

Home Bound

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FADE IN:

INT. TRANSPORT SHIP - DAY

An array of different colored stars fill the vision. Cair'Ha's voice comes through in the Hath language.

CAIR'HA (V.O.)
Purpose. Duty. Fragile things.

The edges of dull metallic window frame, CAIR'HA, a large, charcoal, stone-like skinned alien with a large oval shell that covers his head is gradually reflected, at first dully, then stronger, in the window, the ship's inside dimly lit.

CAIR'HA (V.O.)
Purpose fills life with fire, duty tames it. It is who we are that defines the galaxy.

Cair'Ha's reflection grows stronger in the window. The shoulders of other passengers appear. In the reflection, a space ship made of fragmented bits of differently colored metal flies in the window behind Cair'Ha, over his head.

CAIR'HA (V.O.)
We are nothing without it. I am nothing without it. If this drive which make us, if they are so fragile...

The reflection solidifies, crystallizing Cair'Ha's body, showing his armored shoulders, large backpack at his feet, and a bundled shape of his same race a third his size. VIE is nestled against his ribs, his arm around her body.

CAIR'HA (V.O.)
How am I to be strong? How can I protect her?

Behind Cair'Ha there is a space station stretching in a long line, large pillars perpendicular to the station in a pattern with wide gaps.

Several ships of different sizes are docked at these pillars, and the ship behind Cair'Ha docks at the pillar closest to Cair'Ha's ship.

Faint yellow light flickers on, stirring the passengers. The CAPTAIN'S voice crackles overhead. The voice speaks in a different language at first, a robotic language chiming in a

moment later with the translation.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

We have arrived at Nisc Mire. This ship will refuel and cast off in an hour.

Other passengers of different races get up, the narrow hallway of the space ship not enough space for the wide shoulders of tall, lizard-like Trannorians or the chassis of the Fr'Dinnians, ports showing bright gas swarming inside.

CAIR'HA (V.O.)

So who are we?

Cair'Ha's arm tightens around Vie, her eyes underneath her sleek beetle-like helmet blinking. She gets up, gathering her cloak around her. Cair'Ha and Vie wait for the passengers to disembark, avoiding eye contact as they pass.

INT. NISC MIRE - HALLWAY

Cair'Ha and Vie step through a large metal doorway, the door sliding shut behind them. Ahead of them is a short hallway, the last of the other passengers already disappearing as the door shuts.

Vie speaks in English.

VIE

Sleep well, father?

Cair'Ha looks down at Vie and she wobbles her head at him. He raises his hand and shakes it back and forth. Vie sighs heavily.

VIE

You need to sleep. It was fine. I could have taken watch.

Cair'Ha rumbles with a short laugh. He hefts the large pack, the top of the pack riding higher than his head. He walks down the hallway. He responds in kind to Vie's English.

CAIR'HA

It would have been a short nap. You are a great sleeper.

Vie bends her head down and flaps her cloak about her as she

follows him.

VIE

Okay, I did sleep a lot but it is only because we have taken so many flights.

(beat)

When are we going to stop?

(beat)

And why do I have to keep speaking like this? I will never see a human.

They arrive at the door, subdued sounds of a crowd seeping through. Cair'Ha looks down at his daughter, his hand hovering over the side of the door and a small holographic display covers his hand.

CAIR'HA

We have a long way to go, I am afraid. As far as the language, it is good practice.

Cair'Ha's mandibles tap slowly.

CAIR'HA

Keeps your mind moving.

Vie says nothing, keeping to his flank, but her hands clench the cloak tighter, her claws peeking through the material. Cair'Ha looks at her, but she refuses to meet his gaze. He turns to the door, squares his shoulders, and opens the door.

INT. NISC MIRE - MERCHANT'S WALK - DAY

Sounds pour into the hallway. Aliens walk left and right, both the Trannorians and the Fr'Dinnians.

The hallway opens out into a large hallway that extends to their left and right, the walls filled with booths, some storefronts and some made of cloth and scrap.

QUIZZRET, a thin Trannorian, double-takes at Cair'Ha and runs off.

CAIR'HA

We just need a few more trips to be safe. Stay with me.

Vie mumbles but steps within Cair'Ha's arms. They walk through the crowd, and as they are noticed they are granted a wide berth, many of the persons muttering or altogether walking off.

Atop two stalls are three glowing shapes, spirits, following Cair'Ha and Vie idly as two walk. The spirits have different shapes, one like a walking flower, one a flaming bird, and the last like a snake-monkey hybrid.

At the end of the hallway is a large archway, angled and decorated with glowing symbols all the way down to its roots. In the center is a large Trannorian statue with wings hanging over the entrance way. Cair'Ha and Vie pass under it.

INT. NISC MIRE - AI HUB - DAY

The next room is double the width and height of the hallway and almost as packed. Obelisks litter the floor with terminals attached.

Cair'Ha and Vie make their way to an obelisk. The terminal scans Cair'Ha, an error sounds like a long, high pitched horn, and Poe forms. It forms of pixels generating from the terminal, coalescing in front of Cair'Ha's face.

The Poe begins speaking in the Hath language, its voice distorting until it finds a comfortable, light voice to speak with.

POE

Greetings Hath visitors. How may we aid you on this irregular moment?

Cair'Ha responds in kind with the Hath language, dropping the English.

CAIR'HA

We seek to purchase a small transsol vessel.

The Poe bubbles for a moment, a small face that appears like a poorly animated version of Cair'Ha's face. Its eyes widen.

POE

Forgive me, you are not here with a vessel of your own?

The Poe notices Vie and a puzzled look washes over its face.

POE CONTINUED

Nothing in my database states there are Hath so small.

Cair'Ha puts his hand over Vie's head and leans towards the program. He reveals his mandibles, his solid jaw unfolding to

show several moving teeth. A low buzzing sound emanates from his chest, and other customers at the same obelisk leave.

CAIR'HA

You have never seen her. Discretion is in your guild.

The Poe sighs. Its animated face ripples like water disturbed, wiping away Cair'Ha's features.

POE

Yes, discretion. I will ignore the small one's existence, and your odd behavior. A transsol vessel?

CAIR'HA

An older one. No magic.

POE

Just tech based. That is harder to come by.

CAIR'HA

I can pay. That is what matters in your civilization, correct, program?

The Poe ripples again, its colors shifting from blue to green back to blue.

POE

We are sentients and more than our code, Hath irregular.

(beat)

But you are correct, provided you have the right denomination.

Cair'Ha hesitates, his mandibles retracting until there is a solid, stone-like jaw.

CAIR'HA

Find me the ship, and we will see if the price fits.

The Poe spins, tossing off bits of pixels like water drops as it works.

POE

I will contact you once I have a seller. Do you have a communication

device?

CAIR'HA

No.

POE

Savages. Come back to any terminal and I will be able to contact you.

The Poe's voice suddenly becomes very cheery.

POE CONTINUED

Have a good day!

The Poe dissipates and Cair'Ha rumbles in his chest for a moment. Vie pushes his hand away from her and punches his knee. Cair'Ha looks down at her, his mandibles rippling.

VIE

You let him bully you. We do not let others bully us, father.

Cair'Ha bops her on the side of her head, her shelled head tipping over and almost knocking her over. He lets out low buzzing sounds like chuckles as she squawks and regains her balance. Vie looks up at him, her own mandibles quivering.

CAIR'HA

We are no longer home or Hath, Vie. Respect is harder to come by where no one understands. We--

Cair'Ha cuts himself off, looking around. They have a wider berth than usual, but no one is staring at them anymore. Cair'Ha shrugs his pack off, grabbing two packages in sealed in a yellow paper. He hands one to Vie.

CAIR'HA

Eat.

Vie grabbed the package, her little claws tearing at the package in her hurry. In the package is an oblong shape colored dull purple. She took a bite, her mandibles tearing into it and slurping. She stopped suddenly and looked at him.

CAIR'HA

What is it?

VIE

You never finished about respect. You always talk about respect.

Cair'Ha sat, opening his own package. He hesitates before he takes a bite.

CAIR'HA

We best eat and move is all, little one.

Vie shrugs and begins to eat again, but she grows rigid. Cair'Ha is suddenly standing, aware the wide berth has suddenly grown much larger. Ahead of them a group of Trannorians like a pack of wolves stares them down.

KURANTAO stands taller than the rest of his pack, black armor covering his body. A large sword and gun rests on his back, but he has made no move to draw them. Cair'Ha widens his stance, his arms slightly in front of him, watching.

KURANTAO

Two Hath. One miniature and one large. Warrior and whelp, it seems.

One of the pack, the same slight Trannorian, Quizzrett, nods and rubs his hands.

QUIZZRETT

Told you. Thought you'd be happy.

Kurantao steps forward towards Cair'Ha, his sharp teeth showing in his long grin.

KURANTAO

I am more than happy. This is the best chance I've had in months.

Kurantao takes another step towards Cair'Ha, the distance closed by a third. Cair'Ha stands tall and silent.

KURANTAO

That is the point, warrior. Your death or mine. The clan seer will recognize me after I bring your overgrown head, shell and all to their feet.

Shifting his gaze to Vie, Kurantao snorts.

KURANTAO

If you need a moment to hide that, we can get started.

Vie stares up at Kurantao, her mandibles snapping quickly in irritation. Cair'Ha takes a step forward. The Kurantao smiles and draws his sword. A line of orange energy shoots up its blade and Kurantao charges.

Cair'Ha moves with uncanny speed, his bulk almost vanishing and reappearing on the inside of Kurantao's attack. The Kurantao attempts to cut at him, roaring, but Cair'Ha manages to grab the hand on the hilt, and crushes it.

KURANTAO

Ahhhhhh!

The rest of the pack took a step, Quizzrett begins yelping.

QUIZZRETT

Boss!

Growling, the Kurantao snaps a kick at Cair'Ha's leg, disrupting Cair'Ha and getting away. The sword clatters to the ground, the metal hilt disfigured. Kurantao's hand is a bleeding, pulpy mess.

The crowd murmurs, shifting uneasily. To the right and in the middle of the crowd, JARED, a human in a light environment suit watches. He toys with one of the guns at his belt but does nothing.

