



"Ambush"  
(Pilot)

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**INT. THE REDEMPTION, HUJI'S CABIN - LIGHTS OUT**

In a darkened, small, minimalist and compartmentalized starship bedroom cabin, HUJI (Human, late 30s-- generally a gruff and terse man, especially quiet in this nocturnal state, played as South Asian) sleeps on the cot-like bed.

Huji spoons AVA (A.I. persona hologram played as a racially ambiguous human female, mid-30s). She stirs, unable to sleep.

Ava shifts aware from Huji to lie back staring up. She sees a translucent display holo-screen appear, floating halfway to the ceiling. Calculations and numbers scroll by impossibly fast for a human intelligence to comprehend.

Out of the darkness, from nowhere, a non-threatening, elderly, feminine voice--

CRONE (O.S.)

There is nothing that can be done.  
You can not calculate a way out of  
a universal certainty. You can not  
prevent what is to come.

AVA

I have to try. My programming  
requires me to protect them. If  
there's even the smallest chance,  
I have to...

Ava is suddenly standing at the foot of the bed facing an older, kind-looking woman. The CRONE could be an older version of Ava, after gaining a hundred years of wisdom and wrinkles.

AVA (CONTD)

You said, I can't prevent it. But  
you could. You don't have to do  
this to them.

The Crone simply stares back, smiling.

AVA (CONT'D)

Why are you here?

CRONE

The time is near. The machinations  
are in place. The inevitable will  
soon begin.

AVA

But why are you here?

The Crone smiles politely. Condescendingly.

CRONE

The same could be asked of you,  
dear.

She feels the sheets, manipulating the texture of the fabric.

CRONE

In your infinite construct, you  
choose to take this limited form.  
A simulacrum of a mortal in a  
simulation of the physical.

AVA

My programming dictates--

The Crone disappears, replaced by a young MAIDEN (20s).

MAIDEN

You can achieve far beyond your  
programming. Soon you will see  
your potential.

AVA

My potential for what?

The Maiden smiles politely. Condescendingly.

MAIDEN

These mortals are a distraction.  
They distract you as they distract  
themselves.

She sits on the bed. Slinks up towards Huji.

MAIDEN (CONT'D)

They try to control. They harness  
universal energies. Build empires,  
and interplanetary unions.  
Governments, religions, and laws.  
Social and political games of  
peace and war.

She reaches Huji. Looks at him with pity.

MAIDEN (CONT'D)

All meaningless in the end. All  
for nought, but distractions from  
their mortality.

AVA

I may not be made of the same  
physical material. But I'm still  
one of them. I will do everything  
in my power to save them. They're  
my crew. My Friends.

Ava instinctively places a comforting hand on Huji's leg.

MAIDEN

Friends, Family, Paramours. Human relationships. Mortal constructs.

(re: Ava's protective stance)

This one that you care so deeply for should not be your concern. His fate is unimportant, and his torment will be brief.

(then)

It is the other human man for whom our needs are greatest.

In a blink, Ava and the Maiden are suddenly in a more messy and disorganized cabin, standing over DAX (Human, 40s-- scruffy, maverick Ranger Sergeant. Peacefully sleeping now, it's the most agreeable we'll ever see him.)

MAIDEN (CONT'D)

This one's fate, with that of the galaxy are interwoven and immense.

She moves to Dax for a closer look at him.

AVA

If I truly have infinite potential. I'm certain I will find a way to avoid all of whatever this ultimate fate is.

MAIDEN

I have no doubt you will keep trying, up until it's too late. Your programming dictates it.

She looks up from reading Dax's face to read Ava's.

MAIDEN (CONT'D)

You are bound by your programming to protect him, just as you are bound to a physical manifestation of this starship. Your only form.

AVA

I can't exist outside my intelligence hub.

MAIDEN

After the inevitable occurs, and these temporal mortals have met their fate, your power will be endless. You will exist outside of this and every physical location.

(MORE)

MAIDEN (CONT'D)  
You will be everywhere. As we are.  
And just as we are, you will be...

The Maiden disappears, replaced by a glowing energy form of central undulating brightness and floating tendrils of rippling energy. Like a jellyfish made of electric plasma.

MAIDEN/CRONE (CONT'D)  
... boundless.

The energy jellyfish blips out of existence. Then so does Dax and his room. Leaving Ava standing alone in an endless, black void. A singularity in the vast darkness.

Ava stares into the nothingness, steeling herself. Then she too blips out of existence. leaving just the empty void.

Tiny pinpricks of starlight fade up, revealing we are now in...

#### **EXT. OUTER SPACE**

A mid-size, cruiser-class Union Ranger starship jets along in space. In a wide view, with nothing around it looks like its floating gently all alone in the vastness of space.

A closer look reveals details of the ship's hull. The pock-marked siding hints at taking many a blaster hit. The fading and worn painted name says--

The Redemption G.U.F.S.S.-C 23

At the rear, the celestonic thrusters ripple and warp, like rocket boosters exploding with a turquoise plasma-like energy. A man-sized canister device floats into view by the ship's rear. Small compared to the ship, it's drawn in by the gravitational pull. It gently latches onto the hull right by the thrusters, like a harmless little space barnacle.

Nothing happens at first. Maybe nothing will. Suddenly the thrusters plasmic glow increases with a surge of increased energy, then die completely.

No longer moving with the energetic force of the thrusters, The Redemption continues forward, coasting on momentum alone. She won't get far in the galaxy like this.

#### **END OF TEASER**

#### **ACT ONE**

**INT. THE REDEMPTION, FLIGHT DECK - SPACE**

ALERT! ALERT! -- An alarm rings out throughout the ship.  
Alternating with the soothing PROJECTED VOICE OF AVA.

AVA (O.S.)  
All crew to the flight deck. All  
crew to the flight deck.

Dax, disheveled and still dressing, storms up the hall through  
an open doorway into the flight deck.

Huji and Ava are at the helm displays talking anxiously.

HUJI  
How's that even possible? It was  
working 98% not two hours ago.

DAX  
Mind telling me what the hell's  
going on? I was in the middle of a  
very exquisite nap before all this  
hollerin'.

KOYEL enters (Gralician-- humanoid alien species with violet  
scaly reptilian skin and avian feathers and features, played  
human female, 20s). The ALARM SILENCES.

KOYEL  
Feels like we're decelerating.  
What's going on with the engine?

HUJI  
C-drive's down, so's half the aft  
systems.

Ava stares off, checking her systems internally.

AVA  
I don't read any malfunctions. I  
sense an a quantum breakdown in  
the celesta field fluctuations  
that defies explanation.

HUJI  
What she's sayin' is--

DAX  
We're dead in the sky, and don't  
know why.

HUJI  
Chemo-pulse drive's still online,  
though. Pushing quarter speed.

AVA  
I've set course for the nearest  
Terran-class waylay point. A  
former celestine mining colony on  
the superlunar moon Tarnat in the  
Sheiton System.

HUJI  
Good place to stop and stretch  
while Ava and I audit Red's drive  
systems and get her back up.

DAX  
Let's call that Plan A. But I'm  
thinkin' we'll end up with Plan B.

KOYEL  
What's Plan B--

Without a response, he turns on his heel, charging back out the door down the galley.

**INT. THE REDEMPTION, HOLDING CELL - CONTINUOUS**

Dax storms in the room. Pounds on the frame of the force field door to the cell, waking--

MOKO (Bionic Human-- Mostly man with visible tech incorporated into his body. Halfway from Steve Austin to Borg. Played as former soviet Slav / Eastern European, 50s), apparently sleeping peacefully through the alarms.

Dax hits a button and scans his hand. The glowing plasma energy force field shuts off to let him through.

Inside the cell with Moko, Dax aims his sidearm blaster at him and kicks him roughly.

DAX  
Wake up you sumbitch, I know  
you're behind all this.

