's pain-wracked face closes up as he gets closer to Adele's. His already creepy demeanor is even worse.

ADELE

There was... a man with a medical uniform, that I remember. He was young and close to madness with the battle around him. I... told him the Prophet was with him even as everyone around me used weapons to kill others, staining their robes with heathen blood.

(beat, alone in thought)

It was then I realized that those who claim to follow the Prophet were doing nothing but working for their own ends, not his. Not anymore. When men who claim to be civilized kill others for any means... it is an abomination the Prophet should not allow. And yet he does allow it. And still has to this day...

Adele can't continue as Isaac suddenly LEAPS forward and passionately kisses Adele! She shouts in alarm, kicking and punching with all her might. Isaac eventually grabs her arms with his, pinning her as his lips intertwine with hers.

When she does land a knee onto his groin, however, Isaac drops like a stone. The previously conversing trio turn to the scene.

HATCH

That HAD to hurt!

INT. CULT CRUISER - BRIDGE

Ridek is now sitting at one of the largest consoles on the bridge, Shera and Carlise at his flanks, keeping him steady on his injured legs. He looks quite content at whatever commands he has input.

RIDEK

And this button goes... here. This switch... flipped. There you go.

SHERA

Do you know what you're doing? Honestly?

RIDEK

Sure I am. Why wouldn't I be?

SHERA

Because you flipped that same switch six times already.

RIDEK
Hey, when you do these things you
sometimes have to backtrack, start
all over again.

SHERA
Not when you're trying to activate
the console.

We turn to see the console Ridek is working at in greater
detail. Indeed, it is dark as night.

RIDEK
Shut up.

CARLISE
This is ridiculous.

Carlise sighs and KICKS the console with all her might.

RIDEK
You idiot!

SHERA
That was rude!

But, almost immediately after the kick, the console hums to
life!

SHERA
Oh... uh... very good.

RIDEK
Wouldn't have thought of that for a
second.

CARLISE
Ancient Talosian secret. I swear.

Ridek smiles and gets to work. As he does, Shera's eyes dart
to a large screen detailing the insides of the vessel. A
large, red blob is heading right for the bridge.

SHERA
Uh... we may have a problem.

CARLISE
The hell is that?

Ridek doesn't skip a beat.

RIDEK

The crew coming back. They should've realized I couldn't wire the explosives with a little tricorder all at once.

SHERA

Smarter than we thought. You owe me some cash, Carlise.

CARLISE

Yeah, yeah.

The blob moves faster and faster, riding a very powerful lift.

SHERA

So, uh... how much time do you think we have?

Ridek doesn't answer, preferring to tap buttons like mad.

Unfortunately, Shera does get an answer. In the form of several guns jabbing into her back.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TEMPLE - ROL'GIN'S ROOM

Rol'Gin stands at the edge of his bed. In his hand, he holds an extremely old book of scripture, possibly over a century old. The scene is silent and very tense.

Especially when there is a loud knock on his door. Rol'Gin jumps before he nervously answers.

ROL'GIN

Y... yes?

Standing in the threshold is not Sovari or some kind of horrible death squad, Rol'Gin's fear, but a very slight man dressed in robes several sizes too large. This is TOLLARIS, Rol'Gin's second.

TOLLARIS

Lord? Are you well?

Rol'Gin smoothes some hair atop his head and puts the book down on a nearby table. He tries to hide his anxiety with all his might but it fails miserably.

ROL'GIN

Yes. Yes, I am.

(beat)

What can I do for you?

Tollaris looks puzzled for a moment before clearing his throat.

TOLLARIS

Rol'Gin, I'm afraid I have orders from the local commander that all vessels have been locked down due to some trouble on the fire ship.

ROL'GIN

An incursion?

TOLLARIS

I don't know. I have ordered the helm to keep us in a low orbit for now, but I don't know if we will be moved.

ROL'GIN

That is wise.

Rol'Gin looks past Tollaris quickly before grabbing his second's shoulders.

ROL'GIN

Tollaris, until I give you a counter order, you are the commander of my vessel. Do nothing to attract attention to yourself or the crew. They've suffered enough.

Tollaris looks doubly confused but does not question, long used to strange orders.

TOLLARIS

I understand. Will you be rejoining us soon?

Rol'Gin sighs.

ROL'GIN

I do not know. Just follow my orders. Please leave me.

Tollaris, for a moment, looks genuinely concerned for Rol'Gin, but hides it under the veil of military discipline.

TOLLARIS

As you will.

Tollaris moves to close Rol'Gin's door.

ROL'GIN

Please lock it behind you.

Tollaris nods and does so, leaving Rol'Gin once again alone.

INT. TEMPLE - HOLDING CELLS

Adele is behind the solid wall of Zorin and Siren while Isaac tries to explain himself. Hatch watches from a distance.

ISAAC

I just... wanted you to know my feelings.

ZORIN

This woman can help us? Help you in ways I'd rather not discuss, but to think you'd do all of this for...

SIREN

You're sick, Isaac.

ISAAC

(slightly angry)

You don't know anything! She helped me survive my own home's goddamn destruction! She gave me the strength to keep going.

ADELE

I don't know you! Leave me alone!

ISAAC

You do know me! You have to! You're... my life! I'd give anything to you! Do anything!

SIREN

Then die already and leave us alone!

Isaac is but an inch away from pouncing between Zorin and Siren to get to his lady love. All three participants are shouting at each other their views while Adele cowers in true terror and Hatch watches with interest.

ZORIN

I swear when we get back, you won't have a place on my ship!

ISAAC

As long as I'm with her, it doesn't matter!

SIREN

Shut up!

The scene grows in chaos, building and building. Isaac rushes Zorin several times, but his mere human strength is nothing compared to the Hirogen's. Siren holds her arms out, prepared to strike out with her tendrils should she need to.

HATCH

Stop it!

Comically, the action stops when Hatch screams. And when he points to the door, the group turns in unison to see what he does.

ISAAC

Oh damn.

Standing in the doorway is another short Cultist, though there are several things very different, and very WRONG, about him.

First of all, where all other cultists wear red robes of smooth cloth to one degree or another, these robes are dark red leather, all of them dangling off his nearly skeletal frame, pulling him over in a hunchback position. But the weirdest things about him are his bald head, skin so pale that it looks translucent and his eyes, which are not natural but crude-yet-refined metallic implants that spin and click in precision. This is the CREEPY CULTIST.