Cair'Ha follows up on his attack, closing the gap quickly and strikes at Kurantao's gut. Kurantao dodges but takes a hit to the shoulder, knocking him back a few feet. He screams in pain, one arm useless.

Kurantao grimaces, smoke curling around his teeth. A slight flame breaths out of his mouth. Cair'Ha's mandibles click, and there is a beat of silence.

Kurantao goes for his gun, trying to draw and fire the assault weapon with one arm and fumbling. Cair'Ha is standing in front of him before he fires, missing and hitting the ground, and Cair'Ha punches Kurantao in the face.

The pack of Trannorians scatter backwards, watching Cair'Ha as warily as he watches them. He clicks his mandibles one last time before returning to Vie, who now had her fists clenched in front of her and shaking.

VIE

That was awesome!

Cair'Ha patted her head. An error sound like a long,

distorted horn drones in the room. The Trannorian pack grabs Kurantao, dragging him into the crowd before the sound finishes.

Pixels forms rapidly from the terminal and the Poe returns.

POE

So I see you kept yourself busy, Hath.
By fighting? Breaking the peace on our
humble station?

Cair'Ha speaks in Hath.

CAIR'HA

They attacked us.

POE

I guess you don't understand our
civilization. No fights, no weapons,
all parties equally guilty.

CAIR'HA

What?

The Poe wiggles and a large red x forms over it.

POE

I will not be able to assist you. You
have one full rotation to get off the
station before I have you removed.

Cair'Ha moves closer to the Poe and rests his bulk on the obelisk. His weight causes the obelisk to bend slightly, the Poe's incorporeal form shuddering for a moment.

CAIR'HA

They drew weapons on us.

POE

Your people always seem to have
weapons being drawn. Good day.

The Poe disappears, leaving Cair'Ha and Vie staring up at the empty space. Cair'Ha whirls around to look for the Trannorians, but they were gone. His mandibles began clicking fast and Vie nervously touches his leg.

VIE

How are we going to leave? How long is

a rotation?

Cair'Ha shakes his large head and picks up the pack and hoists it onto his back.

CAIR'HA

Whatever they want it to be, little bug.

He kneels down and offers his hand.

CAIR'HA

Come up, we have to move quick.

Vie scampers up his arm and sits in between the top of the pack and his shoulders and nestles there. She wraps the cloak around her, making herself look like a part of the pack.

VIE

What are we going to do?

CAIR'HA

What we can.

VIE

Which is?

CAIR'HA

Little one, you will be the first to know.

She quiets and pats the base of Cair'Ha's head, rubbing it softly. Cair'Ha sighed and looks back towards the hallway with the vendors. Before he could move, JARED steps into the wide berth the crowd has left them.

They stare at each other for a few brief moments, before Jared speaks in broken Hath.

JARED

Fight good.

Cair'Ha kept staring at Jared, puzzled. Vie leaned forward suddenly, her mandibles open wide. In hushed English, she speaks.

VIE

No way. Is that a human?

Jared put both of his hands on his hips and leans back.

JARED
Y'all know English?

Cair'Ha nods, watching Jared's hands. He speaks in clear, strong English.

CAIR'HA
What do you want?

Jared shook his head, claps, and gave a small shout.

JARED
I should have figured you two knew English. Wasn't eight years ago y'all were razing the colonies on Mars. Only natural.

Cair'Ha walks towards Jared, looming tall above him. When Jared did not take a step back and stares at Cair'Ha unflinchingly, Cair'Ha's mandibles snaps.

CAIR'HA
What do you want, human?

JARED
You seem to be in a predicament. AI stations like this, they're pretty prejudiced.

He continues, whispering in a conspiratorial voice.

JARED
Particularly when folks like you show up, all genocidal and causing problems.

Cair'Ha brings his face closer, getting inches away from Jared's face. Vie moves on top of Cair'Ha's head, looking over the lip of his shell head and down at Jared.

CAIR'HA
Do you have a point, or are you here for some measure of payback?

JARED
(laughs)
Measure of payback. They must've had you all watching old classics and learning proper English. No, friend,

no, no payback.

He pats Cair'Ha on the chest at payback and Cair'Ha twitches.

JARED

No I'm here to offer you a job. Figure you need it, stranded and surrounded. We got a ship and we need someone with your ah...

He gestures with a wide flourish at Cair'Ha.

JARED

Your skill set. See what I mean?

Cair'Ha leans away from Jared's face. He studies the man before speaking.

CAIR'HA

What job?

Jared chuckles, a hollow sound that comes from the radio speaker from his mask. He takes a step away from Cair'Ha towards the hallway, and beckons for him to follow before walking into the crowd still milling about.

Cair'Ha hesitates, turns back to the obelisk, and follows Jared into the crowd.

INT. MERCHANT'S WALK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Cair'Ha and Vie follow Jared through the thinning crowds. Many of the patrons disappear through doors leading to other corridors.

Two of the spirits, the snake-monkey and flaming bird, are chasing each other around on the vending stalls nearby as Cair'Ha, Vie, and Jared walk through.

They stop in front of a doorway. Jared looks all around, then opens the door.

INT. S.S. BOND DOCKING - CONTINUOUS

The corridor Jared leads them through is more spacious than the hallway the transport dropped them off. There is a section with chairs and a section with foodstuffs labelled 'Organics Amenities' in flickering languages.

To the right of where the three enter is a large window showing a large space ship, long and narrow with spires and

archways branching off of the main body and interlacing with fins on three sides.

The ship is painted black with scratches throughout the paint revealing a garish yellow underneath. On the side in blocky lettering is 'S.S. Bond.' Cair'Ha and Vie stop alongside Jared as he halts in front of it.

JARED

This is it. Tough enough for hellfire,
much less plasma.

Vie is plastered to the window, her mandibles making rapid chattering sounds as her head darts around, trying to see more than the window has to offer.

VIE

Why is it so pretty?

Jared laughs, the sound coming off hollow from the mask's ventilation.

JARED

Yeah it's... something. Fr'Dinnians
crafted it as some kind of old
business vessel, supposed to be
strong.

Cair'Ha looks down on Jared. His shoulders hitch up.

CAIR'HA

For keeping meetings safe. It was the
common model not long ago.

JARED

Yeah, that's what I heard. It works
though. My employer pays for its
upkeep so its pretty top dollar.

Vie looks up at Jared.

VIE

What is top dollar? Is the dollar on
top most valuable on Earth?

JARED

Its uh, meaning that Cloxy pays a lot
to keep it running. No fear of
drifting in space.

Vie stares at Jared for a moment more before turning back to

the ship.

VIE
Top dollar ship.

Jared coughs and looks at a monitor on his wrist. He looks up at Cair'Ha when the door far on the same wall parallel with the shaft connecting the ship to the station opens.

A woman, AMARA, walks in, taller than Jared, with red hair and tan, freckle splattered skin. She wore gloves and a scarf that wraps around her neck. A submachine gun hangs off a strap around her shoulders at her side.

She smiles crookedly when she sees the three of them. As she draws near, she speaks in Spanish, the quick fluid language causing Cair'Ha to stare intently at the two of them.

Amara looks at Cair'Ha and smiles wide, a tired but relieved expression on her face. She offers her hand to shake.

AMARA
I heard you know English, and you know something of Earth.

Cair'Ha grasps the much smaller woman's hand and shakes it gently. Amara's smile continues unabated as she takes stock of Vie, then looks back at Cair'Ha.

AMARA
Not often we see a kid, Hath. In fact, pretty rare to see any of you. Usually have scalebacks doing your errands.

Cair'Ha studies Amara for a few beats then takes a step closer to Vie. Vie ignores the newcomer and continues staring at the ship.

CAIR'HA
We are disconnected from our people.
Did your man tell you what we require?

Amara and Jared extend a look of amusement between each other and laugh before looking back at Cair'Ha.

AMARA
Yes, my man here did tell me. After we help you, we either give you transport to a destination or enough resources to do so. Where are you headed?

CAIR'HA

The deal was that we receive our own transport. The location is not yours to be concerned with.

AMARA

It'd be a lot easier if we could just drop you off ourselves, unless there's a problem following you.

Cair'Ha's shoulders twitch again and his mandibles click audibly, one after the other.

CAIR'HA

As long as the job is quick, there is no trouble for you to be concerned with.

Amara nods towards Vie and looks back at Cair'Ha.

AMARA

I'm taking on a kid, a kid Hath. Your people tried to wipe us out. There is a part of me that says I should kill you both now, real quick. Wouldn't even make up for Mars, much less Earth.

Cair'Ha settles into a fighting stance. He places his feet squarely with his shoulders, Vie hidden behind him.

CAIR'HA

If you tried, you would be dead.

AMARA

Jared told me about your fight. Decent duel against a bunch of rusty scalebacks.

Amara puts a hand on her chest and leans in slightly.

AMARA

You're looking at two veterans of Mars. We killed plenty of you. We know how you work. You two don't get anywhere without my say so, and I'm honestly only giving you the option cause of your kid. Provided that it is your kid. Wouldn't surprise me if you all had slaves.

Cair'Ha's pack jostles as he let out a deep series of rumbling chittering and his back shell opens and closes at Amara's insinuations. Vie looked up, her own shell opened and closing as she reacts before Cair'Ha.

VIE

Don't talk to him like that. He isn't bad.

Vie falls silent suddenly and stares up at Amara, her mandibles and shell falling silent.

VIE

(softly)

You have spirits.

Cair'Ha turns to her, surprised, then turns back to Amara and Jared, raising his hand and tenses up. Jared and Amara both draw their weapons and take a step back.

JARED

Whoa, whoa, whoa, what the hell!

Amara's eyes go wide and she looks angrily at Cair'Ha.

AMARA

How does she know that?

Jared keeps his masked eyes on Cair'Ha, but his hands shake for a moment.

JARED

Mar? What do you mean?

CAIR'HA

You are possessed then. Who do you work for? What Trannorian cult sent you assassins?

AMARA

Nobody! We work for a Fr'Dinnian, Cloxy. He runs out of Earth, no scaleback hired us.

CAIR'HA

Then why does my daughter see spirits? Only possessed may use a spirit's power.