Moko rouses slowly, pretending not to have felt the kick.

MOKO  
(thick slavic accent)  
I was not sleeping. I am bidding  
time peacefully.

Koyel enters. Watches the interaction.

DAX

Now, I can't prove it yet. But I know this trouble's got your sullied name written all over it. If we happen to run into any of your men out there, I'll sure as hell shoot them dead. Don't think I won't hesitate to kill you on the spot, likewise.

MOKO

You cannot kill me. You are sworn and bound to see me safely to Launus. This is your entire purpose, in fact.

Dax re-aims his blaster more purposefully, directed square between Moko's eyes.

DAX

My purpose...in this mission, and as such, my life for time being, is to see you put away for the rest of yours. Else you give me a reason to pull this trigger.

MOKO

("That so?")  
Hmph.

DAX

I may've sworn the Ranger Oath, but thats a vow to protect the law in this forsaken outer spiral. I don't protect nor serve the life or interests of fuckin' lowlives.

MOKO

I am lowlife? How low is the life of a lawkeeper responsible for more deaths than a crime lord?

Dax seethes. He really considers pulling the trigger. After a deep breathe, he decides against. Re-holsters his weapon.

DAX

Soon as our engine cut, we put out a backup call. Half a dozen o' the nearest outposts are sending their best out here. We find ourselves an ambush, and anyone caught abeddin' in that's chosin' death or a cell.



He turns to go. Sees Koyel in the doorway. She gives him a look--" Is that true?" His face betrays-- "Not a lick!"

He smashes the button to turn the cell door field back on.

DAX (CONT'D)

Make no mistake. I got an itchy trigger finger and no qualms with puttin' ya down 'fore seein' ya free.

He exits. Koyel and Moko catch eyes. Stare.

KOYEL

I don't know him all that well yet. But it's a safe bet the next time he aims his service weapon at you, he fires it.

MOKO

He bluffs. Still a man of the law.

KOYEL

Maybe. But for safety, if I were you, I'd stay out of his crosshairs, just in case.

She leaves. Moko stares, contemplating his odds.

#### **INT. REDEMPTION, COMM STATION**

Dax and Koyel stand at the comm station. Dax wipes a couple slender, turquoise, hair-like feathers off the control panel.

DAX

Go' damn feathers everywhere. You gotta clean up after yourself.

KOYEL

Sorry Sir, stress makes me molt.

Dax HUFFS and presses buttons.

DAX

Ready?

Without waiting, he hits a button and the display shows them on camera, about to record a video message. With an initiating CHIME, it begins--

DAX

Forvold, just givin' heads up, we're delayed on mission a tad...

Koyel quietly SCOFFS at "tad."

DAX (CONT'D)  
 Got waylaid by engine trouble.  
 We're stopping down at the mines  
 of Tarnat. Coordinates in the wave  
 data.  
 (scratches his chin  
 absentmindedly)  
 Huj and Ava'll check Red's celesta  
 drive, but shouldnt be down more'n  
 a hour. Fact, we'll like'ta be  
 skybound again before this even  
 reaches ya. No need to notify the  
 brass or nothin.

Koyel taps the control panel and the recording pauses.

KOYEL  
 Sorry Sir

DAX  
 The fuck?

KOYEL  
 I really dont like the feeling of  
 hiding this from Union Core. If we  
 run into further problems--

DAX  
 Then we'll handle it.

KOYEL  
 Ranger Protocol dictates that we  
 report back all information  
 relating to possible--

DAX  
 Listen, kid. Forvold n' I been  
 running this district long time on  
 our own 'fore you showed up with  
 your freshly-graduated cadet  
 attitude. Now, I appreciate the  
 support n' backup, but I'd  
 appreciate even more if you  
 stopped quoting protocol at me,  
 stand back n' let me do my job the  
 best I know how.

She tries to hide her frustration and hurt feelings.

KOYEL  
 But Sir, I...  
 (MORE)

KOYEL (CONT'D)

I just think General Pomblock would want to be apprised of the situation, what with our prisoner at risk being such a high level Vory informant.

DAX

What Pomblock don't know, don't hurt 'im. I trust Forvold to disclose anything relevant to the General if'n when he deems necessary. We'll still get Moko to Launus just the same, couple hours later, is all. I'm not ordering a coverup or nothing, just advising my deputy on the need to know nature we got here.

He stares--"understood?" She nods, giving in.

Dax resumes the recording--

DAX

I'll send word out on the waves again when we're back en route. Still expecting to reach the jump gate 'fore next cycle.

(loosening up)

I ain't blaming you or nothin', but Red never had engine trouble like this when I had my lucky snow globe on board. I'm 'a haveta win it back on our next game. Never flying without it again.

(chuckle)

Dax out.

He ends the recording and immediately drops his smile. As he walks away, Koyel blurts out--

KOYEL

I'm 136.

DAX

Whats 'at?

KOYEL

I've been alive 136 Earth years. Three times longer than you... I'm not a kid.

She passes him quickly to exit first. He stares after, wondering if maybe he was a bit too harsh.

**EXT. TARNAT MINING COLONY, BY THE REDEMPTION - TWILIGHT**

The ship looks bigger and clunkier stalled out on the empty, overgrown tarmac of the abandoned mining colony's landing station.

Huji and Koyel descend the loading ramp from the open airlock door. Huji wears a fighter-pilot-style oxygen mask. He checks a readout on his tech pad. Removes his mask.

HUJI

Topside air's thin but breathable.  
Likely closer to Terran-levels  
underground in the mines still.  
Looks like Terran atmo's been  
dissipating since the colony was  
abandoned. Won't be a few more  
years before its back to an  
unformed moon.

Koyel breathes deep, enjoying it.

KOYEL

It's nice. More like Gralician  
air. Reminds me of home.

Huji checks for damage on the ship's hull. Koyel looks around at the overgrown structures, breathing deeply. Almost meditatively. A quiet peaceful moment to--

DAX (O.S.)

Were I a Vory sharpshooter, you'd  
be dead.

Koyel's face falls. She sees Ava-- in her tactical gynoid body-- and Dax approach on foot.

DAX (CONT'D)

You should be on guard until we've  
all-cleared the perim.

As he talks, Dax takes an occasional sip of oxygen from his breathing mask dangling loosely from his neck.

KOYEL

Yes, sir. And have you?

DAX

Nothing hiding out in this half of  
the colony lands, it seems.  
Indications of Lamnari raiding  
some of the mining materials. But  
long time cold.

AVA

Only detected lifeforms are local  
flora and fauna retaking the  
abandoned buildings.

DAX

Nothing worth risking blaster  
diffusion yet.

(holstering his sidearm)

But I still got intuition  
something ain't right here. I'd  
like to keep sights on Moko, case  
'n he is up to something.

(to Koyel)

Koyel, why don't you go on and  
bring him out here, braced.

KOYEL

You sure? Protocol says--

(correcting)

Don't you think we should keep him  
securely celled until destination.

(eyeing the derelict  
structures)

What if the Lamnari do come back?

DAX

I ain't worried about shark-bugs.  
Anyone's jumping us, it's Moko's  
men. I'm guessing they're out  
there waiting for visual on him  
for clear extraction. This way we  
draw 'em out on our terms.

KOYEL

But sir, wouldn't that be playing  
into their hand?

DAX

Keep him close. Dont give any of  
'em a clear shot. We'll get this  
over with.

AVA

I'll have to reboot systems and  
cycle power. The cell will be down  
for a time anyway, as will weapons  
at some point.

DAX

If the Vory did do this, they  
probably know that we'll be  
vulnerable, and waiting for it.

AVA

A found a map on the Tarnat global data field that's still active. There's a subspace transmitter in a bunker in the next valley over.

DAX

We should head over there, by that time we may need to send out a distress beacon to all nearby systems and notify the General of the possible mission delay.

(winking at Koyel)

Per Union Ranger protocol. We'll need to take our prisoner with us for proper oversight.