CREEPY CULTIST

So you are the new ones to disgrace
the temple. I am disappointed to
see so few of you...

Isaac and Zorin stop their tussling and move in fluid motion to stand before the creepy cultist in the most intimidating manner possible. Siren circles behind, keeping a careful vigil.

The Creepy Cultist does not even look at them. As far as we know.

CREEPY CULTIST

Unfortunately, Adele and one Thomas
Hatch have been selected to meet
the Prophet in Sovari's little
playhouse, so they are out of my
hands...

Creepy Cultist's head moves to stare at Isaac in a move too fast to see. He smiles broadly, showing off teeth sharpened to razor points.

CREEPY CULTIST

But the rest of you... are mine.

RIDEK
 STOP right there... I'll push this
 button. I will! Let me finish this!

The acolyte tries again.

RIDEK
 What are you, dense!? I said stop!
 (pushes some more buttons)
 Yeah, just keep right there.

As Ridek keeps over a dozen Acolytes at bay, Carlise and Shera do what they can. Carlise has a gag over her mouth, blood oozing from under it. An acolyte cowering in a corner has a large chunk of bottom lip missing.

SHERA
 Come on... let us help him. Look at
 his legs for goodness' sake!

ACOLYTE
 Shut up!

The acolyte moves to put a gag on Shera's mouth.

SHERA
 Come on... let us be. We won't stop
 whatever you have planned. We
 just... wanted a tour of the ship.

ACOLYTE
 Liar. We saw how you've desecrated
 our canisters with your... bodies.
 You will but live to see this
 vessel consumed in cleansing fire.
 I don' need to explain how you will
 witness it.

SHERA
 Maybe we can... come to other terms,
 then?

In her binds, Shera uses her last wile, her body, to try and convince the acolyte. But the restraints prevent her from doing more than wiggling in a weird way.

The acolyte looks disgusted.

ACOLYTE
 You heathens are all alike.

He stands and moves to Ridek. We keep on Shera and Carlise for a second.

Though Carlise can't speak, we can tell her expression screams: "You have so much to learn about men."

Ridek is now staring at the console, only half-heartedly holding his tricorder out to his side. Every time he hears a footstep, though, he lifts the device slightly, forcing everyone to take a step back.

Until the acolyte shows up behind him and grabs the tricorder in an extremely fast motion.

RIDEK
HEY! That's mine!

The acolyte smiles grimly and PUNCHES Ridek in the burned legs, causing him to cry out in pain.

ACOLYTE
Heathens like you are what are
ruining this galaxy. Your deaths
will not be soon enough.

More acolytes show up after the single show of bravery and bind Azel quickly, making sure to be extra rough.

Just before they get his arms, though, two things happen.

ACOLYTE
Would you like any last words
before we send you to the next life?

RIDEK
Yeah...

He presses one button on the console. Sirens and klaxons blare loudly!

RIDEK
FUCK YOU!

Everyone looks on in fear.

EXT. PRIME - NIGHT

In the turbulent skies above Prime, everything around the massive temple is suddenly lit up almost as day!

Everyone for miles around turn to look at the spectacle, especially those aboard the Avalon...

INT. TEMPLE - TORTURE ROOM

The torture room is in the same hall as the holding cells, shown by the extremely similar architecture.

Except for the many, many table-sized racks covered with bodies of species of all kinds, some mutilated beyond recognition.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
 AUUUUUUUUUUGHHHHHHHHHHH!

We pan over metal instruments almost too horrible to imagine, several of them covered in liquids of all colors and types. Blood of a more human variety, fresh and still viscous, already covers several.

As we keep moving, we see the Creepy Cultist moving about a larger table like a child in a candy store.

CREEPY CULTIST
 Now let's see... this xreptacilic acid does wonders on your left arm's blood vessels. Look at that swelling! I'll have to use it on humans more often...

We keep moving to see Isaac, shirtless, covered with sweat and strapped spread-eagle to the table. In several veins on his body stick out several crude pipes and cruelly large syringes.

CREEPY CULTIST
 Now, answer me this one question and I'll stop the flow for a moment.

Isaac doesn't reply but simply sweats and shakes in pain.

CREEPY CULTIST
 Why did you sneak into our most holy of temples? Surely it could not have been for a woman.

Isaac doesn't reply.

CREEPY CULTIST
 Excellent.

Creepy Cultist moves to a control console at Isaac's side and pulls a lever melodramatically. The tubes connected to Isaac firm up with liquid quickly pumping into them. Isaac cries out loudly.

ISAAC
 ADELE! ADELE! ADELE! ADELE!

Creepy Cultist shuts the machine off.

CREEPY CULTIST

 Hmm... most peculiar. Could your
misguided feelings lead you to do
something as stupid as this? Hmm...

As he thinks, Creepy Cultist activates the machine,
listening to Isaac's cries like a very creepy music.

As Isaac suffers, Creepy Cultist waves two acolytes, almost
green in pure horror.

 CREEPY CULTIST

 Collect him and send him back.
 Bring me the Deltan.

As he exits, the acolytes shut the machine off and nearly
vomit as they remove the long and cruel needles from Isaac's
flesh. Blood and whatever was pouring into his system leak
out of the holes created by the torture.

They carry Isaac's nearly lifeless body out.

Creepy Cultist enters again, humming a short tune while
replacing the bags of fluid that were injecting into Isaac.
It doesn't take long for Siren to be dragged in. Her cheek
is bright red from a nasty punch in the face. She is putting
up a good fight, but is too out matched to fight much longer.

 CREEPY CULTIST

 Bring her here.

Using his own surprising strength, Creepy Cultist helps to
strap Siren to the bed. She screams and claws wildly, almost
animalistic in her attempts at freedom.

 CREEPY CULTIST

 What a masterful temper. So totally
 unlike her ancestors.

We pan behind the table so we don't see Siren's shirt ripped
from her frame or the Cultists inserting the tubes into her
flesh. Siren, of course cries out in panic and pain.

 CREEPY CULTIST

 Yes... show us the anger. Show me
 your pain and we will begin.

Though his eyes are creepy metal sockets, the Cultist's eyes
seem to leer with an unnatural hunger as Siren's unseen
agony begins...

INT. TEMPLE - CORRIDOR

Rol'Gin stalks the halls of the temple, working his way over to the prison with all speed. Sweat covers his face, forcing him to wipe it off constantly as he walks.