Jared looks over at Amara, his voice quiet and delicate.

JARED

Mar, you told me it didn't work.

Amara looks at Jared and her face screws up and her eyes water. She takes a deep breath to steady herself and regains her composure.

AMARA

Listen, Cair'Ha, right? Let's calm down and put down the weapons and I'll explain.

CAIR'HA

You are the only one who-

Amara clenches her jaw and Jared turns back and holds the pistol in his hand.

AMARA

We know how strong your type of Hath is. Put your hands down and step away. Veterans, remember?

Cair'Ha puts his hands down and takes a step back, Vie scuttles backwards behind him. She peeks up at Amara, her dark eyes much wider than normal as she looks up at Amara.

Amara sighs and puts down her submachine gun and Jared follows suit. He turns towards Amara.

JARED

Amara.

Amara looks at Jared then away, and then glances at Cair'Ha before looking at Jared again.

AMARA

It did fail. Just... in the opposite direction.

Amara glances at Cair'Ha again before looking back at Jared.

AMARA

We should get inside.

JARED

What does that mean?

Cair'Ha rumbles with deep chittering. Amara and Jared looks

at him and he holds up a hand.

CAIR'HA

It means she is dying.

Jared stares at Amara for a beat before ripping off his mask, revealing a pale face with circles underneath brown eyes and a messy beard. His eyes and mouth are wide.

JARED

You're dying?

Amara sighs.

AMARA

Rysar did the procedure and it didn't work. At first. He had the spirit, he did the binding, and then it didn't work.

(beat)

Till it did. Rysar confirmed it.

JARED

Confirmed what?

Cair'Ha's mandibles clicked once.

CAIR'HA

The spirit your Trannorian utilized is taking over. It is only a matter of time before she is gone.

Jared and Amara look pensively at each other before both turning to Cair'Ha.

AMARA

So you believe us?

CAIR'HA

Your story has merit. Why do you need me?

Amara looks out over the spacious room and its flickering lights and terminals. She gestures towards the ship. Cair'Ha hesitates before nodding, leaning to allow Vie to scamper up his arm. Jared and Amara walked away.

Cair'Ha follows slowly. He turns his head towards Vie as he walks. He speaks quietly to her in Hath.

CAIR'HA
Good job, Vie.

Vie snuggles next to Cair'Ha's head, a low fast chittering sound, like purring, comes out of her as Cair'Ha follows Jared and Amara into the S.S. Bond.

INT. S.S. BOND - MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cair'Ha bends low under the ceiling of the passage way and into the meeting room, less spacious than the docking corridor, but more than enough room for the four in the room.

Amara and Jared stand around a large table with a terminal floating in front of Amara. Jared speaks in Spanish to her while she mutters back and works the terminal.

An Earth style leather couch, an easy chair, and another table near a flatscreen television set encased in hard plastic is fixed to the side of the wall opposite the easy chair and couch.

In the easy chair is RYSAR, a moderately sized Trannorian sprawled uncomfortably as he avoids looking at Jared and Amara. He is colored a dull yellow with scales colored a turquoise hue at the edges around his head, neck, and spine.

Rysar locks eyes with Cair'Ha and Vie, both who stare back at Rysar without any movement. Rysar raises a hand and speaks in broken English.

RYSAR
You are help?

Vie is leaning over Cair'Ha's shoulder, staring at Rysar for several moments before Cair'Ha sighed and wiggled his shoulder. Vie jumps down and creeps towards Rysar, still out of reach but still staring.

Rysar stares back, straightening his back as he looks back between Cair'Ha and Vie.

RYSAR
(weakly)
Uh... Dudes?

Amara and Jared ignore Rysar's words, now facing each other as they continue to argue.

VIE
You glow weird.

Rysar scratches his head. He speaks in Trannorian, sounding like words accentuated by long hisses, rasps, and rolls of the tongue.

RYSAR

You speak Trannorian?

Cair'Ha speaks in Trannorian, his mandibles creating odd accents as his mouth recreates the Trannorian's words.

CAIR'HA

Yes.

Rysar brightens immensely and stands up quickly. Vie stays still, but Cair'Ha has advanced a few steps without seeming to move. Cair'Ha's movements surprises Rysar and he falls back into the chair. He looks uncertain, but still excited.

RYSAR

Thank the peeling stars, I've been stuck with these savages for weeks. I think they're going to kill me.

CAIR'HA

You failed in your procedure.

Rysar runs both of his hands over his head before answering.

RYSAR

Yes, yes. It isn't my fault, how can I be expected to do the first possession of a new species and no mistakes? How?

(beat)

You agree?

CAIR'HA

Why did you try?

Vie creeps closer, her head tilting back and forth.

VIE

You look like a light. Glowy.

Rysar glances at Vie and hesitates before looking at Cair'Ha.

RYSAR

I handle spirits. My cult ran me off when I did a possession for money, and Cloxy took me in.

Cair'Ha's mandibles move slightly.

CAIR'HA
The Fr'Dinnian.

Cair'Ha comes closer.

CAIR'HA
Who is he?

Before Rysar can respond, the terminal makes a long tone, drawing Rysar's, Cair'Ha's, and lastly Vie's attention to the terminal where Amara and Jared stand.

Holographic lights flicker over the center of the table as emitters affixed to the ceiling come to life. The image stabilizes and a metallic helmet with a central face ribbed with other windows comes to view.

Inside the helmet is flowing yellow gas, with swirling lights that coalesce to resemble a mouth and many eyes. Amara and Jared come over to stand by Cair'Ha, Rysar, and Vie as the face stabilizes and stares down on them all.

Vie hides behind Cair'Ha's legs, peeking up as CLOXY begins to speak in English.

CLOXY
Greetings, my faithful employees. I
hear you finally found someone for the
heavy lifting, is that so?

Cloxy's eyes are settled on Amara, but the helmet turns slightly towards Cair'Ha.

AMARA
Yes sir. This is Cair'Ha. Found him on
Nisc Mire dueling a Trannorian.

Another impression of an eye forms as it looks at Cair'Ha, unblinking as it seems to take in all of him.

CLOXY
A Hath. And a child. How paradoxical,
I thought your kind trained children,
not took take of them.

Amara, Jared, and Rysar glance at Cair'Ha, but Cair'Ha stares at the metallic, flickering being. Vie hid out of sight.

CLOXY CONTINUED
Much less taking a job with a
Fr'Dinnian! The Hath must be so

desperate right now.

CAIR'HA

This one is mine, Fr'Dinnian, and I represent myself alone.

Cloxy's eyes swirl at Cair'Ha's words.

CLOXY

Two Hath, alone in the galaxy. How can I ignore you two.

(beat)

You will be in my employ?

Cloxy leans in on his last word, his gaseous eyes swirling.

CAIR'HA

Provided you acquiescence my demands.

Cloxy studies Cair'Ha for a second.

CLOXY

I need you to help my employees to recover a portal stone from the derelict ship, Nopa, in the Nular nebula.

CAIR'HA

This does not seem difficult, a simple salvage.

CLOXY

A manifestation has taken up resident there. A large one.

Cair'Ha tilts his head.

CAIR'HA

You believe a crew this size would be able to handle a manifestation?

Cloxy rattles his head.

CLOXY

They're trained by the best, and this ship is perfect for this job. And with you?

(laughs)

I'm sure it will be a success. What is your price?

CAIR'HA

Before that, Fr'Dinnian, let me make myself clear. I do not serve you. I do this job, and we are done.

Cloxy stills then inclines his head.

CLOXY

What is your price?

CAIR'HA

An outfitted, tech only ship for transsolar travel and supplies to last. Do this, and I will ensure your mission a success.

Cloxy looks down on Cair'Ha, then down at Vie.

CLOXY

What about your daughter? Will she be requiring a safe location for the duration of the mission? I have contacts on the station.

Cair'Ha's shell vibrates. Vie hides fully behind Cair'Ha.

CAIR'HA

You will not speak of her, to her. She stays with me.

Cloxy sighs.

CLOXY

Your demands are amiable. My human there will handle the rest of the negotiations. I have other business to attend to.

-

Cloxy raises one large, metal hand, and an image of the portal stone appears. It is smooth and oval shaped, as if a large fragment of a meteor has rested in a river and smoothed over.

CLOXY

This is the portal stone. If you cheat me, I will ensure you and your... spawn, will be vaporized.

Cloxy's hologram dissipates, the hologram falling apart in strands as the emitters slowly dim away. Amara and Jared look at Cair'Ha and Rysar looks away. Cair'Ha snaps his mandibles, then looks at Amara.

CAIR'HA

Tell me more of this stone, and why
you need me.

Amara brings up schematics of a massive ship, its head like a spear point shooting from its large body with massive four wings and seven layers of decks up and down the ship's body.

Several large, triangular bodies of metal float in between the ship's main body and the ship's head, docking and moving in between strategic points around the ship's vulnerable parts.

AMARA

This is why we need you.

Cair'Ha takes a hesitant step forward, Vie scampers right behind him for a moment before clambering on his back to get a closer look.

CAIR'HA

Trannorian.

AMARA

It is. Warship, able to take on a
small fleet. Records say there was a
lot of chatter about something they
found. Before they lost contact.

Jared holds up his hands.

JARED

Before... something found them.

Jared makes a ghostly sound, making Vie gasp. Cair'Ha and Amara look at Jared for a moment before resuming.

AMARA

Before they lost contact. This is what
it looks like now.

The diagram shifts, showing a new picture of the ship. A large bulk of the lower ship is missing. Several of the thrusters, metal moving shields, and the bottom half of the

docking looks like it is torn off.

CAIR'HA

It looks that someone took your prize.

AMARA

That's what the Trannorians thought.
Raiders, scavengers, at least until
this was taken.

An obscured, real life picture of the ship is shown. The spear head is prominently in view, but it appears the sheared lower levels have a mass now. Cair'Ha mutters in his language while Vie peers closer, leaning over Cair'Ha's shoulder.

VIE

What? What is that?

Amara raises her hand and a holographic dial fills it. She turns it, and the picture plays like frames of a video. A few pinpricks of violet light shines, and as the frames shift a multitude of the lights grow brighter and more numerous.