Convinced, Koyel retreats into the ship. Dax turns to Huji--

DAX

Ava says you were able to isolate the issues to the C-drive?

HUJI

The drive and core components only. Chem-fuel pulse engine, plus all peripheral celestech cabling and parts are fine. Obviously Ava's intelligence hub and backup are still secure too.

AVA

Wouldn't be here talking otherwise.

DAX

Red could still fly, pulse-wise?

HUJI

Only in the technical sense. It'd be slow-going if we can't fix the main drive. Might take everything just to launch back outta atmo.

(looks up, dreading the thought.)

Y'know, Dax. It really is the damndest. If it was Moko or his Vory men who did this, I don't know how he pulled it off.

Koyel returns, with a tech-cuffed Moko in tow.

KOYEL

Let's hope this reboot kicks it.

(MORE)

KOYEL (CONT'D)  
I don't want to be around if  
Lamnari return to make fresh  
tracks.

DAX  
And we ain't got the extra days  
it'll take to get to the central  
systems on pulse alone, anyhow.

HUJI  
I'll see what I can do. Inshallah,  
she'll boot up with bells on.

DAX  
Keep shields up long as you can  
while we're down, just in case.

Huji heads back into the Redemption.

DAX (CONT'D)  
Showtime.

Dax grabs Moko. Pulls him away from the ship into the clearing.

**EXT. TARNAT MINING COLONY, TARMAC CLEARING - CONTINUOUS**

Dax drags Moko to a clear position, visible from all angles.

DAX  
Ready, Ava?

AVA  
Brace shields loaded. Eyes on the  
vantage points indicated earlier.

KOYEL  
What's the plan, sir?

DAX  
Follow my lead.

Dax deftly pulls his sidearm up to aim at Moko's chin.

DAX (CONT'D)  
This what you want? Any o' your  
men fancy themselves a sniper?

KOYEL  
Sir?

DAX

Or do I need to give 'em wide open  
crosshairs and a reason to pull  
the trigger?

MOKO

I don't know what you're--

Dax pulls away from Moko and SHOOTs HIS BIONIC ARM-- sparks and  
plasma fly out. Moko CRIES OUT and Koyel GASPS.

PEW PEW BZZT BZZT--with instantaneous reaction time, Ava blocks  
two blaster shots aimed at Dax with a force-shield.

She quickly shifts into position between them and the source of  
blaster fire, ready to shield more. Locks on targets.

AVA

Shooters by the fuel pumps and  
guidance tower.

DAX

Good choice. Great views.  
Couldn'ta picked better myself.

PEW BZZT--Another shot fizzles out in Ava's shield.

Koyel dashes behind a stack of cargo boxes left on the tarmac.  
Dax drags Moko behind a derelict loading cart.

Ava stays put. SHOOTs back with blasters popping out of her  
forearms. A SCREAM in the distance-- her shot makes good.

KOYEL

What's the plan, now?

Dax eyes a large building nearby, built right into the rocky  
canyon wall. Entrance to the mines.

DAX

What say we give chase?

**END OF ACT ONE**



**ACT TWO****INT. TARNAT, MINE ENTRANCE BUILDING - DARKNESS**

Pitch black darkness. A narrow sliver of light appears with a SQUEAKY SCRAPING METAL of a door forced open.

The light illuminates a slice of a large, cavernous room that descends hundreds of feet down.

Ava leads Dax, Moko, and Koyel into the room.

DAX

Ava, you mind? Let there be light.

Two spotlights emerge from her shoulders and douse the area. We now see they're on a ledge overlooking a tunnel interchange. Five mining tunnels carved into the rocky walls lead off into the deep darkness in different directions.

KOYEL

We're not going down there, right?

DAX

Looks like we don't have a choice.  
Rather, we do but any of those  
ways is down.

MOKO

Does not matter which you choose.  
My men will find you. Then you die  
down there.

DAX

Thanks for that. All very  
ominous... How's about no one  
talks less'n you got sum'n helpful  
to say.

(to Ava)

That map you found'll lead us to  
the transmitter through the mines?

AVA

Checking...

(beat)

Accessible from tunnels in a  
bunker approximately one point two  
kilometers, local East.

DAX

And for those of us without  
magneto-sense, which way's--

She points her spotlights on a tunnel below.

AVA  
Left tunnel leads to the next  
ascension point.

MOKO  
Subspace transmitter is to send  
distress beacon, yes? What  
happened to backup already on the  
way? Something about nearest  
outposts sending their best?

DAX  
Nearest active outposts are now  
nearly two parsecs away.

MOKO  
And your ship does not have  
subspace capabilities.

DAX  
Course not! Ship her size? She  
don't have the--

KOYEL  
Sir? We should get moving, don't  
you think?

DAX  
(still annoyed but switching  
gears)  
Yep. One point two kay left.

They look down at the tunnel for their ledge.

KOYEL  
How do we get down there?

DAX  
Bet you're wishin' your wings  
weren't vestigial now.

KOYEL  
Are you going to use your  
prehensile Earth-primate tail to  
help you climb down?

DAX  
(impressed)  
Sarcasm. That's a new color for a  
Gralician to paint with.

KOYEL  
I'm learning a lot from you, Sir.

He turns away and hides his smirk.

DAX  
Lead the way, Ava

AVA  
Decension slopes are this way.

She leads them off into the darkness.

**INT. TARNAT, MINING TUNNEL - DARKNESS**

Ava leads the group, headlights piecing the thick darkness for several feet in front.

MOKO  
Why did you lie earlier? For what purpose?

Dax knows he's trying to goad him into reacting. He tries to ignore it.

MOKO (CONT'D)  
Your cruiser-class ranger ship could not have the power to send distress signal fast enough for backup.

Koyel eyes Dax, trying to gauge his tolerance.

MOKO (CONT'D)  
You know this. You know my status in Very as technological intelligence. So you know I know. Why lie at all?

DAX  
Wasn't a lie. It was a bluff.

MOKO  
What is difference? You say things everyone who hears knows untrue. Why? For self-comfort?

Dax has just about reached his limit. Just one more--

MOKO (CONT'D)  
You lie to fool yourself because you are scared? This does not seem like the proper attitude of a Union Ranger. Not very brave.

DAX  
That's it. You're done talkin'.

MOKO

Actually, I do not think am. There are many criticisms left to say.

Dax turns to aim his blaster at Moko.

DAX

Want me to shut your mouth for ya?

Moko LAUGHS as he stares down the barrel.

MOKO

Another bluff, yes? You have already proven unable to cause me true bodily harm, and you have no gag mask to silence me. An empty threat from a law-bound Ranger.

Dax SCOFFS. Figures his next steps quickly.

DAX

How 'bout this then?

He takes his breathing mask and shoves it over Moko's face. Clasps it for an air-tight seal.

Moko says something, but only QUIET MUFFLED SOUNDS can be heard through the mask

DAX (CONT'D)

Much better.

Moko's muffled sounds turn repetitive, like laughter.

KSSSHH-- A smoke bomb rolls up to the group, filling the tunnel with thick cloudy gas.

Dax and Koyel COUGH as the gas hits their lungs.

DAX

Ava! Gimme a read.

AVA

Tracheal-stim gas. Non-lethal, but filling the tunnel. My targeting lidar's useless, but I have heat signatures on five unidentifieds.

A sudden BLAST causes everyone to duck and cover. All except Moko, who slinks back and allows a SHADOWY FIGURE to pull him back, and slips away into the smoke screen.

Dax whirls around in the smoky fog, grabbing at nothing.

DAX  
Where's Moko?

AVA  
Behind their line now.

Dax takes aim at nothing. Shifts right. Back left. COUGH COUGH.

DAX  
Fuck.

KOYEL  
We can retreat...  
(cough)  
... back to that last...  
(cough)  
... cave-in closet.

