

Dark Space

By
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FADE IN:

SUPER: "THE UNIVERSE IS NOT REQUIRED TO BE IN PERFECT HARMONY WITH HUMAN AMBITION" ~ CARL SAGAN, COSMOS, 1980

SUPER: "THE 1100 YEAR WAR WAS A CONFLICT BETWEEN NOIDS... AND HUMANITY FOUND ITSELF IN THE CROSSFIRE, LAID TO WASTE IN A MATTER OF WEEKS... WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS UNIVERSE, AND I FIND MYSELF WISHING THAT WE WERE." ~ GENERAL WEISS, HUMANITY'S EXODUS, 2501

Thousands of stars fill the entire screen, twinkling, barely moving.

INT. SKY TRAM - SECOND TERRACE COLONY

The stars fill the brownish-gold eyes of ALEX CHASER (21). Fit and boyish, silvery-white hair cut short, yet attractive.

Fine-tuning her prosthetic right arm, Alex is the only girl on a crowded tram of dismal, cyberpunked passengers.

Finished, Alex moves her fingers and tests the joints; a crude design, but it works.

She leans back, watching the curved, encased metropolis pass by.

PROPAGANDIST (V.O.)

There's good news today, my friends!

EXT. SKY TRAM - SECOND TERRACE COLONY - CONTINUOUS

The tram zips across like a bullet-train through the colony.

It's as if New York City and Tokyo were smashed together and rolled up and enclosed in a grimy metal tube.

Monitors on the taller buildings each play a plump, clean-shaven PROPAGANDIST, a bellow voice and shiny hair.

Bold text is imposed just below the Propagandist that reads: "HUMANITY WILL NOT DIE"

PROPAGANDIST

The Human Restoration Organization has reported a stable 0.7% increase in the human population.

The tram enters the station.

INT. TRAM STATION - SECOND TERRACE COLONY

As passengers file out, it's impossible to miss Alex despite her attempt to blend in with the crowd, drawing her hood over her head and goggles over her eyes.

PROPAGANDIST

The brave women at the Sanitarium of Embryonic Eugenic Development, or Seed for short, volunteering as surrogate mothers, continue to keep humanity strong. Stemming the very threat of extinction...

(continues)

Banners are plastered on walls; of a man and woman with child looking upward in a field of green and golden sky.

BANNER: S.E.E.D. BE THE FOUNDATION HUMANITY NEEDS.

Alex is shoved by one of the PASSENGERS.

PASSENGER

Watch it, Breeder!

Alex glares, ready to spout a retort, but freezes as two STATE POLICEMEN of the Restoration approach her.

STATE POLICEMAN

Step to the side for scanning, ma'am.

ALEX

(whips out a card)

At ease, boys. Genetically inferior. I'm assigned to the docks.

The Policeman takes the card, studying it and her skeptically. He scans it with his device.

Alex's eyes wander to two other POLICEMEN pinning a young WOMAN against a wall.

PROPAGANDIST (V.O.)

...We've all had to make sacrifices under severe mandates. But take heart and remember. Our Admirals formed the Restoration government to unify humanity against block-busting politics of the alien, hegemonic Collective!

The woman frantically thrashes about, screams muzzled by the police. No one else even bothers to look at her.

Alex fidgets in front of her Policemen.

After a cold look, the Policeman hands Alex her card back.

STATE POLICEMAN
On your way, then.

Alex keeps her head down, ignoring the cries of the woman.

INT. ALBATROSS - SECOND TERRACE HANGAR

The lounge of the ship: a game table, small kitchen, long table, and a hologram device in the center. Badgered and unkempt.

Alex is at the hologram, handling wires and decks. Tiny, holographic screens sit in front of her eyes. Tools and bits float by her head in zero-g.

PROPAGANDIST (V.O.)
...these noids and their Collective regime are a bunch of exclusionaries! Is sticking us in barren systems like homeless refugees their idea of charity?...

ALEX
Vince, shut this guy off, will ya?

The lights and power go out.

ALEX
Not what I meant!

VINCENT ASHCROFT (20s), a chipper, stout gear-head, peaks out from a chute in the ceiling.

VINCENT
Just a little hiccup. I'll fix it.

Vincent sinks back into his hole.

Alex moves to a floor panel and opens it to find the power conduit. She double checks to ensure she is alone.

She places her left, flesh hand on the conduit and closes her eyes.

Her hand glows teal-blue, tiny sparks shoot around her hand, and power is restored on the ship.

She looks around, smiling with pride.

Vincent pops back out.

VINCENT

Did you-?

ALEX

Like you said: just a hiccup.

RONNY (O.C.)

Yeah, thing's been on the fritz for weeks.

Alex and Vince turn to see RONNY CHO (30s), a cross-dresser with spiky green hair, eye-shadow, and lipstick to boot. But he wears it well with an approachable charm.

In his hands are bags of groceries.

RONNY

Thought you kids could use a break.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The cockpit is suited for space travel: spherical, gazing out to a shabby dock and a gas-planet, the seat's in a pit, and mouse-ball-like controls in place of joysticks.

Ronny sits in the pilot's seat with Alex and Vincent behind him; chatting, looking at logs, etc.

ALEX

...Six words. That's all I want to hear.

VINCENT

I'll throw you two words-

ALEX

Six words: "Alex, we want to hire you."

RONNY

Sweetie, you wouldn't last two blinks to another sector. One stop at a Restoration checkpoint, hello hospital beds and baby Alex Chasers.

ALEX

If you can pull off looking like a girl, I can pass as a guy.

RONNY

A guy with a protruding chest?

ALEX

They're not that big...

RONNY

Not that small either.

VINCENT

At least you get to keep everything. You have any idea what it's like being castrated like dogs?

RONNY

I'm sure you'll remind us-

VINCENT

We're limp all the time! Not even a little spring in the morning-

RONNY

Vince. Lamenting over your little spring kind of takes a backseat to confinement on a human farm.

ALEX

Plus if men had their mojo, they'd screw every woman that crossed their way and we'd have bastard children sucking up more air than the colonies can pump out.

RONNY

Point is life sucks no matter what's between your legs.

VINCENT

Restoration my ass-

A tiny screen pops up in front of Alex's eye; a call.

MARCUS (O.S.)

(over comm)

Chaser. Drop what you're doing and come to Dock 27B. Noid ship coming in.

ALEX

On my way.

(to Ronny, Vincent)

Time to roll out the red carpet.

RONNY

Maybe the noids'll wanna hire you.

ALEX

Careful what you wish for, Ronny.
Because the first ticket I grab off
this cylinder leaves you without
your ace mechanic.

EXT. WAREHOUSE HANGAR - SECOND TERRACE

The sound of gears and drills echo in the long warehouse of
docked ships. Human MECHANICS are hard at work.

Alex waits patiently, peevish as a weasely JASON (30s) vents
at MARCUS (50s), a large man with a posture of superiority.

JASON

Putting Chaser in charge is a joke,
Marcus! I have seniority over her-

MARCUS

Chaser's more fluent in Galactic
Basic than you are.

JASON

The men respect her half as much as
they can throw her-

MARCUS

Since we're in zero-g, guess that
makes her queen of the colony.
Don't like it, go to your corner,
have your little tantrum, then man-
up and be ready to bow for your
queen.

Jason storms off, muttering insults at Alex.

ALEX

Oh Jason.
(Galactic Basic, sounds
like German and Latin)
<Disrespect me again and I'll rip
your dick off and stick it on your
head.>

Jason flinches, failing to stare her down, not understanding
a word she said.

MARCUS

We're not gonna have another
incident are we, girl?

Alex shrugs.

MARCUS

Watch your back out there.
Whatever trashed that ship can't be
far behind.

Marcus exits, leaving Alex as she stewes in her frustration for a minute, gazing out at the giant planet and alien ship. A great yearning is reflected in her eyes.

INT. WAREHOUSE HANGAR - COLLECTIVE SHUTTLE - MOMENTS LATER

The alien shuttle slowly comes in to dock. Its smooth, curvy shape makes it a diamond in the rough compared to the rigid, blocky colony.

Alex waits at the front with the group of workers.

Jason's behind Alex, eyeing her bitterly.

The Collective shuttle docks and the hatch opens.

COTCH NICKOLLANIA (20s), a sierri'an (hedgehog-head, stands naturally on toes), is the first out of the shuttle. A beauty of stoicism and authority.

She is followed by an OBSERVER; a floating, robotic rectangle.

KISHEYU ORTONI (40s), an asarinu (tall, golden species of beauty and grace) exits last. His eyes glow red, carrying the weight of a galaxy filled with wonder and terror.

He has a distinct, crop-circle-like tatoo running down the left side of his face.

Everyone falls silent and glares at Kisheyu with prejudice.

WORKER

What the hell's an assi doing with
the Collective?

WORKER 2

Looks like the Collective has more
love for planet killers-

ALEX

Shut up! Right now!

When Alex looks back at Kisheyu, her face tightens with haunted fascination.

P.O.V. ALEX CHASER - CONTINUOUS

Kisheyu has a mystifying, bluish-teal fog emanating from his body.

Kisheyu looks back at Alex, equally stunned and surprised.

INT. WAREHOUSE HANGAR - COLLECTIVE TRANSPORT SHIP -
CONTINUOUS

Time slows down. Alex and Kisheyu are fixed on each other, the only two glowing beings. But Alex's aura is noticeably fainter than Kisheyu's.

No one else comments on Kisheyu's aura; they don't even notice it.

The Observer's androgenous, metallic, voice snaps her out of the daze.

OBSERVER

Observer 2-3-Blue-0-9-1-1:
Speaking. Introducing Prefects:
Kisheyu Ortoni of the asarinu and
Cotch Nickollania of the sierri'an.
Request: Immediate emergency
refuel-

ALEX

<Ship that size will dry us out->

Cotch speaks urgently and Alex responds in the alien language in a short exchange.

JASON

So what's the order, your highness?

ALEX

They'll pay triple the regular fee
plus re-supply us once they can.
But we should start now.

Jason, and the rest of the group, shuffle unenthusiastically.

ALEX

That wasn't a suggestion. Move it!

The group disperses to their duties as a few of the workers, including Jason, join Alex and the Prefects.

EXT. COLLECTIVE SHUTTLE - LATER

The shuttle flies from the human space colony to the damaged Collective frigate.

INT. COLLECTIVE SHUTTLE - CONTINUOUS

The human workers (Alex, Jason, CHRISTOFF (20s), GREG (30s)) sit on one side of the ship, while Kisheyu and Cotch sit on the other side. Everyone is on edge.

Alex tries to sit back and relax.

Kisheyu stares at Alex. She shifts uncomfortably, massaging her mechanical arm, as if feeling pain.

KISHEYU

<Your speech is very fluent. How long did it take you to learn?>

ALEX

<I'm a fast learner.>

KISHEYU

<You appear rather young to be in charge. You must be quite the prodigy.>

Alex grips her metal arm tighter, looking away.

ALEX

<Wasn't meant for much else.>

Cotch gives Kisheyu a look. He sits back, ignoring her.

INT. COLLECTIVE BASE

Lights flicker on and off. Alien bodies lie dead on the ground, pressed into the walls. Alarms ring throughout the halls. The base is as still as a morgue.

INT. COLLECTIVE BASE - CONTROL ROOM

A door opens and closes on a dog-like alien corpse.

In the center of the room, undisturbed by the dead bodies, a creature from nightmares studies several holographic screens.

MÖBIUS is a being of black sludge shaped into a burqa with an ivory mask.

NISHUNA (O.C.)
 Möbius! Have you located the
 artifact?

Möbius turns to see NISHUNA (30s) dragging the corpse out of the way from the door and carelessly dropping it.

Nishuna is an asarinu, same as Kisheyu. And instead of a tattoo, a scar runs down the left side of his draconian face.

Möbius stares blankly at the corpse, and then at Nishuna. When he speaks, Möbius doesn't move his mouth. His voice is low and soft, echoing across a great distance.

MÖBIUS
 Perhaps.

Möbius glides to a panel, enters a command, and a hologram of star-systems appears. It projects a number of ships diverging from a single point.

MÖBIUS
 The fleet scattered to throw us off
 their trail. But I believe our
 ship may be...here. Docked in a
 human refugee sector.

Möbius zooms in a section of the hologram, and blueprints of the human colonies rotate next to the star system.

Nishuna looks at the hologram with disgust.

NISHUNA
 Let's not waste time. Regroup-

A blast at the control panel and the hologram glitches out.

Nishuna whips around, gun up, while Möbius turns casually.

They face a SSIRRISSI PREFECT (four-armed lizard alien), struggling to hold his weapon up. Bright green blood streams down his face and armor.

SSIRRISSI PREFECT
 By...by order of Collective...I
 herby...herby place you
 both...under...under...

Nishuna slowly stalks towards the Ssirrisi Prefect.

The Ssirrisi fails to steady his aim, his shot grazes past Nishuna's head.

Nishuna rushes the SsirriSSI, hands on both the gun-arm and the neck.

SSIRRISSI PREFECT

You'll never find the Precursor device.

Nishuna's hand gripping the gun-arm glows teal and the gun-arm disintegrates.

The SsirriSSI begins to panic against the choking grip.

NISHUNA

Embrace the void. Nothing is equal.

Nishuna's hand on the SsirriSSI's neck glows teal. The SsirriSSI attempts to scream from the searing pain but only a hiss emits as his head is turned to ash.

NISHUNA

Everything is connected. Glory to the Brotherhood.

Möbius stares apathetically at the headless corpse as it drops to the ground, twitching.

MÖBIUS

Poetic as always, my dear Nishuna.

EXT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - LATER

The Observer robots repair the hull of the carrier as human tankers refill the ship.

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - ARBITER COMM CENTER - LATER

A dark, deceptively infinite room with FIVE Observers.

Kisheyu and GENERAL REDAIR, a color-speaker (four-armed, translucent land-cephalopod), face the Observers.

When Redair and the Observers speak, they use changing fluid colors to communicate (Observers act as call-throughs to the ARBITERS, leaders in the Collective).

REDAIR

(green)

We remain severely crippled by Brotherhood's attack and Ortoni wants to help one single human?

KISHEYU

I saw it with my own eyes, General.
The human girl possesses the aura.

OBSERVER 1

(green; female,
authoritative)

Impossible. Humans barely achieved
interstellar travel; they're too
underdeveloped to be psions.

KISHEYU

Nevertheless, she'll need
instruction. I request
reassignment to transport her to
the Directorate-

REDAIR

(purple)

Lost sense! Prefect Ortoni's
priority is to artifact recovery!

KISHEYU

Arbiters, we can't ignore this
discovery. The Brotherhood surely
won't. What if they find her and
spread their influence among human
colonies? Or worse? Whether
humans are infantile or psionic,
Collective Law keeps them under our
supervision.

OBSERVER 2

(yellow; male, proper)

Prefect Ortoni, your insight has
always been held in the highest
regard. But the mission takes
precedence and the human plight is
a distraction. Whatever guilt you
harbor shouldn't factor into your
judgement. Humans were unprepared
for the traverse, and remain
incapable of galactic commune.

KISHEYU

Perhaps. But how long do we ignore
a discovery...

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - GENERATOR ROOM - LATER

KISHEYU (V.O.)

...before it becomes a danger?

Alex and Greg are hard at work, helping the engineers replace power-cores.

ALEX

No, you press, hold, and then you put in the new tank-

Christoff pokes his head in.

CHRISTOFF

Alex! Jason's causing trouble again.

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex steps out of the Generator Room to see one of the COLLECTIVE ENGINEERS bickering with Jason. An Observer attempts to moderate.

JASON

Dude, I-can't-understand-you!

OBSERVER

Please avoid aggressive acts onboard the vessel.

COLLECTIVE ENGINEER

<If you humans knew what you were doing-!>

JASON

You wanna take over? Here!

Jason shoves the tools he was using into the Engineer's chest. A fight nearly breaks out but Alex steps in.

ALEX

That's enough!
(to Engineer)
<That's enough! I'll get rid of him.>

She turns to Jason as the Engineer leaves in a huff.