Cair'Ha stays stoic and Vie gasps. Amara continues dialing the frames forward and the darkness condenses suddenly, making the lights go into one condensed burst before blinking.

The picture fills suddenly with a sharply lined gaping maw of a black, bat-like creatures face with eyes shining like stars all about its face. The frame stops there.

CAIR'HA

A voidrassil.

JARED

What?

CAIR'HA

An ancient word from when my species began space travel. It means a being made of stars and death.

Jared nods slowly.

JARED

Big mood.

Amara glares at Jared and pushes him. Cair'Ha and Vie stare

at them, both of their heads tilted in confusion. Amara clears her throat and continues.

AMARA

Your people got it right. This was footage of a Trannorian recovery team.

CAIR'HA

How did your employer gain this?

AMARA

Cloxy got this how he usually does.

JARED

Talking a hell of a lot.

Vie shakes in laughter and catches herself before falling off Cair'Ha. Amara suppresses a smile.

AMARA

He has contacts.

Cair'Ha stares at the voidrassil.

CAIR'HA

No Hath could handle that. You would need wizards, artifacts, a fleet. It is made of magic and only magic can disperse.

Amara and Jared lose all mirth. Amara scowls, and before anyone could speak Rysar gets up and joins everyone at the table.

RYSAR

That's why they needed me. You know... spacial possession.

Jared leans against Amara slightly and Amara nods.

AMARA

I'll take care of that.

CAIR'HA

You will use your spirit to draw it out.

RYSAR

Amp her and the ship with enough magic, we can confuse it. Like dribbling sugar in a hatchlings mouth.

Keep it guessing where it comes from.

CAIR'HA

Does not answer my question.

JARED

You'll be with me and Rysar. Cracking the ship open and getting at the artifact.

CAIR'HA

Magic draws it. Why would it leave an artifact, if this item does exist?

JARED

Because the artifact is shut off. If you look here...

Jared raises his hand and spins the ship and shifts the picture to show magical emanations. It washes away all of the colors of the nebula, and Vie leans forward and coos.

Where the ship was is covered in oil slick strands that wraps around where the voidrassil lies like a ball of yarn. At the edges of the pictures where the strands are least, there are the faded colors of red, yellow, and green.

VIE

Like when I see!

Cair'Ha makes a hissing sound, nearly covering up what Vie said. Amara and Jared look confused while Rysar does a double take, but says nothing.

AMARA

Yes. Well, what my husband is saying is-

Jared interrupts her. Amara rolls her eyes.

JARED

Even if the thing is there, any active artifact would be shining. But the lights here...

Jared points to the edges of the picture where the red, yellow, and green fades.

JARED

It was deactivated! The suckers turned it off!

Rysar's ears flattens in response to Jared's words.

CAIR'HA

Or it was consumed.

Rysar coughs and Cair'Ha turns his head slightly towards the shorter Trannorian. Rysar coughs again.

RYSAR

I am familiar with the type of artifact, and I read this. It could feed this creature for centuries, and it has barely been a decade.

CAIR'HA

What is this artifact?

Rysar straightens his posture slightly.

RYSAR

Cloxy has decided only I am to know. I will be boarding with you two, as I know how to handle the artifact.

Cair'Ha turns his head all the way to look Rysar in the eye, and the Trannorian recoils slightly.

CAIR'HA

Would not the artifact's particulars assist us?

Rysar huffs. Jared coughs.

RYSAR

It is Cloxy's wishes.

(beat)

But it is, as Cloxy said, a portal stone. It needs be reactivated, and until then, it does nothing.

Cair'Ha shakes his shell head, then looks at Amara and Jared.

CAIR'HA

When do we leave?

Jared and Amara exchange a look and mutter something in Spanish.

AMARA

Now.

Cair'Ha nods and Amara goes to turn off the monitor when Cair'Ha raises his hand. Amara looks questioningly.

CAIR'HA
I will familiarize myself.

Amara nods and walks away. Vie whispers something in Cair'Ha's ear. Cair'Ha responds in the Hath language.

CAIR'HA
What? You will get in the way. I- No.

Vie beings hissing and her mandibles click rapidly. Cair'Ha sighs.

CAIR'HA
Go.

As Vie scuttles off of his back to follow Amara, Cair'Ha calls after her in Ha.

CAIR'HA
Remember, if they strike-

VIE
(in Ha)
Cripple.

Cair'Ha waves his hand and she disappears after Amara. He stares at the ship, then raises his hand to dial the picture to the voidrassil, mouth gaping.

CAIR'HA
(whispers)
Death.

INT. S.S. BOND - HALLWAY TO BRIDGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Amara walks briskly to the bridge, Vie sneaking behind her several yards back. Amara walks into the bridge and Vie slowly walks to the door frame and peeks in.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Amara walks to a central console with multiple displays with a large seat in a room shaped like half an oval. Windows goes from nose of the room all the way past Amara, with ribbed frames separating the window in four parts.

Three other seats are unoccupied with their own smaller monitors, only one of them lit to the left. The console to

the left has a mug that says "World's Best" with the third word faded away.

The chair at the right console is moved away, several symbols and designs drawn into the ground in red, cyan, and green, all centered in a space large enough for Rysar to sit.

Vie focuses on the symbols, seeing magical vapors mixed of the same colors and a dark, yellow one mixing into it all, the vapors kaleidoscoping into geometric sequences before dissipating.

A gun being cocked happens suddenly and Vie jumps back. Amara is looking over the chair, her eyes wild, suddenly a mix between milky white and her normal brown color. Amara's lips are twitching

A large, thin, pulsating creature shaped like a stick insect with dozens little jellyfish strands tapering off of Amara looms over her, suddenly growing larger and filling the room with light.

A large strand reaches out to Amara's gun hand and Vie scuttles up the frame, hiding the bulk of her body behind the frame, her mandibles chittering rapidly. The light dies away suddenly and the apparition fades.

Amara stands there with her gun in her hand, blinking away the milkiness from her eyes and she looks up at Vie.

AMARA

Oh it's you.

Amara puts away the gun, and the two of them stare at each other for a second awkwardly.

AMARA

Sorry about that.

Amara pats her gun and fiddles with the holster. Vie looks at Amara and clacks her mandibles.

AMARA

Just a little uh, out of it.

Vie climbs in through the upper part of the frame, stopping on the wall, and stares at Amara.

AMARA

Yeah, uh, come right in.

Vie looks up at Amara and makes a disgruntled, snapping sound with her mandibles. Vie clambers down and walks up to the chair and looks up at the monitors before looking back at Amara, who looks guilty.

AMARA

I would not have shot at you.

Vie shakes her head and mocks Amara's voice.

VIE

I would not have shot at you.

(normal)

You couldn't have.

Amara stares at Vie before, stunned, and laughs. Vie narrows her eyes up at Amara, her voice upset.

VIE

You couldn't have. I am way too fast.

Amara starts laughing full blown, falling back into her chair and Vie clenches her fists and stands straight.

VIE

I am the best at dodging! My dad says so! Stop laughing!

Amara wipes her eyes and snorts, then looks at Vie.

AMARA

I'm sure you are, it's just something I've heard before.

Vie clambers up on the back of her chair, moving quickly and looks down at Amara, eyes narrowed thin.

VIE

Could they do that?

(gets closer)

Huh?

Amara blinks and puts a hand in front of Vie's face, and raps Vie's head plate. Vie blinks, scrambles, almost falls off, before jumping down to the floor.

AMARA

I certainly couldn't.

Vie looks at her up and down, and scoffs.

VIE
Not with those fleshy nubs.

AMARA
Not- It's what I would have said when
I was your age. Whatever age you are.

VIE
Oh.

Vie pats where Amara knocked her head plate, staring up at it, before looking back at Amara. Amara giggles a bit and focuses on entering codes with a smile on her face.

VIE
I would be faster than you were when
you were my age!

Before Amara could respond, Vie walks away and climbs onto the chair to the left. She picks up the mug, seeing the full, faded phrase, 'WORLDS BEST FATHER.' Vie peers at it and then smells the dried contents and gags.

VIE
What is this?

Amara does not respond, focusing on the codes and mutters to herself. Vie sighs and smells again.

VIE
Bitter. Eugh.

Vie gets up and walks up to Amara, staying out of arms reach but is looking at the monitors, before loud thuds and gas hissing distracts her. The stars in the window begin shifting, and Vie runs over to see the ship move.

EXT. NISC MIRE - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUED

Vie's face can be seen from the window as the S.S. Bond detaches from the station, drifting away slowly. Thrusters from the underbelly ignites and pushes the ship away.

At a suitable distance, the ship's primary engines engages, three bright, yellow tails ignite and the ship drops away into the distance.

A ship named Esclair, half the size of the S.S. Bond detaches. It is a similar design to the S.S. Bond, with only

one fin, two engines, and painted red and black with scrapped paint. It accelerates and disappears after the group.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - CONTINUED

Vie stays at the window for another couple of seconds, the stars now passing like faded blurs. The stars are all twinkling in different colors. Vie looks towards Amara, and the stars drop into normal black and white.

Vie clammers up to Amara's elbow, looking up at the screens. Amara looks down and smiles before turning back to the monitors.

One of Amara's hands is inside a part of the console, a stone with symbols glowing milky white all around it. Amara looks strained but focused as she enters more coordinates, her eyes glowing faintly of milky white.

VIE

Do you need the spirit to fly?

Amara glances at Vie and shakes her head.

AMARA

No, but it helps.

Vie looks up at Amara and squints. The faint outline of the stick-like spirit coming into view. Its tendrils and body is still attached to Amara, but a good deal of the tendrils are focused on the stone object.

The creature turns to Vie and wavers. It vibrates slowly and Vie sighs.

VIE

It does not mean to hurt you.

Amara turns suddenly and stares at Vie. The outline of the spirit disappears, and Vie takes a step back.

AMARA

So you can really see it.

Vie's mandibles all twitch.

AMARA

It's all right. I don't mind.

Amara looks back at the console.

AMARA
(bitterly)
What, is it crying?

VIE
Yes. It does not understand what is
happening.

Vie looks up at where the spirit was.

VIE
It feels you, but everything you are
is confusing to it.

