

Fortune  
Episode I  
"Pilot"

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. SHRINE

The main worship chamber of a large shrine, with walls rising hundreds of feet to meet in a seam at the top. The decor is stark and dimly lit, except for great banners with white circles embroidered on them. A PATRON, a local leader of THE SANCTITY, speaks at a lectern before a small crowd.

PATRON

Chance, my friends, had nought to do with it. Was it chance that gave the truth to the founder of The Sanctity? Was it chance that blessed the Traveler Monks with their sacred ability? No.

Text: Sanctity Shrine, the planet Piran

As the PATRON speaks, RACHAEL (mid-20s) enters the chamber and sits. She is dressed very primly, with a ribbon holding her hair back.

PATRON (cont'd)

No, it was intent. The intent of The Divine First. The intent of all of us, the faithful members of The Sanctity. Believe not those who theorize the universe is built on chance. Believe in the truth. Believe in The First. We spread to all worlds.

CROWD

We spread to all worlds.

As the CROWD files out, RACHAEL remains seated. As the last few leave, she rises and approaches the PATRON, who is busying himself at the lectern.

RACHAEL

Patron Nereus.

PATRON

Yes, fledgling.

RACHAEL

I come to absolve my wrongs.

PATRON  
I am occupied at the moment.

RACHAEL  
Please, Patron. They weigh on me.

INT. ABSOLUTION BOOTH

A two-seat enclosed booth with a screen between the two seats. The PATRON sits in one, and RACHAEL gets into the other.

PATRON  
(uninterested)  
And what are your wrongs,  
child? And do be quick.

RACHAEL  
I have had impure thoughts,  
Patron.

PATRON  
About whom?

RACHAEL  
A man. I work with him.

PATRON  
A superior?

RACHAEL  
Yes.

PATRON  
Have you acted on these thoughts?

RACHAEL  
No. Patron, is it possible to gain  
absolution for things I haven't  
done yet?

PATRON  
No, child.

RACHAEL  
So, I can't confess for shooting  
you?

PATRON  
What?

RACHAEL pulls a STUN GUN from under her clothing and fires it through the screen at the PATRON, who falls to the ground, immobilized. RACHAEL walks out of the booth.

INT. SHRINE

RACHAEL walks down the middle of the empty shrine, pulling the ribbon from her hair and removing her frock to reveal tighter clothing beneath. She walks past TWO MONKS in red, who are armed with guns. Their heads are hooded, faces obscured. RACHAEL nods toward them, and they enter the booth.

INT. HANGAR

A busy public space, with ships of various sizes landing, launching, and being serviced. It looks like an airport.

RACHAEL gets into a ONE-MAN SPACE FIGHTER and takes off into the sky. A futuristic CITY gleams in the sunlight. A large SHIP (a "CLOUDSKIPPER") is hovering far above, and RACHAEL heads for it. The CLOUDSKIPPER has many small ships buzzing around it, taking off from it and landing on it.

INT. FIGHTER COCKPIT

RACHAEL pulls up a COMMS SCREEN. BRAIN, the voice of her computer's A.I., responds.

RACHAEL  
Set me up a live beam.

BRAIN  
Right away, sir. Code?

RACHAEL  
1066898

The COMMS SCREEN brings up RAFAEL's (40's) face. RACHAEL loves RAFAEL in secret.

RACHAEL (cont'd)  
It's done, Your Worship.

RAFAEL  
Excellent work, my child. Dependable as always. It is a shame Nereus has wandered so far from the flock.

RACHAEL  
Perhaps rehabilitation can save  
him.

RAFAEL  
Mm.

EXT. SKY

RACHAEL lands her fighter on the hull of the CLOUDSKIPPER,  
which is steadily making its way to space.

INT. FIGHTER COCKPIT

RACHAEL  
Should I come back to your presence  
now, Most High?

RAFAEL  
Not yet, my dear Rachael. I must  
trouble you for another task  
first. I am sending the details  
now. We will talk soon.

RACHAEL  
I live to serve...

The COMMS SCREEN goes black.

RACHAEL  
... Rafael.

The screen brings up a hologram of the DARK DELIGHT, a  
smaller spaceship, and the face of CAPTAIN AVI PARSHALL.

EXT. SKY

The CLOUDSKIPPER accelerates dramatically, punching through  
the atmosphere and into space, which is busy with ships of  
various sizes.

END OF TEASER

## ACT ONE

EXT. SPACE

The BLESSING OF LIBERTY, a Jasconius-class spaceship is visible. The DARK DELIGHT has landed on its belly, as have many other small ships.

Text: CCS Blessing Of Liberty, Jasconius class

INT. DARK DELIGHT COCKPIT

PARSHALL (50) and BASH (40) sit in the cockpit chairs. ROSIE (25) sits at a console in the rear of the room.

ROSIE

Just got word, sir - blink in two minutes.

BASH

And the toll money flushed our account ten minutes ago. This has better be worth it, Avi. Captain Parshall, I mean.

PARSHALL

It should be.

BASH

Who's this big client, anyway?

PARSHALL

Whoever it is, he went through a lot of trouble to make sure I can't pin him down.

ROSIE

Which means he's rich.

PARSHALL

Very rich.

BASH

Or he's trouble.

ROSIE

Probably both.

PARSHALL  
That's what I'll be bringing you  
for, Mr. Daniels.

BASH  
(snide)  
Happy to help, Captain.

ROSIE  
Travel in 30 seconds.

SHOT: THE CAMERA EXITS THE DARK DELIGHT AND PUSHES THROUGH THE HULL OF THE BLESSING OF LIBERTY, PASSING THROUGH VARIOUS BITS OF TECHNOLOGY AND ROOMS BEFORE...

INT. ROOM

The travel room of the Blessing of Liberty. A TRAVELER MONK (15) sits in the dark surrounded by holographic map readouts, as if he is surrounded by stars. An ENGINEER (30) sits to the side.

ENGINEER  
Are you ready, Brother?

MONK  
I am.

The MONK begins to mumble a prayer

ENGINEER  
Djiesi engine... activated.

The room begins to SHAKE.

ENGINEER  
Five, four, three.

The MONK opens his eyes

EXT. DARK DELIGHT

Pan out to the BLESSING OF LIBERTY, which is now vibrating slightly. It DISAPPEARS.

EXT. SPACE

FORTUNE STATION, an active space station in deep space.

Text: Fortune Station, deep space.

The BLESSING OF LIBERTY appears, partially off camera. The camera quickly shifts to center on it. Beams of light begin to shoot in all directions from the ship's hull. These are data-beams, the equivalent of mail.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - COCKPIT

ROSIE

And here we are, *uomos*. Sunny  
Fortune Station.

PARSHALL

(into speaker)

OK, Mr. Horton. Give me docking  
speed.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - ENGINE ROOM

HORTON (45) and TATER (60) are working. HORTON is the chief engineer, a tough, sarcastic woman with a prosthetic leg. TATER serves as steward. He is meek, and has a tendency to whine.

HORTON

(into wall-mounted speaker  
panel)

OK, Captain. She's been sputtering  
a bit lately, so don't be  
surprised.

TATER

Tell him.