Rol'Gin winds several halls, only giving the most passing greetings to his fellow cultists as he walks.

At least until he runs into Sovari, whose smile goes from ear to ear.

SOVARI

Why, Rol'Gin, why are you walking these halls so quickly? What is the rush? The Prophet is nearly with us.

ROL'GIN

I'm... just going to visit Tollaris. He has something I need.

SOVARI

Is that so? Why did you not as for an attendant to see to this matter? Don't you have matters to attend that are much more important than simple errand runs?

ROL'GIN

Since you have taken the reigns of power... no.

Sovari laughs heartily.

SOVARI

Rol'Gin, you are always good for a laugh. Don't let that jovial spirit die in your final days.

ROL'GIN

I'll try not to. Remember the last words of the traveling merchant of Andoria. "My spirit will join the prophet soon. I leave nothing behind but my joy and my hopes."

SOVARI

Yes yes yes. I've heard the parable many times.

Sovari and Rol'Gin stand silently for a long while. Eventually, Sovari's eyes gleam with something.

SOVARI

I must be leaving you now, Rol'Gin.
Finish your errand. I won't stop
you. Good bye.

Sovari walks away still unusually happy, leaving Rol'Gin to keep walking, extremely confused.

As he walks, he is unaware of Zauric stalking him on his heels...

INT. TEMPLE - HOLDING CELLS

The mood of the room is now dour. Isaac looks weak on the floor, hesitantly tended by Adele. Though he doesn't look nearly as bad as he claims to. Zorin and Hatch wait by the door, both anxious for Siren to return.

HATCH

So... how did you two meet?

ZORIN

Are you serious?

HATCH

I thought it would ease some of the tension.

Zorin looks out the door for a long moment.

ZORIN

Perhaps it would be better if she told you.

Hatch nods, knowing he won't get more.

HATCH

So are you two... you know...

He sways his hips back and forward in an indication of...

ZORIN

No, we do not.

(beat)

Another thing she should tell you.

HATCH

I see...

Zorin jumps suddenly and stares ahead.

ZORIN

They're coming.

Zorin easily shoves Hatch out of the door's way as it slams open, emitting a very unconscious and shirtless Siren. The marks where the tubes entered her are all healed almost miraculously, but her out-of-waking demeanor proves that there is something much worse going on inside her body.

ZORIN

Siren!

Zorin moves fast enough to catch the falling Siren, gently lowering her to the floor. Isaac opens his eyes at the commotion, reluctantly pulling away from Adele to see what's up.

ZORIN

What did they do to her?

Hatch does his best to keep not only from fainting, but from keeping his eyes on Siren's almost serene face.

HATCH

Is she alright?

ZORIN

I don't know. Isaac!

Isaac stands and moves to inspect Siren with the cool hands of a professional. Adele is behind him, impressed at his sudden mood change.

He works for only a moment.

ISAAC

Severe shock caused by a massive influx of...

CREEPY CULTIST

Myochondriax Seventeen. My own special blend of Deltan maladies. She took it all magnificently.

Zorin moves to kill Creepy Cultist with his bare hands, but the same acolytes step forward with very large guns.

CREEPY CULTIST

I had my fun, even though I will have nothing to report to Penultimate Sovari...

Zorin looks proud at that statement. Creepy cultist turns to the Hirogen.

CREEPY CULTIST

It will take several hours to prepare the machines for you, animal. I promise you will feel more pain than you think you can handle. It's my own personal challenge.

He exits in a huff, allowing Hatch to once again emerge from the shadows to watch Isaac do his best for Siren.

HATCH

Damn creepy...

Isaac is performing a quite stylized CPR on Siren, checking everything on her torso for signs of life.

ISAAC

Come on... come on, dammit!

ADELE

Will she survive?

ISAAC

Survive, yes. He must've diluted whatever he was using with too much. She's only fighting a few things. But will she ever wake up...?

ADELE

Is there anything I can do?

Though he's lost in his work, Isaac still lights up at Adele's question.

ISAAC

Pray.

Isaac, with his newfound, almost unnatural care, does all he can to help Siren not only breathe but survive to regain consciousness.

Hatch walks back and forth, chewing on his thumbnail and looking very disturbed, especially when Isaac's chest pumping or forced breathing causes her hand tentacles to extend a few centimeters then retract.

Zorin stands like a statue.

It all goes silent and tense.

Isaac looks desperate.

ADELE

Dear Prophet... please extend your wisdom to this man to save her life... please let her live.

Siren suddenly GASPS for air loudly, kicking Isaac off of her and grabbing her nearby shirt in the same instant. She still looks weak but at least awake.

ZORIN

Are you all right?

Siren tries to stand to show her strength, but can't support her own weight. Zorin catches her easily.

ZORIN

Don't try too hard. Let it pass.

As Siren relaxes in Zorin's embrace, she tries to speak, though it quickly fades into welled tears and soft sobs.

HATCH

I'm so sorry, Siren...

ISAAC

Be damn glad it didn't last much longer than it did. She's on the edge as it is.

Nobody has much time to relax or even enjoy the silence before the door smashes open again! This time it's Rol'Gin, however.

ZORIN

YOU! How much must you torture us!?

Siren's presence is the only thing keeping Zorin from ripping Rol'Gin in half.

ROL'GIN

Whatever you may be feeling about me and those I serve, Hirogen, it is well deserved. But I hope my next actions will redeem me in the eyes of the rest of the galaxy.

ISAAC

What are you talking about?

Rol'Gin disappears for a moment then reappears just as fast, this time brandishing every weapon taken from our heroes from before, even some extras!

ROL'GIN
I'm going to get you out of here.

INT. TEMPLE - CORRIDOR

Everyone runs for their lives through an endless amount of halls and corridors in the temple, all of them identical in shape and build. Zorin carries Siren in his arms as well as leading forward with his guns. Isaac, though not at his peak, is still only second to Zorin. Even Hatch and Adele are armed, though they don't look like they enjoy it.

Rol'Gin leads the troupe, holding a small paper map in his hands.

ROL'GIN
This way.

He leads them around a sharp turn to...

A group of at least six hundred soldiers and acolytes! Lead by an extremely pleased Sovari.

SOVARI
My very dear Rol'Gin. How I've been waiting for this moment.

Zorin and Isaac move forward, ready to shoot their way out. Hatch tries to follow but only makes a fool of himself.

ROL'GIN
No, you cannot win.

SOVARI
Wise words, wiser than I thought a heretic like yourself could ever utter.