AMARA
(mutters)
Glad to know it isn't just me.

Vie looks at Amara and her mandibles click. Amara glances at her then back at the screen, her forehead furrowing.

AMARA
Can you leave? I need to focus. You
probably shouldn't be here.

VIE
I--

Amara turns to Vie, her eyebrows furrowing and her eyes wet.

AMARA
Leave.

Vie runs from the room, pushing past Jared who yells, holding two mugs with steam flooding from their rims. A tear creeps from Amara's tense face. One of her fists is clenched on her arm rest.

INT. S.S. BOND - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Rysar stares at Cair'Ha, his eyes narrowed, his tail flattened underneath of him. It swishes on the floor. Rysar huffs, then speaks in Trannorian.

RYSAR
So... what's a Hath commando doing

here?

Cair'Ha continues to study the diagram of the ship, the light shining fully onto his face. Rysar gets up and walks around the table, looking over the diagram before turning back to Cair'Ha.

RYSAR

My cult worked with Hath commandos a few times. A couple of us even challenged yours. All got smashed, but they was the best fights we seen.

Rysar snorts and waves his hand at the diagram.

RYSAR

That's what you're doing? Checking out the fight? Planning?

Cair'Ha turns all the way to look Rysar in the eye, and in the hissing and spitting tongue of Trannorians with the clicking of Hath mandibles, he speaks.

CAIR'HA

What is it that you want, Fr'Dinnian slave?

Rysar tenses up and straightens up, a rumbling sound in his chest vibrating his fleshy throat.

RYSAR

You should speak better to me. We're working together.

Cair'Ha turns away and looks at the diagram. Rysar tilts his head and lowers it using his long neck, looking up at Cair'Ha from a lower angle.

RYSAR

You think you're better than us? You work for the gasheads, like the rest of us. You have no room to judge.

CAIR'HA

I work with the humans. Not with it.

Cair'Ha rotates the diagram.

CAIR'HA

You owe it your life.

Rysar laughs and turns off the diagram. Cair'Ha slowly looks at Rysar and the Trannorian sits on the table, looking at Cair'Ha headlong.

RYSAR

You work with the savages, me, and the gashead. You and your magic-seeing daughter.

Cair'Ha's mandibles twitch. Rysar's smile widens and raises his head arrogantly, bobbing it back and forth.

RYSAR

Yeah, I picked up on that. Doubt that the two primitives know how valuable she is, but don't worry, I'm not stupid enough to get on your bad side. She's safe.

Rysar puffed out a ring of smoke, then crossed a diagonal line through it.

RYSAR

By my spirit.

Cair'Ha leaned in close, through the dissipating smoke.

CAIR'HA

Speak of my daughter again, and you forfeit more than your spirit, scaleback.

Rysar hissed, his nostrils glowing, before he regains composure. He gets off the table and growls.

RYSAR

Got it. Not friends. So long as we get through that-

Rysar flicks the diagram back on.

RYSAR

-I don't care about your daughter. Or you. You're lucky I'm not greedy. She'd buy a major spirit.

Cair'Ha snaps his mandibles and takes a step towards Rysar. Rysar yelps and runs out of the room, his tail vanishing behind him. Cair'Ha stares after him until a scuffling sound interrupts the silence.

Cair'Ha looks back to see Jared standing in the doorway that leads to the bridge. They look at each other for a second before Jared speaks in English.

JARED

Just wanted to let you know your girl ran off. Upset my wife something wrong.

Cair'Ha's chest rattled in something approximating a sigh, then replies in English.

CAIR'HA

She at times does that. What did she do?

JARED

Dunno. Mara won't share. Just make sure she doesn't bother her again, her condition doesn't allow for flights of feeling.

Cair'Ha nods.

CAIR'HA

Fair. I will speak to her.

JARED

You do that.

Jared looks after where Rysar left.

JARED

You causing problems with the shaman?

CAIR'HA

He caused problems with me.

He turns towards Jared.

CAIR'HA

Should make sure he stays away from me and mine.

Jared studies Cair'Ha for a moment, then nods.

JARED

Fair enough. Get prepped, we should arrive soon.

Cair'Ha nods and turns off the display.

INT. S.S. BOND - CARGO HOLD - DAY

A room at least twenty yards across filled with crates, completely dark. A hissing battle cry that sounds too close to a scream breaks the stillness, and a large tower of crates fall over.

Vie jumps on top of the fallen crates, graceful except for the slightly awkward way she stands for a moment and then goes into a battle stance. She stared fiercely, then gets bored and sits down.

VIE

(low)

Leave. Just cause I know.

Vie stares at the room and made angry, chittering sounds with her mandibles. Then a faint glow catches her attention. She follows the strand's trail to the closed metal door leading into the room.

It was a dark green strand with bright sparks of red and strands of white shining off it. Her eyes widens and she laughs quietly as she jumps up and hides behind a crate.

The strand drifts close to her and tries to latch onto her. She dodges it nimbly and it drifts away. She holds her breath as it nears where she was, then it dissipates.

She stays that way for a moment, then the door swishes open and Cair'Ha comes in. Cair'Ha is shrouded in dark green energy, the sparks of red and strands of white falls off him like a cloak.

She ducks behind the crate. Cair'Ha looks towards the sound, then looks around in an exaggerated manner. Vie rolls behind another crate, and Cair'Ha prowls slowly behind the crate. Vie peeks around the corner and Cair'Ha is gone.

Vie looks around and Cair'Ha grabs her from behind. Vie shrieks and struggles with Cair'Ha's grip as he swings her around, then presses her tightly to his chest. She stops struggling and looks up at Cair'Ha.

VIE

How do you always find me so quick?

Cair'Ha's shell head touches hers, making a slight thudding sound. He grins her shell slightly, making her laugh

CAIR'HA

I told you, there are some strategies
to be shared, and some used to
exploit.

Vie sighs and grabs Cair'Ha's shellhead, pushing it away so
she can glare at him.

VIE

What if I die cause you won't share?

CAIR'HA

Then I would kill your murderers and
lecture your bones.

Vie pushes his arms away and huffs and Cair'Ha laughs. He
pins her down and clenches her tight.

CAIR'HA

No one will kill you. You are too
smart, and we too good a team to be
defeated.

Vie makes a pleased buzzing sound before wriggling out and
jumping on top of some crates.

CAIR'HA

You did better in knowing when I was
coming. It has been months since I
snuck up on you.

Vie groans and spins around on the crate, glaring at her
father.

VIE

What's the point if you always catch
me?

Cair'Ha sits silently for a moment.

CAIR'HA

What did you do on the bridge?

Vie stops moving and sits down, practically wilting.

VIE

Did they say something? I didn't do or
say anything.

CAIR'HA

The male human said you bothered the

captain.

Vie's mandibles snaps and her head snaps up as well.

VIE

She bothered me! She said she was like me, I told her spirit is sad, and made sure she knew I was faster. That's all!

CAIR'HA

You told her about her spirit?

Vie becomes invested in her clawed fingers.

CAIR'HA

You know how dangerous it is to speak of your capabilities. Most know not that any of us can use magic.

Vie grows agitated, her mandibles chittering at increasingly high speeds as she talks

VIE

But the captain was sad! And the spirit too! I thought that if the spirit could tell her, then maybe-

Cair'Ha stands up, and walks over to her. Vie quiets, and when Cair'Ha extends and arm Vie scuttles up his arm and perches on his shoulder. For a moment they sit quietly.

VIE

I messed up?

Cair'Ha made a low buzzing sound, and Vie lays her chin on Cair'Ha's shell head, and lets out a long sigh.

VIE

When will I be able to just be, dad?

CAIR'HA

When we get to our new home, my little bug. Until then...

VIE

Until then?

CAIR'HA

You must keep your quick mouth quiet. The Trannorian already knows, and the

humans...

VIE

But we can trust them! They see how the gashead and scaleback messed with the woman!

Cair'Ha shakes his head.

CAIR'HA

We will have no help from them. They need the gashead too much to be trustworthy. From now on, stick to me, little bug.

Vie grumbles and scrambles around Cair'Ha's head, until she is in the hollow between Cair'Ha's neck. Cair'Ha gets up, and begins walking to the door.

VIE

(quietly)

What if I can help her?

Cair'Ha thrums with a chittering, and his mandibles clack.

CAIR'HA

She will go without your aid. That is an order.

Vie tucks her head against the back of Cair'Ha's back shell, her eyes unfocused as she stared away.

Cair'Ha is standing in front of the door when a clicking sound echoes around them from unseen audio speakers. A few, unintelligible words echo obviously from Amara, Rysar, and Jared, before Jared clears his throat.

JARED (V.O)

Will our Hath passengers--

Amara's voice cuts in from the background and they argue for a second.

JARED (V.O)

...fine. Will Cair'Ha and Vie please make it up to the bridge? We have a tail.

Vie scrambles on top of Cair'Ha's shell head and peers over

the lip in Cair'Ha's face.

VIE

Is it home?

Cair'Ha's shakes his head, making Vie's head bob.

CAIR'HA

It is not home anymore. And no, it cannot be.

The door slides open, the bright light from the hallway streaming into the cargo hold.

CAIR'HA

There is no way they found us. I made sure of that.

Cair'Ha steps through the frame, ducking, with Vie on his back.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - CONTINUED - DAY

Amara is sitting at the central console with Jared standing over her gesturing and talking, and Rysar sitting amidst the diagrams of symbols. Many of them are lit, and Rysar's eyes flicker with strange lights.

JARED

They would have had to be right behind us, and we were clear before we brought--

Cair'Ha and Vie enter during the conversation, Cair'Ha ducking underneath the bridge's entrance frame.

JARED CONTINUED

--them on board. Something's wrong.

Cair'Ha speaks in English.

CAIR'HA

We are being tailed?

Amara looks at Jared and jerks her head at the second console. Both Jared and her consoles had mugs on the dashes. Jared speaks over his shoulder as he walks.

JARED

Yeah. Any reason for that?

AMARA

What my husband is saying, Cair'Ha, is that we seem to have been followed from the station.

Amara looks at Vie then back at Cair'Ha.

AMARA

Any reason we should be worried?