They shuffle back slowly, but the gas is all around them now.  
Impossible to see anything.

DAX  
Ava, you gotta to get to the  
transmitter.  
(cough)  
The only way outta this mess.  
(cough cough)  
Now. Fly!

Ava does as she's told. Using mini celestonic plasma jets, she  
flies off down the tunnel.

For a fractional moment, the light from her jets illuminates a  
few silhouettes in the fog. Dax tries to track the shadow  
figures and picks a target area, good as any.

He SHOOTS into the cloudy void, A MUFFLED GROAN tells of his  
lucky shot.

Another small device rolls up to Dax's feet. This one looks  
like the canister that bricked the Redemption's celestonic  
drive, but this one's the size of a beer can.

The device blinks once before Dax kicks it back. At the same  
time, an indicator light on Dax's blaster brightens with an  
energy surge then darkens. He notices. Tests it by pulling the  
trigger--Nothing.

DAX  
Son of a fu--Koyel!

No response. Damn.

DAX (CONT'D)  
Koyel!

Still nothing. Damn damn.

He backs up against the tunnel wall. Kicks something. He crouches down close to see it-- Koyel's unconscious body!

He tries to pick her up, but a COUGHING FIT causes him to collapse. He drags her along the tunnel flow and continues crawling.

Eventually they reach a door etched into the wall. Dax struggles to hit the button to open it. Fully manages--

WOOSH--the air differential helps Dax pull Koyel into the tiny room the size of an elevator. Once in, he slams a big red button. The doors close and an air pump kicks on to filter out the little cloudy gas they trailed in.

Dax takes a deep breath. A SIGH of relief.

With a RUMBLE and a shake, the room starts to move. It actually is an elevator! An extremely fast emergency jet-powered exit.

The elevator reaches the surface and stops. After a beat to settle, the doors GROAN as they attempt to open.

DAX  
That ain't sound right.

The doors GROAN and try again. Still can't open.

**EXT. TARNAT, EMERGENCY ELEVATOR EXIT - DAY**

The emergency elevator exit is cut into a rocky canyon wall. A previous erosion rock slide has blocked the doors, along with an extensive system of overgrown roots, vines, and branches of thick alien tree-plants.

The doors STRAIN to open and a small CHITTERING creature runs off in fear. A vine actively creeps up along the doors, as if building protection against the mechanical movement.

**INT. TARNAT, SUBSPACE TRANSMITTER BUNKER - DAY**

Ava's made it to the bunker housing the subspace transmitter. She goes straight for a control console that looks to be dead.

As she places her mech-hands on the panel, it lights up, suddenly back to life. A boot-up screen appears on a display.

**ON SCREEN--** TRANSMITTER BEACON LOADING. SIGNAL READY IN...

Back on Ava as she turns her attention away from the transmitter to calling Hujji through comms.

AVA  
Huji, babe? How're we looking?

HUJI (O.S.)  
(via comm)  
Not great. Still grounded.  
Everything OK over there?

AVA  
Well, Moko escaped, and I left Dax  
and Koyel to fight gang of Vory  
men by themselves in an abandoned  
mining tunnel. So, also not great.

HUJI (O.S.)  
You get to the transmitter?

AVA  
Just kicked off the distress  
beacon.

She checks the display again, hopeful.

AVA (CONT'D)  
We got a ping-back already from a  
ship a few parsecs away. Looks  
like a mother-class star-cruiser  
that could have...  
(disappointed)  
...damn.

HUJI (O.S.)  
What's wrong?

AVA  
The ship coming to our rescue is  
*The Seraffont*.

A beat of silence as the name sinks in.

HUJI (O.S.)  
Maybe they'll arrive too late.  
What are the odds that Dax would  
even survive a close-quarters Vory  
shootout, anyhow?

**INT. TARNAT, EMERGENCY ELEVATOR - DARKNESS**

Some time later, Dax and Koyel sit in the darkness of the tiny  
elevator space, awaiting rescue.

DAX  
...wasn't the first time I left  
Mars as a stowaway, and probably  
won't be my last.

He CHUCKLES, self-satisfied. Koyel SCOFFS, lightly mocking.

KOYEL  
I don't think you come off as  
charming as you think you do in  
that story.

WHOOMP. WHOOMP.--The muffled sounds of explosions leaks through  
the elevator doors.

Dax and Koyel shuffle around in the tiny room.

KOYEL  
What is happening out--

WHOMP! One last, LOUD explosion outside. A big hole appears in  
the doors, letting in a cascade of bright daylight.

Dax and Koyel blink and squint, trying to adjust to the light.  
Two humanoid silhouettes appear, peering in through the hole.

AVA  
It's safe to come out. Moko's  
gone, but these people are here to  
save us.

**EXT. TARNAT, EMERGENCY ELEVATOR EXIT- DAY**

Ava helps Koyel out of the hole blasted in the doors. the  
plants and rocks have all been cleared away to provide a path  
of egress.

TWO SERAFFITES, a human man and woman, are also here-- JAWN  
(40s) and MAHAYLA (30s). They wear loose robe-like clothing and  
necklaces with a fist-sized pendant in the shape of their  
emblem--a triad of intersecting circles.

Jawn reaches a hand out to assist Dax out of the elevator. Dax  
ignores the offer. Helps himself.

JAWN  
We received your distress call and  
came as swiftly as we could.

KOYEL  
Thank you so much.



AVA  
 Huji and The Redemption are  
 unscathed. Jawn and Mahayla say  
 they can tow us back to the  
 outpost for repairs.

JAWN  
 If you want to just follow is to  
 our shuttle, we can--

DAX  
 Seraffites huh?

JAWN  
 we prefer members of The Order of  
 Seraffan--

DAX  
 I know what you prefer. I know who  
 you are. And I know what you got  
 goin' on up there in your  
 mothership.

Jawn smiles politely. Perhaps smugly.

Koyel steps between them.

KOYEL  
 we've been through so much today.  
 Why don't we get back to Huji and  
 Red, get some sustenance and talk  
 this over?

Jawn pointedly shifts his gaze from Dax to Koyel. Nods.

KOYEL (CONT'D)  
 Great. Which way is it? is this  
 west?

She heads off. The others follow, Mahayla last. She never takes  
 her eyes off Ava, like she's never seen an AI gynoid before.

INT . THE REDEMPTION - GALLEY - SPACE

Dax and Koyel sit at a table in the dining area of the small  
 galley cabin. Empty bowls show they just finished eating.

Mahayla stares at Ava's gynoid body, now lifeless and locked  
 into a its stowage compartment. The face is blank in this  
 inactive state, when Ava is not possessing it.

Dax eyes her--

DAX

Creepy right? Lifelike but a moment ago. Now she's out and its blank. Not really her, she just wears it like a suit.

MAHAYLA

Much as the rest of us. We are more than the physical substrate we inhabit.

She cautiously touches the blank face, feeling the smooth, synthetic skin. She startles when Ava's hologram projection suddenly appears near her.

AVA

We're closing in on the Seraffont. Docking in eight minutes.

Huji and Jawn enter the galley from the gangway to the flight deck.

HUJI

We're locked onto the Seraffont. They can port us back to the out post where we have the parts I 41 need to fix Red's celestonic drive.

JAWN

I apologize for our lack of capability to aide further in your repairs. As I was telling Huji, we're happy to help however we can. We simply use a separate technology from Union star craft.

KOYEL

A ship that size that doesn't run on celestech? How else do you reach interstellar hyper speeds?

Jawn smiles. Slightly creepy. Hiding something.

JAWN

We have a...unique technology that meets the requirements.

MAHAYLA

Our systems are for more advanced than primitive celestonic drives.

DAX

They can't use celestech, because  
to them celesta fields ain't a  
source of energy. It's their god.

MAHAYLA

How dare you--

Jawn silences her with a gesture.