ALEX

You're done. Go back to the hangar.

JASON

Excuse me? I was doing my job-!

Alex heads back into the generator room but Jason isn't finished.

JASON

Hey, don't walk away from me, noid-humper!

Alex stops and slowly turns to Jason, clenching her jaw, as he approaches.

JASON

Think you're too good for normal people? Like it up the ass, planet killers get you all wet-

Jason reaches to grope Alex, but she grabs his genitals with her metal arm and begins twisting and squeezing them.

Jason whimpers and grunts in pain.

ALEX

Keep talking about my sex, I'll remind you of yours-

Jason whips up and slugs Alex in the jaw. She staggers back and Jason pins her to the wall, choking her, groping her.

Cotch comes walking down the hall and spots Jason pinning Alex. She moves quickly to intervene.

JASON

You are nothing but a piss-ant breeder! If it were up to me, I'd ship you off to Seed, strapped down in stirrups, pushing out babies!

Alex grits her teeth, lip dripping blood, as she swings her left hand on to Jason's face to push him off.

A bright flash on impact and Jason's body turns into a headless rag-doll, falling to the floor, neck spewing ash.

The Observer sounds an alarm.

Cotch is frozen by shock, still processing what she did.

Alex slowly looks at the hand she used, terrified and trembling.

She finally notices Collective soldiers pointing their weapons at her.

COLLECTIVE SOLDIER 2

<Down on the ground!>

The soldiers bark orders at Alex, whose arms and legs shake uncontrollably. She puts her hands up, backing away.

Cotch dashes right behind her, and knocks her out.

P.O.V. ALEX CHASER - LATER

Everything is black. It sounds like Alex is breathing through a metal cup. The clanking of shackles echoes and the breathing picks up.

COTCH (O.C.)
<Don't move!>

BLINK. Alex views her surroundings through a computer screen, everything black and white.

Alex spots the silhouette of Cotch standing in front of a squad of soldiers and an Observer aiming their guns at her.

COTCH
<You will answer my questions quickly and directly.>

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - PRISON CELL

Alex, suspended in the air, wears a heavy-looking helmet and arm-clamps. A small camera eye on the helmet is her only means of seeing.

COTCH
<Are you human?>

ALEX
What? Where am I-?

COTCH
<Answer the question. Are you human?>

ALEX
<Yes! Yes I am human!>

The soldiers ready their guns but Cotch throws her hand up.

COTCH
<Are you with the Brotherhood?>

ALEX
Please. What...what happened to Jason? Did I...did I-?

COTCH
<Are. You. With. The Brotherhood?>

ALEX
 I...I just fix ships! Nothing
 else! I...I didn't...please, just
 let me go. <I'm sorry. I'm
 sorry.>

Cotch stares at Alex dubiously.

KISHEYU
 <Stand down!>

The attention shifts to Kisheyu entering the room.

KISHEYU
 <I'll take it from here.>

Kisheyu walks to Alex without hesitation.

COTCH
 <Sir Ortoni. Are you sure?>

KISHEYU
 <It's alright. I've already spoken
 with the Arbiters.>

Kisheyu looks up at Alex, ignoring Cotch and the guards.

P.O.V. ALEX CHASER - CONTINUOUS

A defined yet pixilated Kisheyu appears on screen.

ALEX
 Please. Let me go. <Let me go.
 I'm sorry.>

Kisheyu nods. He reaches behind the helmet, a click is heard, and everything is black again.

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - PRISON CELL - CONTINUOUS

Kisheyu carefully sets Alex down and removes the helmet and arm clamps. Her face is wet from the tears and her flesh arm is bruised and scarred.

Kisheyu puts his hand on the wounds and blue-teal light emits from the palm. He heals the scars and bruises.

Alex examines the arm in disbelief.

Kisheyu reaches into one of his pouches and pulls out a small, circular case.

Opening it, he pulls out the last of a slug-like device the size of a fingernail.

Alex carefully takes the slug, looks at it, and then looks at Kisheyu confused, not knowing what to do with it.

Kisheyu points to his nose and ears.

Alex's face churns with disgust, slowly takes the slug, and puts it in her ear. She squirms, gagging slightly.

KISHEYU

<It's al-> -right. It's dis-< -
comforting-> -at first. But you-
<will get> used to it.
Communication varies in diversity,
so a universal translator has its
use.

Alex looks at Kisheyu in surprise, hearing the mishmash of English and Galactic Basic.

KISHEYU

Can you understand me?

Alex manages to force out a nod.

KISHEYU

Good. You may call me Kisheyu. I
am a friend.

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - HOLODECK - LATER

The room is completely black with rotating star clusters and a soft, neon blue glow emitting from where the ground meets the wall.

A circular door opens. Kisheyu enters first with Alex being nudged in by Cotch.

Alex quickly turns, keeping her defensive eyes on Cotch and Kisheyu, waiting for them to act.

COTCH

Relax, human. You should consider
yourself fortunate to be in the
company of Sir Ortoni. His
philanthropy borders on naivety.

KISHEYU

Careful, Cotch.

ALEX

Look, I already told you what happened was an accident! I'm just a mechanic! I didn't mean to explode heads-

KISHEYU

It was a breakdown.

ALEX

I didn't breakdown! I mean, sure I was in shock-

KISHEYU

No. A chemical breakdown. You triggered a molecular response but your energy emission was too high and, well... It's not uncommon among psionic neophytes.

ALEX

Psion...neo...what?

COTCH

Your detention may have been excessive, but you must understand a human psion is unheard of-

ALEX

I don't even know what a psion is. So how about you cut the routine and give me some straight answers?

Kisheyu nods admittedly and removes his opal necklace pendant, shaped like an alien flower, laying it in the palm of his hand.

His hand glows teal and the pendant begins to morph and reshape itself.

Alex is mesmerized by the show.

KISHEYU

What you are is a syphon capable of conducting the atomic forces of nature and, to an extent, affect the states of matter. You may have already experienced certain abnormalities: feeling electrical pulses in electrical systems, self-generating energy, even enhanced cerebral activity.

COTCH

Only a handful of sentients achieve such an evolutionary rarity. Even fewer species in their entirety become psions like Sir Ortoni's people.

Alex looks between Cotch and Kisheyu, her intimidation growing as she grips her metal arm.

ALEX

So what? Am I a hazard? Are you taking me away?

COTCH

That all depends on your cooperation.

KISHEYU

Computer. Directorate 12, Garden.

Instantaneously, they are transported to...

INT. HOLOGRAM - DIRECTORATE 12 GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

An indoor garden filled with aliens. The room is chrome white with banners, decorative plants, and alien statues.

Above is a glass ceiling gleaming light from a grey sky.

Alex doesn't waste time to walk around the garden and look at the flowers. Joy and shock overwhelm her.

Aliens phase through Alex and the Prefects. They, too, are part of the hologram.

KISHEYU

This is Directorate 12, where Cotch and I trained to become Prefects-

ALEX

Are we on a planet?!

KISHEYU

Planet Apex. The capitol world of the Collective.

Gazing out a window, Alex sees a city world: flat with metal structures and very few towers, mainly space-elevators.

ALEX

I'm on a planet. I'm actually on a planet. Ronny's gonna flip.

Alex walks to one of the statues, a four-armed lizard race. She notices the Garden is filled with statues.

COTCH

The Collective is the pinnacle of galactic law and order. We Prefects are its watchmen. These statues serve as memorial for the greatest of Prefects and recognize the sizable diversity within the Collective.

ALEX

Diversity's an understatement...

KISHEYU

Perhaps one day you too can have a statue in the garden.

ALEX

Are you serious?

KISHEYU

You are a psion, Alex Chaser. Which means you are eligible to join the ranks of the Prefect Order. We can teach you to control your talents and enhance them. And as a Prefect, it would also give your people citizenship. A chance to rebuild your civilization.

They stand in silence, staring at each other, aliens oblivious to them until-

Alarms blare and the hologram evaporates back into...

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - HOLODECK - CONTINUOUS

Alex looks around her.

ALEX

Again? What is it this time?

COTCH

The Brotherhood has found us...

EXT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Small, dark, cone-shaped fighters zip towards the Collective Cruiser.

Among them is Möbius, the black comet.

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kisheyu, Cotch, and Alex exit the holodeck running past other, frantic officers.

Kisheyu contacts General Redair via comm-link.

REDAIR (O.S.)
 Brotherhood has the drop on us!
 Prefects take escape pods.
 Collective Cruiser will lure them
 away.

KISHEYU
 General, you're in no condition to
 fend them off-

REDAIR (O.S.)
 Not defend. Distract. No choice.
 Redair uploading artifact
 coordinates. Prefects must
 complete mission!

KISHEYU
 We'll get it done, General. Just
 get our people out of here!

Kisheyu leads the way as Cotch pushes Alex.

ALEX
 Wait, what mission?

KISHEYU
 Stay close!

The ship shakes from an impact.

EXT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Observers fire orange beams out their "eye." A ship darts past them and is destroyed, but Möbius approaches, slicing the observers.

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - ESCAPE POD BAY - CONTINUOUS

Kisheyu is the first to enter and readies an escape pod.

The hatch opens and Cotch and Alex enter first followed by Kisheyu.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Cotch is in the pilot's seat. Alex and Kisheyu take the seats behind her.

COTCH
 Launching!

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - ESCAPE POD CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

The escape pod zooms down a straight, narrow chute, scraping the walls.

EXT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

The pod shoots out and heads straight for the human colony.

Behind the pod, all that is seen are sparks and flares surrounding the Collective cruiser as it makes its escape.

The cruiser disappears instantaneously in a flash, entering subspace.

INT. COLLECTIVE CRUISER - BRIDGE

Alarms still ringing, General Redair and Collective Officers take a momentary breath of relief.

COLLECTIVE OFFICER
 Subspace blink successful. Course
 set for-

Lights flicker out along with electrical malfunctions.

REDAIR
 (green)
 What has happened!?

Möbius seeps through the doors of the bridge; a bubbling floating blob.

Before anyone can react or pull out a weapon, Möbius thrusts out black spike arms, piercing everyone except Redair.

As soon as everyone is dead, Möbius reverts to his humanoid burqa form and approaches Redair with a casual smile.

REDAIR
 (blue)
 Möbius...

MÖBIUS
Salutations, General.

From the floor, Möbius extends a small puddle beneath Redair and shoots up four needle spikes to impale all four of Redair's tentacle arms.

Redair roars in pain, turning several colors.

MÖBIUS
Your Collective has a nasty habit of hoarding precursor relics. It's becoming hazardous to your health.

REDAIR
Artifact...not worth Brotherhood's time-

Möbius folds the needles outward, stretching and torturing Redair.

MÖBIUS
You send a fleet of five cruisers to retrieve the relic capable of altering a species' evolution and play it as little interest? I'll let you in on a secret: this chase is a waste of my time!

With that, Möbius whips the spikes, shredding Redair to pieces.

EXT. ESCAPE POD - SECOND TERRACE COLONY

Cotch's escape pod flies straight towards the human colony.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

An alarm sounds, signaling a control error.

Cotch attempts to correct the problem, but to no avail.

ALEX
Look out!

Cotch looks up and a small, human ship cuts in front of them. Cotch quickly turns to avoid it.

EXT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

The pod barely misses the human ship, turning straight into some debris and into a construction site.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Cotch maneuvers the pod between towers and bars, but some holes are too small that the sound of scraping can be heard.

An alarm sounds.

The pod begins spinning.

COTCH
Brace yourselves!

EXT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

As the pod spins, it flies towards a nearby hangar.

INT. SECOND TERRACE HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

The humans inside see the pod and rush to get out of the way.

The pod passes through the energy-field gate separating the air in the colony from space. The pod hits the deck and grinds on the floor before slamming into the opposing wall.

EXT. ALLEY - SECOND TERRACE COLONY - LATER

An unconscious Alex rustles awake as a damp cloth is patted on her forehead.

She jolts back into a wall when she sees Kisheyu's hand.

KISHEYU
You're alright! We're safe.

COTCH
Not for long. The Brotherhood likely has agents onboard the colony. And I am unable to reach General Redair. We are on our own.

Alex collects herself, still reeling from a headache.

ALEX
Tell me, is there anyone in this galaxy you guys don't piss off?

Kisheyu moves in to comfort Alex, but she shoves him away.

KISHEYU

Alex Chaser, I know we have put you through much, but we need your help. We need transport to-

ALEX

Help? You noids have never cared about us. Ever. I lost my job thanks to you! My neck's still sore from the thrashing you gave me! Then you pull a 180, try to recruit me, and now you expect me to help you?

COTCH

(to Kisheyu)

Charming girl. Certainly a credit to her species.

ALEX

Bite me, pinhead.

COTCH

You think you are any safer on your own?

ALEX

I'm not the one being hunted by this Brotherhood gang. Whoever they are, they really want you dead.

KISHEYU

They're remnants of the Asarinu Empire. Psionic extremists bent on terrorizing and dismantling the Collective, and they believe the artifact we have will help them-

ALEX

Still sounds like a you-problem to me.

COTCH

Psions can sense other psions. If the Brotherhood finds you, they will either kill you or make you an enemy of the Collective. Either scenario further endangers your entire race!

ALEX

Look around you! We're already endangered!

KISHEYU

Alex, please. This isn't just for our mission or for the Collective. Aiding us may be the one chance you have to help your people.

Alex's gaze shifts out the alley, spotting Restoration Police squads taping off the hangar.

ALEX

Before, you guys said I could be a Prefect. Does that mean the Restoration can't touch me?

COTCH

Prefects answer to the Collective, but in turn, individual alien governments answer to us.

ALEX

Will I get my own starship?

KISHEYU

That and more.

Alex ponders her options for a moment.

ALEX

There's one guy I know who might help.

EXT. SECOND TERRACE - PARADISE LOST - LATER

A place for having a drink and seeking "companionship." Many men, a few women, and those in between are gathered in front.

INT. PARADISE LOST - CONTINUOUS

Alex looks around the saloon. The main area is large, with small tables and private booths for drinking, a smaller area for dancing in the corner, and upstairs are private rooms.

It's fairly crowded; people drinking, dancing, and leaning on balconies above.

Many people shoot the stink eye at the Prefects; mainly aimed at Kisheyu.

COTCH

I cannot understand an organic's
fetish on physical intimacy.

ALEX

Never got down and freaky, Cotchy?

COTCH

Do not call me Cotchy.

The flamboyant Ronny Cho leans into TOBI "MOUSE" VALENTINE, a large, muscular man and shaved head, sit at a private booth.

Ronny drinks a cocktail while Mouse browses the brothel's catalog of companions.

MOUSE

Okay, how about this one?

RONNY

Nope. It's a guy.

MOUSE

Really? How can you tell?

RONNY

Cheekbones are a dead give away.

MOUSE

Doesn't bother me that they mix
guys with girls. But is a little
more variety too much to ask for?

RONNY

These days it is. People come here
for quick hook-ups. Not to spend
more than a night with a partner.

MOUSE

Can't understand why the Cap
bothers coming to these places.

RONNY

Trust me. The thing he wants is
the one thing he's afraid to have.
Speaking of...

He spots Alex in the crowd and waves at her. Alex spots Ronny and motions Kisheyu and Cotch to follow.

Ronny sees the two Prefects and his eagerness dies down.

RONNY

Oh boy...

Mouse follows Ronny's gaze and spots the two Prefects.

MOUSE

And you invited her to our table...

Alex and the Prefects arrive at Ronny's table.

RONNY

Bit of a vibrant entrance, honey.

ALEX

Believe me, I wish I was invisible right now.

MOUSE

So two Prefects and a human walk into a bar. The punch-line damn well better be worth it.

ALEX

Nice to see you too, Mouse. The punch-line is a job for you guys.

MOUSE

Tch. Saif is gonna love this...

Mouse rushes out of his seat, nearly bumping into Cotch.

MOUSE

Watch it-!

Cotch flexes her head-needles in aggression.

RONNY

Mouse. Captain. Now!

Mouse runs off. Ronny shakes his head and turns to Alex.