JARED

What my dear wife is trying to say--

Jared swivels around in his chair, mug in hand, and gestures with his free hand at the image of a space ship.

The chipped red and black paint and the name Esclair is on the side of the vessel. Jared pressed a button and a large glowing plane with the ship's image materialized in front of Amara's console.

JARED CONTINUED

--is who in the hells is this?

Cair'Ha tilts his head up, studying the ship and Vie glances at Amara. Amara's eyes flicker to Vie but quickly locks on to Cair'Ha.

CAIR'HA

Trannorian transport.

Rysar lets out a plume of smoke.

RYSAR

Obviously. I have been trying contact for minutes.

Cair'Ha looks down at Amara.

CAIR'HA

Could this not be his old cult, looking for their pound of flesh?

AMARA

Could be, but I'm betting it is whatever business has you running off into the corners of space.

Amara looks at Vie, then back at Cair'Ha.

AMARA CONTINUED
Smuggling a little girl.

Vie chitters aggressively and Cair'Ha remains quiet.

CAIR'HA
My people have bigger concerns than my
daughter.

Amara contemplates Cair'Ha's face and Jared snorts. Rysar opens one eye and watches.

CAIR'HA
If they knew where we were, they would
not use that ship.

They all sit still for a moment as Amara studies Cair'Ha, until Amara nods.

AMARA
I believe you.

Jared shakes his head and Rysar snorts.

AMARA
If that was Ha, you wouldn't be
standing here all calm, would you?

Amara glances at Vie. Jared looks as well, and then looks at Amara and back at the screen.

AMARA
Regardless, we need to lose them.
Can't have them competing for the
stone. Rysar?

Rysar opens both of his eyes and stretches, yawning his mouth wide.

RYSAR
You want to use your spirit so soon?

Amara looks dead ahead at the ship in front of them.

AMARA
Better practice.

RYSAR
Fine. You remember what I told you?

Amara sighs, closed her eyes, and holds both of her fists

together, knuckles touching.

AMARA

Stable core.

Amara takes in a deep breath.

AMARA

Breath.

Vie gasps a moment before white strands comes into being around Amara, twisting and coalescing like a large, billowing cloak about her.

RYSAR

And connect. To the spirit...

Rysar looks pleased, grinning widely. Jared turns to look, and despite the look of amazement, a frown stretches across his face.

RYSAR

...then the ship.

The white strands splay outwards, whipping into touching the ship's metal, the cloak stretches out behind Amara, grabbing onto the ship's floor.

Cair'Ha takes a step back, his mandibles snapping, but the strands spread around him, staying away from him. Several strands drift near Vie and she touches one, which glows brighter then snaps tightly to the ship.

RYSAR

Now, guide the ship, and distort the tail's perceptions of us.

Amara's eyes are fluttering, bright light peeking from underneath her eyelids. She slowly floats off her chair, and Rysar grimaces. He sits down and mutters, symbols flaring brightly around his hands.

RYSAR

Amara, you must stay in control.

AMARA

I.. am.

More strands coalesce around Amara, forming something of a

hunched shape through the cloak that forms around Amara. Rysar mutters and a symbol slashes in front of him, and the shape dissipates.

Amara gasps, and her eyes open wide, completely encompassed by the white light. The screen in front of her suddenly glows white, and a white wave passes through the ship.

EXT. S.S. BOND - SPACE - DAY

The windows of the S.S. Bond glows brightly, then a wave of white energy passes over the whole of the ship, making the rest glow subtly as if the metal became hot.

The ship's engine's flare with the white energy, suddenly causing the ship's speed to distort the star, and several ghost images of the ship peels off from their starting point.

The ghost images go the same speed as the S.S. Bond, one even going back towards the Esclair, but they all disappear behind the S.S. Bond as the ship vanishes into the distance.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - CONTINUED - DAY

White light dims suddenly in the room, the white strands snapping one by one and fizzling away from existence. Jared is rubbing his eyes clear, Cair'Ha and Vie are shaking their head, and Rysar is breathing heavily.

Amara is still sitting with her fists touching each other, eyes wide open and glowing white. The vestiges of the shimmering, white cloak drifts behind her, the rough shape of the stick spirit dimly there.

Jared's eyes widen when he sees the spirit's caricature and rushes over to Amara.

JARED

Amara! Honey-

Rysar stretches his hand out.

RYSAR

No! Do not touch her, you will burn!

Jared jerks his hands away right before he touches her. He looks between Amara and Rysar. Cair'Ha steps away as his eyes clear, staying silent. Vie is half on top of Cair'Ha's head, eyes wide.

JARED
If you don't fix this, scaleback, I am going--

RYSAR
(interrupts)
There is nothing I can do. I have spent as much as I dare before the mission.

Jared pulls out a gun and primes it, aiming at Rysar. His eyes tears up.

JARED
You fuckin' did this you ingrate, you better fix it before I burn you out. Alright?

Rysar stares at Jared, then back at Cair'Ha and Vie. Cair'Ha's eyes widen.

CAIR'HA
Do not--

RYSAR
(interrupts)
Her! She can do this!

Rysar points at Vie, and Jared spins around to face Cair'Ha and Vie. Cair'Ha stays stock-still while Vie stares at Amara.

JARED
Can she help?

CAIR'HA
He speaks--

JARED
(interrupts)
Can. She. Help.

Jared pulls out another gun and aims it at Cair'Ha. Cair'Ha begins thrumming with a dangerous vibration, but Jared just stares Cair'Ha down.

JARED
(yelling)
Can she do it or not?

CAIR'HA
Put your weapon down, human.

Jared turns fully to Cair'Ha with both pistols aimed at Cair'Ha.

JARED
 (quietly)
 I'm going to relish this you scum
 eating--

VIE
 (interrupts)
 I will do it.

CAIR'HA
 What?

Before Jared, Cair'Ha, or Rysar can react, Vie leaps off Cair'Ha's back nimbly and lands next to Amara.

Cair'Ha goes to move, but Jared fires a shot in between Cair'Ha and Vie. Cair'Ha hisses with all mandibles outstretched, but stays still, watching Vie's every move.

Vie begins picking up the loose ends of the white strands, gathering the edges of the cloak, the magic fizzling as it touches her.

As she looks up, she sees the spirit hunched over Amara, the cloak hanging off it from its arms as it wraps around Amara's shoulders. It appears to be speaking, but only the sound like a billow sucking in air is heard.

Vie holds up the strands to the spirit and it looks away from Amara to Vie. Glistening, clear tears drip from its face as it looks down on Vie and shakes its head. The tears that fall and hit the chair burns it and smoke trails up.

Vie stands up, pats the spirit's arm, then gets up onto the back of the chair, puts on arm on Amara's head, then one around the spirit's arm.

Vie begins humming like a cello playing its lowest note, and the spirit closes its eyes, and tears come gushing out.

Suddenly the spirit is gone, and it is just Vie sitting on the back of the chair, one arm around Amara's head. Amara gasps and falls back onto the chair, her eyes blinking rapidly as tears falls down her face.

Jared lowers both guns, the sounds like a wheel stopped spinning as both powers off. He drops them on the ground as he kneels in front of Amara and touches her hand tentatively.

Amara blinks, clearing her eyes, and looks down at Jared. Vie is looking dazed off into the distance where the spirit used to stand.

AMARA

Jared?

JARED

Honey, are you okay?

He touches her arm, then holds her hand.

AMARA

What... happened?

Jared smiles wide, blinking out tears from his own eyes.

JARED

We almost lost you, Rysar, he couldn't do nothing, and then.

He gestures at Vie and Cair'Ha

JARED

They managed to save you.

RYSAR

She managed to save you.

Rysar is standing over Vie now, a big, toothy smile on his face as he stares down at them both.

AMARA

What?

-

RYSAR

She... what is word... calmed the spirit. Right down into your mind.

(laughs)

Close too, I do not think you would have lasted with that much magic spinning out of control.

AMARA

How did...?

Cair'Ha's shadow darkens Rysar's face. He looks up and

shrinks away from Cair'Ha's suddenly close face. Cair'Ha extends an arm to Vie. When she did not notice, he nudged her and clacks all his mandibles, which rouses her to movement.

Vie looks down at Amara and Jared, then at Rysar and then to Cair'Ha. She quickly looks down before climbing up Cair'Ha's arm and up to his back.

Cair'Ha begins walking away, but Amara calls after him.

AMARA

Thank you, kid.

Cair'Ha halts and looks over his shoulder, but Vie does not move. Jared stands up next to Amara.

JARED

Both of you. I'm sorry about the guns,
but-

Cair'Ha interrupts, turning slightly towards all of them, his eyes boring angrily at Jared.

CAIR'HA

But you needed her. Like everyone
does.

JARED

I understand it was rude of me to
point, but Mara was going to die!
Surely you can understand that.

Cair'Ha turns with a loud humming sound, similar to a disgusted growl.

CAIR'HA

If you knew how much was expected from
her before I took her, you would not
be so flippant about the use of her
abilities. Everyone uses her. It is
ended.

Jared and Amara stays quiet, glancing at each other, but then Rysar laughs.

RYSAR

It was the best choice, Cair'Ha. You

are just upset the secret is out. Do not worry, no one will tell Cloxy.

CAIR'HA
Shut your mouth, worm.

JARED
Whoa, whoa. That's enough.

Cair'Ha's mandibles splay out and he hisses loudly. Jared raises both of his hands, and Amara stands up unsteadily.

AMARA
Cair'Ha, Vie, thank you for your help. There is no need for hostility. I owe you both my life. We won't betray you.

Cair'Ha glares at the two of them, and almost speaks until Vie tugs on his head. Cair'Ha stills, but before he can move Amara speaks.

AMARA
We need her for the mission.

Cair'Ha shakes his head.

CAIR'HA
No.

AMARA
This is the only way for us to get the portal stone.

Amara points at Cair'Ha

AMARA
And for you to get your ship.

Cair'Ha hesitates for a beat.

CAIR'HA
Only if she agrees.

Vie says something into the hollow of Cair'Ha's neck, too quiet for the rest of them to hear. Cair'Ha closes his eyes when he hears.

AMARA
What was that, kid?

Vie looks up.

VIE
I will do it.