HORTON

Oh, and Captain? Tater wants to  
know if we can free up some funds  
to buy sugar.

TATER

Ants got into it, sir.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - COCKPIT

PARSHALL

Well, we can't have that. Mr. Daniels will take care of it.

BASH

What, I'm the bank now?

PARSHALL

If you'd like, Mr. Daniels, I can pull up the log entry where I gave you authority over the ship's accounts. I believe your exact response was "I'd love to, sir".

ROSIE chuckles.

PARSHALL (cont'd)

Can you pull that up Mr. Doak? I think it was two weeks ago.

BASH

Don't do it, Rosie.

ROSIE

I dunno, sounds like something I'd be interested in hearing.

BASH

I mean it.

ROSIE

"Oh, may I please, sir? Anything for you, Captain sir!"

BASH

You're gonna bleed, kid.

PARSHALL

Fortune, this is the Dark Delight, ident san-810 requesting dock.

EXT. SPACE

The DARK DELIGHT detaches from the BLESSING OF LIBERTY'S hull and moves towards the FORTUNE STATION. Other ships are doing the same.

INT. FORTUNE STATION - ROOM

An ANTECHAMBER. HAND (60), a grim man who serves as RAFAEL's secretary, sits at a computer screen. He is dressed in the purple robe of a Sanctity bureaucrat. An alert comes up, and he switches to a COMMS screen.

HAND

Your Extreme Holiness? They have arrived. I have asked the station to give them streamlined access, so I expect him within fifteen minutes.

RAFAEL

Thank you, Brother Hand. See him right in. And change into civilian clothes; I don't want anyone guessing who I am.

HAND

Yes, Most Exalted One.

The comms screen closes and HAND grimaces.

INT. FORTUNE STATION - HANGAR

A busy hangar. A translucent FIELD separates the hangar from open space, and the DARK DELIGHT passes through unhindered and lands. The main hatch opens, and the whole CREW walks out.

BASH

Damn I hate being dockside.

ROSIE

It's a space station, Bash. It's just like a ship. But it's bigger. And it doesn't move. And...

BASH

And it's a giant floating ant farm. Let's meet this guy and get stars under our feet again.

BASH hands TATER some money.

TATER

Ten? With the prices way out here?

BASH  
Make a deal.

PARSHALL  
Where's that dockrat bar?

ROSIE  
The Hope and Anchor? Tucked right  
over there.

HORTON  
Here's a chance for you to buy me  
that top-shelf scotch, Rosie.

ROSIE  
That's the last time I bet with you  
drunk.

HORTON  
Doubt it.

PARSHALL  
When I'm done, we'll sync up  
inside.

HORTON  
Planning a hasty escape, Captain?

PARSHALL  
I'll see you after.

The CREW splits up. BASH and PARSHALL are met by a GUARD.

GUARD  
Captain Parshall? Come with us,  
please.

INT. FORTUNE STATION - ROOM

HAND stands in civilian clothes looking impatient. Enter  
PARSHALL and BASH.

HAND  
Greetings Captain Parshall, Mate  
Daniels. I've been expecting you.

BASH  
And your name?

PARSHALL  
When will the meeting start?

HAND

Right away. You will wait here,  
Mr. Daniels.

PARSHALL

(aside to BASH)  
You hear anything...

BASH

I'm hoping. He could use a little  
one-on-one time.

PARSHALL

I'm ready.

HAND opens the door to an observation deck. PARSHALL enters.

INT. FORTUNE STATION - OBSERVATION DECK

A large room with windows facing the activity in the space around Fortune. This room is filled with tables and chairs, and is meant for a large number of people. RAFAEL, with his back to the door, is pouring TEA into simple cups. He turns around.

RAFAEL

Tea?

PARSHALL

(kneeling quickly)  
Your Eminence!

RAFAEL

Do get up. Between us, I never did like the custom of people kneeling to the High Minister. It gives the impression that the man is to be worshiped, not the Divine First for whom he labors. I am your servant, Captain Parshall, as is the entire Sanctity.

PARSHALL

I...

RAFAEL

...didn't expect your client to be the spiritual leader of all Mankind? I'm glad. I took great efforts to ensure you did not. Please, have some tea.

PARSHALL takes a cup.

RAFAEL (cont'd)

A superior blend, donated by a wealthy member on Actaeon. I do try to convince people that gifts are not the way to purity, but they never seem to listen. And even a holy man has his weaknesses.

PARSHALL

How did you get here, Your Grace?

RAFAEL

Same as you. I traveled on a ship of the Cycle.

PARSHALL

And no one recognized you, Your...  
(stumbling as he tries to come up with another honorific)

RAFAEL

(laughing)

This will go much more quickly if we dispense with the epithets. I have heard you are a very formal man; I hope it will not offend if I ask you to call me simply "Rafael". Or is it religious sentiment that makes you so polite?

PARSHALL does not answer.

RAFAEL

You are not a spiritual man? You can be honest with me.

PARSHALL

Religion is a strong motivator, and a solace to those in need.

RAFAEL

But you don't believe.

PARSHALL

I've spent enough time in the cold to believe in what I can see. And when I see a young man move a ship through space with prayer, well there must be something to that.

RAFAEL

Indeed. But I am sure that you are as anxious to get back to your calling as I am to mine. Let's discuss the terms of the agreement. Humor me - how much have you guessed already?

PARSHALL

Well, a very wealthy and very careful client wants to commission the Dark Delight for a long-term engagement. In my experience, this usually means a smuggling job for a person of quality who will pay to make sure nothing can be traced to him. That's why you want a freelancer like mine, and that's why the offer has so many zeroes.

RAFAEL

But surely you have never been involved in any sort of illicit activity?

PARSHALL smirks.

RAFAEL (cont'd)

And I have no need for a smuggler. The Sanctity is not in the business of earthly commodities. Even if we were, our Traveler Monks are the key to all transit. No ship in the universe can blink without one of our people.

PARSHALL

So what is it then?

RAFAEL

I would like to present you with a unique opportunity, Captain Parshall. I do have a... commodity of sorts which I would like transported.

RAFAEL shows PARSHALL a picture of RACHAEL.

PARSHALL

(disgusted)

I'm sorry, Patron, but we aren't bloodrunners.

RAFAEL

I know, and that is one of the reasons I asked for you. That and your reputation for having a crew with a good sense of discretion. Oh dear, I forgot your personal history. Forgive me, Captain Parshall, I did not mean to bring up bad memories.

PARSHALL

(furious, but controlled)  
You didn't forget a damn thing. You looked me up, read some half-truth, and decided on me despite of it. Because of it, probably.

RAFAEL

It will serve you well to know that I am not accustomed to being chided, nor cursed at.

PARSHALL fumes, and does not apologize.

RAFAEL (cont'd)

But you are right, of course. A student of motivations, I see, and not unfamiliar with subterfuge. These are good qualities for a man of your profession. I'm afraid I can only ask for your forgiveness, Captain Parshall. Your file was brought to my attention.

PARSHALL

The Sanctity keeps files on people?

RAFAEL

Who better to look after an attractive young woman than someone in your situation? No, I don't want Rachael to be run anywhere, Captain. I am asking you to give her a place on your crew.