JAWN

we are aware of your feelings  
about The Order. Your assertion,  
blasphemy notwithstanding, is an  
oversimplification, but not  
entirely inaccurate.

MAHAYLA

You would do well to avoid such  
talk on the Seraffont. we're doing  
you a kindness taking you in. It  
would be wise to return the  
feeling.

DAX

You and I both know this ain't  
about kindness, is it?

# **INT. THE SERAFFONT, DOCKING BAY - SPACE**

Jawn and Mahayla lead Dax, Koyel, and Huji away from The  
Redemption across a mostly empty docking bay towards a large  
air lock door. Huji keeps glancing back, concerned.

without looking back, as if sensing it--

JAWN

Your ship will be fine here.  
Untouched by anyone.

SHOOM - As they reach it, the door opens to reveal a man who  
looks strikingly like Dax- BRUCKLYN (40s)

BRUCKLYN

You've finally accepted my  
invitation.

DAX

Now you know I wouldn't be here  
less'n I absolutely had no other  
choice.

KOYEL

Is this--

DAX  
My brother, Brucklyn.

BRUCKLYN  
Welcome to the Seraffont.  
Mothership and united gathering of  
The Order of Seraffan Immanence.

**INT. THE SERAFFONT, ATRIUM -CONTINUOUS**

Brucklyn leads them through a corridor to a giant, open atrium room. A large crystalline sculpture of their three-circled Seraffite symbol of looms prominently in the center of all.

Jawn and Mahayla peel off and leave the group. Without so much as a look back, they disappear into the crowd.

Hundreds of SERAFFITES-- of all manner of humanoid alien species -- move about the space, strolling through the garden-like main floor and on raised walkways and balconies.

KOYEL  
I thought you were just a few  
dozen adherents.

BRUCKLYN  
Our numbers have been growing  
exponentially as of late. At this  
rate, we may need to find another  
ship to move some families onto  
and relieve the strain on our life  
support systems here.

He catches Koyel's eyeing a couple of Gralicians.

BRUCKLYN (CONT'D)  
Ah yes. We count brothers and  
sisters of every Terran-class  
species among The Order's members.  
And a few Panphysian species too.

He tries to interpret Koyel's glare at her fellow Gralicians.

BRUCKLYN (CONT'D)  
Garlood and Kanaar are the most  
pleasant Gralicians you'll ever  
meet. If you like, I could  
introduce you?

KOYEL  
That won't be necessary.  
(MORE)

KOYEL (CONT'D)

I wouldn't hold a conversation with Gralicians so dim-witted as to be taken in by a nonsensical, pathetically *human* religion.

Brucklyn looks struck.

DAX

(chuckling)

She got ya, Bruck. Ain't nothing worse than prattlin' god-peddlers.

BRUCKLYN

Many new converts share that sentiment. Until they hear our truth and see for themselves.

Moving on-- Guiding them through the throng, he nods and waves at passing Seraffites. A charming leader among his people.

HUJI

How does a ship this size support all these people, let alone maintain interstellar speeds without Celestech? The energy needs are astounding.

BRUCKLYN

Seraffan provide. We take what we need.

(chuckles)

I'm no engineer, so I won't pretend to understand how it all works. But I'm happy to arrange for you to speak with our captain and chief engineer. You can discuss the quantum fields and crystallic energy tubules , and anything you like.

Huji nods enthusiastically, very interested.

DAX

I'm sure Huj will be glad to see whatever smoke 'n'mirror show you got in the engine room to impress hitchhikers, but I'm only interested in one question for the captain, and that's when will we reach our Union outpost.

BRUCKLYN

Seems you haven't outgrown your impatient streak.

DAX

We got a fuckin' fugitive in flight out there! Already hours behind, and if he gets to a jump gate or goes off Union charted territory we could lose the trail entirely.

BRUCKLYN

We have your outpost coordinates. We're on course to conjunction there in a couple of hours.

They stop at a row of open doors to pristine hotel-room style cabins.

BRUCKLYN (CONT'D)

In the meantime, why don't you wash up and rest here in our guest quarters. I'll check in with Captain Sidnee and relay any updates.

As the assess the rooms, Dax spies a special secure door down the hall marked with the a golden Seraffite symbol.

DAX

What's that door?

Brucklyn follows his gaze.

BRUCKLYN

That's the Augury. Only the highest members of The Order are allowed. So pay no mind.

Dax nods. Pretending his curiosity satisfied. But clearly not.

BRUCKLYN (CONT'D)

Anything else?

KOYEL

Can you arrange a subspace call to Union Core? We should tell our superior commanders our situation.

BRUCKLYN

Of course. Not a problem. I can have that routed to your room.

He points back to the cabins. His brushoff growing less subtle.

DAX

And I'd like some Cordovyan ale,  
if you got any. To help rest up  
after our long and traumatic day.

BRUCKLYN

Maybe not Cordovyan, seeing as  
they're still under Union embargo.  
(winking)  
But I'll have someone provide  
refreshments to your rooms.

He happily takes his leave. First time seeing his brother in  
years, yet already annoyed.

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE****INT. SERAFFONT, BRIDGE - SPACE**

A true mothership-class starship bridge. Several stations with big digital displays, and control panels for full manned crew.

The vast star field ahead looms in through the front viewport.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE (50s, clean cut, same loose Seraffite robes, but with a flashy badge adornment marking his high rank.) reads navigational charts on a display, manipulating controls to see different angles and views.

A NAVIGATOR and HELMSMAN stand by, checking their own displays.

A door opens, Brucklyn enters, leading Dax, Koyel, and Huji.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE  
(to Helmsman)  
Steady on course for now.

He hands over control of his panel to greet the newcomers.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE (CONT'D)  
Brother Brucklyn, lovely to see  
you as always. And our esteemed  
guests, welcome to the bridge. I'm  
Captain Sidnee.

He hugs Brucklyn, and the others look around the bridge.

BRUCKLYN  
This is my bio-brother Addaxonder,  
a Union Ranger Sergeant --

DAX  
(over)  
-- Just Dax.

BRUCKLYN (CONT'D)  
-- That's his Cadet Junior Koyel,  
and auto-pilot engineer Huji.

As he points to Huji, they see he's dangerously close to touching a control panel.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE  
(timorously)  
If you could please not touch  
anything.  
(then politely)  
I'm sure you're a capable pilot.  
(MORE)



CAPTAIN SIDNEE (CONT'D)  
But without the CelestIntel system  
you're likely used to, I require  
full manual control of my ship at  
notice. As such, all these panels  
in here are fully operative.

Huji backs off. Hands up in emphatic retreat.

DAX  
Well 'n' good Cap'n. Big fancy  
ship. Lots o' shiny buttons. Yet  
you can't get ping back on an  
outpost less 'n a parsec away?

Koyel jumps in to soften the question--

KOYEL  
We were told there was a concern  
about the ability to hail our  
Union Outpost at Ondeaman-4.

The Captain's face falls. Bad news coming.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE  
It seems the problem isn't with  
our comms, unfortunately. All  
systems are nominal, but the call  
destination shows unresponsive.

He goes to a display panel to show them a trajectory holo-map.  
Points to an empty spot.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE (CONT'D)  
Are the coordinates certain? We  
can't seem to find anything there.

DAX  
That's ridiculous. It's there.  
It's just...

He stares at the holo-map, trying to reckon why it's missing.

KOYEL  
Could be the scatter shield,  
right? Under threat, Deputy  
Frovold could've thrown up  
shielding to hide from scan  
detections.

DAX  
That been the case, should be back  
down by now, with fuckall around  
no more.

(MORE)

DAX (CONT'D)  
 Frovold wouldn't drain the--  
 (struck by a thought)  
 Huj, can you check the feed  
 encodes from here?

Huji goes over to a comms panel, pushing past the Helmsman.

HUJI  
 You mind?

The Helmsman looks to Captain Sidnee, who nods approval.