The whole group stands still, absolutely quiet. Rysar smiles, and looks around at them all.

RYSAR
So
(beat)
When do we arrive?

INT. S.S. BOND - MEETING ROOM - DAY - AN HOUR LATER

Cair'Ha, Jared, and Rysar are all suiting up. Jared is putting on his mask, while Rysar is fitting metallic fabric all over his body with a metal cuirass fitting over like a suit of armor.

Cair'Ha puts on a mask attached to a large tank fitted in grooves along his chitin. Vie walks in, Amara behind her.

Amara goes to check on Jared, making sure that his suit is correctly put on. Jared grabs her hands and puts his head to hers, then hugs her. Rysar looks away in a huff, while Cair'Ha kneel in front of Vie.

Cair'Ha and Vie speak in Hath language.

CAIR'HA
You are certain?

VIE
Yes. This is what I am good at, and it will keep you safe.

CAIR'HA
I still think that this is dangerous.
We can not trust them.

VIE
It is necessary. And I would have to be up here in either case, yes?

Cair'Ha huffs, then conks his head against Vie's own. She grinds her shell head against his, then steps back. Cair'Ha gets up and looks at the others. Rysar grins at Cair'Ha and Jared nods.

The three of them walk down a separate hallway while Vie and Amara go to the bridge.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Amara and Vie run into the room, with Amara sliding into the console chair with Vie standing next to her. Through the forward facing window is the derelict ship, the fog of the nebula swirling around it. The

Amara hits a button and a holoscreen with Jared's face shows up to the side of her console.

AMARA

Are you all in the shuttle?

JARED

Locked in and ready to roll, dear.

AMARA

You really want to go with that one?

JARED

Hmm you're right. Locked in and ready to roll, cutie pie.

Amara sighs and brings up Rysar's and Cair'Ha's faces.

AMARA

Get ready for drop off.

Amara reaches to hit a button and Jared winks at her.

JARED

See you on the other side.

INT. S.S. BOND - SHUTTLE BAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A sleek, long nosed ship the size of a small bus sits in the center of a room big enough to hold two of the shuttles. The shuttle is grey with yellow details.

Jared can be seen through the shuttle's front facing windows, while Rysar is doing stretches on the outside, next to the open door. Cair'Ha walks into the shuttle and disappears from sight.

INT. S.S. SHUTTLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jared is in the pilot seat of the shuttle, hitting buttons and making sure the shuttle is good to go. He takes an old Polaroid picture of him and Amara on Mars from his pocket, smiles, and wedges it in the controls.

The primary body of the shuttle is like a hallway with two rows of four seats with triangular bits of metal folded off the corners of the frame.

Cair'Ha is strapped in already, the triangular metal tech glowing. Rysar enters into the shuttle, and the door shuts. Rysar chooses the seat across from Cair'Ha.

Rysar is flexing his arms, taking deep breaths, while Cair'Ha sits with his back straight and staring dead ahead at the wall.

When Rysar let's out a plume of smoke and a bit of fire that sweeps into Cair'Ha's face, Cair'Ha moves only his eyes to look at him. Cair'Ha speaks in English.

CAIR'HA

Is that truly necessary?

Rysar lets out another, shorter plume of smoke and grins. Rysar speaks in Trannorian.

RYSAR

It is necessary to prepare oneself for combat. You know our ways.

Cair'Ha tilts his head back until it hits the shuttle wall. He speaks in Trannorian.

CAIR'HA

I merely thought you would have left that behind with your dignity.

Rysar narrowed his eyes and breathes out a longer, larger plume of smoke directly into Cair'Ha's face. Cair'Ha makes no reaction.

Jared looks over his shoulder at the two of them.

JARED

We're close. Clench those cheeks, gentlemen.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The S.S. Bond fires up from behind a dense cloud of gas, dispersing the mass and it shoots towards the derelict.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Amara sits at the console, breathing in and out slowly, with

Vie standing next to her. Vie stares out the window and at the derelict, mesmerized.

Out the window the derelict at first seems empty, but great puffs of black smoke suddenly expand from the derelict's dark underbelly. The mass grows, and bright pinpoints of violet energy begins to appear.

AMARA

Vie

(beat)

I'm starting.

Vie at first does not move, but when white strands begin picking up all around Amara, Vie moves quickly, darting to one strand, flicking it and making it grow brighter and adhering to the side of the room.

Vie continues to move, flicking and shooting more strands as white energy around Amara increases, glowing brighter by the second.

A burst of energy from Amara fills the room, and the cloak materializes, fuller and brighter than it had before. Vie grabs both edges, and flaps it hard, her body vibrating slightly as her own insect-like humming fills the room.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The S.S. Bond is glowing brightly, the beginnings of a white shield forming in front of the ship's nose.

A wave of black vapors and wisps are gathering around the derelict's broken belly. The voidrassil's eyes are fully formed, and its mouth yawns open, and black fire spills out into its body.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Vie billows the cloak again, the strands attaching to the ship increasing in strength and volume. Amara's eyes are wide open, white energy beaming from her eyes, and she is already floating.

Vie is the only thing that is not glowing, but a sudden movement in the cloak grabs her attention.

The stick spirit is forming out of the cloak, and its face, more detailed than before is looking down at Amara. Its hands are reaching all around, and its eyes looks sad.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The voidrassil suddenly explodes, sending waves of the black vapor spinning through the space, hitting the shield of the S.S. Bond, making the ship tilt slightly.

INT. S.S. SHUTTLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle rumbles, making Rysar nearly fall off his chair, the energy emitters reflecting his forward momentum in distortions and keeping him still.

Jared looks up at the dash, frowns, and takes out the picture of he and Amara again. He kisses it and closes his eyes.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The S.S. Bond is a third of the way there, its progress slowed. The wave of black vapor is dispersing.

Another gathering of black vapor and smoke draws close to the voidrassil, and it breaths a wave of black and violet fire out of its mouth back and forth. It spreads out wings double the size of the derelict.

The S.S. Bond is nearly halfway.

It leaps off, its body a quarter the size of its wingspan. It continues to breath its black and violet fire, advancing faster towards the S.S. Bond's speed.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Vie grabs onto the spirits arm, and it looks down at Vie and tilts its head. Vie tilts her head too, gives the cloak another billow, then points out the window.

The spirit looks out, and then back at Vie. It nods slowly, and its outline fades slightly. Amara stands up suddenly, the white energy arcing in between her hands. She twists the energy.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The voidrassil nears the ship, the black and violet fire nearing the ship's shield, its head nearly the size of the ship itself.

The white shield encircles the ship's exterior, parting the shadowy vapors as the S.S. Bond veers off the side, suddenly much faster, skirting the voidrassil's underbelly.

The voidrassil screams and breaks its flying to try and attack, missing every blow. The S.S. Bond soars to the derelict.

Drawing near to the derelict reveals evidence of the voidrassil making the derelict its home.

Scratches and bites taken even further away on all the edges. Many of the floating plates are now dismantled, only one appears to still be floating.

Far away from them, the voidrassil screams, and it begins to turn.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Amara's energy dims slightly as she hits the console. Her voice comes out layered with multiple versions of itself, as if she is speaking normally, deeper, and a higher pitch all at once.

AMARA

Now! Go!

INT. S.S. SHUTTLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jared falters as he hits the controls. His voice breaks slightly.

JARED

Heard. We are launching.

INT. S.S. BOND - SHUTTLE BAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Thrusters on the bottom of the shuttle flaring to life, causing the shuttle to suspend in the air before the floor cracks and begins sliding away.

Beyond the shuttle bay doors is the Nular Nebula, faint wisps of black vapor sweeping across over the multiple colors of the gas clouds making up the nebula. The shuttle drops into space.

EXT. DERELICT - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle flies away from the S.S. Bond, the white energy still surrounding most of the ship in an ovale-like bubble.

A second after the shuttle gets some distance from the S.S.

Bond, it fires back up and soars away. A black and violet wave of fire hits where the S.S. Bond was, hitting the derelict instead.

The shockwave makes the shuttle waver from side to side

INT. S.S. SHUTTLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Cair'Ha and Rysar are thrown against their harnesses. Cair'Ha's mandibles clench and twitch while Rysar closes his eyes and lets out a plume of smoke through his nostrils.

Jared is grimacing, his lips thin against his teeth as he struggles to keep the ship moving.

EXT. DERELICT - SPACE - LANDING PAD - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle lists again before straightening, then the shuttle moves towards what used to be a shuttle bay for the derelict, but torn in half. What remains looks similar to overlapping molten rock.

The shuttle lands, and two seconds later the shuttle door opens, showing Rysar hesitantly stepping out, then sliding along the side. Cair'Ha gets out a second later with Jared right behind him.

Jared and Rysar move to the far wall, an intact, hexagonal door. At every corner it goes into metal points and looks like gold. Cair'Ha goes to follow, then hesitates and looks back.

The S.S. Bond is jetting through the red, green, and yellow of the Nular Nebula, its white shield streaming against the speed it is going, with the voidrassil screaming after it, beating its wings against the void of space.

Cair'Ha stands rigidly, his eyes reflecting the lights flashing, and his mandibles twitching.

JARED

Cair'Ha!

Cair'Ha turns to see Rysar looking at him, while Jared stares past him, then looks at him. He gestures to the door.

JARED

You're up. They're buying us time.

Cair'Ha nods, walks over, and stands in front of the door. Jared and Rysar stand to either side of the door.

He holds both arms to his side in a flex, his chitin armor suddenly bulging then he smashes a fist into the center, bulging the door in. He hits again, making the indentation splinter, and he grabs the edges and tears the vacuum sealed door open.

The door opens to reveal a hallway with cracked floors, shattered, clay seeming lanterns posted on the walls save one.

The lantern carried a small, orange flame that illuminated three bodies that lay underneath the flickering light.

Cair'Ha, Rysar, and Jared walked into the derelict ship, Jared with his guns at the ready, Rysar with magic glowing faintly around his hands, and Cair'Ha walking boldly first.

INT. DERELICT - HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They stand over the three Trannorian bodies in the hallway, the bodies frosted from vacuum exposure, their bodies perfectly preserved with the absence of bacteria. The end of the hallway curves away, with two doors on both walls.