INT. FORTUNE STATION - A BAR

The Hope and Anchor. Enter EMERSON (late twenties), who walks up to the bar.

BARTENDER  
Usual, Emerson?

EMERSON  
Yep, but not on my tab this time.

EMERSON puts a sum of money on the bar.

BARTENDER  
What's this?

EMERSON  
I'm paying it off. Remember that pleasure liner that stopped here last night? The quality learned a few lessons in the finer points of poker last night.

BARTENDER  
In a perfectly fair game, I'm sure.

The BARTENDER gives EMERSON a drink. He downs it and waits for another, noticing HORTON and ROSIE as they enter. A DOCKRAT enters behind them and walks over to EMERSON.

DOCKRAT  
Bourbon.  
(gestures towards EMERSON)  
On him.

EMERSON  
Bad day at the office, sweetie?

DOCKRAT  
I keep telling you. Crane op's too much sweat for the creds.

EMERSON  
(gesturing towards HORTON and ROSIE)  
But in the off-hours you meet such interesting people. You should try a little action on the side. Set up a little card table in the back and give the tourists a taste of adventure.

DOCKRAT  
 (snorts)  
 Maybe if I had your luck.

EMERSON walks to a SIM MACHINE (an arcade game) and begins to play. A fighter cockpit's outline appears holographically around him.

INT. FORTUNE STATION - OBSERVATION DECK

RAFAEL is drinking his tea as PARSHALL speaks into the comms unit.

PARSHALL  
 Mr. Daniels, you can head back.

BASH  
 (via comms)  
 Are you sure, Captain?

PARSHALL  
 Go ahead, Bash.

RAFAEL  
 I hear Mr. Daniels is a capable mate.

PARSHALL  
 You hear correctly.

RAFAEL  
 Rachael is currently on Callistus doing some work for me. When she is done, she will start working for you. I am quite confident you will find her an ardent and talented crew member.

PARSHALL  
 I don't understand this.

RAFAEL  
 Nor do you need to. But, as I would like our trust to be complete, allow me to explain. The relationship between the Sanctity and the Concordium has been one of mutual benefit and respect for millenia. Unfortunately, there was a breach of that respect recently. The new Prime Citizen

(MORE)

RAFAEL (cont'd)

does trust the cloth as much as his predecessors did. So, I am trying a new tack. Rachael will have a place on your crew until further notice. You will go about your business as per normal, except for when you receive a beam from me, at which point you will go where I ask and let her do whatever I need.

PARSHALL

She's a spy.

RAFAEL

Of a sort. The Sanctity has eyes and ears everywhere, of course. This will be different.

PARSHALL

How?

RAFAEL

What is the smallest class of vehicle which uses a Djiesi engine?

PARSHALL

Nothing smaller than a Leviathan, I think. The purchase cost, the tithe for the use of a Traveler Monk...

RAFAEL

...make it prohibitive for anyone other than the Concordium to blink. I assume you know this is intentional.

PARSHALL

I figured.

RAFAEL

The Dark Delight will be the first and only vehicle of its size and ownership, then, with djiesi technology. You will be provided with the engine, and the cost of the monk will be handled by my office. Imagine it Avi. You will be able to go anywhere you choose, bypassing the Cycle and all of the expense and red tape that entails. Complete freedom.

PARSHALL  
Except for when you tug on the  
leash.

RAFAEL  
I would not put it in such a way,  
but yes.

PARSHALL  
And if I walk away?

RAFAEL  
Are you familiar with the old idiom  
about the secrets of kings?

PARSHALL  
I've heard they aren't a very safe  
thing to have.

RAFAEL  
That's the one.

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

INT. THE HOPE AND ANCHOR

EMERSON finishes his game, and steals a look over to the table where BASH, ROSIE, TATER, and HORTON are drinking. The top score list appears. "CJE" holds nine out of the ten, and all top five. He logs his initials, CJE, at the #2 slot. He turns around, and BASH is standing close to him.

EMERSON

You want next?

BASH

Something interesting to you, Slim?

EMERSON

What do you mean?

BASH

You've been eyeing my table for the last half hour.

EMERSON

Well, I don't usually see you in here. I tell you what, let me buy you all a round and we'll forget about it.

BASH

Get out.

EMERSON

You want to kick me out of my own bar?

BASH

Unless your last name is Anchor, it's not your bar. Out.

EMERSON

Or what, handsome?

BASH takes a swing. EMERSON dodges and counters with a quick jab to the throat. BASH gasps and doubles over, coughing for air.

BARTENDER

Oh hell.

The BARTENDER hits a large BUTTON on the wall behind the bar. All of the drinks in the place are pulled to the tables by an UNSEEN FIELD. The CUSTOMERS are on their feet, giving BASH and EMERSON room to fight. ROSIE, HORTON, and TATER move towards the fight, but the DOCKRAT stands in their way.

DOCKRAT

Sorry, pallies. More fun if you let them tussle it out on their own.

ROSIE

Bash is gonna pulp that kid.

DOCKRAT

Care to lay some creds on that?

HORTON

I've got thirty.

Money changes hands.

BASH has nearly recovered his breath and is back to throwing punches. EMERSON takes one to the temple and reels. BASH goes to grab a chair, but it is stuck to the ground by the same field which grabbed the drinks.

BASH

What in...?

EMERSON throws a killer punch to the back of BASH's head, knocking him to the ground. ROSIE and HORTON push their way past the DOCKRAT and face off against EMERSON.

HORTON

Think you best apologize, cutie.

EMERSON

A one-legged woman and an idiot walk into a bar....

ROSIE jumps EMERSON, clearly having had some martial arts training. EMERSON is on the ground in moments.

EMERSON (cont'd)

OK, I'm sorry. I'm sure you're very smart.

Enter PARSHALL.

PARSHALL

Bash!

BASH

(groggy)

Avi.

PARSHALL

What the hell is this?

ROSIE

This guy just swabbed the deck with  
the first mate's face.

PARSHALL

Not very gentlemanly  
behavior. What's your name, son?

EMERSON

Who's asking?

PARSHALL

(looking at the arcade screen,  
where "CJE" is still blinking)  
Is this you? CJE? Wait, you  
fought *him*?

EMERSON

That's the scuttlebutt.

PARSHALL

And won?

TATER

Despite all appearances, yes.

PARSHALL

How would you like a job?

BASH

What?

PARSHALL

We leave in ten minutes.

HORTON

Captain, bar-fighting isn't in our  
job descriptions.

PARSHALL

Last offer, son.

EMERSON

Sure. You guys seem real nice.

INT. FORTUNE STATION - HANGAR

The CREW, now including EMERSON, is walking towards the DARK DELIGHT.

ROSIE

I'm Rosie. Rosen Doak, Sailing Master. You have all of the high scores on that fighter sim?

EMERSON

Not all of them. Somebody else has the #6 spot. I guess I won't be pushing him off for a while.

EMERSON looks back and sees the DOCKRAT, who is incredulous and angry. EMERSON winks and waves.

BASH

Wouldn't bet on that, junior. Lots of dockrats take a turn out in the cold. They always slink back port-side at the next station.