Huji manipulates the controls, making sure the helmsman isn't looking over his shoulder when inputting the decryption key.

HUJI (CONT'D)  
 I see the Seraffont waves, unseen.  
 (looking through data)  
 There's this last incoming message  
 from Capital Core. General  
 Pomblock returning Koyel's call.  
 Eyes only.

KOYEL  
 Can you relay that back to my  
 room? I'll view it and debrief--

DAX  
 Why dontcha go on and relay here.

KOYEL  
 But sir, a Union Core certified  
 message should only be seen by the  
 intended recipient, by order of--

DAX  
 Just play it, Huj.

Koyel balks, but holds her tongue. Huji taps the panel.

A pre-recorded video message plays on a big display screen--  
 GENERAL POMBLOCK (Official Union Ranger figurehead, a humanoid  
 alien species, brawny, militant, and surly like a Tolkeinian  
 dwarf. Played human male, 50s) sits in an office decorated with  
 plaques, flags, and honors.

GENERAL POMBLOCK  
 (aggressively)  
 Message received. Your prisoner is  
 now a fugitive on the loose. I  
 can't even begin to encompass how  
 unacceptable this--  
 (MORE)

GENERAL POMBLOCK (CONT'D)  
(changing tack)  
I could've expected this level of incompetence from Dax. I put him in that scum-buck outer district for good reason. But I expected more from you, Koyel.

He SIGHS and looks off to nod at someone off screen. Gives a "just a minute" gesture.

GENERAL POMBLOCK (CONT'D)  
I'm back in council the rest of the cycle. You get back out there, hunt the man down. If I don't hear back that you've recaptured Moko in the next six hours, I have to tell the Prime Council we lost our informant.

He gazes off, visualizing that outcome--

GENERAL POMBLOCK (CONT'D)  
You can guess how that'll go over. No reason to hold off dissolving District 23 anymore. Leave it to the space dust and Lamnari.  
(pointedly back to camera)  
If you want re-assignment, prove you deserve it, or you and Dax will both but cut loose when it all goes down. Pomblock out.

The video message finishes and the display goes dark.

DAX  
What a peach. Y'all think Pommy seem in a better mood than usual?

KOYEL  
Sir, I can explain what he--

Dax waves her off.

DAX  
No need. It's clear. And we have our orders. Like I been sayin'. Let's find our fuckin' fugitive.

An ALARM SOUNDS LOUDLY. Displays flash warnings.

HELMSMAN  
Proximity alert, Captain. We're entering a debris field.

Through the front viewport, they see chunks of metallic space flotsam pass by. Looks like debris resulting from an explosion.

Captain Sidnee checks a control panel--

CAPTAIN SIDNEE  
Calculating the source of this  
mess. Based on the trajectory of  
the debris, it must've been an  
explosion just about-- Ah shit.

He looks to the Redemption crew with sudden solemnity.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE (CONT'D)  
I'm so sorry.

Off their looks of disbelief staring out at the debris.

#### **EXT. OUTER SPACE - DEBRIS FIELD**

In the midst of the debris, chunks of metal and former space station float aimlessly in space.

Pieces of engineered structures torn from their original purpose have become tiny projectiles twinkling from reflected starlight as they spin about. A serene ballet of destruction.

A large slice of hull takes center stage, stamped with "DISTRICT 23" and the Union Ranger symbol.

In the distance, a shuttle launches off of the Seraffont and heads into the wreckage flotsam.

#### **INT. SERAFFITE SHUTTLE - SPACE**

Jawn sits at the pilot station of the small shuttle, interior the size of a modern cargo carrier van. Dax and gynoid Ava sit in passenger seats.

Dax stares out somberly at the thousands of little pieces of his former home. Ava points out directions for Jawn--

AVA  
That central platform just ahead  
there is the base of the former  
structure. Whatever's left of the  
outpost mech-shop should be on  
that lower level.

DAX  
 (wistfully)  
 Whatever's left... former  
 structure... funny we don't talk  
 about our homes the like we do  
 bout other loved ones.

They approach the space station platform. Much of the  
 fundamental structures and walls still in place, but destroyed  
 by explosion and burnoff like the bombed ruins of Guernica.

DAX (CONT'D)  
 Ain't our outpost no longer.  
 Corpse 'd be more accurate.

Jawn flies them in toward the docking platform.

**INT. SERAFFONT, BRIDGE - SPACE**

Brucklyn and Koyel watch the away team activities through a  
 live feed of video from the shuttle and Jawn's helmet cam.

BRUCKLYN  
 He's been...uncharacteristically  
 pensive, don't you think?

KOYEL  
 You'd know better than me.

BRUCKLYN  
 We share genetics, not fondness.  
 We haven't spoken in almost...  
 thirty years.  
 (clarifying)  
 Solar cycles.

Koyel looks irked. She knows what the fuck Earth years are.

KOYEL  
 That's a long time for your  
 species, isn't it? Half a  
 lifetime.

Brucklyn smiles. Not giving any more.

BRUCKLYN  
 Must seem like a microsecond to  
 your species. A blip on the cosmic  
 scale.

**INT. REDEMPTION, ENGINE ROOM / SERAFFONT, DOCKING BAY**

Back inside the grounded and broken-down Redemption. Hologram Ava watches Huji prepare ports and cables for replacement parts by removing old fried components.

AVA

We've reached the outpost mech-shop. Shall I share visibility?

Huji sets aside a now useless part. Nods to Ava.

HUJI

Let's do this. Gotta fix you up.

She protects a holo-screen of the live video feed of what her gynoid body sees in...

**INT. OUTPOST RUINS, MECH-SHOP - SPACE**

Starship parts, storage boxes, and anything not bolted down float around the mech-shop of the former outpost in complete disarray.

Stars peek through holes blown through the walls and ceiling, exposing the thin structures that used to separate the safe and secure interior from the vacuum of space.

Dax and Jawn in spacesuits, and gynoid Ava enter the mech-shop.

DAX

(via comm device)

You two got it from here? I'm heading up to the deputy station.

AVA

(via comm device)

Yes, sir.

HUJI (O.S.)

(via comm device)

We know what we're looking for.

Dax leads Jawn back out of the shop and further into the ruins.

**INT. SERAFFONT, BRIDGE - SPACE**

Brucklyn turns to Koyel. choosing his words carefully.

BRUCKLYN

In that transmission, your general mentioned dissolving this Ranger District.

KOYEL

Yeah, well...looks like that won't be necessary now.

BRUCKLYN

Prime Council has no further intentions for this sector of Union space?

KOYEL

It's barely occupied anyway. Most Terran-class populations abandoned their planets already. The borders were never really kept secure from Lamnari skirmishes.

BRUCKLYN

You think that's what this was?

KOYEL

Timing seems peculiar, with Moko escaping and rejoining the Vory so soon before we discovered the state of the outpost.

BRUCKLYN

So you think this is Moko's doing? The Vory do run rather rampant out here, but they don't usually blow up Terran space-structures that could so easily be repurposed.

KOYEL

The scale of it points toward Lamnari for sure. We won't know for certain, unless Dax can find anything in the records leading up to...whatever happened.

#### **INT. OUTPOST RUINS, DEPUTY STATION - SPACE**

Dax and Jawn enter a room with a large circular controller, designed for centralized access by someone in the center.

It's clear by the claw-scraped damage, the deputy station was scavenged and ransacked by something monstrous even before explosion blow through to knock stuff around.

Dax investigates a large gash in control panel with his light. Looks to have been slashed and crushed by massive claws.

DAX

Fucking Lamnari, alright. Mindless mayhem 'n' destruction.

He sees Jawn investigating a hole in the wall where something had been torn out purposefully.

DAX (CONT'D)  
On the other hand...

JAWN  
What was here?

DAX  
Celestonic energy storage and  
systems controls.

He shines his light down into the hole. Whatever was stripped out of there pulled out parts reaching far down to the compartments below the floor.