Rol'Gin tosses the map to Isaac.

ROL'GIN
Run.

ZORIN
But we can-

ROL'GIN
RUN!

Without question, Zorin and Isaac head in the opposite direction, taking Adele and Hatch with them.

When they're long gone, Sovari and his acolytes surround the now resolute Rol'Gin.

SOVARI

So it has come to this. Your traitorous mind has finally corrupted to the point of letting other heretics loose on our most sacred of sites. You disgust me.

Rol'Gin calmly looks at the gathered soldiers then at Sovari.

ROL'GIN

No... it is I that am disgusted in you. The Prophet's message has always been one of peace. Of providing an example to the galaxy as to what we COULD be. He has never once said every member of us must be armed, must kill those who do not believe.

SOVARI

It is YOU who are wrong, Rol'Gin. You are not the penultimate. I am! I have spoken to the Prophet! I know what he wants, and I will ensure it comes to pass. It is my duty!

Tired of the speech, Rol'Gin rears his hand back and PUNCHES Sovari! The blow isn't especially powerful, but it is surprising.

SOVARI

How the mighty have fallen...

Sovari strikes back, knocking Rol'Gin to the floor! The penultimate follows, forcing Rol'Gin's face to the floor multiple times.

ROL'GIN

You will never understand.

SOVARI

I understand enough. I understand you have tainted our very religion. Our friendship. Over a misguided...

Sovari flashes a small knife in Rol'Gin's face.

SOVARI

Ideals.

From behind, Sovari jabs the knife into Rol'Gin's back, straight into his heart. Rol'Gin's death is mercifully quick.

SOVARI

In death, may you find his will again.

Sovari stands and looks over all of his stunned troops.

SOVARI

Go and find them!

The troops file out around Sovari.

INT. TEMPLE - LIBRARY

The library of the temple is a massive room, full of windows that open to the still dark sky. It is empty save for a single computer terminal connected to a mainframe half the size of the Avalon.

It is still and silent until Adele runs in, completely out of breath.

ADELE

In here! We can rest here!

Zorin runs in second, placing Siren down on a rather conveniently placed bench hewn of solid stone. Isaac and Hatch are next, both of them pointing their guns behind them.

ZORIN

What is this place?

ADELE

One of the mainframes of the temple.
Every writing and piece of
collected information is stored here.

HATCH

Awesome.

Isaac and Zorin move to cover the doorway, leaving Adele to tend Siren and Hatch to stare at the computer. Reverently, he sits at the only console and activates it.

ZORIN

Hatch, what are you doing?

HATCH

Just some research.

Zorin rolls his eyes again.

Hatch taps the screen over and over, pouring through uncounted amounts of information. Images of all kinds pass over the screen, including Federation vessels of the past that look familiar yet somehow alien.

When Hatch stops at a file named U.S.S. Diadem, he stops cold.

HATCH

Hmm...

Unfortunately, he taps the screen in shock, only to have it switch to U.S.S. Diadem-A, a Starfleet ship of such an alien design to be nearly incomprehensible.

HATCH

No no no! Go back!

He taps the screen furiously, trying to get back. Unfortunately, all he gets are progressively weirder and alien starships and people's profiles he doesn't care about. Eventually, Hatch slumps in defeat.

HATCH

DAMMIT!

On cue, of course, the door suddenly BOOMS with the loud pounding of a battering ram!

SOLDIER (O.S.)

Open this door!

ZORIN

Hatch, stop the searching and cover us!

Hatch looks quickly to Adele and Siren, who both look frightened and weak. Hatch reluctantly stands and stares at the screen, which now shows the profile of a silicon based life form. In frustration, he takes his handgun out and shoots the screen.

SOLDIER (O.S.)

Weapons fire. Aim to kill!

The pounding gets louder and louder, making an impressive dent in the door's frame.

ISAAC

It's not gonna last.

ZORIN

On my count, we shoot, understand.

Isaac cocks his gun.

ISAAC

Got it.

Hatch just stands like a frightened kitten.

HATCH

Yeah, sure, whatever.

The door pounds one last time, throwing it open!

ZORIN

Start shooting!

Zorin and Isaac cut down the first wave of advancing cultists, their shots all perfect. Hatch tries to shoot, but can't point it right.

In perfect slow motion, more soldiers than both fighters can take swarm into the library, pounding, punching and wrestling Zorin to the ground and easily shoving Isaac over. Siren tries to fight but can barely lift her head.

Adele looks down in shame.

Hatch's eyes widen as a gun barrel is shoved in his face.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT SIXTEEN

FADE IN:

EXT. PRIME

Prime, in her glory, spins like a jewel through black space, sparkling oceans and green hills roll and twist under a veil of pure white clouds.

We slowly go forward, going closer to her atmosphere until we're flying just above cloud tops. Racing with us are several small vessels, all of them the color of blood red. They fly in perfect formation until dipping below the puffy cloud cover. We follow them until we find ourselves-

Flying over a city several hundred kilometers long, every sparkling silver building covered in red banners the same color as the ships. People line every street, all of them dressed in the same red color, making the streets look as if blood.

We continue flying until we're flying over a massive savannah, its grasses full of life of all shapes, several herds of massive animals walk by in proud procession, lead on by a line of marching people in red robes. A line that is several miles long.

As we fly, we find this line ends at a gathering so massive, it looks as if the ground itself is bleeding. Millions upon millions of people of all races face a single direction, something so far off, we can not yet see it. As we fly over this crowd so massive it goes off into the farthest horizon, we eventually see the object of their adoration.

We speed toward a vaguely pyramid-like structure, viewing more and more detail as we enclose. Eventually, we find a pyramid so massive, yet vaguely familiar, it dominates even the massive jungle that surrounds it. This is the temple of the Avatar of Light. It is a pyramid four kilometers tall and long on every side, angled perfectly with every cardinal direction. The vessels of the Cult fleet and those that have been taken rest nearby, under the shadow of a smaller temple building.

But through all this, people in their uniform red robes stand in unison, turning the world red in their presence. It is both perfect and terrible in its beauty.

We slowly begin to pull up after this awesome spectacle, into the temple itself, back into the very room from previous.

INT. TEMPLE - LIBRARY

Our group is in bad shape. Isaac and Zorin have been completely disarmed as several Cult soldiers hold them down while others take their boots to both male's torsos and legs. Zorin puts up much more of a fight, but can't even himself stand up against a dozen well muscled humans and other species.