EMERSON

I guess I'll just have to prove you wrong.

HORTON

So what are your skills?

EMERSON

My what?

HORTON

Your skills. What do you know how to do? On a frigate?

EMERSON

Right. Well, I've been working the crane arm for about five years. There's a crane on board your ship, right?

HORTON

And how would you know that?

EMERSON

Five years. You think I've never seen the Dark Delight before? Only ship in the register that's sprayed black. Why is that, by the way?

PARSHALL

I wouldn't worry about that Mr...?

EMERSON

Emerson. Conrad. And you're Captain Murray?

CREW looks nervous.

PARSHALL

Captain Avi Parshall. First Mate Wabash Daniels. Chief Engineer Theodora Horton. Steward Josiah Tate.

(gesturing to the DARK DELIGHT)

And this is your new home, Able Sailor Emerson.

WORKMEN are leaving the DARK DELIGHT.

BASH

What's this?

PARSHALL

Where'd you guys put it?

A WORKMAN points at a 3x3 BOX just inside the hatch.

BASH

Gee, thanks.

PARSHALL

OK. Mr. Emerson, Mr. Horton, get that down to the engine room.

HORTON

The engine room, sir? Not the hold?

PARSHALL

Mr. Tate, did you get that sugar?

TATER

Yes sir. And for only eight-fifty.

PARSHALL

Mr. Daniels, prep us for slingshot.

A loud WHIRRING starts. A SHRIKE -- a single-pilot space fighter -- is being placed into the Dark Delight's HANGAR via crane.

EMERSON

Whoa. I haven't seen one of those in years. Shrike class isn't it? An old Needle?

ROSIE

Yep. The Needle's a lot more dependable than the newer marks.

TATER

Eats less fuel, too.

EMERSON

I had a poster of one of these in my room as a kid.

HORTON

Taking an interest, eh? You're skinny enough to be a Needle yourself. I'll bet Rosie could train you up on it real quick.

BASH

We'll see. Come on, Rosie.

All enter the DARK DELIGHT. PARSHALL takes a look around the dock and leaves the hatch open.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - ENGINE ROOM

HORTON and EMERSON put the box on the floor.

HORTON

Well, at least you can pull your own weight, little Needle.

EMERSON

(looking at the engine)  
Is this a four-thirty-six?

HORTON

Thirty-eight. Installed it myself, mostly. Smoother off the line than the thirty-six, but she's a real bitch. More sensitive than my second husband.

EMERSON  
You married now?

HORTON  
(joking)  
You hitting on me?

EMERSON  
Gimme that prise.

HORTON grabs a crowbar and tosses it to EMERSON, who opens the box.

HORTON  
What's this?

EMERSON  
This can't be right. It's a djiesi engine.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - COCKPIT

BASH and ROSIE are prepping the ship.

ROSIE  
Lateral thrust?

BASH  
Check and check.

ROSIE  
Yaw thrust?

BASH  
Check.

ROSIE  
Bruised pride?

BASH  
Don't start with me, kid. What the hell is Avi thinking? Another hungry mouth trimming our shares. That guy's a criminal, I just know it.

ROSIE  
Maybe it's got something to do with the new mystery job.

BASH  
He should have asked me.

ROSIE  
Why?

BASH  
Murray would have asked him.  
(sees something outside)  
Who's that?

A HOODED FIGURE approaches the ship and enters the hatch.

BASH (cont'd)  
Damn it!

BASH jumps up and runs out.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - HALLWAY

PARSHALL is walking towards the COCKPIT. Enter BASH, who nearly bowls him over.

PARSHALL  
Easy!

BASH  
We got a visitor.

BASH runs through the ship, PARSHALL and ROSIE close behind. In the hallway near the hatch he sees BRENDAN, who opens his cloak to reveal the black clothes of a Traveler Monk. He remains hooded. BASH skids to a stop.

BRENDAN  
Please, forgive my intrusion, but  
there was no one at the  
hatch. This is the Dark Delight,  
correct?

BASH  
What in hell?

PARSHALL  
Yes, it is. Forgive the excitement  
- I haven't had a chance to inform  
the crew. I'm...

BRENDAN  
Captain Avi Parshall, recently  
First Mate Parshall, long-time  
sailor who has spent much of his  
(MORE)

BRENDAN (cont'd)  
 career aboard this ship in various  
 capacities. I am Brother Brendan.

BASH  
 (superstitiously nervous)  
 What's he doing here?

ROSIE  
 Captain? We've got slingshot in  
 just under two minutes.

PARSHALL  
 I'll explain as soon as we're in  
 the wind. You two, back to the  
 cockpit. Brother, please get to  
 the ward room and strap in.

BRENDAN  
 Thank you, Captain.

The CREW split off. ROSIE and BASH exchange whispers as  
 they go.

ROSIE  
 I don't get it, uomo.

BASH  
 Those guys give me the crawlies.

INT. FORTUNE STATION - HANGAR

A massive CRANE is placing the DARK DELIGHT on a  
 "slingshot", a long rail used to push ships out into space.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - ENGINE ROOM

The floor moves, and EMERSON loses his balance.

EMERSON  
 Whoa. I've never been on this side  
 of crane before.

HORTON  
 You've never done a slingshot?

EMERSON  
 Nope. I haven't left Fortune since  
 I got here.

HORTON  
Well, you're in for a fun ride.

EMERSON  
And look at you.

HORTON  
Look at me what?

EMERSON  
No trouble keeping your balance.

HORTON  
Why should I?

EMERSON  
Well...

HORTON  
Well?

EMERSON  
The leg.

HORTON  
What leg?

EMERSON  
Your prostho.

HORTON  
Works a lot better than yours,  
apparently.

EMERSON  
So how'd you lose it?

HORTON  
I'll make you a deal. I'll tell  
you how I lost my leg if you tell  
me how you lost your arm.

EMERSON  
What?

HORTON grabs EMERSON's arms and forces it behind his back,  
cackling cruelly.

EMERSON (cont'd)  
Aah! Quit it! Okay, okay. I  
give. I give!

HORTON  
 What's wrong, little  
 Needle? What's the matter?

BASH  
 (over speaker)  
 All hands strap in.

HORTON  
 (releasing EMERSON)  
 Over here, ya wuss.

EMERSON and HORTON take seats on the wall with their legs over their heads and their backs on the floor. EMERSON struggles with the belt.

HORTON (cont'd)  
 Come on, junior.

EMERSON  
 I've got it.

INT. FORTUNE STATION - HANGAR

The DARK DELIGHT is shot into space.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - ENGINE ROOM

EMERSON is tossed down the wall. The GRAVITY of the ship is now different - one of the walls is now the floor due to the acceleration of slingshot.

BASH  
 (over speaker)  
 Mr. Horton?

HORTON  
 Yeah, yeah.

HORTON unstraps and walks to the ENGINE, firing it up.

HORTON (cont'd)  
 Have some juice, you greedy  
 bitch. You okay, Needle?

EMERSON  
 Outstanding.

HORTON  
 You did better than me my first  
 time out. I ended up with a  
 (MORE)

HORTON (cont'd)  
concussion and covered in vomit to  
boot.