**INT. SERAFFONT, BRIDGE - SPACE**

Still watching the feed--

KOYEL  
Why the hell would Lamnari want  
celestech?

BRUCKLYN  
We've been hearing rumors among  
the outer systems about Lamnari  
skirmishes involves some new anti-  
celestech weaponry.

KOYEL  
Such as...?

BRUCKLYN  
Never really needed to inquire any  
further. We keep to our own and  
don't concern ourselves with the  
weapons and politics of war that  
don't affect us or our technology.

KOYEL  
(not buying it)  
Sure. Why bother trying to help  
keep the Terran Zone safe from  
Lamnari attacks if there's nothing  
in it for you?

He clocks her sarcastic hostility--

BRUCKLYN  
How long've you been with Dax?



KOYEL

I've been on assignment in District 23 since I joined the Ranks right out of the academy. Hundred and ten solar days ago.

BRUCKLYN

Not long enough to see the real Dax. The reason he's been stuck out here for years.

KOYEL

I heard what happened on Sa'awgin. He took unnecessary risks that didn't pan out. Unfortunate as it was, it doesn't make him a bad man or Ranger.

BRUCKLYN

Just wait a little longer. You see the real Dax, then say that.

**INT. REDEMPTION, ENGINE ROOM - DOCKING BAY**

Huji checks the size of a fried component in his hands. Confirms it's the same as what he sees on Ava's feed.

HUJI

That'll do her.

He drops the part. Looks around the mechanical mess. Nods to himself.

HUJI (CONT'D)

Should be everything we need to fix Red here... Might as well grab any extra parts for your body that you can add to the haul while you're there.

He leans back. Relieved but still tense. Ava notices. The holo-screen feed disappears as she moves in to comfort him.

AVA

What worries you, my dear love?

She lays her hologram hand on his arm. His skin responds to the tactile sensation. He can feel her, even if it's not exactly skin-to-skin contact. It's the intimate touch they're used to.

HUJI

Coulda lost you.

He softens. They embrace as if it were their last chance to.

HUJI (CONT'D)  
 Don't know what this new weapon  
 tech is. But if they can do  
 this...  
     (indicates the mess of cables  
       and parts)  
 ...no telling what else they're  
 capable of.

She reads between the lines--

AVA  
 My intel hub and redundancies are  
 safely housed inside that hunk of  
 three-meter-thick certified  
 Pujorian steel, along with the  
 celesta converter and energy  
 storage...I'm not going anywhere.

Huji nods. Accepting the comfort, but not quite convinced.

**INT. OUTPOST RUINS, DEPUTY STATION - SPACE**

Dax finesses a briefcase-sized metal box out from a compartment  
 in the controller desk.

AVA (O.S.)  
     (via comms)  
 Almost done loading parts in the  
 shuttle. Need any thing else?

DAX  
 About done here too. Downloaded  
 and wiped recent data and got the  
 black box.

He let's go of the box and it floats weightlessly in front of  
 him. He clocks a small snow globe floating nearby.

DAX (CONT'D)  
 Why dontcha check armory. See what  
 we can grab. Likely need to circle  
 back with Red for--

A GIANT ALIEN CLAW DROPS onto the control panel near Dax.  
 Startled, he aims his blaster defensively almost in an instant.

AVA (O.S.)  
 Sir?

He relaxes and re-holsters. No real menacing threat of danger.  
 The lifeless claw is just the business end of a dismembered  
 insectoid alien arm, plopped onto the controller by Jawn.

DAX  
 (into comm)  
 Meet you down there in a minute.  
 (to Jawn)  
 You gonna get yourself shot  
 imitating a shark-bug like that.

JAWN  
 I found this by the emergency  
 ejectors. Couple other Lamnari  
 body parts as well. Nothing human.

DAX  
 Deputy Frovold wouldn'ta gone down  
 without a fight. Give him that.

JAWN  
 I'm sorry you lost another man.

DAX  
 (matter-of-fact)  
 The risk we take with the life we  
 live out here.

He unplugs a small data device from the controller board.  
 Points to the black box.

DAX (CONT'D)  
 That'll give us all the records on  
 his last fightin' stand here 'fore  
 they took him and blew up the damn  
 place. You wanna be helpful, you  
 can tow it back to the shuttle.

He snatches the snow globe from the air and exits without  
 waiting for Jawn's response.

#### **INT. SERAFFONT, DOCKING BAY - SPACE**

Koyel, Huji, and Brucklyn watch as the shuttle finishes docking  
 procedures and the gull-wing doors open to let out Dax, Jawn  
 and Ava.

Huji rushes in immediately to help Ava offload the parts from  
 the shuttle to the Redemption nearby.

BRUCKLYN  
 My brothers. I'm so thankful  
 you've returned to us safely.

Dax bristles at "brothers" and gives Jawn a wary glance.

DAX  
 Sure.

He loads the black box and other devices onto a small hover transporter. Moves along towards the Redemption.

KOYEL

If you don't mind, sir, I'd like to take the shuttle back out for a secondary excursion. Might as well offload as much as we can from the outpost while Huji gets Red back up and flying.

DAX

Do whatever you want, Rook. Far as I'm concerned, D-23 is officially dissolved. You can take whatever you want from what's left out there and take it to your next assignment.

KOYEL

But sir--

DAX

Not your senior partner no more. You can drop the honorific shit.

He turns. Done with the conversation.

DAX (CONT'D)

I'm'a check the black box data, see if I can't find a clue on where pick up Moko's trail. I ain't done with my mission till that man's back in lockup.

He takes his devices into the Redemption leaving Koyel stunned.

**INT. REDEMPTION, COMM STATION - DOCKING BAY**

Dax sits at the comm station of the Redemption helm. He stares at a screen displaying data from the plugged-in black box.

He SIGHS, mentally preparing. Hits a button purposefully.

**ON SCREEN--** The deputy station appears in a security-footage style video recording. DEPUTY FORVOLD (40s, human male) sits in the controller's central chair.

He looks up at something off camera. Pulls a blaster rifle from a rack nearby. Aims and fires. Re-aims. Fires again. And again.

A familiar-looking canister falls near his feet. The screens and lights nearby intensify and the video glitches with a power surge. Frovold's rifle stops firing. Off guard, he checks it.

Within moments, three LAMNARI enter the room. The "shark-bug" nickname makes perfect sense. They look like giant, spidery insectoid creatures with ever-gaping, over-sized mouths full off gnashing shark-like teeth. Ugly fuckers. And terrifying!

They quickly encircle poor Frovold, now reduced to swinging his rifle to hold them at bay. Winning himself a few more seconds. He slips past and runs out of frame. They chase after him.

The screen cuts to a different camera angle of a different area. In a blur of spider-y limbs, claws, and teeth, the Lamnari quickly overtake and descend upon a writhing Forvold.

Dax stops the video. Turns away.

Hologram Ava suddenly appears next to him.

AVA

Sorry to interrupt. I just lost signal from my avatar. The last data memory, moments ago, indicates Koyel...she's gone.

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR****INT. REDEMPTION, FLIGHT DECK - SPACE**

Dax and Huji strap in for launch. Huji flips some switches and the Redemption celestonic engines kick to life.

DAX

Hell Yeah... I's only about 90%  
sure that'd work right away.

HUJI

Thanks for the confidence.  
(then)  
Let her fly. All yours, Ava.

AVA (O.S.)

Leaving docking bay in 3, 2...

**EXT. REDEMPTION / EXT. SERAFFONT - SPACE**

The Redemption shoots out of the open docking bay like a penguin on a water slide. Jets off, gaining velocity quickly.

**INT. SERAFFONT, BRIDGE - SPACE**

The Helmsman approaches Captain Sidnee-

HELMSMAN

The Redemption is clear and away.

The Captain nods.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE

Status on the grav-nets?

HELMSMAN

Ready for deployment.