RONNY

So...your friends drink anything?

INT. PARADISE LOST - OUTSIDE ROOM 306 - MOMENTS LATER

Three stories above, overlooking the main room, Mouse walks down the aisle to Room 306.

MOUSE

Captain? Hey, Saif?

A frustrated sigh is heard.

SAIF (O.C.)

What is it, Mouse?

MOUSE

Sorry to interrupt your coitus whatever. But Alex is downstairs with Ronny. Brought two Prefects, one of them asarinu. Something about a job.

SAIF (O.C.)

I'll be right out.

INT. ROOM 306 - CONTINUOUS

SAIF AL KADAR (30s), face scarred with age and experience accompanied with a brash smile and silky brown dreadlocks.

Saif gets dressed, putting on a Restorationist Pilot's jacket, sporting an emblem of the Tribars fighter wing.

A beautiful COMPANION comes behind Saif and massages his back and caresses his chest.

COMPANION

Stay awhile. Let the noids wait.

SAIF

Nah. If it is Prefects, best not to keep them waiting.

Saif turns towards her.

COMPANION

Next time, I can be more than just your cuddle buddy.

Saif rises and gently holds her chin in his palm.

SAIF

Stay safe.

She blows him a kiss before he exits.

INT. PARADISE LOST - MOMENTS LATER

Saif is seated at the table. Kisheyu and Cotch have drinks in front of them. Alex has just finished downing half a mug of beer, with one empty mug in front of her.

SAIF

I see. It's quite a mess you're in, I'll admit. So where is it they need to go?

Alex speaks to Kisheyu and Kisheyu speaks back to her.

ALEX

Two places. First to the Trugowa Sector and then the drop off to a nearby Collective-

MOUSE

Like Hell, Captain! Don't sit right with me fumbling in Trugowa. Not after what the message boards are pinging.

SAIF

Still, I'm curious: what business do they have in Trugowa?

ALEX

They're picking up an alien artifact. Worth a whole freight of creds to the Collective.

Saif thinks for a moment.

SAIF

Sorry, Gold-eyes. It's too shady. And I don't like shady.

ALEX

Seriously? A pirate who's turning down a treasure-hunt?

SAIF

First off: we're not pirates.

MOUSE

Aren't we?

SAIF

No! We're...corsairs-

ALEX

That's just a fancy way of saying you're pirates-

SAIF

We only steal from other pirates! At the very least, that makes us honest pirates-

RONNY

Honest pirates are still pirates who are dishonest about their trade-

MOUSE

Does that make us self-hating pirates?

SAIF

Moving on! There are plenty more pirates here who'll take the job.

ALEX

You're the only one I trust!

SAIF

The only one you trust? Or only one you know?

Alex doesn't respond. She whispers to Kisheyu.

Ronny and Mouse lean in towards Saif.

RONNY

Come on, Saif. We could really use the money. And Alex is a good kid who just lost her job. How long you think she'll last before the Restoration snags her?

MOUSE

Still don't like it, Cap. An assi Prefect needing to stop by Trugowa? For an antique? Situation's more fickle than Ronny's gender identity. No offense.

Ronny flips Mouse the bird while blowing a disgruntled kiss.

SAIF

Problem is our navs can't avoid Restoration checkpoints. Alex is screwed either way-

ALEX

Not if I'm with the Prefects. And Kisheyu just upped the pay: 300,000. Plus whatever the Collective will pay.

Saif, Ronny, and Mouse go wide-eyed after hearing this.

MOUSE

3...300 grand?

ALEX

Straight from Kisheyu's personal account.

Saif looks at Kisheyu directly.

SAIF

Your friend's gotta be royalty to
toss around that much cred.

ALEX

You asking for more?

Saif hesitates, considering the offer.

SAIF

Depends how high the stakes go.

Saif puts out his hand; he and Kisheyu shake.

Everyone rises to exit.

SAIF

(over comm)

Quatre, Vincent, we're heading out.
Meet back at the Albatross...

Alex, Kisheyu, and Cotch trail behind them.

COTCH

Impressive, Alex Chaser. I was
concerned this endeavor would have
taken longer.

ALEX

You're welcome, Cotchy.

EXT. PARADISE LOST - LATER

As the group goes through crowds, a tall, DARK FIGURE (just
as tall as Kisheyu) spots them and follows. He wears a black
cloak, his face hidden by a high collar, and dark sunglasses.

INT. SECOND TERRACE STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The Dark Figure keeps his distance, ignoring the various
humans whose attentions he draws.

Two more Dark Figures follow.

Alex slows her pace and starts to look back.

KISHEYU

Don't make eye contact. They're
Brotherhood scouts.

Alex immediately faces forward.

COTCH

Keep walking. We will deal with them before we reach the hangar.

Saif turns his head, listening to their alien talk.

ALEX

Saif-

SAIF

Cloaks following us, right? What do you think, Mouse?

MOUSE

Count three. Maybe more.

SAIF

Same. Ronny, run ahead to the ship.

Ronny disappears into the crowds ahead.

Alex makes a quick glance at one of the Dark figures.

P.O.V. ALEX CHASER - CONTINUOUS

She sees the Dark figure glowing the same teal blue as Kisheyu.

INT. SECOND TERRACE STREETS - CONTINUOUS

SAIF

Mouse, keep your eye on the one to our right. We'll deal with them once we reach-

ALEX

Saif, you should wait until Kisheyu-

SAIF

I know what I'm doing.

ALEX

These guys aren't your typical thugs-

MOUSE

Less talky! More shooty!

Mouse shoots the Dark Figure across the street. It hits the D.F.'s shoulder and he twirls to the ground.

Colonists scream and run for cover.

Saif shoots the Dark Figures right behind them.

Everyone takes cover for the fire fight.

The D.F. across the street (the one Mouse shot) jumps high into the air, uninjured, taking out his baton.

Mouse fires repeatedly.

All the shots curve away from the D.F., now revealed to be an asarinu; the same race as Kisheyu.

MOUSE

Well that ain't fair!

Cotch pushes Mouse out of the way and dodges the D.F.'s pounce with a backward summersault.

From a pouch, Cotch throws dust at the D.F. that sparks blinding flashes, disorienting him.

Cotch fires from her gun-arm, filling the D.F. with holes as blue blood spatters out.

The two remaining D.F.s continue firing at Saif and Kisheyu.

Behind the D.F.s, RESTORATION POLICE charge forward with THREE drones above them.

But the D.F.s use psionics to destroy the drones and create a giant wall of floor panels, cutting the Restoration off from them.

SAIF

You didn't mention anything about psions!

ALEX

I told you they weren't your typical thugs, didn't I?!

Alex, covering behind Saif, turns her attention to the alley where a D.F. charges at them.

ALEX

Mouse! Gun!

Mouse tosses her an extra gun. She catches it and fires down the alley but his energy-shield blocks her fire.

ALEX

In the alley! In the alley!!

The D.F. launches at Alex, but Kisheyu engages him with his metal, extending staff against the D.F.'s baton.

Alex jumps on the D.F.'s back and chokes him with her cybernetic-arm. He flips Alex and slams her onto the ground.

FROM D.F.'s P.O.V: he sees Alex's soft, teal psionic glow.

Kisheyu grabs and throws the distracted D.F. across the street.

Kisheyu puts out his hand and creates a wall of floor plates, trapping the D.F.s.

Saif leads the group back to the ship.

SAIF

There's gonna be a hell of additional danger fees!

ALEX

Bitch about the money later!

The wall-plates are forced down by one of the Dark Figures, and they chase after the group.

INT. WAREHOUSE HANGAR - OUTSIDE THE ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The engines to the Albatross hum harmonically.

The group enters the hangar and run for the ship but are intercepted by three more Dark Figures that block their path.

SAIF

(over comm)

Uhh, Ronny? Got a situation at the front door.

The rest of the Dark Figures enter from behind them; six Dark Figures surround the group.

DARK FIGURE 1

<Hand over the coordinates to the artifact!>

Kisheyu goes into a trance. Cotch nudges Alex.

COTCH

<Tell your friends to get down.>

Alex looks at Cotch confused then looks at Kisheyu.

P.O.V. ALEX CHASER - CONTINUOUS

Kisheyu's blue-fog aura recedes but outlines him brightly.

INT. WAREHOUSE HANGAR - OUTSIDE THE ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Dark figures point their weapons at everyone.

DARK FIGURE 1
<No tricks, Prefect-!>

ALEX
Everybody down!

Everyone hugs the ground just as the Dark Figures fire.

Kisheyu emits an energy-bubble-shield surrounding the group, stopping all the projectiles.

He opens his eyes with a burning gaze and throws his hands outward. The bubble expands in an explosive shockwave.

The Dark Figures throw their shields up but are knocked back by the combined force of the shock wave and projectiles, hitting the ground and walls.

The Albatross' defensive turrets descend and fire. They kill two of the unprepared Dark Figures, but the other four take cover.

Kisheyu falters. Alex and Cotch help him as the group retreats into the ship.

INT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

Saif is the first on board, he rushes to the cockpit.

Alex leads Kisheyu and Cotch toward the medical bay. Kisheyu is sweating and breathing heavily.

QUATRE BARKMAN, a middle-aged, gentlemanly doctor, runs in with confusion.

QUATRE
Captain, what's happening-!

SAIF
Noids! Talk later!

ALEX
 Quatre! He's hurt.

Quatre turns to see Alex and Cotch helping Kisheyu onboard.

KISHEYU
 <I'm fine. Just got careless.>

QUATRE
 This way!

Quatre leads them into...

INT. ALBATROSS - MEDICAL BAY

Cotch and Alex help Kisheyu to one of the medical beds as Quatre is ready with his medical scanner.

QUATRE
 Don't know much about alien anatomy. Worked on a noid cadaver once...back in med school. First time for everything I suppose.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Ronny is at the pilot's seat as Saif bursts in.

SAIF
 What the hell? Were you doing your nails?

RONNY
 I keep telling you the gears need to be replaced-!

SAIF
 We're still in the dock! Take us out, take us out!

Ronny preps the ship for launch.

INT. WAREHOUSE HANGAR - OUTSIDE THE ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross lifts from the ground, continuing to fire defensively, and exits the hangar.

Two of the Dark Figures have regrouped. One presses a button on his visor.

P.O.V. DARK FIGURE 2 - CONTINUOUS

The Dark Figure scans the ship, acquiring the blue prints and detailed identification.

INT. WAREHOUSE HANGAR - OUTSIDE THE ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Dark Figure who scanned turns to his partners and motions them for their retreat.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross picks up speed, getting as much distance between it and the human colony.

INT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

IN THE ENGINE ROOM, Vincent finishes typing up commands and holds tight.

SAIF (O.S.)
 (over comm)
 Vincent, we all set to blink?

VINCENT
 Ships lit up and burning bright,
 Captain!

BACK AT THE COCKPIT, Saif grabs a handle, standing firm.

RONNY
 3. 2. 1. Blink!

Ronny presses the button to jump.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross "blinks" and disappears into subspace.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

A bright, foggy white disk remains at the head of the Albatross, with waves of energy emitting like solar-flares from the disk passing the ship.

A moment of peace is disrupted as Saif storms out the cockpit, brushing past Mouse.

MOUSE

Hell of a close call, hey Cap-?
Oh, he's pissed. Alex?

RONNY

Alex.

INT. ALBATROSS - MEDICAL BAY - CONTINUOUS

Saif enters the Medical bay to find Alex vomiting into a bag held by Quatre. Cotch helps Kisheyu drink some water.

Alex sees Saif and turns red.

QUATRE

Just your typical subspace-nausea.
Nothing to worry-

SAIF

(to Alex)

Let's talk. In my quarters.

Saif leaves not waiting for an answer.

Alex gives Cotch and Kisheyu a sheepish glance before following Saif, leaving Quatre to grumble.

QUATRE

Oh sure. Drop the noids on my lap.
I better get bonus pay for this!

INT. ALBATROSS - SAIF'S QUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

A typical captain's room; pictures of beautiful girls and past friends and missions, a weapons rack, and a simple bed.

Alex leans against the wall, scolded by Saif.

SAIF

This is one hell of a favor to slam
in my face! Forget the Prefects
onboard. If I'm caught smuggling a
woman-

ALEX

Oh don't even start-!

SAIF

And what's the deal with the assi
Prefect? He a double agent?
Triple agent? We in the middle of
another goddamn war?

ALEX

They needed my help, I'm helping them-

SAIF

Oh, okay. Glad to know it's all for charity then-

ALEX

They're paying 300 grand!

SAIF

Money means jack when you're throwing us into a quasar field! I got colonists depending on us for food, meds, equipment, not to mention my ship, my own crew to take care of! But what I want to know is why you? What do the noids have on you?

Alex and Saif stare each other down.

ALEX

...I'm a psion. The first human to be a psion.

SAIF

Wait...what now?

Alex looks around his room for something.

On Saif's desk, there is a fluorescent lamp. She unscrews the bulb part, holding it in her left hand in front of Saif.

Her hand glows teal and the bulb lights up Saif's awe.

Alex tosses Saif the bulb and sits on his bed, slightly savoring his astonishment.

SAIF

How long have you been doing this?

ALEX

As long as I can remember. And get this: Prefects say if I help them, I can be a Prefect myself. Pretty neat, huh?

SAIF

Neat? A human Prefect...the first...and all because you're a psion? That's all it took?

ALEX

Well I did kind of disintegrate a
guys head-

SAIF

You did what!?

ALEX

By accident! And in self-defense-

SAIF

Alex, this is all kinds of shady-!

ALEX

Look. The only other option I had
wasn't an option. No matter where
I went or how much I struggled to
be something else, I'm expected to
be caged up as another baby
factory. For the first time, I get
to take control of my life. I'm
sorry I roped you guys into my
problem. But I needed help...

Saif sternly peers over Alex who doesn't relent. With
reluctant acceptance, Saif takes a seat next to Alex.

SAIF

Wow. The first human Prefect.
Who's also a woman...and a
cripple...and a hardened bitch with
a superiority complex-

Alex punches Saif's arm, trying to hide her smile.
Eventually stress turns to laughter.

SAIF

Just tell me one thing. Do you
trust the assi?

ALEX

Asarinu or not, he saved us today.
I think he deserves a chance.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - BRIDGE

A hive-like, crystallized room with an alien encased in a
glass-like bubble, controlling the ship using psionics.

All the aliens use psionics to control the ship.

The four Dark Figures who chased after Alex and the group
stand at attention to Nishuna.

The whole room is frozen and silent at his presence, except Möbius who waits in the corner in boredom.

NISHUNA

You let them get away...

DARK FIGURE 1

He manifested a magnetic shield at least four meters in diameter. And the chewmics were more troublesome-

Nishuna stomps his foot on the ground, a teal ripple of light expands, and the four Dark Figures are ensnared by crystal.

NISHUNA

He was one psion tethered to a bunch of chewmics.

They struggle to free themselves as Nishuna takes a step closer, another teal ripple, and the crystal wraps ever more tightly around their bodies, slowly crushing them.

NISHUNA

You think your incompetence excuses you? Our retribution against the Collective means nothing without that artifact!

Nishuna watches with no remorse as he chokes the life out of his subordinates.

Suddenly, a large, black whip snaps around Nishuna and shatters the crystal entrapments.

The Dark Figures fall to the ground, gasping for breath.

Nishuna turns with piercing anger towards a hauntingly calm Möbius gliding towards the Dark Figures.

NISHUNA

Möbius, explain yourself!

Möbius lowers his ghost-white face to be at level with the second Dark Figure, still coughing and gasping.

MÖBIUS

Your report mentioned a human psion.

DARK FIGURE 2

(wheezing)

Yes...faint...but I saw it. A chewmic psion. The first of its kind.

Möbius rises back, ignoring Nishuna's glare.

MÖBIUS

Confine yourselves to your
quarters. You're relieved of duty
until told otherwise.

The Dark Figures hustle out, still recovering from Nishuna's punishment.

Möbius turns to leave, passing by an infuriated Nishuna.

MÖBIUS

I found their intel quite
invaluable. Did you not?