EMERSON  
Is the djiesi device alright?

HORTON  
Looks like. This must be the job -  
shipping this thing  
somewhere. Doesn't make any sense,  
though. Who would want a ship like  
ours for that?

EMERSON  
Maybe it's stolen.

HORTON  
Look at you. Five minutes aboard a  
freelancer and already a hardened  
criminal.

EMERSON  
Is that the deal here? You guys  
are smugglers?

HORTON  
We've made a shipment or two which  
the captain told us not to open,  
but no. We've always been as clean  
as they come.

EMERSON  
What about this thing?

HORTON  
I guess we're... what do they call  
it? Broadening our client base.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - COCKPIT

PARSHALL  
Mr. Doak, point us towards  
Callistus.

DOAK  
Aye, sir. It's just off the  
Cycle. Shouldn't take us more than  
a couple days to reach.

PARSHALL

Sails up.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - ENGINE ROOM

HORTON

Aye, sir, sails up.

HORTON starts to leave.

HORTON

Come on, Needle. You're not sitting around while I pull the halyards.

EMERSON

(mocking)

Aye aye, sir. Or is it Ma'am?

HORTON

I'll take the mizzen, you take the others.

EMERSON

But they're on opposite...

TATER runs in.

TATER

Step to it, Needle! I've got the main, you take the fore.

EMERSON

Funny, Ted.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - HALLWAY

EMERSON, HORTON, and TATER run to different stations and manually turn the HALYARD WINCHES which raise the SOLAR SAILS.

EXT. SPACE

DRAMATIC SHOT OF THE DARK DELIGHT'S SOLAR SAILS UNFURLING.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - COCKPIT

ROSIE

Sails unfurled, Captain. 3  
minutes, twenty seconds.

PARSHALL

(into comms)

Mr. Horton, you make sure Mr.  
Emerson gets those toilets nice and  
shiny. That was a full minute over  
normal.

EMERSON

(over comms)

What?

HORTON

(over comms)

Quiet! Aye, Captain.

BASH

So, Captain, what's this exciting  
new opportunity of ours?

PARSHALL

We'll be taking on a new crew  
member at Callistus.

BASH

Another one?

PARSHALL

She'll be with us indefinitely. And  
don't worry - her wage is being  
picked up by the client.

BASH

No sense made there. Who's this  
client? And what's in that box?

PARSHALL

All we be made clear in time, Mr.  
Daniels.

BASH

I want it made clear now. Captain  
Murray never kept us in the  
dark. Not once.

PARSHALL is angry, but controlled.

ROSIE

If you guys don't need me, I'm just gonna... yeah.

Exit ROSIE.

PARSHALL

Bash, when we are in private, you may be as frank as you like. You liked Murray better? Fine. But you never disrespected him in front of his crew. And you know as well as I do he didn't share *everything* with us.

BASH reacts, as PARSHALL is referring to an uncomfortable moment in the ship's past.

PARSHALL (cont'd)

You want to know what's going on? Make me trust you.

BASH

(not happy, but not fighting anymore)

So, how do we spot this girl? She gonna send us a love note or something?

PARSHALL

Stop fretting, Mr. Daniels. We'll be making a nice, easy pickup and moving on.

INT. HALLWAY

A planet-side WAREHOUSE. RACHAEL is in the middle of a firefight, taking cover behind a corner.

RACHAEL

Well, I'm off to a great start.

Fires several shots.

END ACT TWO

## ACT THREE

INT. SHRIKE COCKPIT - ROSIE

ROSIE is midcombat, the tac-brain (tactical display) showing another shrike.

ROSIE  
Dark Delight, this is  
Bluejay. I've got him.

BASH  
(over speaker)  
OK, Rosie. Take him out.

ROSIE  
Ooh, he's a slippery one.

ROSIE fires. BLANKS fire from the gunports. The tac-brain indicates a hit.

ROSIE (cont'd)  
Woo-hoo!

INT. SHRIKE COCKPIT - EMERSON

EMERSON's tac-brain glows red, indicating that he has been hit.

EMERSON  
Damn it!

ROSIE  
(over speaker)  
Those sims aren't the same as the  
real thing, huh uomo?

EMERSON  
Yeah, yeah. Best 3 out of 5!

INT. DARK DELIGHT - COCKPIT

BASH and PARSHALL are in the seats. BASH laughs.

BASH  
The new guy's got some moves. Good  
thing. I guess we can use another  
shriker, what with all the fights  
we'll be getting in to.

PARSHALL

What fights?

BASH

Come on, Avi. This deal's a little too sweet to be a safe one. We get a djiesi engine for free. The client is covering the tithe for the monk. We just have to cart some girl around and go where he says now and then. I'm just guessing the locals won't be too glad to see us when we just show up.

PARSHALL

I got the sense he was looking to keep things as quiet as possible.

BASH

So this girl is, what, a thief? You know it's bad luck to have a woman on a ship.

PARSHALL

What about Ted?

BASH

She doesn't count. You ever gonna tell me who this client is?

PARSHALL

He didn't give his name. As long as he pays, what do you care? And think of the jobs we can take now. We can blink, Bash. Anywhere in charted space in a moment's time. Shipping, courier jobs, people-moving, whatever. And we can do it at a fraction of the cost of the Cycle ships.

BASH

So we just start advertising? "For the cheapest blink in space, beam the Dark Delight". You think the client wants publicity? We're gonna be running for the slimiest of the slimes.

PARSHALL

We don't have to take any jobs we don't want. Just as long as we

(MORE)

PARSHALL (cont'd)  
keep our heads down, we should be  
fine.

INT. WAREHOUSE

RACHAEL peers over the top of a crate and quickly ducks as a bullet flies nearby.

RACHAEL  
(counting enemies on her  
fingers)  
One by the door, two to the left,  
one on the catwalk, one behind the  
big box. Four rounds. Forty hours  
without sleep. All in service of  
the Sanctity, right?

RACHAEL slides out from behind the box and clambers up another. As she climbs, she shoots her pistol under her arm. The round hits the man on the catwalk in the chest and zaps him into submission. RACHAEL leaps up to the catwalk, locking her legs around the handrails, hanging upside-down and firing two shots to take out the men on the left. RACHAEL releases her legs and drops, catching the canvas on the side a stack of boxes. This swings her within view of the man behind the big box, who she shoots. Releasing the canvas, she falls to the floor, rolls, and runs toward the man at the door. The man at the door fires in terror, misses, and is KO'ed by a kick to the head.

RACHAEL  
Right. I'm a damn saint.

RACHAEL touches her forehead. We see her point of view for a moment. An augmented reality display points her towards the facility's hangar. RACHAEL walks towards it, checking her watch.

RACHAEL (cont'd)  
You ready?

BRAIN  
(the disembodied voice of her  
fighter's computer, speaking  
through the implanted  
technology in her head)  
The information you... secured has  
been stowed in hard memory. Only  
waiting on you.

RACHAEL

I'm coming. My date's not due for a few hours. And a lady always makes him wait.

SHOT: ONE OF THE THUGS' WATCHES READS 12:38.