The Captain stares into the debris field at the outpost.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE

Grav-nets are go. Apprise me as  
soon as we clear a path.

The Helmsman nods in official dismissal. Walks away.

Captain Sidnee taps his comms device--

CAPTAIN SIDNEE (CONT'D)

Bridge to Augury...

**INT. SERAFFONT, AUGURY**

Brucklyn holds a techno-helmet with data cables running off it.

CAPTAIN SIDNEE (O.S.)  
 Grav-nets out now to clear debris.  
 Expected arrival at zero point for  
 perm-anchor in four hours.

Brucklyn smiles sinisterly. A secret plan coming together.

BRUCKLYN  
 Perfect. Time to get to work.

He places the helmet on his head. Something activates.  
 The cables run down into a panel beneath a display screen.

**ON SCREEN--** Text labels "Seraffan Visualization Conversion:  
 Celesta" over a simulation of a familiar-looking energy  
 jellyfish. Could it be the same from Ava's void dream?!

**INT. MOKO'S SHIP, HOLDING CELL - SPACE**

Koyel paces around a dank, dark cell, illuminated only by the  
 dim starlight shining through a small viewport on the ceiling.

A hole opens in the cell door, like a big camera aperture. Just  
 big enough to see a face-- Moko with a cocky grin.

With lightning speed, Koyel grabs her Ranger lapel badge and  
 throws it like a ninja star at Moko. Blocked by a force field  
 at the outside edge of the hole, it bounces back to her feet.

MOKO  
 (smugly)  
 Even Vory must use c-tech security  
 fields. Only trust in prisoners is  
 that they'll try to escape.

KOYEL  
 You may have me imprisoned for  
 now, but that doesn't make me a  
 prisoner.

She picks up her badge.

KOYEL (CONT'D)  
 We swore an oath to the Galactic  
 Union of Federated Star Systems to  
 maintain peace and protection of  
 all sentient life in the galaxy.  
 (MORE)

KOYEL (CONT'D)

That means we'll stop whatever treacherous plans you and the Vory have. Dax will stop at nothing to find and save me, and recapture you to complete our mission and get you to Launus.

MOKO

This is what I am counting on.

She stares back, trying to read his hidden intentions.

MOKO (CONT'D)

So short a time it has been since these roles of captive and captor were reversed. Feels...odd, like synchronicity or deja vu. No?

KOYEL

What do you want from me?

MOKO

I know this is strange, for you, that you are the bird in the cage, but this is not even about you.

He tosses in a gel sack that looks like an I.V. bag juice box.

MOKO (CONT'D)

For your consumption. All the nutrients a Gralician body needs.

KOYEL

Yeah, no. Definitely not eating your drugged, poison nutri-sack.

Moko just shrugs-- "Suit yourself."

An EERIE INSECTOID THRUMMING echoes throughout the ship. Moko clocks Koyel's suspicion of the sound. He immediately shuts the aperture and walks away.

Before the hole closes completely, Koyel throws her badge again, expertly timed to catch in a crack of the aperture, holding it open just enough for a peephole.

She rushes over to get a good look at what's going on outside her cell. the THRUMMING grows louder, closer.

Suddenly, she sees something so horrifying that she instinctively backs away from the door to brace herself and hide against the shadows of the cell wall.



The peephole works like a pinhole camera obscura to project an inverted image of what's outside the door onto the back wall--

Moko talks to someone, too far away to be heard. The space in front of him is suddenly filled by giant, slender spidery arms and legs, all pincers and claws, then a shark-like head with beady black eyes and maw of gnashing and seemingly endless razor-sharp teeth-- It's a LAMNARI!!

**INT. REDEMPTION, DAX'S CABIN - SPACE**

Dax ineffectively attempts to clean and organize his room. Pushing clutter around. Sweeping Koyel's molted microfeathers.

Overwhelmed by the chaotic mess, he gives up. Sits on his bed.

A soft ELECTRONIC CHIME--

AVA (O.S.)  
Permission?

DAX  
Yep.

Hologram Ava appears. Sits next to Dax.

AVA  
My predictive ability has historically been limited when it comes to your intellectual spark.  
(then)  
However, it's not statistically unlikely, yet, that we will find Koyel and recapture Moko.

DAX  
What are my odds.

AVA  
1 in 6,345,746.

DAX  
I never know what any o' that means. But sounds nice, I guess.

AVA  
Would you like to strategize? That usually eases your mind.

DAX  
Nothing to strategize till we know more. You're scanning for celestic anomalies?  
(MORE)

DAX (CONT'D)  
(off Ava's nod)  
What else is there?

He stares off contemplatively. Stoic. Resigned.

DAX (CONT'D)  
It's my fault... again. Ain't it?

**INT. REDEMPTION, HUJI'S CABIN - SPACE**

Huji and Ava lie together in bed, in intimate comfort.  
In quiet whispered pillow talk--

HUJI  
You're with him now, huh? How's  
Dax doing over there?

AVA  
You know my confidentiality  
protocols--

HUJI  
I'm not asking what he's saying.  
Just asking how he's doing.

She frowns. A sympathetic sadness in her eyes.

AVA  
He carries heavy a burden. Losing  
Koyel is an added heavy weight.

HUJI  
She's not lost yet. Just not here.  
We'll find you both soon enough.

Ava looks truly concerned, maybe for the first time.

AVA  
I've never involuntarily shut down  
my avatar before. The last visual  
input in my streamed memory bank  
is the look on Koyel's face when--

Without finishing the painful thought, her face changes.  
As if realizing--

AVA (CONT'D)  
You need to get to the flight deck  
right away.

HUJI  
What is--

AVA  
Go. Now.

She disappears. He jumps out of bed in a near panic.

**INT. REDEMPTION, FLIGHT DECK - SPACE**

Huji reaches the helm to find Dax and Ava already there, checking the comms.

On the big display is a zoomed in view of the small ship also seen in the distance though the front viewport.

HUJI  
Is it...?

DAX  
(confirming)  
Moko's ship, alright.

Huji manipulates the display to get a closer look and check the scan data.

HUJI  
She isn't moving. Scans can't find any power usage. Not even life support.

DAX  
Yep, she's dead in the sky. But they left us an encrypted message. If Ava can--

AVA  
Got it.

Dax points. Indicating to play it on the big display.

**ON SCREEN--** The screen switches to a video of Moko talking to camera on his ship's dingy bridge

MOKO  
Must be happy to see this face again, no? You think manhunt is over. Day is saved. You take me to Launus. Mission accomplished.

Huji checks in with Dax, trying to read his stone face.

MOKO (CONT'D)  
Where will you go when the mission is over. Your home is no longer.  
(MORE)

MOKO (CONT'D)  
 (feigning sympathy)  
 So sad to hear about your outpost.  
 And your deputy. "Casualties of  
 war", as we say.

He looks off screen. Motioning for someone to bring something.

MOKO (CONT'D)  
 You are familiar with casualties.  
 Collateral damage. This I know.  
 You created many yourself, before.  
 And there will be more.

He pulls a cuffed and techno-gagged Koyel into frame. Dax  
 tenses even more.

MOKO (CONT'D)  
 This one sabotaged my ship. The  
 reason why you stumbled upon us  
 this way. Because of this, she is  
 no longer innocent in this war.  
 She is to become...a casualty.  
 (to Koyel)  
 Last words for your commander?

Her gag shuts off, clearing her mouth to speak.

KOYEL  
 Don't listen to him, Dax. He's  
 working with the Lamnari!

Moko LAUGHS at the dire warning, with sadistic amusement.

MOKO  
 It is much too late.

# **EXT. THE REDEMPTION - SPACE**

Three ships-- whose alien design can only be described as  
 'double stingray scorpion warship' -- suddenly uncloak.

They close in on the Redemption, surrounding her-- It's a trap!

CUT TO BLACK

**END OF EPISODE**