Möbius glides around Nishuna who stews in his own anger.

EXT. SPACE

Stars and silence.

The Albatross blinks out of subspace, passing by a family of comets; their tails of dust and ice provide a mystifying glow to the bleakness of space.

INT. ALBATROSS - LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Alex sits at a hologram table, playing a spherical, connect-the-vectors game with Ronny. Her thoughts linger elsewhere, not focusing on Ronny's chain of victory points.

Mouse and Vincent sit at the table drinking, conversing openly.

VINCENT

...I'd go after the Slicks. For
some long-overdue payback!

MOUSE

Too bad you ain't the Prefect-to-be.

VINCENT

Come on Alex, you're thinking the
same thing, right?

ALEX

Why bother with small-time gangs?
The first payback I'd deliver: a
serious ass-kicking to the
Restoration.

RONNY

But before you beat anyone, you
first have to stop letting me win.
Oh! Another chain!

Alex frowns at Ronny as he winks her.

QUATRE (O.C.)

...and what do you expect to happen
on the off chance one of the
Prefects bites it?

Saif and Quatre walk in towards the kitchen, arguing.

SAIF

Right. It's not like there was a
position on my ship I explicitly
hired you for-

QUATRE

If memory serves me right, no
noid's heart is ever in the same
place! Even a drop of our morphine
can kill a noid-

MOUSE

Morphine bombs! Is that even a
thing? Can we make it a thing?

QUATRE

Not my point!

SAIF

Quatre. It's decided; we have to
see this mission through.
Especially since...

QUATRE

What? Alex? No noid goes to this
much trouble for one human; let
alone a damn knickknack unless it
was worth an ass-load of credits or
some kind of doomsday machine!

ALEX

Weapon or not, you still get your
ass-load of credits-

QUATRE

We're caught in the middle of a
noid agenda! They'll use us as
meek shields; they don't give two
shits about...

Quatre trails off as the room falls quiet.

Alex turns her head to see Cotch standing at the doorway.

After a momentary pause, Cotch speaks to Alex in galactic basic.

All eyes now land on Alex.

ALEX

She's asking for water.

Saif hesitates before motioning towards the water dispenser behind him.

Cotch wastes no time. She walks around towards the kitchen, taking a canteen Saif hands her.

The sound of water filling the metal canteen fills the room; everyone waits uncomfortably for Cotch to leave.

MOUSE

What do you suppose those spikes on her head are all about? Hey, Needle Noggin! When you're in the sack with your lover, do the pricks get in the way?

ALEX

Mouse, shut up.

MOUSE

What? Not like she understands-

Cotch bangs the cap back on the canteen, interrupting Mouse, and leaves without saying a word.

Alex rises up and runs after her.

RONNY

Sweetie?

Alex is already gone.

INT. ALBATROSS - CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

Cotch is busy doing maintenance on the various Prefect weapons, laid out neatly.

Kisheyu sits on his knees, preparing their meal. Using the water from the canteen, he pours some water into a cup of powder and stirs it around, creating a porridge paste.

COTCH

They refuse to trust us. Why bother with futile conversation?

KISHEYU

Time and patience, my friend.

COTCH

Of which we have neither-

Alex bursts in, glaring down at Kisheyu.

ALEX

I hate sitting around doing nothing. Start teaching me.

Both Kisheyu and Cotch look up at Alex confused.

ALEX

You said I'm a psion. So teach me to fight like you.

COTCH

Fight like Sir Ortoni? You barely have control of your abilities. Let alone your emotions.

Alex stiffens her glare, choosing to ignore Cotch.

Kisheyu stands, towering over Alex, who steps back, swallowing her intimidation.

Kisheyu then takes the canteen, holds his hand over the hole, and with hands glowing teal he gathers the water inside to form a baseball-sized orb of water swirling in his hand.

Using both his hands, Kisheyu separates the light-blue liquid oxygen in his left and the pinkish neon gas of hydrogen in his right.

Alex's face is aglow from the mixture of teal and pink light emanating from Kisheyu's psionics.

KISHEYU

Let's begin your first exercise.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - MÖBIUS QUARTERS

A pitch black room. Only Möbius' face can be made out.

He is looking over a hologram of the Albatross, with panels of texts next to it, including a graph of human anatomy.

The door slides open, and Nishuna enters.

Möbius pays him little mind.

NISHUNA

Do you play me for a fool?

MÖBIUS

I play everyone for a fool. It's nothing personal.

NISHUNA

Don't be coy! You may be father's favorite pawn, but he put me in command and that includes command over you. So show the esteem that is expected of you-

MÖBIUS

If I had, we would have overlooked an interesting development.

NISHUNA

The chewmics?

MÖBIUS

The Prefects' alliance with the humans was an interesting move, but they are in the presence of the very first human psion. An unaccounted variable, multiple conclusions. It's quite exhilarating.

NISHUNA

Spare me your petty infatuations. One chewmic psion can't change their fate.

MÖBIUS

But a single artifact can alter yours? You put far too much value on relics. Was its loss truly worth the lives of your scouts?

NISHUNA

You are not asarinu. You'll never understand what my people endured after the 1100 Year War.

MÖBIUS

And your suffering has little difference to the plight your dead empire inflicted upon humans.

(MORE)

MÖBIUS (CONT'D)

In fact the asarinu and humans have more in common now than-

NISHUNA

Don't you dare compare my people with chewmic filth! They are parasites unfit for this galaxy. And once we find the artifact, the asarinu will ascend to greater beings and erase the Collective's infinite existence. Figure out their next move, Möbius. There's no more room for failures.

MÖBIUS

There are no failures. Only changes in direction.

Nishuna hesitates, confused by Möbius' words, before exiting.

Alone again, Möbius continues to analyze the holograms, focusing on a picture of Alex. He leans in closer, and his mask morphs to copy Alex's features.

INT. ALBATROSS - CARGO BAY

Alex is struggling to maintain the shape of the water-orb between her hands, eventually splashing on the ground.

ALEX

Damn it!

Kisheyu walks around her, arm extended, and the water forms a stream in space toward his hand, forming a perfect sphere.

KISHEYU

Again.

He hands-off the orb to Alex, tensing up and regaining her stance.

PEAKING THROUGH THE ENTRANCE, the Albatross crew watches Alex.

RONNY

And that makes twelve.

VINCENT

Three seconds. A new personal best.

MOUSE

If she can pass four seconds, then
I'll be impressed...

BACK IN THE CARGO BAY, Alex holds the orb's shape. But her hands tremble and she's splashed as the orb bursts.

ALEX

Son of a..!

Alex whips her hands to the side to dry off.

Cotch frowns with a subtle shake of the head as she cleans the Prefect weapons.

Kisheyu approaches her with a new water-orb.

KISHEYU

Sit with me.

Kisheyu sits cross-legged in front of Alex who is hesitant to join.

Both she and Kisheyu hold the orbs shape.

Alex sees a black-opal pendant around Kisheyu's neck.

ALEX

So what's the deal with that
necklace? A memento from your
sweetheart?

KISHEYU

If only I had time for such
pleasantries. It's supposed to be
a flower from my home planet. I
carved it from a piece of
invitanium.

Kisheyu takes off the necklace and hands it to Alex.

She takes it, turning it in her fingers.

KISHEYU

Go on. Try to break it.

Alex looks at Kisheyu skeptically. She then presses tight on the stone, bangs it on the ground, even slams it.

Not a scratch.

She hands it back to Kisheyu, impressed.

ALEX

Strong for a tiny thing...

KISHEYU

A metal so dense, only psionics can mold and carve to this detail. One of your tests will be to shape a block in front of the Arbiters: the governors between systems.

ALEX

Carving blocks and water tricks. Not the boot camp I was expecting.

KISHEYU

Psionics isn't just a force of destruction. It is also a means of creation.

Alex rolls her eyes in disbelief but continues to focus on maintaining the water-orb's shape.

KISHEYU

We never properly thanked you for finding us passage. I hope my being asarinu hasn't complicated matters.

ALEX

Noids are noids; doesn't matter to me one bit.

COTCH

Easier to hate all races equally?

ALEX

You guys don't make much effort being friends yourselves-

Alex wavers and the hemisphere of water facing Alex ripples violently. Kisheyu flicks his fingers and retains the orb's shape.

COTCH

As disheartening as it sounds, there is a reason the Collective sets a high standard before sanctioning other races-

ALEX

So if I wasn't a psion, you wouldn't have bothered with me?

COTCH

Collective Law forbids interaction with infantile races. We preserve the natural evolution, even if nature calls for a species' extinction. Our primary concern is assuring that advanced races do not hinder or encourage these natural processes. But in the case of psions...there still remains much controversy.

ALEX

Whatever. So long as I get my own ship.

KISHEYU

And what do you hope to do with your own ship?

ALEX

What else? Get out there, see what I've been missing. Doesn't bother me if I have to play deputy. It'd just be nice to call the shots and explore the sights, you know?

Cotch and Kisheyu share a concerned look.

KISHEYU

Alex, you have to understand your species is at a critical point in its history. Countless organisms are still struggling microbes in oceans and gas clouds, never coming as far as to set foot on another planet or feel the sunlight of an alien star. We make up only a tiny percent of life in this galaxy capable of such wonders. And despite all the tragedy and hardship, your people continue to survive. But survival means nothing without the drive to be more than you were yesterday. The mark of a psion is a mark of ascension. And as Prefect, it will be up to you to become a beacon for your people.

ALEX

And are you a beacon to your people?

Kisheyu huffs a laugh, unable to answer. Alex's smirk slowly fades, considering what Kisheyu has told her.

AT THE ENTRANCE, the Albatross crew still spies on Alex and the Prefects.

QUATRE

Wish we could understand what they're saying.

There is a continual chirp, and tiny holographic screens appear in front of Ronny's eyes.

RONNY

A checkpoint!

Saif and Ronny rush to the cockpit.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT

An alarm sounds, Ronny and Saif rush in.

RESTORATIONIST PATROL (O.S.)

(over comm)

Repeat! Unidentified craft, you are trespassing in an established Restoration Zone permitted by Collective Law. State your business.

SAIF

This is Saif Al Kadar of the Albatross. We're escorting two Prefects to Trugowa.

RESTORATIONIST PATROL (O.S.)

Albatross, maintain your course and prepare for inspection.

SAIF

Uh...that's a big negative. Like I said, we have Prefects onboard-

RESTORATIONIST PATROL (O.S.)

If you attempt to flee, we will open fire. Stay on trajectory as we direct you to H.R. Science Vessel Arkham III.

RONNY

Saif, it'll be another hour before we can blink back to subspace.

Saif hesitates, weighing his options.

SAIF
Copy, Patrol. We'll stay on
course.

Saif slams his finger to cut the transmission and reaches for the intercom.

SAIF
Just when the noids aren't enough
of a migraine.
(over com)
Attention everyone, we're gonna
deal with unwelcome company in a
few minutes.

INT. ALBATROSS - CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

Alex, the Prefects, and the rest of the crew listen to Saif on the speaker.

SAIF (O.S.)
Hide anything and everything that a
Restorationist may consider
illegal. That goes double for you,
Mouse. And keep your mouths shut
about Alex!

Alex is frozen stiff and the water-orb splashes to the ground.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

Two patrol ships guide the Albatross towards the center of the axis-point of two binary planets.

A large human science vessel, a few, small escort of frigates, and a carrier sit in space.

The Albatross maintains a steady course and moderate speed.

The Albatross enters a hangar of the Science Vessel, and the two patrol ships fly out to patrol the area.

INT. SCIENCE VESSEL ARKHAM III - LATER

The crew of the Albatross stand in a line, inspected by three scientists scanning them with devices.

A small crowd of the Arkham III crew have gathered to surround the Albatross crew.

One is inspecting Alex more closely than the rest. Alex, annoyed, swings away the scientist's hand.

Everyone is tense. Saif studies the Arkham III crew.

Kisheyu and Cotch remain attentive and keep a close eye on Alex.

RESTORATIONIST TROOPER
Captain on deck!

The Restorationists get in formation for the entrance of their Captain, BENEDICT WEISS.

A frail man, walking with the sound of gears turning and metal clanking. Both hands are cybernetic. His eyes tired and worn out, his neck made up of metal and wires.

BENEDICT
I'm Captain Benedict Weiss of the
R.S.V. Arkham III.

Saif steps forward.

SAIF
Sir, Saif Al Kadar. Captain of the
Albatross.

Benedict approaches Saif, taking note of the Tribars emblem on his jacket.

BENEDICT
That patch on your jacket. You
flew for the Restoration?

SAIF
The 67th Tribars.

BENEDICT
Disbanded?

SAIF
Conflict of interest, sir.

BENEDICT
So now you turn to piracy?

SAIF
Again with the... Do we really come
off as piraty?

Ronny, Vince, and Mouse nod an apparent "yes."

Benedict inspects the rest of the Albatross crew. He eyes Kisheyu and Cotch with contempt.

BENEDICT

You're flying into Trugowa. We received word a Collective fleet just passed through there.

SAIF

The tall one's got important cargo that was left behind.

He comes to Alex and stares down at her, fascinated by her glowing eyes, studying her silver hair.

Alex grips her metal arm tightly.

Alex finally notices the Observers, floating by the doorway.

BENEDICT

Oh yes, the Observers; recent additions to our ship. Hundreds of them just started showing up on human colonies and vessels quite insistent on providing service to us. Even the Collective doesn't know what's gotten into them.

Alex gulps, struggling to keep her composure.

BENEDICT

There aren't many women who go grey at such a...youthful age. And such an unusual eye color.

ALEX

I don't fall for flattery, "vice."
And the Prefects are in a hurry.

Benedict looks to Saif, who bites his tongue, waiting for Benedict to speak.

BENEDICT

Mr. Al Kadar. Is it in your contract to smuggle fugitives?

SAIF

Sir?

BENEDICT

This woman you're traveling with is a runaway. An escapee from one of our research facilities.

Saif looks to crew, confused and panicked.

Benedict grabs Alex's cybernetic arm. She fidgets to free herself.

RONNY

Let her go, you asshole-!

Restoration guards block Ronny's interjection.

ALEX

I ain't the fugitive you're looking for, pal.

BENEDICT

You just happen to have glittering eyes and silver-white hair? No matter. A simple blood test can easily prove your identity-

ALEX

You pigs can squeal all you want. But I'm not staying here!

On the final word, Alex unintentionally releases a shockwave; causing lights and electronics in the hangar to malfunction.

Even Benedict malfunctions temporarily, staggering backwards.

The Restorationists look around dumbstruck, but the Albatross crew and Prefects tense up.

Benedict glares down at Alex as if possessed by insatiable greed.

BENEDICT

Take this breeder into custody!

The guards move in, but Mouse gets in their way.

A brawl ensues, as more guards bark orders at the Albatross crew to stand down.

Kisheyu uses his psionics to levitate and push the soldiers away. Cotch raises her gun-arm in defense.

KISHEYU

Stop! Stop! We talk!

All attention lands on Kisheyu, suddenly speaking poor English with a heavy accent.

KISHEYU

Alex is Prefect protect, yes.
Important mission. Take her, and
crime committed against Collective.

Alex looks up at Kisheyu, stunned by Kisheyu's poor English.

KISHEYU

(to Benedict)
Captain, we talk private, yes?

Benedict raises an eyebrow of intrigue.

INT. S.V. ARKHAM III - OUTSIDE MATERNITY CLINIC - LATER

The clinic is small but pearly white and clean. Four WOMEN are present, two pregnant, one with a child in her arms, exhausted, stressed, and feigned smiles.

Benedict, Alex, and Kisheyu are on the other side of the windows.

BENEDICT

Her? A Prefect!?

KISHEYU

Potential in Alex Chaser. She is
great translator, also resourceful-

BENEDICT

We have plenty of soldiers, years
of experience, far more qualified
than this fugitive!

ALEX

I was barely two, you son of a-!

KISHEYU

With great respect, Captain,
certain circumstances have gained
Alex much attention.