INT. DARK DELIGHT ENGINE ROOM

A CLOCK reads 12:38 and switches to 12:39. HORTON is welding the DJIESI DEVICE to a beam which runs through the floor. Enter PARSHALL.

PARSHALL

How's it look?

HORTON

Well, I've never installed one of these before, never seen one installed, I'm not real confident on the physics of the thing, and it didn't come with a manual.

PARSHALL

So, you're all set?

HORTON

Of course! Real engineers never read the literature.

PARSHALL

I've never understood how these things work. A meter-wide donut that can move anything of any size to any place.

HORTON

It's not the engine that does it...

BRENDAN enters.

HORTON

(to PARSHALL)

It's them.

BRENDAN

I hope I am not interrupting.

PARSHALL

Not at all. Come to check up on Mr. Horton's work?

BRENDAN

No. I was looking for you,  
Captain.

PARSHALL

Okay, what can I do for you?

BRENDAN

We are due to claim the new crew  
member in just over two hours,  
correct?

PARSHALL

That's right. We'll be there in  
plenty of time.

BRENDAN

May I ask why you are allowing two  
of your crew members to play around  
in fighters this close to the  
appointment?

PARSHALL

No, you may not.

BRENDAN

I...

PARSHALL

If you were the Traveler on one of  
those big Jascoes, would you be  
questioning the captain?

BRENDAN

The ships of the Cycle follow  
strict regulations.

PARSHALL

Not as strict as you might  
think. How long have you been  
doing this?

BRENDAN

Six years.

HORTON

Six years? You can't be more than  
what, twenty-two?

BRENDAN

My office requires that I ask the  
Divine First to blink this ship  
wherever you tell me to. It does

(MORE)

BRENDAN (cont'd)  
not require that I answer your  
personal questions.

BRENDAN exits.

HORTON  
He's a real charmer.

PARSHALL  
He's part of the deal, Mr.  
Horton. He'll come around  
eventually.

HORTON  
How do you know?

PARSHALL  
You did.  
(gesturing to the djiesi  
engine)  
Don't mess this up.

PARSHALL exits.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - GALLEY

TATER is feeding bits of food to a mouse in a cage.

Enter PARSHALL

PARSHALL  
How are we on supplies, Mr, Tate?

TATER  
Should probably be enough for a  
little jaunt like this. We're  
stocked to the gratings with food  
and drink, but parts... the stores  
just aren't selling any spare beam  
dishes! This is the fourth station  
I've...

PARSHALL  
Don't worry; I'm sure you'll find  
one.

(a pause)

TATER  
How is the installation going?

PARSHALL  
No problems that I could see.

TATER  
Mm.

(another pause)

PARSHALL  
(letting his guard down. It  
is evident that he and TATER  
are old, fast friends.)  
Our client. I'm a little nervous  
about him, Tater.

TATER  
A rough sort?

PARSHALL  
I can't tell.

TATER  
Even a brigand usually pays when  
you get the work done for him.

PARSHALL  
How about a High Minister?

TATER  
What are you saying?

PARSHALL  
His Most Holy Perfectness Rafael  
Kelvin Dimarquez. That's our  
client.

TATER  
By the First....

PARSHALL  
Exactly.

TATER  
The High Minister hiring us on the  
sly. It doesn't feel right.

PARSHALL  
Everyone has secrets.

TATER  
And his is a woman?

PARSHALL

It's not like that. She's some kind of agent of his.

TATER

And that makes us his agents. You must be terrified. A freelancer is master of his own life. Not anymore.

PARSHALL

Maybe. But I couldn't resist. He knew exactly how to play me. A djiesi engine. This could be it, Tater. No more missed leads, no more scrimping to pay the tithes. Now that we can blink....

TATER

You might finally be able to find her.

PARSHALL

(thoughtful, then resuming his distant demeanor)

Mr. Tate, you make sure Sparky stays in his cage. I don't relish the thought of waking up with him in my hammock again.

TATER

Yes, Captain.

EXT. SPACE

RACHAEL's fighter is flying away from Callistus. BRAIN (the inboard computer) speaks with her.

BRAIN

Shall I hail the Dark Delight, sir?

RACHAEL

They're still pretty far out.

BRAIN

I see. Well, let me know when you would like me to hail them.

RACHAEL

I will.

BRAIN

Are you at all concerned about the unknown object heading towards us?

RACHAEL

Hm?

BRAIN

Here, let me show you.

The tac-brain screen zooms out to show a BLIP far from RACHAEL's location. A line showing it's trajectory passes some distance from RACHAEL's.

RACHAEL

That? All the way back there? You're a little jumpy today, aren't you?

BRAIN

I have attenuated my long range scope to a higher level of sensitivity than normal, yes.

RACHAEL

Why?

BRAIN

When you entered the cockpit, your heart rate was 30% above standard.

RACHAEL

Thanks for your concern. That's probably just some jock taking his girlfriend out on a little pleasure...

The LINE indicating the unidentified ship's trajectory changes to line up with that of RACHAEL's fighter.

RACHAEL (cont'd)

... cruise. Why haven't we hailed the Dark Delight yet?

BRAIN

So sorry. I'll send a beam right away.

RACHAEL

See if they can pencil us in a little earlier.

BRAIN

Aye, sir.

RACHAEL

Not very ladylike to show up early,  
I know.

RACHAEL increases the throttle.

BRAIN

Aye sir.

INT. DARK DELIGHT COCKPIT.

RACHAEL

(via comms)

Dark Delight this is the Albatross,  
return.

PARSHALL

Albatross, Dark Delight. We're on  
schedule to pick you up about two  
hours.

RACHAEL

Not gonna cut it, DD. I may have a  
friend coming.

BASH

Oh great.

PARSHALL

Confirmed?

RACHAEL

Not yet, but his attitude is  
straight at me.

PARSHALL

I hear you, Albatross. We'll beat  
to quarters and meet you  
early. Delight out.

BASH

Haven't done this in a while.  
(hitting comms unit)  
Rosie, Needle, back inside.

PARSHALL

(into the comms)

Belay that. Mr. Emerson, I want  
you to lamprey. Mr. Doak, get in  
the hangar.

(to BASH)  
 If we tack ten degrees to larboard  
 we might shave off a few minutes.

BASH  
 (pointing at MAP, which shows  
 an AMORPHOUS OBJECT)  
 There's a shoal right here.

PARSHALL  
 No good. We'd lose too much wind  
 avoiding it.

BASH  
 Make a straight shot through it,  
 Captain. I've been this way  
 before.

EXT. SPACE

ROSIE and EMERSON are headed for the DARK DELIGHT, and  
 communicate via comms.

EMERSON  
 Which one of these switches me over  
 to live rounds?

ROSIE  
 None of them do, uomo.

EMERSON  
 What? How am I supposed to defend  
 myself out here?

ROSIE  
 Beats me.

EMERSON  
 I'm not sure I like this.

ROSIE  
 Orders, Needle. I'll see you in a  
 few.

EMERSON  
 Great. Just great.

ROSIE docks in the HANGAR and EMERSON glides up to the hull  
 and lands on it. A SUCTION CUP on a CABLE descends from the  
 bottom of his shrike and attaches to the hull

INT. DARK DELIGHT COCKPIT.