Surrounded by ten guards with guns all pointed at his head, Hatch drops his gun.

HATCH

I give up. I give up.

Adele is treated not much better than Zorin. A dozen well armed men not only hold her down with their weapons, but several take the chance to punch or kick her. Siren, weak as she is, doesn't resist to simple rope bonds around her arms and feet.

Into this scene, Sovari enters, his face beet red and a large vein on his forehead throbbing. He surveys the surrendered group for a moment, his eyes locking especially on Adele before he speaks.

SOVARI

It vexes me very much why you...
heathens... would desecrate ground
so sacred to me and everyone around
us. We have enough respect to not...
trample your most private and
respected places. And yet here you
are in this repository, this
sanctum, of the Prophet's most
secret and guarded information.
This sin is... nearly
incomprehensible. It vexes me.

Sovari looks to Adele.

SOVARI

How the mighty have fallen. Your
corruption has touched too many
souls, too many minds. I long for
the hour when your blood will seal
this temple and keep it safe from
others like you for all eternity.

Sovari takes his boot to the prone Adele and KICKS, breaking her nose with a sickening crunch.

ISAAC

YOU FUCKING BASTARD! I'LL KILL YOU!

Sovari doesn't even look down.

SOVARI

Restrain them and place the two heretics in shock collars. I'm sure the Prophet will forgive us for a minor expediency of his plans.

With Isaac still screaming, the Cultists obey the order. Adele and Hatch are bound with silvery collars and handcuffs that, when locked, emit a low buzzing sound. Isaac and Zorin are bound by simple cuffs, but Zorin's seem much stronger.

Sovari takes one last look at the prisoners before walking off.

ISAAC

Come back, you bastard! Come back!
COME BACK!

He's finally silenced by the strong butt of a rifle against his face.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

The bridge is nearly empty of life except a very angry Azel and a very nervous crewman sitting at the helm console. Azel sits in Zorin's seat, his head buried in his hands. Tears flow freely from his palms, a testament to his knowledge of the explosion.

COMPUTER

Um... Azel? I can see something you should see.

AZEL

(quietly)

I don't care.

COMPUTER

You should. It's THEM.

Azel slowly lifts his head. On the viewscreen, the Avatar temple stands majestically and terribly. Very tiny pinpricks of movement can be seen at the very top.

AZEL

Can you... magnify it? Somehow?

COMPUTER

Sure.

The view suddenly shoots forward to the top of the temple, revealing a hub of activity.

Before we can comprehend it, however, we suddenly go forward with it, transcending the viewscreen to:

EXT. TEMPLE - TOP

The top of the temple, kilometers into the sky, is almost windy enough to knock everyone to their feet and off its sheer sides. Sovari and his guards walk slowly and carefully on painstakingly carved footholds, keeping posture and face on the horrendous ledge.

Our crew is brought up after Sovari moves to the edge of the temple, standing proudly before a group of people so massive, it reaches like a red ocean. Behind him, four machines slowly rise. Two are the general size and shapes of a normal bed, while the other two, rising from the center of the top, are nearly three meters wide and keep rising to ten meters tall. Spindly, metallic tentacles reach out at every meter, waving in the wind like flags.

Sovari raises his fists, a wordless command to bring Hatch and Adele forward.

HATCH

Hey, keep your hands off of that!
Don't touch me there! OW! Stop that,
jerk!

The Cultists that bring Hatch forward all share the same annoyed expression as they walk forward.

Very quickly, the two machines that rose immediately behind Sovari expand and transform into two upright beds full of spikes, blades and a rather nasty screw-like device at the head area.

HATCH

OH FUCK THAT!

Sovari lowers his arm, the signal to tie Adele and Hatch to the beds. Behind the group approaches the creepy cultist, his eyes gleaming a murderous light.

Adele is held in front of the leftmost bed while Hatch is taken to the right. The creepy cultist takes four leather straps from a hidden pocket and begins to bind the pair's wrists at specially molded loops.

CREEPY CULTIST

You know what these are? They're
the hide of the last heretic to
anoint a temple over six years ago.
His death was dreadfully fast, but
I think I've perfected it this time.

HATCH

Why don't you test it on yourself
to find out first? You can have my
spot. Here, I'll just slip out-

A soldier slaps Hatch with his gun.

Sovari turns to the two then to the rest of the prisoners
standing just behind.

SOVARI

We will have to use these machines
multiple times for each of you, but
I doubt the Prophet will mind.

(wistfully)

He will arrive soon. Soon enough to
watch you die and fulfill the final
prophecy.

Adele's eyes widen.

ADELE

What do you mean? He is... here?

SOVARI

(venomously)

He is EVERYWHERE, ignorant one.

(wistfully again)

He will address all of his children
before he reveals the final
prophecy to all of us. This very
temple was constructed to transmit
his views not only to us on this
world, but to everyone in the
galaxy! Do you not see it yet!? The
wonderful wholeness of it all?

(beat, to the air)

Begin the ceremony!

The soldiers around Hatch and Adele disperse and join the
others around Zorin, Isaac and Siren in perfect order. They
begin to march around the entire trio and the gruesome
tables until they form perfect ranks and files around them,
not a single man out of place.

Sovari stands still as the taller machines behind the tables
begin to flap and whirl around in wind not created naturally.
They eventually begin to expand, contract and move so
rapidly that they form a perfect sphere nearly thirty meters
wide. Amazingly, no tentacle touches anyone on the temple
top, though several come within mere inches of some
cultist's heads.

Sovari finally turns to see the wondrous device in its glory, watching as the tentacles move so rapidly that the sphere looks like a solid surface more than a dozen tentacles whipping in sequence.

SOVARI

I, the penultimate Sovari bow to the wisdom and power of the one who sees the fate of the universe and the soul! The one who transcends death and life to know the very secrets of the galaxy and all of us in it! I BOW TO YOU!

On Sovari's word, the sphere suddenly crystallizes into a metal ball of perfect proportions. And in this sphere... a face coalesces!

Slowly at first, like a fog rolling in, the face fills the entire sphere in a three dimensional image of a hooded figure that only exudes power. Though we can't see the eyes or nose, a very full beard pours out of the bottom of the hood and thin, crooked lips form at the top of this shaggy mane. This is the hooded face of THE PROPHET himself! As he speaks, we can only get the slightest hint of crooked but perfectly white teeth.