BENEDICT

Don't talk to me about
circumstances! Look at the
circumstances of your war, assi.
(pointing to women in
clinic)

(MORE)

BENEDICT (CONT'D)

We risk overcrowding our colonies that we have no choice but total population control: abducting women for breeding, storing male sperm and sterilizing boys at age 12--a child's age! We humans would fuck and shit to early graves if it wasn't for the Restoration's Seed program. And still your galaxy remains callous to our suffering! Our history is filled with explorers, conquerors, philosophers, and reformers. But now...we're just survivors holding on to what little life we have.

ALEX

Then let me become a Prefect. It may actually do some good-

BENEDICT

You aren't a soldier, girl!

ALEX

I'll learn to be one-!

BENEDICT

And risk decades of research and hardship to construct you!? You are Restoration property!

Alex steps forward, ready to hit Benedict, but Kisheyu holds her back.

KISHEYU

What research, General?

BENEDICT

...to perfect humanity. To make us equal among you noids.

Kisheyu closes his eyes, considering the weight of this fact.

KISHEYU

Is true Alex Chaser unique human? Genetic controlling can be terrible crime. One of two outcomes. Either I keep quiet, you help us, great reward. Or I report illegal research, Collective intervenes. Possible shut down.

Benedict glares coldly, even Alex is stunned, shocked by the remorseless Kisheyu.

Benedict suddenly laughs with frustration and anger.

INT. S.V. ARKHAM III - HALLWAY - LATER

Saif and his crew, along with Cotch, huddle together with Restoration soldiers standing guard over them.

Everyone is on edge.

BENEDICT (O.S.)
Captain Al Kadar?

Benedict leads Kisheyu and Alex back to the Albatross crew.

Saif steps up cautiously.

BENEDICT
We will accompany you as additional
escort. To ensure the Prefects are
successful in their mission. This
won't be a problem, will it?

SAIF
How can I object to Restoration
intervention?

Benedict turns to Alex and Kisheyu.

BENEDICT
We'll be in touch.

Benedict leaves the crew as they shift with uncertainty.

EXT. ALBATROSS - SUP-SPACE

The Albatross zips through the stream of subspace.

INT. ALBATROSS - CARGO BAY

Four Restoration soldiers wait patiently near some boxes, cleaning weapons.

In the opposite corner, Cotch and Kisheyu tend to their weapons.

One soldier gives the Prefects the stink-eye. Cotch flexes her needle-hairs.

MOUSE (O.C.)
You kids better behave yourselves,
you hear?

The Prefects and Restoration soldiers look up to see Mouse peering through the porthole of the closed door.

MOUSE

It would be a damn shame if you gave me any reason to press this iddy-biddy button that just so happens to open the cargo doors, sucking you out into the cold, open vacuum. Remember: you in Uncle Mouse's territory now.

Mouse proceeds to a bench and picks up a datapad to read as he puts his feet up.

ALEX (V.O.)

It's not something I enjoy bringing up.

INT. ALBATROSS - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Alex sits on a bench as Quatre examines her prosthetic; cleaning where flesh meets metal, checking reflexes, etc.

Ronny and Vincent listen attentively as Alex softly recalls her escape from Seed, burying any emotion she feels.

ALEX

I remember alarms blaring, people yelling, running. The woman who birthed me was shot; I watched her fall as I was being carried off-
Ow! Easy, Doc.

QUATRE

This is what happens when you don't clean the skin around the metal.

ALEX

We made it onto a shuttle but they must have tracked us. The scientist threw me and another girl into an escape pod. Guess you could say she was a sister. What I remember most is reaching out to the scientist, and the hatch crushing my arm as it slammed shut. It felt like an eternity in that space capsule, drifting, drunk on pain, and my sister just wouldn't stop crying. Eventually she did.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Stopped crying, stopped moving,
stopped breathing all together. In
the end, I was the lucky one.

Ronny and Vincent just stand in silence, taking in all that
Alex has kept bottled up. Saif steps in behind Ronny and
Vincent.

SAIF

So the Restoration sees you as more
than just another breeder?

Alex shrugs.

VINCENT

This is so messed up. Were you,
like, born from a tank-?

RONNY

Vince!

ALEX

Don't know. I've stopped looking
for answers and sympathy a long
time ago. The noids may have
screwed humanity over, but the
Restoration screwed me over. This
arm is a constant reminder of that.

QUATRE

Would you rather have one child
policies leading to black market
abortions? Or turn people's lives
into a giant lottery?

RONNY

How the hell can you even say that?

QUATRE

We're all paying a high price. But
Seed chose the lesser of all evils.

ALEX

And I bet women who had no choice
are beyond thrilled.

Quatre packs up his supplies. Alex moves to put on her space-
suit, ignoring his rant.

QUATRE

By no means is it fair. But the
Restoration's population control
has always been about our continual
existence.

(MORE)

QUATRE (CONT'D)

Who does the Collective's control benefit? Ask yourself that when you're spit-shining your Prefect uniform.

An unsettling silence follows Quatre's exit.

Alex struggles to bring her metal arm through the space-suits sleeve.

SAIF

Give us a minute.

Ronny and Vincent exit.

ALEX

(about the suit)

Damn it!

SAIF

Let me help.

ALEX

I can do it-

SAIF

You keep yanking like that, you'll tear a hole in it. Now shut up and let me help.

Alex huffs with annoyance but allows Saif to untangle the sleeve.

SAIF

The difference between being on a colony and out there is you won't have a cable to keep you from spinning out. Focus on a single point, move slowly, and always hold on to something. Other than that, it's a total cake-walk.

Alex nods. The two stare into each other's eyes, hypnotized for a moment.

They break away, slightly embarrassed.

SAIF

So...you still feeling good? About this whole psion thing?

ALEX

Yep. Still feeling good.

SAIF

Because everyone has said their thoughts but you act like you just hitched a ride.

ALEX

Me making Prefect won't change anything.

SAIF

It does change everything-

ALEX

I'm no savior! I only went along with it to get out of being a mom. Why should I worry over making things better for everyone if they can't already do it themselves? It's pathetic! If I can get by on my own, so should everyone else.

SAIF

Sometimes we forget the good we're capable of doing, we need something to remind us. Or someone.

ALEX

I'm a mechanic; I fix machines. I can't fix people. And what... what if I'm not cut out for it?

SAIF

Then you can always run with us.

Alex looks up at Saif cockeyed.

SAIF

To hell with noids. Forget everyone else. You can join our crew. Chaser and the Corsairs!

Alex smiles, stifling a laugh.

SAIF

Yeah, okay, the name's stupid. We'll work on it later. Maybe we'll have an exploding head as our emblem. Plus your psionics will send other pirates packing-

ALEX

So we're pirates now?

SAIF
Corsairs! No one seems to grasp
the concept.

Alex manages to laugh as does Saif. But it quickly fades.

ALEX
Saif, whatever happens...thank you.
For everything.

Both shift awkwardly before Alex nods and starts to leave.

SAIF
You'll let me know, won't you?
What you want?

Alex turns to Saif, a subtle smile of admiration.

ALEX
You'll be the first.

EXT. SPACE - DAWN LIGHT GRAVEYARD

The Albatross and a Restoration Carrier blink out of
subspace, flying straight into...

A large debris field of damaged, alien ships and cruisers.
Two cruisers, the largest ones in the field, are the same
cruiser-models of the one that docked at Second Terrace.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Ronny, Alex, Kisheyu, and Cotch are at the cockpit looking
out into the field.

Saif enters.

SAIF
Holy...

Everyone, including the Prefects, is awestruck.

Kisheyu points to the Cruiser that has been partially torn.
A giant scar runs down the middle of the ship.

KISHEYU
<There. The Dawn Light.>

SAIF
Alright, Ronny. Take her in, nice
and easy.

RONNY
Double copy, roger that, Cap.

EXT. SPACE - DAWN LIGHT GRAVEYARD - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross flies slowly through the field of debris.

BACK AT THE Carrier, two Restoration fighters launch.

INT. RESTORATION CARRIER - BRIDGE

Benedict Weiss stands attentively looking out into the Graveyard.

RESTORATION SOLDIER 1 (O.S.)
(over comm)
We're approaching the vessel.
We'll send more data once aboard.

BENEDICT
Proceed with your mission.

EXT. SPACE - DAWN LIGHT GRAVEYARD - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross comes to a stop near a section of the Dawn Light.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

A door slides open and the Prefects, Alex, Saif, Mouse, and the four troopers are behind it, all in their space suits.

While the humans dress in traditional, albeit more advanced space-suits, the Prefects have a silvery, mercury-like membrane masking their entire heads.

Saif notices the two Restoration fighters patrolling the area.

Mouse steps up with a harpoon gun attached to the ship.

MOUSE
Firing harpoon.

Mouse shoots the harpoon. In silence, the harpoon attaches to an opening on the Dawn light.

Two soldiers and Cotch are the first ones out. Cotch's back pack allows her to "fly," no need for a cable.

Alex swallows her fear away.

Cotch and the soldiers land inside the Dawn Light.

Mouse and another soldier head out next. Alex steps up but hesitates.

P.O.V. ALEX CHASER - CONTINUOUS

The distance between the Albatross and Dawn Light is hauntingly vast.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

Alex stumbles a bit, but she shakes her head to rid herself of dizziness.

SAIF

Alex?

ALEX

I'm fine.

Alex attaches her zip-line and heads out. Kisheyu follows closely behind her. Saif and the last soldier finally depart the Albatross.

Alex observers her surroundings; the debris, the damaged ships, the infinite darkness filled with stars.

She forces her attention straight ahead, drawing ever closer to the Dawn Light. Kisheyu comes up next to her.

ALEX

Could you really do it? Shut down the Restoration?

KISHEYU

We were rushed. Sometimes a threat encourages haste.

ALEX

Part of me wishes that you'd do it.

KISHEYU

And the other?

ALEX

Would rather know what you're doing all this for. I never met a noid so set on sticking his noes where it don't belong.

Kisheyu is quiet for a moment.

KISHEYU

Not every asarinu wanted conquest of the galaxy. Even fewer chose to stay with the Collective after we had seceded and started the 1100 Year War. Those few were marked and exiled for their decision.

Alex stares at Kisheyu, speechless, as he points to his tatoo.

KISHEYU

I'm just one of the few who strive to be a counterbalance in this fragile galaxy.

Alex and Kisheyu arrive on the Dawn Light, followed by Saif.

SAIF

(over comm)

Ronny, we're all on the ship. Just sit tight.

RONNY (O.S.)

You keep my girl safe in there, you hear?

MOUSE

Hell of a graveyard. I'm getting jittery just standing here.

Cotch activates a device on her wrist and holographic panels appear. A three dimensional map of the Dawn light opens up.

In red, a line maps out the path to their destination.

COTCH

<This way.>

Cotch and Kisheyu lead the way.

INT. DAWN LIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The corridors range from being slightly clustered to impossible to pass.

Tools, objects, wires, and dead bodies float aimlessly.

Light beams from the astronauts' helmets guide their way. All are careful not to get tangled in the debris.

RONNY (O.S.)
How's it looking?

MOUSE
Like the Collective got their asses
handed to them.

Ronny and Saif laugh.

The group comes to a canyon within the ship; a giant rip in the hull creating a scar.

Cotch motions to the group and points to their destination on the other side of the canyon.

Cotch pushes off and flies to the other side, landing with grace.

MOUSE
Of course. Why bother being
dropped off at your destination
when you have a metal ravine to
jump across?

SAIF
Stow it, Mouse.

The first two soldiers make the jump to Cotch, using their jets on their suits to guide them.

Saif pats Alex on the back.

SAIF
Remember, focus on that single
point. It's like playing darts
back at the saloon.

ALEX
Not quite how I would put it.

Mouse makes the jump. He launches towards Cotch but he pushed awkwardly and is spinning.

MOUSE
Crap, crap, crap!

Cotch jumps out, grabs him, and gently sling-shots him to the landing. The two soldiers catch him as Cotch returns.

MOUSE
I'm okay!

RONNY (O.S.)
What just happened?

SAIF
Nothing. Mouse just being Mouse.

Mouse gives Saif the finger.

SAIF
(to Alex)
We'll go on three.

Alex swallows with a nod. Saif puts his arm around her.

SAIF
Ready?...Three!

Saif launches and the two make their way to Cotch.

But as they float, a chunk of the hull spins towards them.

COTCH
<Alex! Debris behind you!>

Alex turns to see the hull-chunk catching up to them.

ALEX
Saif!

Saif turns his head and sees the chunk.

Saif pushes Alex to Cotch and both go in opposite directions, but Saif's push forces him "downward" into space.

Kisheyu and the two other soldiers move out. The soldiers move to help Alex while Kisheyu moves to Saif.

Cotch and the two soldiers make it to Alex, who turns to Saif and Kisheyu.

ALEX
Oh no! Saif!

Kisheyu gets to Saif but the g-force spins them out of control. He looks around, finds a large tank.

Using psionics, he moves the tank right behind him, allowing for Kisheyu and Saif to push off towards the rest of the group.

Kisheyu moves debris out of the way or uses debris as anchors to guide them back.

They land with a stumble, but are alright. Alex helps Saif up.

SAIF
Physics can kiss my ass.
(to Kisheyu)
Guess I owe you one.

Kisheyu nods.

INT. DAWN LIGHT - VAULTS - CONTINUOUS

The group arrives in the vaults; a section of the ship with tall, metal cubes.

The group follows Kisheyu and Cotch, looking at the various vaults, wondering what's inside.

Alex trips on a thick cable, but Mouse catches her.

ALEX
Thanks. Didn't see the cables...

Alex follows the cable and finds that it's no cable; it's a tentacle belonging to a large, monstrous alien cephalopod, pinned by iron spikes into the wall.

Alex and Mouse shriek. Everyone jumps back in fright, but calm down when they realize the creature is dead.

RESTORATION SOLDIER 2
A hiver! It's a real hiver! I've never seen one this close!

ALEX
Why is it pinned like that?

COTCH
<Hurry up!>

Cotch and Kisheyu continue on, slowly followed by the rest. Alex's eyes still fixed to the corpse.

ALEX
Wait, what's wrong?

SAIF
When hivers scavenge an area, they always leave behind a corpse.

ALEX
They do that to themselves?

MOUSE

Sure it's all fascinating but I'd rather grab the damn artifact than admire a hiver carcass!

The group stops at one of the vaults.

Cotch approaches a panel, inputs a code, and the vault doors slowly open.

Behind the doors is a chamber; an alien electronic device holds a shiny, basketball-sized orb.

A perfect sphere that reflects everything. There are subtle engravings underneath the mirror-shell.

The humans look at the device with curiosity and puzzlement.

Kisheyu approaches it.

KISHEYU

<Good. The artifact appears undamaged.>

MOUSE

That's it? A shiny alien ball? I was expecting...I don't know, something bigger.

Kisheyu inputs the codes to release the sphere from its holding. Cotch takes out a cylinder case to carry the sphere.

RONNY (O.S.)

Captain! We got trouble!

SAIF

Let me guess...

EXT. DAWN LIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A large, jellyfish-like ship phases into the area (exiting subspace travel) just outside the graveyard.

Smaller, scarab-like aliens carrying octopus-like aliens exit the jellyfish carrier.

Hivers move in space with many small, solar-fins that glow.

The "scarabs" release the "octopi" by spinning, using the force of momentum, throwing them to the Dawn light. The spiders move to intercept the Restorationist fighters.

The Restoration fighters fire upon the scarabs. The scarabs attack by attaching themselves to the fighters.

INT. DAWN LIGHT - VAULTS - CONTINUOUS

Cotch and Kisheyu finish locking the sphere in the cylinder case, and everyone makes their escape.

ALEX

The hivers?

SAIF

That corpse of their's ain't just for marking territory! They're called hivers because they're a hive-mind. Stay close and move fast!

The group floats past the hiver corpse; their bodies reflected off its red-eye lens.

INT. DAWN LIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The group continuous to hurry towards the exit.

SAIF

Ronny! Break away and evade them! I'll signal you when-!

Crash! A hiver breaks through the wall charges at the group. It is the size of an elephant.