ROSIE enters.

ROSIE  
To quarters? What's the plan?

BASH  
Hope you skipped lunch.

ROSIE  
Oh hell. Are we really going  
through *that*?  
(re: the shoal)

BASH  
Trust me, if this is the place I  
remember, there's nothing in there  
big enough to break anything  
tougher than a light-bulb.

PARSHALL  
Mr. Daniels, you keep us on this  
attitude, no matter what.  
(into comms)  
Tate, Horton, get to the fore and  
aft sails and wait for Mr. Doak's  
mark.

HORTON  
(via comms)  
Aye sir.

PARSHALL does some calculations on a piece of paper.

ROSIE  
Someday I'll convince you to run  
those calcs through the nav-brain.

PARSHALL  
Don't let machines do your thinking  
for you, Rosie. They aren't as  
perfect as people say. When we get  
within .38 of that shoal, you give  
us the word.

ROSIE  
Aye, sir.

PARSHALL exits.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - HALLWAY

PARSHALL slides down ladders headed for the mizzen halyard winch. He runs into HORTON on the way.

HORTON  
What's going on?

PARSHALL  
Our new crew member's got a tail.

HORTON  
What, like a dog?

PARSHALL  
Damn it, Ted! Just get to the aft!

HORTON  
I'm going!

PARSHALL gets to the mizzen halyard winch and waits.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - BARRACKS

A small room with a hammock. BRENDAN rises from a meditative position, walks to the wall and hits the COMMS unit.

BRENDAN  
Where do you want me, Captain?

INT. DARK DELIGHT - HALLWAY

PARSHALL  
You can get up to the helm and keep your eyes open.

BRENDAN  
Yes, Captain.

PARSHALL  
And Brother? You can pray.

EXT. SPACE

EMERSON is nervous in his shrike. The SHOAL starts to become visible -- a band of space junk.

EMERSON  
 (into comms)  
 Guys, we're turning sometime soon,  
 right?

BASH  
 (via comms)  
 You just sit tight, Needle.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - COCKPIT

ROSIE  
 point three-eight... now.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - HALLWAY

PARSHALL  
 Furl 'em!

EXT. SPACE

The SOLAR SAILS begin to roll up just as the DARK DELIGHT  
 reaches the shoal.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - HALLWAY

TATER is having trouble with his winch.

TATER  
 Come on, come on, come on.

PARSHALL  
 (via comms)  
 Tater...

TATER  
 I've got it, Captain.

HORTON  
 (via comms)  
 If that sail catches anything  
 bigger than pebble...

TATER  
 I know, I know!

EXT. SPACE

The last sail furls completely, narrowly missed by an large object. The DARK DELIGHT plows through the shoal, bits of space junk bouncing off its hull.

INT. SHRIKE COCKPIT - EMERSON

EMERSON

If this is your idea of a hazing ritual...

BASH

(via comms)

Don't worry, kid. There's nothing in this shoal big enough to do more than scratch the paint. Trust me - if you had seen the battle, you'd know.

EMERSON

(to himself)

Yeah, you come out here and say that.

EXT. SPACE

RACHAEL's fighter is racing towards the rendezvous.

RACHAEL

What are they doing?

RACHAEL adjusts her trajectory to head in the direction of the shoal.

BRAIN

The unknown vessel has adjusted its course to intercept.

RACHAEL

Surprise, surprise. How long until he's within firing range?

BRAIN

That calculation is impossible. I do not know the class of fighter he is flying.

RACHAEL

Just guess!

BRAIN

Assuming standard armaments for a pirate vessel of that size, I assume twenty seven minutes.

The tactical display shows the BLIP of the enemy ship DISAPPEAR and then REAPPEAR much closer.

RACHAEL

What in hell?

BRAIN

Updated calculation. Forty seconds.

RACHAEL

What happened?

BRAIN

Perhaps the sensors need repair.

RACHAEL

You're gonna need repair if you don't shut up.

RACHAEL begins to move her fighter in zig-zags along the path to the rendezvous point. The enemy is close behind and opens fire, missing.

RACHAEL (cont'd)

How long 'til our ride's here?

EXT. SPACE

A large piece of junk skids along the side of the DARK DELIGHT and collides with EMERSON's shrike. The shrike detaches from the hull, held on only by the cable. EMERSON fires up the engine and adjusts his location back to the hull.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - COCKPIT

BASH

(appraisingly)

Nice move.

PARSHALL

Ok, we're almost through. Albatross, what's your status, return.

RACHAEL

(via comms)

I am currently under fire and starting to get a little annoyed.

PARSHALL

Okay, we see you. Keep your heading. We're dispatching a shrike to escort.

RACHAEL

(via comms)

A shrike? I hope he's loaded for bear, because this guy's pretty good.

PARSHALL

Our fighter is loaded with blanks only, but may be enough to scare him off for a few seconds.

BASH

And I was just getting to like the kid.

ROSIE

Should I get back out there?

PARSHALL

It's too late now. It's all you, Needle.

EMERSON

Fantastic.

EMERSON'S shrike disengages and he heads for the fight.

END OF ACT THREE

## ACT FOUR

EXT. SPACE

RACHAEL keeps snaking her way towards the DARK DELIGHT under heavy fire. A shot hits a wing, causing white gas to pour from the hole.

RACHAEL

DD, I've lost  
directional. Whatever you've got  
planned, it better be quick.

The Albatross spins in space out of control. The enemy fighter passes, then loops around to bring its guns to bear again. EMERSON aims his fighter's nose towards the enemy fighter and fires. The enemy twists and fires off a single shot without aiming. It hits EMERSON's cockpit glass directly in the middle, but does not break it. EMERSON readjusts and heads straight for the Albatross.

INT. FIGHTER COCKPIT - RACHAEL

RACHAEL (cont'd)

What is he doing?

INT. FIGHTER COCKPIT - EMERSON

EMERSON

Time to go.

EXT. SPACE

EMERSON passes the Albatross at full speed, cuts his engines and flips his shrike around, now facing the direction he came from. Inertia is keeping him headed in the direction which is now backwards. He punches the throttle forward and is forced back into his seat violently. The move confuses the enemy fighter, who spends a few useless bullets. Gaining speed, EMERSON collides with the Albatross, the wing of his shrike locking with one of the its wings. He aims his nose towards the DARK DELIGHT and guns it.

INT. FIGHTER COCKPIT - EMERSON

RACHAEL

(screaming, but unheard  
through the vacuum)  
Are you crazy?

EMERSON

Sorry, I'm a little distracted  
right now.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - COCKPIT

BASH

Well, I've never seen that before.

ROSIE

Needle, pull up 12 degrees. That  
will bring you straight to the  
hangar.

PARSHALL

Never mind the hangar. Brother,  
time to earn your keep.

BRENDAN

What? No. Captain, the meditations  
take time.

PARSHALL

Rosie, bring up the maps.

ROSIE

To where?

PARSHALL

Whatever you can bring up  
fastest. Brother, you've got less  
than a minute.

(into comms)

Mr. Horton, that djiesi device had  
better be ready.