PROPHET

My children. My... beautiful children.

The red tide of cultists both on the temple and on the ground immediately kneel like Sovari, making a terrible red wave of people on the ground. Several thousand wail and moan in wonder and pain, both in religious fervor and of being crushed under thousands of other worshipers.

PROPHET

I am honored to see those who follow my message are such legion. You are all the strength of the galaxy, its strong will against the terrible forces of chaos and depravity that has reigned since that terrible cataclysm of old. The cataclysm that destroyed one galaxy but built a new one, one in which my message sprouted and grew until eventually, all will know the universal truths as I know them. You are all the saviors of this galaxy.

(MORE)

PROPHET (CONT'D)

Each of you are a soldier in the army that will cleanse the darkness and leave my light in its wake. I am the Prophet and I know these secrets.

(beat)

Know that the end times are near. Know that the cataclysm that destroyed entire worlds will soon return, and you, my glorious children, are all that stand between destruction and salvation. But your task is not so complete or simple. You must... draw more. Only through bringing more into our glorious fold will they survive this cataclysm. Only by destroying the wicked and unfaithful will this second coming of destruction be thwarted.

(pause)

Thus is my message to you. Thus is the final prophecy. Go forth and spread my message. Go forth and eliminate those that will not listen and spare them the fate worse than death.

Sovari stands as the message ends. As he does, the Prophet's face slowly dissolves into fog and the perfect sphere dissolves into the same tentacles from before.

Slowly, the towers recede back into the temple, leaving the soldiers, Sovari and the prisoners the only things on the surface.

SOVARI

You have heard his message. Now you will see it made flesh. These... heretics have done nothing but betray his trust and His divine message. Their false blood will make this holy site impervious to more unholy footfalls unto this place.

Sovari turns to Hatch and Adele, who sit still on their torture beds.

SOVARI

(quietly)

Begin the cleansing.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Azel's face is a deep green as he watches Sovari speak.

AZEL

They aren't serious. No way.

COMPUTER

Isn't there anything you can do? We can't let Tom Hatch die. Or anyone else.

Azel stands, slowly looking over the bridge.

AZEL

You're right.

As he turns to Siren's console, where the nervous guy is nearly passed out, Azel's face lights up.

AZEL

Computer, can you tell me what all this does?

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TEMPLE - TOP

The sadistic beds begin to whir to life, spikes along their sides pulsating while the head screws whir to an impossible RPM and begin a slow trek downward.

Hatch is beside himself with tears and snot while Adele stands resolute.

ADELE

If it is my fate to die branded a traitor and heretic, so be it. It matters little in his eyes. I know I am faithful.

HATCH

Ohpleaseohpleaseohpleaseohplease!
Don't kill me!

(sob)

What's going on? Why'm I here? This is a dream. A dream.

(sob)

Oh GOD!

Hatch's sobbing gets truly pathetic, his face contorted by sobs and snot pouring from his nose. Even Isaac gets fed up with it.

ISAAC
Shut the fuck up, Hatch!

But Hatch just keeps repeating the same thing to himself, just as the screw on top of his head begins to twist the most errant strands of his hair.

HATCH
OhGodohGod! No.

Suddenly, all the sounds of the machines, the crowd and the wind atop the temple are dwarfed by a massive BOOM from the heavens! Everyone's heads turns to see:

EXT. PRIME - SKY

Prime's sky is lit up with the falling shape of the very Cult vessel Shera's team boarded! The vessel leaves a long trail of fire in her wake, falling fast and hard straight toward the temple itself!

INT. CULT CRUISER - BRIDGE

Shera, Carlise and Ridek sit around the helm console, Shera's arms freed while the other two are still bound. All of them are ecstatic with joy, unbridled excitement plastered all over each face.

CARLISE
I can't believe that worked! You're a genius, Ridek!

The bridge rocks and tumbles like mad as the barely-controlled vessel makes its descent through the atmosphere.

SHERA
Who falls for an engine core explosion? I mean honestly, I've heard of stupid, but-

CARLISE
WATCH OUT!

On Carlise's warning, a small Cult cruiser almost runs right into the falling ship!

SHERA
WHOA!

Pulling and wrenching the controls with all her strength, Shera barely moves the massive ship out of the way. The smaller ship escapes with only a few burn marks on her hull.

CARLISE

(dazed)

Okay... I think I just shortened my life a bit.

RIDEK

(same)

You can have some of mine... I don't need it.

CARLISE

(same)

...Thanks...

The clouds before the ship quickly dissipate, revealing the massive temple and the red ocean around it. All the activity at the top looks like nothing but ants scurrying about in perfect order.

Carlise's smile suddenly turns twisted.

CARLISE

Are you thinking what I am?

Shera looks to Carlise then back forward, her smile changing to match.

SHERA

You're bad. Very bad.

Carlise and Ridek laugh.

EXT. TEMPLE - TOP

The screw atop Hatch's head now has several strands of hair tangled into its maw, quickly pulling them out from the roots.

Hatch's face is still a wreck of tears and nasal drippings, but he is no longer crying, but half in pure terror and half strangely calm.

HATCH

OW! It took six months to grow that, bastards!

Unfortunately, nobody listens to him, especially as the falling ship SMASHES into the roof of the temple, her fiery exterior crushing and flash-frying several cult soldiers before they realize what's going on.

Sovari stays strangely calm in the chaos of sound and heat, even as his soldiers and guards die by the dozen under the fiery onslaught.

But the peril is not over yet for Hatch and Adele. As Hatch laughs in joy as the red vessel tears chunks out of robed men and the temple's top, the screw finally begins to make contact with the top of his skull.

HATCH
 AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAUUUUUUUUUUUGGGHHHHH!

His scream is one borne from hell itself, the most horrible noise heard in this universe yet.

But it is really short.

Because the machine has been stopped.

By several slender, silvery tentacles.

HATCH
 Am I alive?

Hatch looks over to the still prone Siren, forgotten by the guards in the chaos around them, with her arms stretched out to their maximum, her tendrils lashed out to their maximum, jamming the deadly screws and their deadly intention.

ADELE
 Thank you.

Siren nods and yanks her arms back, tearing the screw devices from their holdings and crushing them with rage-filled strength.

HATCH
 (loud laugh)
 I SO owe you a beer or something!

Siren nods in appreciation before slowly retracting her tendrils and passing out in wonderful sleep.

Zorin, meanwhile, has easily broken from his restraints and is having a grand time throwing cultists from their feet to the bottom of the temple like a child would throw stones.