The restoration soldiers fire as it charges.

The hiver fires bone-spikes kill one of the soldiers.

Kisheyu uses his psionics to manipulate all the sharp, floating debris and throws them at the hiver's eye.

The hiver flails in pain, continuously bombarded with gunfire. After several shots, it floats dead.

But another hiver crawls through the hole of the first.

Kisheyu focuses his psionics on the hiver itself and pushes it against the wall.

KISHEYU

<Cotch! Get them out!>

Cotch and the group exit.

Kisheyu motions his hands, and the hiver's tentacles curl inward and it begins vomiting yellowish-green foam.

Kisheyu catches up with the group as the hiver dies.

EXT. DAWN LIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross twists and turns through the debris field, firing at the hiver.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Ronny is stiff at the controls.

Suddenly, three hiver scarabs attach themselves to the ship.

RONNY

Oh no you don't! Not with my baby!

Ronny spins the ship.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross spins fast and the hivers are thrown off. Two go flying off but the last digs its claws into the hull.

The turrets lock on and fry it to a crisp.

INT. ALBATROSS - TURRET CONTROLS

Quatre is just as tense as Ronny at the gun controls.

RONNY (O.S.)

Doc, keep them off me!

QUATRE

Can't you fly straighter?

RONNY (O.S.)

Oh, I'm sorry, let me pull over and ask the hivers to move slower!

INT. ALBATROSS - ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vincent types feverishly at the controls to adjust flow of coolant and energy.

One of the reactor's alarms go off and he rushes to its panel to fix the problem.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross flies close to the Dawn Light to pick off visible hiver.

INT. DAWN LIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The group rushes through corridors while two soldiers fire behind them.

A hiver blocks their path.

Kisheyu uses his psionics to hurl a large block at the hiver but another hiver crashes through the wall, and another, until a total of three hivers corner the group.

Cotch fires her guns, Kisheyu juggles his focus, managing the barrier and igniting the hiver eyes with blue fire.

A few carcasses float in the room, but more keep coming.

Behind them, a hiver crashes through the wall and charges.

A restoration soldier sees it and fires.

RESTORATION SOLDIER 3

Behind us!

Saif and Mouse fire their guns but the hiver isn't stopping.

RESTORATION SOLDIER 1

Corporal! The emitter!

The soldier reaches down to a device attached to his side. He presses a button and a high-pitched rumble emits.

The hivers cower away but Kisheyu is also affected. He crouches down and grabs his helmet.

But Alex lets out a scream and claws at her helmet.

Cotch rushes to Kisheyu as Saif and Mouse stop Alex from ripping her suit open.

COTCH

<Sir Ortoni, is it->

KISHEYU

<A psi-emitter...>

ALEX

Make it stop! That sound! I can't stand it!

MOUSE

What sound? We're in space!

The Restoration soldiers stand in shock; their eyes focused on Alex who continues to shriek and thrash about.

INT. RESTORATION CARRIER - BRIDGE

Benedict watches the camera feed from one of his soldiers, fascinated and cold.

BENEDICT

I want that girl back on this ship.

INT. DAWN LIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers turn their guns on the Prefects and mercenaries.

SAIF

You backstabbing pieces of-

RESTORATION SOLDIER 1

Your translator is coming with us.
Hand her over-

Alex slams and bangs her fists on the ground, screaming. Steam rises from inside her helmet, her arms spark teal, and the structure of the hall is warped.

Everyone goes flying. They look to hold on to something as they bump into each other.

Pillars pierce through, stabbing hivers, barely missing the Prefects and Albatross crew as they fend off the soldiers.

KISHEYU

<Cotch! She's rebounding! Destroy
the emitter!>

Cotch flips and jumps through the obstacles, kills the soldier, and destroys the emitter.

Alex breaths in deep, reeling back from the torturous pitch.

Mouse and Saif quickly shoot the remaining soldiers.

With the emitter destroyed, Kisheyu rises and ignites the hivers' eyes with a blue fire-blast and provides cover.

Cotch and Saif help Alex to her feet, who clutches her head.

She is weak from the ordeal, on the edge of a panic attack.

SAIF

Ronny, things just got complicated.

RONNY (O.S.)

No shit! Now I got Restorationists on my heels! What did you guys do?

MOUSE

Conflict of interest! We're heading to the scar now. Don't be late!

RONNY (O.S.)

Just like old times.

SAIF

Alex, look at me. We gotta move.

Alex snaps out of her shock.

ALEX

(to Kisheyu)

<Kisheyu, get us to the scar!>

Kisheyu leads them back to the scar.

INT. RESTORATION CARRIER - BRIDGE

Benedict hovers over the console projecting the map of the battle ship, tense with frustration.

RESTORATION OFFICER

Sir! More hivers converging on our point.

BENEDICT

Order our ships to return to defensive-!

The bridge shakes from the impact.

EXT. RESTORATION CARRIER - CONTINUOUS

Hiver spiders and octopi surround the carrier, attacking it.

INT. DAWN LIGHT - SCAR - CONTINUOUS

Kisheyu, Cotch, Saif, Alex, and Mouse arrive at the large scar, where several hivers octopi crawl through the hull.

Octopi on the other side of the scar launch themselves across the scar towards the group.

The group fires back with Kisheyu using his psionics to fling the hivers twirling helplessly in space.

SAIF

Ronny, don't you leave us hanging!

RONNY (O.S.)

Coming in at 10 and 11!

Saif looks up and spots the Albatross flying towards them.

It rotates and opens its cargo doors in front of the group.

RONNY (O.S.)

Come on! Move your asses!

Saif grabs hold of Alex.

SAIF

Hold tight!

ALEX

Wait, are we-?

MOUSE

Just like shooting a goal.

ALEX

But from here-!

SAIF

Mouse, Prefects!

ALEX

Wait, wait!

Alex clutches to Saif tightly as they float towards the Albatross. One by one, Mouse and the Prefects follow.

Alex holds Saif tight as they enter the Albatross.

Hiver attempt to intercept but Kisheyu manages to fling every single one into space.

Eventually, everyone enters the cargo door.

MOUSE

Woo! Ronny, I could kiss ya!

RONNY (O.S.)

Save it for when we're home free.

EXT. DAWN LIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross' cargo doors seal shut and flies out of the graveyard, dodging and shooting at hiver.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT

Saif enters, putting on his jacket.

He takes the seat next to Ronny and plots their next destination.

SAIF

Got the coordinates from the Prefects. Punching it in-

Suddenly, a large, crystal ship blinks into the area, catching Ronny and Saif off guard.

This large ship fires a missile at the large hiver vessel, engulfing it in a white bubble of flame and radiation.

The hiver spiders and octopi writhe in pain until dead.

INT. RESTORATION CARRIER - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Alarms sound and the alien ship fires particle beams at the carrier.

The room goes red as the carrier is torn to pieces.

RESTORATIONIST OFFICER

Raising shields! Preparing for retreat!

The crew panics, but Benedict remains stoic.

BENEDICT

There's no time for that.

EXT. RESTORATION CARRIER - CONTINUOUS

The carrier is ripped apart by the alien ship's beams.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Ronny and Saif are stunned by the destruction.

SAIF

Get us out of here, Ronny.

Ronny tries to maneuver the craft but is unable to.

Alex and the Prefects enter.

RONNY
It's no good! I've lost control!

KISHEYU
<It's the brotherhood!>

Kisheyu turns to Cotch.

KISHEYU
<Cotch.>

Cotch nods and leaves.

ALEX
What do we do now?

KISHEYU
Be Strong.

Alex, Saif, and Ronny look at Kisheyu grimly and back at the Brotherhood ship.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross slowly approaches the crystal ship.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - HANGAR - LATER

The crystallized bee-hive is hauntingly beautiful.

Alex and the crew kneel to the BROTHERHOOD CULTISTS; the majority are asarinu with a few minority races, many wearing grey and blackish-blue body suits with color-band collars.

The Albatross is being ransacked.

Its crew are wearing an uncomfortable looking collar-device. Cotch is not among them.

Some of the Brotherhood cultists eye Alex with interest.

The Brotherhood cheers. Alex and the crew turn to see Nishuna holding the spherical artifact in his hands with victory.

He is followed by Möbius, who shows no emotion towards their accomplishment.

They approach Kisheyu.

Nishuna and Kisheyu temporarily speak Asarinu, a mesh of Japanese and Swahili.

NISHUNA

<Quite a chase you had us on,
Prefect.>

KISHEYU

<Still obsessing over antiques,
Nishuna?>

NISHUNA

<You should know that I'd do
anything for my people, your
treacherous highness.
How your family must feel. Prince
Kisheyu Ortoni the Eighth; the
Royal Defector.>

(to English)

The highest shame on the Imperial
Court.

The asarinu snicker; some even spit on the ground.

KISHEYU

Just making amends for our
atrocities-

Nishuna slaps Kisheyu across the face.

NISHUNA

You dare lecture me on atrocities,
defector? Have you forgotten the
Collective's atrocities against our
people?

Möbius looks at Alex.

MÖBIUS

Is this the human?

Alex raises her head to meet Möbius cold gaze.

KISHEYU

She's a novice, but has potential.

NISHUNA

Potential?

Nishuna can barely contain his laughter.

All Brotherhood cultists laugh, except Möbius.

Möbius is fixated on Alex, curious like a cat. Alex can't pull her eyes off him, despite her intimidation.

Unlike other psions, Möbius' glow is an internal orange.

NISHUNA

Any potential they had died years ago! Even your Collective refuses to acknowledge them. But after today, our people's road to reclaim our galaxy begins. Even if it calls for another 1100 Year War!

KISHEYU

You can't purge entire civilizations. Not when so many will stand against-

Nishuna uses a remote that electrocutes Kishuyu's collar. He collapses to the floor, smoking and unconscious.

ALEX

Stop it! Leave him alone!

The Brotherhood cheers for Nishuna, chanting "Nothing is equal. Everything is Connected."

NISHUNA

Lock this scum up and jettison the chemmics-

MÖBIUS

Belay that order. Father has personally requested to meet the human psion.

Nishuna turns ungratefully towards the Möbius.

MÖBIUS

He would be rather disappointed if he missed the opportunity.

Saif leans towards Alex.

SAIF

Alex, what are they saying?

Alex shakes her head, unable to answer.

NISHUNA

Bring her, then.

Two Brothers raise Alex to her feet and they follow Nishuna and Möbius.

SAIF

Hey, where you taking her-?

Saif is electrocuted by his collar.

EXT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The crystal ship turns slowly and blinks into subspace, leaving the lifeless hiver and damaged Restoration ships.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - HOLOGRAM ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A door slides open and Alex is pushed in by the two guards, followed by Nishuna carrying the sphere and Möbius who waits by the door.

The room is a concave, circular saucer; small, built solely for communications. Alex scans her surroundings.

The guards press down on her shoulders forcing her to kneel. They kneel next to her.

Nishuna kneels last, still holding the sphere gently.

Möbius doesn't kneel.

After a moment of silence, the room fades to dark and a giant hologram of FATHER materializes before the group.

Father is an old and frail asarinu, thousands of years old, with long hair flowing from his head. He wears a great, black robe that glitters with stars and nebulas.

FATHER

Greetings, my children.

NISHUNA

High Father, we have completed our mission. The artifact is safe.

FATHER

And I see you have brought a guest to my summons.

Nishuna looks ungratefully at an astonished Alex.

MÖBIUS

The human psion, Your Excellency. She has the aura. Albeit faint.

FATHER

So you're the one our scouts intercepted. What is your name, child?

Alex remains silent, out of fear and stubbornness.

NISHUNA

Show your respect, chewmic-!

FATHER

Nishuna! You are to leave her and the other humans unharmed. Möbius and I will speak with the girl, alone.

Nishuna opens his mouth to object but closes it. He nods his head in a bow and rises.

FATHER

And leave the artifact with Möbius. The human will find it most insightful.

Nishuna glares coldly at Möbius before placing it in his ivory white hands.

Nishuna leaves, and Alex, Möbius, and Father are the only three in the room.

FATHER

Now then, why don't you tell me about your journey.

ALEX

Look, I don't know who you think you are, but I got no intention of talking to some giant space-ghost and his phantom side-kick. Not until you tell me what you plan to do to me and my friends.

Alex sits on the floor cross-legged. Möbius smirks.

ALEX

So I hope you enjoy floating up there in awkward silence, gramps.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - PRISON CELLS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross crew sit in separate cells; Saif and Quatre in one, Ronny and Vincent in a second, and Mouse in a third.

Mouse paces back and forth in his cell. Ronny sits close to the cell bars and Vincent lies down. Saif walks in a circle slower than Mouse and Quatre is crouched in a corner.

MOUSE

(to Guards)

Hey, you guys got any reading material? Speak any human?

The guards don't answer.

MOUSE

Don't know what's worse; that I'm gonna die or I gotta sit through boredom until it happens.

VINCENT

What do you think their doing with Alex?

MOUSE

Bet you my last credit they're brainwashing her or something.

RONNY

No way. She's way too hot headed for these stiffs.

SAIF

I sure hope so.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - HOLOGRAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex still sits cross legged. Father hovers over her patiently.

FATHER

The Prefect who was traveling with you; do you consider him a friend?

Alex remains stubbornly silent.

FATHER

Has the Prefect told you anything of the artifact's importance?

ALEX

Never bothered to ask-

Möbius manifests next to Alex, taking her hand and putting it to the orb.

She resists, but her hand glows blue as does the sphere.

The sphere levitates and sparks of light flare out. It hums and finally projects a golden hologram of a very alien creature. A jellyfish flower with feathers.

Alex is astonished by the exotic creature. It speaks with a trill of harp and flute sounds.

FATHER

This relic belonged to one of many Precursor races; those who came before. The Collective has been the seat of power for so many cultures. Epochs of history, galactic dominion passing down from one species to another.

MÖBIUS

Many races die out from either war or disease. But there are a few who manage to cheat death and go on to exist in other forms.

Alex looks at Möbius skeptically.

ALEX

You telling me this thing holds the secret to immortality?

The hologram changes into a light-whisp being. Its large, light-beam wings extend out and it flies around the room.

FATHER

Not just immortality, child. This relic details the process for a race to become astrals. Think of it; no need for physical bodies, capable of traveling in space and time without starships. Transcending dimensions. Becoming Gods.

The hologram disperses. Everyone is left to darkness save for Father's holographic light.

MÖBIUS

And in its records, it reveals that the only ones capable of becoming astrals were a psionic race.

ALEX

How convenient for you. I can see why the Collective's not too fond of you nut-jobs having it.

FATHER

You're right in thinking the artifact a dangerous tool to be misused. So if the Collective was as noble as it claimed, why not destroy it rather than go through the effort in retrieving it?

Alex considers the question, confused at the direction of the conversation.

FATHER

It's certainly convenient that after years of neglect, the Collective suddenly takes an interest in your people now that you're a psion.

MÖBIUS

And offered the chance to become a Prefect no less. Do you think your welfare is what drives the Collective's motives?

FATHER

You've seen a psion's destructiveness. They wouldn't dare let such might out of their control. Being a Prefect is no less than being a prisoner to the state, forced to serve under a ruling power.

ALEX

No. No! Kisheyu wouldn't-

FATHER

You never had a choice, my child. You're either destined to be another tool of war or branded a menace against Collective order. Psions are meant for greater things. The asarinu knew this, and the Collective fears it. So much so, at the end of the 1100 Year War, the Collective unleashed a virus, nearly eradicating the asarinu.

MÖBIUS

And your people just happened to be in the crossfire. You were deemed expendable.

Alex's horror nearly stops her breathing.

ALEX

All I wanted was my own ship...

FATHER

Nothing is equal. Everything is connected. Take time to reflect on this.

Father vanishes, leaving Alex and Möbius alone in darkness.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Five Brotherhood engineers monitor the generators.

Suddenly, one of the engineers tenses up, his groans muffled and drowned out by the hum of the machines and is slowly laid down by an invisible force.

A second engineer's throat is slit and tossed over the side.