HORTON

(via comms)

Aye, sir. The solder's cooling as  
we speak.

PARSHALL

Good. Start it.

HORTON

Aye sir. Wait, what did you say?

PARSHALL

Just do it, Ted!

BRENDAN looks over ROSIE's shoulder and scans a series of  
images of stars, entering a deep trance. The DARK DELIGHT  
begins to vibrate.

PARSHALL (cont'd)  
 (into comms)  
 Emerson, I want you to lamprey.

EMERSON  
 Not sure I can do that.

PARSHALL  
 Never mind the landing. Just get  
 some part of your shriek in contact  
 with the hull. Stay focused. You  
 pull this off and you'll earn a  
 place on our Wall of Fame.

EMERSON  
 ...OK. OK. I'm going to scrape  
 along the larboard hull.

PARSHALL  
 Just make sure you don't bounce  
 off.

The enemy fighter bears down on the linked fighters. He  
 opens fire, and the Albatross is heavily damaged.

INT. FIGHTER COCKPIT - RACHAEL

BRAIN  
 Sir, our life support has been  
 damaged.

RACHAEL  
 Shut up!

EMERSON rams into the DARK DELIGHT, scraping along the hull.

PARSHALL  
 Now, Brother!

The DARK DELIGHT disappears. The enemy fighter whizzes  
 through where it was a moment ago, and then turns back.

EXT. SPACE

Clearly a different location, with no planet in the  
 background. The DARK DELIGHT appears. EMERSON's fighter  
 and the Albatross slide off the hull.

PARSHALL  
 Mr. Emerson, are you with us?

EMERSON

(via comms)

Yeah. Yeah, I'm here. Hope you don't mind I brought a friend.

PARSHALL

Good. Use your cable to tow her in. All hands to the hangar. Mr. Tate, bring the med kit. Nice work, Brother.

BRENDAN

It is the First's holy power which... thank you, Captain

INT. HANGAR

EMERSON's shrike and the Albatross are docked. The Albatross is on its side. RACHAEL opens her cockpit and tumbles out, wheezing. She stands up and faces the entire crew.

RACHAEL

Oh hi.

EMERSON steps out his shrike, stands up straight, looks RACHAEL in the eye, cocksure and proud. He then throws up.

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

INT. DARK DELIGHT - HALLWAY

BASH and RACHAEL in a hallway, headed towards the cockpit.

BASH

Barracks are two levels below, and  
the mess is right next to it.  
Didn't see any luggage on that  
fighter of yours. Need anything?

RACHAEL

All I need right now is to send a  
beam to my boss.

BASH

Your boss is up on the observation  
deck. His name is Captain Avi  
Parshall. Keep that straight.

RACHAEL

So what does that make you?

BASH

I'm your boss's right-hand man.

RACHAEL

(moving close)

Don't pull that macho stuff with  
me, stud, or you'll be a lot less  
of a man when I'm done with you.

RACHAEL moves away, putting a KNIFE back in a pocket. BASH  
realizes his PANTS have been slit across the front.

INT. DARK DELIGHT COCKPIT

ROSIE is playing a fighter sim. RACHAEL enters.

ROSIE

Oh, hey!

RACHAEL

Doak, right? Busy?

ROSIE

No, I was just...  
(shuts off the game)  
there. What can I do for you?

RACHAEL  
I need to send a beam.

ROSIE  
Yeah, that's no problem. I can set  
that up for you.

RACHAEL  
(taking ROSIE's seat)  
I can do it myself.

RACHAEL pulls up the communications screen.

ROSIE  
Rosie.

RACHAEL  
What?

ROSIE  
You can call me Rosie.

RACHAEL  
Do you mind?

ROSIE  
Yeah. OK. Sorry.

ROSIE exits. RACHAEL sends a message to RAFAEL.

RACHAEL  
Patron, I have boarded the Dark  
Delight and await your orders. A  
little bit of excitement, but I'm  
fine. I hope you are well. Your  
intelligence was correct; the  
Concordance Security Legion was  
monitoring everything that happened  
in the local shrine.

(RACHAEL holds a data device  
up to the screen and slides an  
image over)

I've attached the evidence. There  
was something else I think you  
should know. I was followed a  
small fighter, and it seemed almost  
like it... I'll double-check the  
sensors and report back later.

EXT. SPACE

The enemy fighter nears the planet. The PILOT is conversation with a WOMAN via video comms.

INT. FIGHTER COCKPIT - ENEMY

WOMAN

Did she see you?

PILOT

Not directly.

WOMAN

But her sensors did?

PILOT

Probably.

WOMAN

That is going to be a problem. I thought I had made it clear how important it is that no one knows...

PILOT

You did. I'm sorry.

WOMAN

Well, everyone's luck goes sour now and then. Did you get an ident on that frigate?

PILOT

Yes. The Dark Delight out of Fortune.

INT. DARK DELIGHT - OBSERVATION DECK

PARSHALL sits on the deck reading and smoking a pipe. TATER is cleaning up coffee.

PARSHALL

Thank you, Mr. Tate.

TATER

Aye, Captain.

TATER starts to leave.

PARSHALL

Tater?

TATER

Yes?

PARSHALL

Business is going to be fast and loose for a while. Keep an eye on the crew for me, would you?

TATER

I will. And I'll be keeping my other eye on you, Avi.

Exit TATER. EMERSON climbs up.

EMERSON

You wanted to see me, sir?

PARSHALL

Mr. Emerson. How are the repairs coming?

EMERSON

Okay from what I can see, sir. Mr. Horton won't let me near those shrikes.

PARSHALL

I don't blame her. Look what happened last time you touched one.

EMERSON

At least I made the Wall of Fame.

PARSHALL

What?

EMERSON

Sir, you said if I got her home I'd make the Wall of Fame. Is there a leaderboard on a wall somewhere?

PARSHALL

Ha! I forgot about that. There's no leaderboard, son. We try to avoid stunts like that, not reward them.

EMERSON

Why'd you lie to me?

PARSHALL waits.

EMERSON (cont'd)

Well?

PARSHALL waits.

EMERSON (cont'd)

Captain, sir, may ask a question, sir?

PARSHALL

You may, Mr. Emerson.

EMERSON

May I ask why you lied to me, sir?

PARSHALL

I needed you in the right frame of mind. Mr. Emerson. Competition motivates you. If you started thinking your little plan wouldn't work, then it wouldn't have. But you would do anything to make that list.

EMERSON

That's not true.

PARSHALL

Yes it is. How much of your weekly wage was spent on that fighter sim in the Hope and Anchor? How many hours have you clocked on it? How many days?

EMERSON

How do you know about that? ...sir.

PARSHALL

You think you're the only one who hears things? Captains talk. When I hear about some underused dockrat with a brilliant tactical mind, I find that guy and hire him.

EMERSON

To do what, exactly?

PARSHALL

You can start by finishing with those toilets.

EMERSON

Lucky me.

EMERSON smirks and exits. PARSHALL goes back to reading. His bookmark is a dog-eared PICTURE of a young woman.

DRAMATIC SHOT OF THE DARK DELIGHT IN SPACE.

END OF TAG