ZORIN
 This feels good!

Zorin punches a cultist in the chest, knocking him back into a line of others behind him, knocking them to the ground and under the crushing belly of the flaming captured vessel now lolling about like a beached whale on the temple's roof.

Isaac is also suddenly free, taking a stolen knife to cult Adele's bonds and gently lowering her to the ground.

ISAAC

Here you are.

Adele moves immediately to Siren to check on her health. Isaac follows obediently, completely forgetting Hatch.

HATCH

Uh, hey, guys? A little help?

Adele turns to Isaac coldly, who hops over to free Hatch quickly before going back to Adele.

HATCH

Uh... thanks.

By now, most of the cultists are either dead or fleeing to safe corners, cowering in abject fear. The ship slowly lifts from the roof, her now bloodstained belly almost matching the color of the rest of the ship.

Zorin and Hatch join the sleeping Siren, worried Adele and impassioned Isaac. Unfortunately, Sovari quickly walks forward.

SOVARI

You... HEATHENS! Look at what you have done! There are no words to describe this... DESECRATION!

From a hidden pocket, Sovari reveals a very nasty looking gun, but looking slightly different than those we've seen before.

SOVARI

You must die! The prophet has willed it! It MUST be done!

Hatch walks forward.

HATCH

Dude... chill out.

Sovari merely screams like an animal and lowers his gun on Hatch's chest...

But drops like a stone when the report of a firing gun sounds. Sovari is merely hit in the shoulder, but it's enough to send him to his knees.

Isaac walks forward, brandishing a very small derringer-like gun.

HATCH

Thanks... again.

ISAAC
He was aiming for Adele... not you.

HATCH
Still... thanks, Isaac.

ISAAC
(mirthless)
Don't fucking thank me.

Hatch smiles and joins the rest of the group.

But their mirth ends when the captured ship floating above their heads is suddenly STRUCK by a powerful missile!

ZORIN
What was that?

EXT. PRIME - SKY

We have a very grand and sweeping view of the temple. Already, the millions of people groundward are panicking, crushing some, killing others in a fervor unheard of before and will again.

And suddenly flying in from a dense cloud are a squadron of red cult fighters, their weapons blazing in deadly intent, all of it aimed at Shera's captured vessel! After launching six missiles, the ships break off, swarming like hornets over a wounded animal.

INT. CULT CRUISER - BRIDGE

Shera barely holds the ship together as it rocks and rends from the relentless assault.

RIDEK
I've changed my mind! I want my
life back, Carlise!

CARLISE
Too bad, I just used that, too!

Shera merely looks forward with intent as she is slammed by another missile.

At least until the sensor monitor goes wild!

SHERA
Um... what's that approaching...
REALLY fast?

Carlise and Ridek move to look outside, just as...

EXT. PRIME - SKY

The fighters buzz around the ship and the temple roof, strafing both targets with powerful machine guns. Everything looks really bad until...

EXT. TEMPLE - TOP

Hatch jumps out of the way just before he is peppered with thousands of machine gun bullets.

HATCH

Whoah!

Isaac tries to shoot back with his pea shooter, but it only holds three bullets.

More machine blasts nearly tear the group apart until..

EXT. PRIME - SKY

From a wisp of smoke rising from the temple's damaged top fly two missiles, both of them striking two cult fighters and turning them into piles of shrapnel instantly.

An instant later, a black streak turns the smoke into an amorphous blob, flying forward with a vengeance. The Avalon is like an avenging angel, tearing through the atmosphere too quickly to be targeted by the cultists. She destroys the rest of the squadron within moments.

EXT. TEMPLE - TOP

Hatch suddenly pops up from the bottom of the screen.

HATCH

YES! OH FUCK YEAH! TAKE THAT!

Though Zorin or Isaac don't exclaim quite so loudly, it's clear they feel the same thing in the spectacle.

Just as quickly as the Avalon flies overhead, she appears at the very edge of the temple's roof, her cargo ramp extended fully. Azel stands at the edge, waving everyone aboard.

ZORIN

Go! Go!

While Zorin picks Siren up bodily, Hatch, Adele and Isaac easily hop onto their rescuing ship. Zorin just steps over the short gap.

ZORIN

Go to the bridge!

Everyone nods before running into the ship and closing the ramp.

Just before it's closed, however, Hatch turns around and gives the still-kneeling Sovari the finger with all his might.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

The Avalon's bridge is full of activity with everyone aboard save Shera, of course.

Siren pats Zorin weakly on the shoulder as he sets her down next to her console. She sits and takes control easily.

AZEL

(excited)

The computer and me... we flew the ship.

HATCH

And kicked total ass!

Zorin sits at his seat.

ZORIN

We are not finished yet. Take us into orbit and signal the other vessel to do the same.

Siren weakly nods and gets to work.

EXT. PRIME ORBIT

The Avalon and stolen cruiser slowly rise above the clouds into space. Unfortunately... a dozen fully functional Cruisers block the path to freedom, all of them pointing their missile tubes at our hero's ships.

HATCH (O.S.)

Shit.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Everyone's eyes lock on the viewscreen.

ZORIN

Missile count.

The computer chimes in.

COMPUTER

Uh... six.

ISAAC

Six?

COMPUTER

And when's the last time you got more, huh? Not like I can magically replicate these things.

SIREN

How can we fight twelve cruisers?

Zorin pauses for a long moment then sighs.

ZORIN

We may have to surrende-

ADELE

You cannot.

HATCH

Excuse me?

Adele strolls forward, followed by Isaac, of course, and points to the underside of a cult ship on the viewscreen.

ADELE

If you can launch a missile at the sensor dome at the front of the vessel, it will create a blind spot under the cargo area for a moment. Enough for our damaged vessel to slip through.

Zorin nods.

ZORIN

Signal Shera and tell her of this development. Prepare to use their warp engines as soon as we launch our ordinance.

HATCH

Uh... this is all well and good... but how will we escape?

Nobody has an answer.

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon flies forward like a black knife. She launches six missiles in rapid succession, all of them hitting six cult ships simultaneously.

Immediately after, Shera's vessel leaps forward into warp, appearing just at the edge of the prime system.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Everyone is smiling at the completion of the plan.

ZORIN

Excellent.

But the mood fades when the ship suddenly ROCKS by the impact of a powerful missile!

SIREN

We're under attack!