A third engineer turns to where the second used to be. He spots the first dead engineer on the floor. There is a "spit" sound and a hole is burned in his head.

Cotch de-cloaks with her gun-arm raised and she finishes off the two last engineers in silence.

Tiny holographic screens appear in front of Cotch's eyes as she sabotages the generators by setting up timed charges.

COTCH

This is Prefect Cotch Nickollania,
Crimson 3297-41, to Directorate 12,
Requesting immediate rescue.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - HOLOGRAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex sits on the floor, hunched over her knees, lost in thought and despair.

MÖBIUS

Such a tragedy to have befallen
your race. You took the great leap
into a larger realm only to be
kicked to the side by greater
beings.

Möbius moves in front of her, picking up the Orb, turning it in his hands.

MÖBIUS

Many asarinu have placed high hopes into this little artifact. They see it as a means to start over. Me? I have lived far longer than is necessary. Immortality is nothing more than the desperate dreams of fanatics and cowards.

Alex doesn't flinch; too preoccupied by the earlier discussion.

MÖBIUS

What do you cling to, I wonder. Would you not want the same? Immortal and unbounded by your limitations?

Alex remains silent as Möbius stares at her.

MÖBIUS

You are a fascinating anomaly. It would be wasted potential if your life were to end-

ALEX

You have your damn artifact. I want nothing more to do with it. So unless you kill me, unless you release my friends, I swear I will do everything to make your lives a living hell for as long as I breathe.

Möbius perks up, fascinated and bewildered by Alex's resolve.

The ship shakes and Alex stumbles. Möbius is unaffected while Alex is rocked to her feet.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Above a great, gas-giant planet, sparks flash from nowhere and the Brotherhood Ship blinks into the area.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - HOLOGRAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alarms go off and the room is set aglow of purple.

Nishuna enters with two Guards.

NISHUNA

Take the chewmic back to her cell.

Alex rises and backs away as the two Guards approach.

But Möbius stands between them.

NISHUNA

Möbius. Step aside.

Möbius, with the artifact still in hand, slices and impales the guards at lightening speed.

Both Alex and Nishuna stand in horror as Möbius cocks his head morphs his hand with the artifact through his body and hands it off to Alex.

MÖBIUS

There's been a change in direction.

Nishuna's psionics makes his body glow teal as he manifests a light-armor shell.

Möbius rushes Nishuna, enveloping him in his black veil, and both vanish into the ground.

Alex clutches the Artifact, frozen in shock. She finally realizes the door has remained open.

ALEX

Fucking noids!

Alex peaks out of the hologram room. The coast is clear.

She treads a cautious jog through the hallways to find her friends.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - BRIDGE

BROTHERHOOD CULTISTS scatter in a frenzy trying to solve the engine failure.

BROTHERHOOD CULTIST

It's no use! All engines are down
and we're caught in the planet's
gravitational pull.

BROTHERHOOD CULTIST 2

Where in blazes is Brother Nishuna?

On the holographic map, two Collective cruisers appear out of subspace, projected with tiny dots indicating fighters launching.

COLLECTIVE OFFICER (V.O.)
 This is Collective Vessel
 Maklauloc. By order of Collective
 Law you are hereby under arrest.
 Shut down your weapon systems and
 prepare for boarding!

BROTHERHOOD CULTIST
 Launch our fighters! Prepare for
 combat!

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The Brotherhood's crystal ship maneuvers and begins slowly descending towards the gas-planet as it launches fighters.

COLLECTIVE OFFICER (V.O.)
 They're descending into the planet!
 Launch the rescue teams now!

The three Collective cruisers maneuver to catch up with the Brotherhood ship, launching tadpole fighters to fight Brotherhood cone-shaped fighters.

Fighting like wasps and hawks in space, the Collective makes quick work of the Brotherhood fighters but not without losing some of their own.

Dagger shape shuttles zip towards the crystal ship and puncture it like a nail halfway through the wood.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The giant, thick blades of the shuttles release a goo clogging the hole it created to prevent air from escaping.

The blade opens like a beak and Collective soldiers fall out to engage the Brotherhood Cultists

Along with conventional weapons, the Collective utilizes flash-bangs and psi-emitter darts to fight psions.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

Möbius' shadow explodes into the area, revealing a teal-glowing Nishuna, protected by his psionics.

Nishuna quickly scans the surroundings, stalking carefully as he searches for Möbius in the darkness.

NISHUNA

Coward! Come out and face me!

MÖBIUS (O.C.)

Exciting isn't? Unknown variables hindering your progress. So many ways this could end.

NISHUNA

The only way this will end is when I present your head to Father. You think you can steal the secrets for yourself?

A shadow whips past Nishuna, catching him guard. Fear and tension crawls up his spine.

MÖBIUS (O.C.)

What need have I for which I already possess?

NISHUNA

Then you're an agent for the Collective, is that it? Face me!

A shadow zips behind Nishuna, who quick-draws his gun and fires into nothing.

MÖBIUS (O.C.)

I'm merely a spectre tugging on the strings of change. And you are a spec fumbling in the darkness!

Möbius' face manifests in the darkness and lunges at Nishuna, and the two engage in a psionic battle of flashes and dark blades.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - PRISON CELLS

The Albatross crew reacts to the tremors on the ship.

QUATRE

What the hell's happening now?

A ruckus is heard from outside.

Two Brotherhood Guards are taken out.

Cotch enters and begins unlocking the gates and unshackling the collars around their necks.

MOUSE

Needle Noggin!

VINCENT

I've never been so happy to see a
noid!

Cotch unlocks the gates, Mouse and Saif rush to the weapons
the guards were holding.

They fumble with the staff-guns.

MOUSE

How in the hell do you...?

COTCH

<Psionic weapons. No good.>

Cotch hands Mouse and Saif two, small pistols she had
attached to her back.

RONNY

Where's Alex?

COTCH

<Little time. Sir Ortoni needs
help.>

(looks around)

<Where is Alex?>

SAIF

Alex. Where-is-she?

QUATRE

She could be anywhere-

SAIF

Then we'll find her. Needles. We.
Follow.

Saif gestures Cotch to lead them out as they rush to rescue
Alex and Kisheyu.

EXT. SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

The battle outside rages on.

The crystal ship begins to graze the gas-planet's atmosphere,
burning up in reentry.

The silver Collective ships fire cables at the crystal ship
and begin thrusting their engines in reverse to pull it up.

Brotherhood fighters attempt to destroy the cables as
Collective fighters try to neutralize the crystal ships
thrusters.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The sound of gun fire and tremors fill the ship as Collective soldiers continue attacking Brotherhood soldiers.

Alex, clutching the orb, rushes down a corridor, ducking and avoiding combat as best she can.

She is ambushed by three cultists at a four-way intersection. As shots fire her way, she ducks and covers, still holding on to the artifact.

Down at the other end of the hall-way, Cotch and Albatross crew spot her.

SAIF

Alex!

Alex jolts up at the familiar voice.

ALEX

Saif? Saif!

Cotch rushes to the intersection and in an instant takes down the cultists as Saif rushes past her to embrace a near terrified Alex.

ALEX

Saif! I'm sorry, I'm so, so Sorry!

SAIF

I got you, Gold-eyes. We're here.
Did they hurt you?

ALEX

No. Just had to sit through some
old fart's sermon.

COTCH

<You have the artifact? How did
you manage-?>

Alex jumps back, glaring at Cotch as a threat.

ALEX

Stay away from me! I know
everything. <Their boss told me
everything!>

RONNY

Sweetie, what're you talking about?

ALEX

The artifact, astrals, psions, the virus at the end of the war! Tell me it's a lie. Tell me it's a lie or I'll-

BROTHERHOOD CULTIST 3 (O.C.)

<They're down here!>

The group is ambushed by three cultists at a four-way intersection and forced to take cover.

The group fires heavily down the hallway, but more cultists appear from behind; a pincer attack.

MOUSE

Perfect moment to have a meltdown, sweetheart!

SAIF

Just shut up and shoot!

One of the cultists presses his hands against the wall, a teal-fog stream shoots along the wall and a crystal barrier entraps the group on all sides.

VINCENT

Goddamn magic tricks!

Cotch fires at the wall, barely chipping it.

COTCH

<No good!>

QUATRE

We're sealed in?

Everyone desperately bangs, punches, and shoots the wall.

The cultists move in to deliver the execution.

ALEX

No. No, not like this!

Alex places her hands on the wall. Her hand flashes teal but nothing happens. Fear consumes her.

ALEX

Come on! Break, Dissolve! Do something!

She punches the wall with her metal arm while her flesh hand still presses against the wall.

A loud ping is heard from inside the crystal casing and the outside begins to crack. The cultists look at each other surprised.

Another loud ping. Alex continuously punches the wall, fracturing it more and more.

ALEX

Fuck noids! Fuck artifacts! We're not gonna die here! I'm not. Gonna die. Here!

A loud boom and a shockwave of glass sends the first group of cultists tumbling backwards, cut by the shards.

Using her psionics and rage, she delivers the same, strong punch on the opposite wall.

The other cultists duck for cover, firing back. Alex plants her hands on the ground and creates a small wall for cover.

But after several hits, enemy blasts puncture through and hit Vincent.

He collapses on the ground, coughing up blood.

MOUSE

Vince!

With a scream, Alex slams both hands on the ground and a spiraling wave of spikes puncture through the walls towards the cultists, killing them.

Once settled, everyone rushes to Vincent, with Alex dropping the Orb.

RONNY

Oh, no, no, stay with us Vincent!

VINCENT

Can't...breathe...

ALEX

I'm sorry, I'm so sorry!

Two PREFECTS, HOWLU (dog race) and COLOR-SPEAKER (giant-land-jellyfish) enter with a squad of COLLECTIVE SOLDIERS.

They lower their guns once they spot Cotch and the humans.

ALEX

I...I thought I made the wall strong enough-

QUATRE

Damn it, stop crying and hold on!
 My bag- I need...
 (to aliens)
 Can't anyone help us!

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - CARGO BAY - CONTINUOUS

Nishuna continues to fight, firing and swinging in the darkness, as Möbius avoids and toys with him.

NISHUNA

Why? What do you gain from this?

MÖBIUS

Our objectives differed regarding the artifact. My orders were to destroy it and all witnesses to it.

NISHUNA

Orders? From father-?

MÖBIUS

That relic is the result of a dead civilization's own sweat and blood and you would steal its knowledge for yourself. No one is deserving of such knowledge if it's handed to them without effort. And then there's the human psion. You and her come from similar, desolate backgrounds yet she refused the powers the artifact bestowed. There is no longer a single course. Through her, there are infinite paths, endless possibilities, each equally probable! I want to see how far she will go; to see what is unforeseeable. The rebirth of chaos governed by the hands of a mortal!

Nishuna sees Möbius form at the corner of his eye and throws out his arm.

Möbius falters as his body forms around Nishuna's grip.

NISHUNA

A shame you couldn't see this.

Nishuna ignites a powerful blast, vaporizing Möbius into a puff of smoke.

No time to catch his breath, Nishuna darts off to counter the humans and Collective.

The smoke lingers. And begins to gather.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - 4-WAY CORRIDOR

The Collective Soldiers and Prefects have gathered around the Albatross crew, still desperately trying to keep Vincent alive.

VINCENT

I'm gonna die?

SAIF

Shh...you're gonna make it. You'll see. You're gonna be alright! We'll get out of here, pick up our reward, and take a nice vacation. Someplace exotic, okay?

VINCENT

(going into shock)

D-Don't leave me. I-I don't wanna die on a noid ship. I can't die, don't leave me, don't leave...

Vincent's terrors are calmed by death's silence. The humans crouch on the floor, tired and grieving.

The Color-Speaker Prefect approaches Cotch, who has picked up the Orb.

COLOR-SPEAKER PREFECT

<Does Prefect Nickollania possess the artifact?>

COTCH

<Actually, the human managed to keep it safe...>

As Cotch and the Color-speaker talk, Saif gently clasps Vincent's hands together, stone-faced, watery eyes.

RONNY

We can't leave him.

SAIF

He's dead-weight. Nothing we can do.

ALEX

Dead weight? He's a person, not luggage-!

SAIF

I damn well know that! But he's dead and we'll be too if we worry about the feelings of a corpse.

Alex chokes back her words. Cotch approaches Alex sympathetically, put her hand on Alex's shoulder.

COTCH

<Alex. You and your friends must make it to the shuttles.>

Alex stands defiantly but Cotch offers her the Orb.

COTCH

The Collective has much to answer for. But right now, I have to find Sir Ortoni and you need to get to safety. Do not let the Brotherhood take this. No matter what. Understand?

Alex clasps here mouth shut and nods, taking the orb.

I/E. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - CONTINUOUS

EXTERIOR the crystal ship continues to descend into the gas-giant, the heat of reentry burning it up, the Collective ships' harpoons straining, beginning to snap.

Fighters continue to dog-fight and shuttles begin to exit the crystal ship.

INTERIOR the fight to escape continues. Brotherhood Cultists throw themselves at our heroes and the Collective, willing to take everyone down with the ship.

Alex and her friends, escorted by the Color-Speaker Prefect, rush to the hangars.

Nishuna has gone berserk, killing Collective and Brotherhood soldiers as he races to beat Alex to the hangar.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cotch arrives outside the interrogation room.

The doors open and she peaks in, gun at the ready.

COTCH
Sir Ortoni!

Kisheyu is strapped down on a medical bed, hooked up with tubes, scarred and weak, rasping.

Cotch rushes to his side.

COTCH
Sir Ortoni, I am here! Just hold
on!

Cotch takes out the tubes and syringes in Kisheyu. She then whips out a stimulant shot from her back and injects Kisheyu.

COTCH
Come on, Kisheyu, wake up!
Kisheyu!

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - HANGAR 2 - LATER

A hangar with a team of Collective soldiers guarding a Collective shuttle.

The Albatross crew, enter the hangar, running straight toward the shuttle when-

Crash! Nishuna pounces the group, releasing a shockwave knocking everyone back and causing jagged pillars to crush the shuttle, filling the hangar with debris and fire.

Alex raises her head weakly, still hugging the orb.

P.O.V. ALEX CHASER - CONTINUOUS

The room is brought back to focus; just in time to see Nishuna walking towards them, burning brightly of psionic aura, eyes on Alex.

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - HANGAR 2 - CONTINUOUS

Alex stumbles to get back up, tightening her grip on the orb.

Mouse charges at Nishuna, roaring with furry.

Nishuna grabs Mouse by the neck, lifts him off the ground and turns Mouse's head into ash, leaving a black, charcoal skull.

RONNY
You bastard!

On reflex and adrenaline, Ronny gets back up, firing a fury of shots at Nishuna. Saif joins him.

SAIF

Why won't you just die!?

A few Collective soldiers that have survived fire at Nishuna.

It takes all of Nishuna's strength to deflect the shots with his psionic shield. He creates a crater-wave of crystal and shards to knock everyone back.

Some hit the ground and walls. Others are unlucky enough to be punctured by the shards.

Snow crystals fall on the smooth, crater ground.

Alex's metal arm is pierced, pinning her among the shards. The orb rolls away from her towards Nishuna.

Nishuna picks up the orb. He is exhausted, fueled by pure rage, soon washed over with fanatical relief, smiling maniacally.

Alex struggles to free herself.

NISHUNA

You are nothing. Your people are nothing.

Nishuna turns to leave.

With newfound determination, Alex rips away from her pinned, metal arm, wires sparking from her socket. She rushes Nishuna, kicks him behind his left knee.

Nishuna falters, dropping the orb, whips around and grabs Alex by the throat, lifting her from the ground.

NISHUNA

You still defy your fate? Don't you get it? It's futile! The universe will never mourn your loss!

ALEX

I don't care what the universe thinks!

Alex grabs Nishuna's arm choking her and, using her psionics, disintegrates it to ash. Nishuna roars with pain.

Alex kicks him in the stomach and rushes for the orb. She picks up and faces Nishuna, waiting for his next move.

Ugly with anger, bruised and bleeding, Nishuna staggers to stand, moaning and roaring in agony. His whole body burns in a psionic flame.