ZORIN

We cannot win! Signal surrender!

HATCH

What!? You just escaped Cult central, took on a bunch of their ships AT ONCE, and now you're going to give up?

The bridge SHUDDERS with another impact.

ZORIN

Shera escaped with the vessel as planned. They will find a way to rescue us in time.

HATCH

You idiot! They're going to KILL US!

ZORIN

(coldly)

Did you... insult me?

HATCH

I calls em as I sees em. You're making less sense now than you did before!

ZORIN

I should have kept you in the temple when I had the chance!

Zorin, in rage built up since he first saw Hatch, LEAPS up and grabs the man around the neck!

Unfortunately, the metal collar around said neck suddenly activates, sending Zorin into powerful SHOCK! He falls to the floor in a heap, leaving Hatch on his feet and very much afraid.

HATCH

Um... okay.

AZEL

I can't believe he did that.

ISAAC

I can't believe he didn't do it earlier.

Unfortunately, the ship ROCKS with another impact.

COMPUTER

Uh, yeah, there's a hull breach on the back of the ship. Just thought you should know.

Hatch leaps over the still Zorin. The ships SHUDDERS. Siren is quickly slumping over in fatigue.

HATCH

Hold it together, Siren. We'll be out of here soon.

Siren weakly nods. Behind Hatch, Azel and Isaac try to flip Zorin onto his back, but his heavy bulk is too much for them to move. Adele walks behind Hatch.

ADELE

So what do you propose?

HATCH

There's got to be something here. Some kind of ace in the hole...

Hatch looks around the bridge quickly, his eyes slowly focusing on a dusty console almost hidden under a broken light near Siren's console.

HATCH

What's that?

SIREN

We couldn't get that one to work. Zorin took the power from it and put it into my console.

Hatch nods and approaches the mysterious console, blowing dust off of it, sending it flying everywhere.

HATCH

Computer... what is this? Does it have power?

The console slowly and weakly powers up.

COMPUTER

She's right, they took a lot of stuff from it, but there's enough for it to work. I'm sorry, I don't know what it does.

Hatch presses a few buttons carefully. Nothing happens except the constant shudder of missile impacts.

AZEL

We don't have much left!

After a particularly nasty SMASH!, a conduit bursts overhead, jetting fire over the bridge! A console behind Zorin's seat EXPLODES in flames, torching the fabric of the seat badly. The doors out of the bridge are knocked out of their holdings, CRASHING to the ground.

Siren falls to the floor in final exhaustion. Hatch loses his footing, nearly falling on Siren.

HATCH

Oops.

AZEL

...We're dead...

EXT. SPACE

The Avalon is nearly surrounded by hundreds of missiles, their bright contrails illuminating the ship to perfect clarity. She looks beautiful in the light. Several missiles impact, one of them TEARING a missile launcher clean off! Another strikes a nacelle, darkening it quickly.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

It's a mess of fire and chaos. People scream and flail. Hatch has a gash on his head from the impact with the floor. Fortunately, he still works the console, pressing buttons blindly.

EXT. SPACE

More missiles surround the ship...

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Hatch moves to a large, red button.

EXT. SPACE

The missiles close in...

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

Hatch touches the button.

EXT. SPACE

The missiles turn to impact and destroy the Avalon, all of them targeting the bridge! Their fury almost touches the ship...

Until it's suddenly surrounded by a glowing energy shield like those of old times. It's invulnerable fury easily dissipates the missiles and even sends a few flying blindly into space.

The cult vessels surrounding the Avalon stop firing in awe and surprise.

The Avalon's shield disappears quickly, but she is whole. Her powerful impulse engines send her to the edge of the system in but a few moments.

INT. AVALON - BRIDGE

The chaos is lessened, but almost everyone is unconscious save Hatch and Adele.

ADELE

You did it, Hatch. You did it.

Hatch weakly smiles.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AVALON - CORRIDOR

Zorin walks stiffly with a much improved Siren. We join the end of their conversation.

SIREN

Azel theorizes that whatever protects the cult vessels from broken space must reside in their hulls, so he had a few of us clear the other ship's cargo bay enough to fit the Avalon into it.

ZORIN

It would explain why they painted our ships before we entered broken space.

SIREN
(continuing)
We'll use the ship until we're out
of Red territory then cannibalize
whatever we need. We'll just leave
it drifting in space wherever we
leave it.

ZORIN
Agreed.

Siren suddenly stops at an unmarked door.

SIREN
I'll stop here.

Zorin nods and limps onward.

INT. AVALON - HATCH'S ROOM

Hatch lies in his room alone, though it does now contain a
rather comfortable bed, obviously stolen from the Cult
vessel. Hatch is on his back, lazily staring at the roof.

SIREN (O.S.)
Can I come in?

HATCH
Sure.

Siren slowly enters the room.

SIREN
I just wanted you to know that
Zorin... appreciates your efforts
in saving all of us.

HATCH
So he's not going to kill me?

SIREN
(smiles)
Not today.

HATCH
Thanks, Siren.

Siren smiles warmly and exits. Hatch almost nods off to sleep...

COMPUTER
Uh... Tom? You awake?

HATCH
I am now.

COMPUTER
I just wanted to thank you for
everything. If it wasn't for you...

HATCH
It's fine.

COMPUTER
Still, thanks.

The room goes silent. Hatch's eyes remain wide open.

HATCH
Uh... computer?

COMPUTER
Yes?

HATCH
You're all... sentient, right? And
you're just as much a person as any
of us.

(beat)
I was just thinking... you need a name.

COMPUTER
A name?

HATCH
Yeah. Something so nobody thinks of
you as just a computer. You're more
than that by like... a million times.

COMPUTER
What do you suggest?

Hatch yawns deeply.

HATCH
I dunno. Something simple. Since
you're the ship and the ship is
Avalon... what about... Ava?

COMPUTER
Ava? What kind of... I like it.

HATCH
Really?

AVA
Really. Thanks, Tom Hatch.

Hatch smiles.

HATCH

No problem.

As Ava "leaves", she dims the lights in Hatch's room to let him sleep.

But Hatch is no longer looking up at the ceiling. He is looking out the window. At stars both familiar and not his own.

We slowly pull out the window to:

EXT. SPACE

We see the Avalon covered by a massive red cocoon. As we keep pulling back, we see that she's snugly enclosed in the belly of the damaged Cult vessel. Both ships fly away at warp, slowly enveloped by starlight.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

The End