NISHUNA

Filthy wretch! I will burn you for your insolence!

KISHEYU (O.C.)

Not before you!

A stream of heat strikes Nishuna and his entire body blisters and ignites. He roars once again with immense pain. He uses psionics to diffuse the flames and faces Kisheyu.

Kisheyu, leaning on Cotch, is atop the crater wall, his hand held out, his face calm yet stern, glaring at Nishuna.

Before Nishuna can act, Kisheyu strikes him again with another heat attack.

Nishuna quickly negates the flame and sends a pillar of shards at Kisheyu.

Kisheyu barely misses the attack, pushing Cotch to the side; he hits the ground but encases Nishuna in a wrapping of crystal and metal.

Nishuna breaks free and sends the debris at Kisheyu, who dodges it by a second.

Nishuna rushes Kisheyu, grabbing him in a lock. Sparks and bolts ignite from their grasps, both negating each other's psionics.

NISHUNA

That artifact is our people's hope to rebuild our empire! Your own people! Does that mean nothing to you, defector!?

KISHEYU

No empire should be worth a foundation in blood!

Alex watches in panic, unable to help. Alex spots Cotch, aiming her weapon, but Kisheyu is between her and Nishuna.

Alex looks at the Orb, then at Nishuna.

ALEX

Hey, Scarface! Let's see how tough you are without the power of your Gods.

Alex raises the orb high above her head.

Nishuna drops Kisheyu, reaching out to the orb.

NISHUNA

No!

Alex slams the orb into the ground, shattering it into a thousand pieces.

Nishuna screams a long, ear-shattering shriek of a horrific meltdown.

Kisheyu and Cotch gaze in frozen shock at Alex, beaming with prideful victory.

Nishuna is practically in tears as the shadow of Möbius forms behind him. Before he can even react, Möbius stabs Nishuna with his spike arm.

Kisheyu, Cotch, and Alex watch, dumbfounded by this betrayal.

Nishuna chokes on his blood, facing a smiling Möbius.

MÖBIUS

There are no failures. Only
changes in direction.

Death finally brings Nishuna to rest.

Möbius removes his spike-arm and faces Alex.

MÖBIUS

You're sending ripples across the
cosmos. Well done. All eyes will
be on you now, Alex Chaser.

Giving a dramatic bow, Möbius teleports away.

Alex lets out a breath, resting her head on the cool ground.

Kisheyu stumbles towards her, kneels, and puts his arm on her back.

Ronny and Quatre help Saif, followed by Cotch, toward Alex and Kisheyu.

Saif stumbles to Alex, who collapses to his knees and lies down.

ALEX

Saif...

SAIF

So...one hell of a treasure hunt
this turned out to be. 300,000
right out the airlock.

Saif is more exhausted than angry, as is Alex, forcing out a
laugh of frustration.

SAIF

What the hell we doing out here,
Alex? This galaxy takes too damn
much and never gives enough...

KISHEYU

I'm sorry-

SAIF

Fuck your apologies, Prefect. You
owe my crew better than that. And
Alex too. She deserves better than
being made a damn Prefect!

Kisheyu, and Alex, hang their heads. Saif scoffs.

SAIF

Don't even know what the hell I'm
saying...

The ship rocks and everyone stumbles.

COLLECTIVE OFFICER (O.S.)

<The crystal ship has passed the
point of no return!>

EXT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The crystal is now a giant fire-ball, space mixing with a
light-blue sky, colossal storms below.

The Collective ships far above the crystal ship fire more
massive harpoons at the crystal ship to help pull it out.

COLLECTIVE OFFICER (O.S.)

<We're sending harpoon life-pods.
Mark them on your maps and double
time it out of there!>

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Cotch brings up a holographic map on her wrist device of the
Brotherhood ship, locating the eight harpoon pods.

PREFECT (O.S.)
 <No good! Life-pods inaccessible!
 Cut off!>

COLLECTIVE SOLDIER (O.S.)
 <What about the shuttles?>

The frantic chatter continues.

COTCH
 <Sir Ortoni, even if we get to the
 pods in time, we risk the cables
 breaking in the stratosphere.>

KISHEYU
 <We can't stay here arguing!>

Alex listens to them argue, any light of hope quickly fading.

ALEX
 We need to find another way off
 this ship.

Saif gets to his feet.

SAIF
 The Albatross. She'll fly us out.

ALEX
 You sure?

RONNY
 My baby's survived worse than this.

QUATRE
 You ever escaped a gas-giant
 before?

SAIF
 Got any better ideas, doc?

Alex nods and turns to Kisheyu and Cotch.

ALEX
 <Kisheyu! Cotchy! We got a plan!>

INT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - HANGAR W/ ALBATROSS - LATER

Saif stands at the landing bridge leading up to the Albatross, hustling Collective soldiers and Prefects.

SAIF
 Come on! Don't think we won't
 leave you assholes behind!

EXT. BROTHERHOOD SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The crystal ship slowly continues its decent, winds roaring and ripping by it.

Two of the elevator pods shoot upward carrying escapees. A cable breaks from the typhoon winds, destroying the pod.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Saif runs in and takes the seat next to Ronny.

SAIF
 Passengers are settled in... How we
 doing up here?

RONNY
 All systems green, Captain. We may
 burn our fuel on escape, but it's a
 small price-

SAIF
 Ronny.

Ronny takes a moment of pause, but goes back to prepping the ship.

RONNY
 We ain't breaking down here,
 Captain. I'll fly us out so we can
 say our proper goodbyes.

SAIF
 Right beside you.
 (over comm)
 Alex, how you doing?

INT. ALBATROSS - ENGINE ROOM

Alex is punching in commands on a console joined by Kisheyu and a four-armed reptoid SSIRRISSI PREFECT.

The ssirrisi is crouched on the ground, hands planted firmly and glowing teal.

ALEX

Ship's ready to blaze a trail!
Plate-face here'll keep the ship
together while Kisheyu feeds you
the energy.

SAIF (O.S.)

Hope your psionics are more than
all talk. Take her out, Ronny.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross lifts up, engines humming to life.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Ronny steers the ship while Saif targets the gates.

RONNY

Wait. With the atmospheric
difference, wouldn't the sudden
change create-

BOOM! The hangar gates blast open and a cyclone viciously
pulls the Albatross out of the ship, jolting Saif and Ronny
in there seats.

Everyone is nearly knocked down by the turbulence.

Quatre, helping wounded soldiers while suffering through
alien jargon, glares upward.

QUATRE

If we live through this, I'm gonna
kill him!

BACK AT THE COCKPIT, Cotch stumbles in, holding on tightly.

Ronny tries to regain control of the ship.

COTCH

<Fly with the wind. With the
wind!>

SAIF

Don't fight the winds, fly with
them-

RONNY

Don't back-seat-drive me!

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross bounces around, knocked by the winds.

It smooths out slightly and its engines burn bright, shooting through the storms at a slight angle.

It leaves behind the crystal cruiser that is released from the cables and consumed by the storm.

INT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

Ronny fights against heavy winds, thunder, and thick clouds. As much as he tries to pull up, the winds pound him down.

SAIF

Ease into it, ease into it!

RONNY

I will turn this ship around!

IN THE ENGINE ROOM, Alex jumps from panel to panel, diverting power and cooling systems, sweating from the intense heat.

Kisheyu has his hands planted on the generator, glowing teal and feeding it energy.

He grows weak, already exhausted from his battle with Nishuna. He falters and collapses.

The engine power diminishes, and the ship is rocked even more by the winds.

ALEX

Kisheyu!

Alex rushes to Kisheyu's side as the SsirriSSI Prefect strains to power the engines while also maintaining the ship's hull.

ALEX

Kisheyu! Don't give up now!

SSIRRISSI PREFECT

No time, human. Unable to generate energy needed.

ALEX

I'm thinking, I'm thinking!

Alex lets anxiety wash over her for a second, until-

ALEX

The subspace drive!

Alex runs to a hatch and opens a small duct leading to the drive core.

INT. ALBATROSS - DUCT

Alex crawls as fast as she can with one arm in the cramped space to the drive core.

ALEX

Wonder if I'm setting a record for the number of times a human saves a noid's ass. Ronny, you hear me?

RONNY (O.S.)

What's happening down there? We're losing air!

ALEX

I want you to start up the drive to blink into subspace.

SAIF (O.S.)

You want him to do what!?

ALEX

Start up the drive and take us anywhere into Collective space!

RONNY (O.S.)

It's impossible! You can't make blinks when you're caught in the planet's atmosphere-

ALEX

With a dense enough E.M. field you can.

SAIF (O.S.)

You do realize that this blink could rip us to shreds?

ALEX

Given our situation, one more near-death experience couldn't hurt.

INT. ALBATROSS - DRIVE CORE - CONTINUOUS

A tremor and the sounds of iron grinding iron.

Alex is out the duct and running to a console, already typing in commands.

I/E. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross is heading straight into a giant, thunderous typhoon, roaring and bellowing with the winds of hell.

Alex draws in a deep breath, stands and faces the generator.

AT THE COCKPIT, Ronny struggles to hold the ship steady. Saif plots the coordinates for the blink.

BACK IN THE ENGINE ROOM, Alex finishes typing in commands and the drive core hums loudly, surrounded by a mirage.

She then opens a floor panel and finds the main conduits connected to the drive core.

ALEX

No guts, no glory...

She swallows her fear, with newfound determination, slams her hand on the conduit, and feeds it the energy it needs.

Her whole body glows and burns teal. She lets out a shrilling roar, never having handled such energy before.

But the energy is enough.

OUTSIDE, the Albatross is encased in a magnetic, swirling bubble as the typhoon inches closer.

At the cockpit, alarms are sounding as the ship is strained for the jump.

RONNY

Come on girl, hold it together.

Alex's metal parts on her shoulder burn her skin from the intense heat of her psionics but she endures. She roars in pain, feeding the generator as much energy as she can.

EXT. ALBATROSS - CONTINUOUS

The Albatross is swallowed by the typhoon. A light flickers behind the stormy veil, a flash and the typhoon bursts outward and inward by a tiny black hole.

EXT. SPACE

A silent, starry void. Still and tranquil.

A flash of light and gas-dust spewing outward, the Albatross blinks into the area.

INT. ALBATROSS - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Ronny is frozen, dumbstruck. He then shoots his arms up with a shriek of joy and collapses back into his seat.

Saif and Cotch let out a loud breath of relief.

RONNY

Un-fricken-believable! I'm
shaking; I can't stop shaking!
Alex! Alex, we did it; you did it!
Alex?

SAIF

Alex, can you hear us?

Saif, Cotch, and Ronny look at each other, petrified with thought.

All jolt out of there seats.

INT. ALBATROSS - LOUNGE

They run past the alien passengers and right past Quatre.

SAIF

Quatre! Something's happened to
Alex!

Not wasting time, Quatre follows behind Cotch.

INT. ALBATROSS - DRIVE CORE - CONTINUOUS

As the main door slides open, Saif squeezes through to find Alex on the floor, smoke coming off her body, unconscious. Clothes burnt, skin scarred around the prosthetics.

Saif is on his knees, taking Alex into his arms, covering her with his jacket.

Ronny, Quatre, and Cotch stand over them.

SAIF
 Don't do this Gold-eyes; I'm not
 losing you too!

Everyone is still, holding their breath.

Saif gently cradles Alex.

SAIF
 We're alright. We're gonna be
 alright...

DOYAN ARBITER (O.S.)
 Alex Chaser.

EXT. PLANET APEX - DIRECTORATE 12 - DAY

A pyramid-like temple with towers and a space elevator,
 standing atop of the flat, metal landscape of the planet.

The sky is a milky, golden grey. Ships are seen entering and
 leaving Directorate 12.

DOYAN ARBITER (O.S.)
 You stand here today to be
 considered for the ranks of the
 Prefect Order.

INT. DIRECTORATE 12 - ARBITER COURT - CONTINUOUS

Alex is dressed in a Prefect cadet uniform, sporting a sleek
 and shiny new metal arm.

Alex stands in the center of an oval room with raised seats;
 a pit overlooked by other Prefects (including Cotch) and the
 five ARBITERS (one of each Collective race).

Kisheyu stands beside her. He and Alex are both bandaged but
 standing tall.

This is being broadcast across the entire galaxy.

DOYAN ARBITER
 (stout, long-necked alien)
 You saved the lives of many of our
 soldiers, and both Prefects Ortoni
 and Nickollania speak highly of
 your talents and determination.

BACK ON SECOND TERRACE, human colonists are glued to the news
 feed.

DOYAN ARBITER (O.S.)
 Yet you've destroyed the precursor
 device, a valuable artifact to the
 Collective and its history.

MARCUS and the DOCK WORKERS from earlier surround a small
 monitor in the hangar.

DOYAN ARBITER (O.S.)
 Many of us question your capacity
 to handle future responsibilities.

Saif, Ronny, and Quatre, are at wall dedicated to lost
 people; dead soldiers, missing people, etc. Dead flowers,
 tons of pictures, lots of candles.

Saif hangs up two pictures of Vincent and Mouse. Ronny
 kisses his fingers and plants them both pictures.

INT. DIRECTORATE 12 - ARBITER COURT - CONTINUOUS

SSIRRISSI ARBITER
 (four-armed, lizard alien)
 Race of humans has much to
 overcome. Weak population, low
 innovation, questionable ethics-

HOWLU ARBITER
 (dog-like alien)
 And it's always been accepted that
 your people were incapable of
 becoming psions. Do you understand
 the implications of such a claim?

Alex steps forward, chin up and straightened.

ALEX
 Arbiters, if you're expecting me to
 sob and break-down groveling to
 join the Collective, you're talking
 to wrong human. Instead, I want
 you to take a look at any one of my
 colonies. I'm here for them!

ON A RESTORATION VESSEL, human soldiers and officers watch in
 the mess hall.

ON A BROTHERHOOD VESSEL, Möbius watches with his fellow
 Brotherhood members, a proud smile on his face.

ALEX

Humanity's hurting. Women are forced to be breeding vessels on human farms, men are sterilized to keep the population in check, and children grow up without real mothers or fathers. But what hurts even more is feeling abandoned. By you and by each other. Feeling that our lot in life is just to accept our fate, lie down and die. Guess that's where I differ. Fate is overrated. A friend of mine once told me that sometimes we forget how good we're capable of being, that we need someone to remind us. And Prefect Ortoni told me that psionics isn't just a force of destruction. It can be a force of creation. I've seen enough destruction in my life time. I want to help create a better future for my people.

The Arbiters consider Alex's words. Some nod, others remain stoic.

HOWLU ARBITER

Commendable words, human. Now let's see if they are on par with your abilities as a psion.

The Howlu Arbiter presses a button and a 4:4:9 invitanium block rises from the floor, in front of Alex.

Alex lets doubt wash over her for a second before marching up to the block.

Alex raises her left hand to the block, touching it, concentrating. But nothing happens.

Alex looks around, intimidated by all the onlookers watching in silence, fixated on her.

Kisheyu watches intensely, holding back an urge to object or help.

BACK ON SECOND TERRACE, Saif, Ronny, and Quatre watch the broadcast from the mural.

SAIF

Come on, Gold-eyes. Show them what you can do.

Alex takes a deep breath and closes her eyes.

After a second, her hand glows a teal-blue. The block doesn't move, everyone waits. Until...

The block slowly begins to turn from metal to clay.

Everyone in the entire galaxy watches in awe. Both Kisheyu's and Cotch's mouths hang open, astonished.

Saif, Ronny, and Quatre stare up at the broadcast; looks of admiration, silently cheering.

Even Möbius is impressed, his eerie smile slowly fading.

The block eventually takes an abstract shape.

Alex breathes heavily but in control.

She opens her eyes and looks around, sweat bearing on her face. Everyone is stunned.

Alex faces the Arbiters with a smirk.

ALEX

Thought you might like an addition
to your garden.

Alex has created what resembles a sculpture of a human figure. Rough and molded, it stands with a protruding chest and a raised fist.

END.