JARED

Last surviving members of the crew?

CAIR'HA

Likely.

Rysar tapped one with his foot, hesitant.

RYSAR

They're wearing similar gear as us. They look like they struggled here, why couldn't they have holed up somewhere else?

CAIR'HA

It does not matter what they used. The voidrassil's presence cracks life support gear and sucks the life out of anything nearby.

Rysar and Jared look at each other then down at the three Trannorians. Cair'Ha walks ahead, going to the door on the left. Jared follows afterwards, while Rysar kneels down and arranges their bodies to be more dignified.

JARED

Let's get going, Rysar.

Rysar stands up and follows. Cair'Ha opens up the door on the left, revealing a half shattered hallway that might have had windows showing the outside. Now there was a broken walkway.

INT. DERELICT - SHATTERED WALKWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

At the end of this walkway there is a similar door to the one from the landing bay, but it is open. Within it there are only shadows.

Jared and Rysar begin muttering and shaking their heads while making their way through the shattered sections.

Jared goes first, his steps certain but wary as he takes one by one. The thin pathway is barely enough for him to make it over. The path shakes slightly, but Jared makes it over.

Cair'Ha goes next, his frame making the path bend underneath the force of his movements. He makes it slowly, but soon after Jared.

Rysar begins his walk, his large, clawed feet making the floor shake slightly. Suddenly, a large rumbling hits the ship, and Rysar, startled, puts too much force on the walkway and it breaks.

Rysar begins flailing as he begins careening towards empty space.

JARED

Rysar!

Cair'Ha springs into action, stabbing a hand into the metal of the wall while grabbing the Trannorian's leg before it flies out of reach. Cair'Ha heaves Rysar to the floor.

RYSAR

Oof!

JARED

The hell- you saved him! Cair'Ha?

Cair'Ha is dangling off his handhold, the force of throwing Rysar making the metal tear slightly. Jared scrambles to grab him before he goes, and Rysar gets up quickly to help.

Between the two of them, Cair'Ha is brought back down. Jared and Rysar, panting slap Cair'Ha on his back. Cair'Ha's

mandibles click in his mouthpiece, and he nods to them both.

CAIR'HA

Thank you.

JARED

Why are you so heavy? I always forget
that you bugs are so heavy!

Rysar laughs and gets up, walking over to the door as Cair'Ha and Jared gets up.

CAIR'HA

It is due to the density of my chitin.
It makes it--

JARED

(interrupts)

No, no, we understand, you're just
fat.

Rysar snorts as he peers into the next room. Cair'Ha raises himself up.

CAIR'HA

I am not fat, my species does not
carry surplus energy like yours.

Jared rolls his eyes.

JARED

Save it for after the mission.

RYSAR

The...

(beat)

Voidrassil? It was supposed to consume
the energy?

Jared looks at Cair'Ha confused. Cair'Ha gets up and walks towards Rysar, speaking as he does.

CAIR'HA

Yes, they leave nothing in their wake,
continuously growing as they feed.

RYSAR

If they leave nothing, what is that?

Cair'Ha gets to the door, and looks inside.

INT. DERELICT - SPAWNING CHAMBER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The next room is massive, easily a basketball court in length and width. Alongside both ends of the room are two flights of stairs that leads to another hexagonal door, one that looks thicker and stronger, but is already half open.

On the ground floor are mounds of Trannorian bodies, many which glow slightly with different colors and faded wisps of spirits of many types, from strange alien creatures to things that look like plants.

On top of the bodies are large, pulsating, glowing violet Poes, strange, hive-like growths coming from the Poes to the bodies below. The room is dimly lit from the violet glows, the light brightest in the center.

The center shows the largest, brightest Poe, its pulsations slow and steady, three rapid ticks after one large thud. Its surface undulates with the movements of something large and bulky inside.

Jared makes a strangled sound as Cair'Ha withdraws and looks up at the voidrassil as it fires again at the S.S. Bond. Cair'Ha turns to Jared.

CAIR'HA

It is not merely here for a feast.

Jared looks up at Cair'Ha, while Rysar stares in, his eyes wide in morbid fascination.

CAIR'HA

It is multiplying.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Vie scrambles around the bridge frantically as the strands slowly die off, some snapping while other simply cease to exist. New strands spawn off of Amara, but as the ship rocks and turns even quicker, the strands die off too.

Amara is still in the center, yanking the white energy emanating around her like reins on a horse, muttering to herself. The window outside almost looks like a painting, the colors and stars mixing together in a stream of imagery.

Vie grabs several old and new strands, tying them together and they shine brightly and connect. She looks for more when a tone comes in, and Jared's face appears on the holoscreen.

Amara's face twists in surprise and exertion.

AMARA

Hon?

JARED

Something's come up that's important.
The creature is breeding, we need more
time.

AMARA

We are barely keeping this up! I don't
know if we'll--

Amara is cut off as she jerks the ship, snapping off several
strands Vie was working on. Vie's mandibles snap in
frustration as she goes to grab more.

JARED

Cair'Ha is--

Jared is interrupted as another tone comes in. Cair'Ha's face
shows up on the holoscreen.

CAIR'HA

Captain, if you take it to the edge of
the Nebula, it will be cautious in its
attempts. It can not go too far from
its offspring.

Amara hesitates.

AMARA

You're sure?

CAIR'HA

I once had to disperse one of these.
We are fortunate it is laying. Take
advantage of its protective instincts
to stay near, and it will aid us.

AMARA

You killed one of these things? How?

CAIR'HA

We had to ram a ship filled with magic
through its gullet. Too much energy at
once, and it implodes.

Amara eyes widen and she scowls.

AMARA
So, kamikaze.

JARED
Amara, don't you dare--

AMARA
(interrupts)
I will buy you time. Keep moving!

Amara cuts the feed off and jerks the reins of the ship.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The S.S. Bond veers away from the derelict, catching the voidrassil off guard as it goes for a bite and narrowly misses. It spins around and dives after the ship.

Off in the distance next to the derelict, a small Trannorian ship with chipped paint and the name Esclair appears from a dense cloud of nebula gas. It flies towards the derelict, and vanishes close to the landing bay.

INT. DERELICT - SPAWNING CHAMBER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Cair'Ha, Rysar, and Jared are standing in the doorway. Jared glares at Cair'Ha.

JARED
Why did you say that?

Cair'Ha stands there, hands by his side, looking at Jared.

JARED
Now she's going to- Agh!

Jared clenches both his fist and walks up to Cair'Ha and brings a finger to his face.

JARED
I bet you have no idea what it is like to lose a wife. Hell, I don't even know if you all love, so let me make this clear. She dies cause of this, you die. Got it?

Cair'Ha's mandibles twitch and Jared clenches the hand he used to point at Cair'Ha, then walks to the doorway. Rysar is standing there awkwardly and avoids eye and physical contact with Jared and Cair'Ha.

JARED

Alright, we need to get through this. Nice and slow, the stairs up there leads to a platform which will get us to the head of the ship. That's where it is, right Rysar?

Rysar nods his head awkwardly.

RYSAR

Should be, they always keep the best stuff near the best warrior, captains of ships should always have it.

Jared nods.

JARED

Good. Let's--

CAIR'HA

(interrupts)

We do feel love, human.

Jared looks back at Cair'Ha.

JARED

What?

CAIR'HA

We do not have 'wives' in our customs, but we do love, and I have lost my partner.

Cair'Ha walks up to Jared and glowers down at the human, his mandibles twitching.

CAIR'HA

Say something so ignorant to me again, and I will crush you.

Jared scowls and raises his hand, but Cair'Ha brushes past him and walks into the room.

CAIR'HA

Come. We do not have time for this delay.

Cair'Ha looks back at Jared.

CAIR'HA

My daughter is up there as well,

human.

Jared opens his mouth, then nods. Rysar is staring at the wall opposite, his lips presses tightly together.

JARED

Right, let's go.

The three of them make their way over small clusters of the dimly glowing eggs.

As they walk past, some of the spirits that still function drift toward them, then the egg pulls them back to the central mound. The most vibrant spirits are the only ones who look up, but they seem to fade with the exertion.

When they get to the stairs, Rysar accidentally taps one of the eggs with his leg. The egg wiggles like jello, and he instinctively withdraws, but the central egg suddenly warps as the large thing inside it shifts.

The three of them freeze as it moves rapidly, until brighter, subdued pinpoints of light points in their direction. None of them move or breath, and the thing keeps staring in their direction for three seconds before its attention wanders.

Jared motions for them to move, and as they get to the top of the stairs, Cair'Ha begins the task of slowly pulling the door wide enough for them to move without making a sound.

Jared is able to make it through first with minimal effort, but when Cair'Ha pulls harder to allow Rysar to get through, the door bends and shrieks.

They freeze and stare at the egg, but the egg only quivers slightly. Cair'Ha pulls it harder, and Rysar slips through. With Rysar and Jared's help, they pull through, and into the hub.

INT. DERELICT - THE HUB - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The hub's size is a third of the room below, with lines of consoles and dashboards on the wall overlooking the egg with windows, allowing them to see the egg and its rapid gesticulations.

The room angles off away from the spawning room to another large hexagonal door, as heavily shielded as the door leading into the hub.

Jared is at one of the consoles with Rysar, attempting to get

it running again. Jared pulls out an object the size of his hand, looking like a glass box with mechanisms surrounding a series of crystals.

Rysar opens up a part of the console and takes out an identical object except shattered and dull. Rysar's finger glows as he draws a symbol over the console, then plugs the object.

Cair'Ha is looking down at the egg, and when the symbol lights up, the egg suddenly stills. Cair'Ha puts his hand on the window and studies the egg below.

Rysar claps his hands and waves his hand in front of the screen, producing a holographic keyboard, and begins typing.

JARED

How much time do you got?

RYSAR

I have enough magic to summon the transport, provided it is functional.

JARED

And? How long?

RYSAR

It is functional... and...

JARED

You are the worst.

RYSAR

I have enough magic. I can bring it here within a few minutes.

CAIR'HA

Hurry.

Rysar waves his hands at him.

RYSAR

No interruptions, I have the requisite-

Cair'Ha interrupts him, turning from the egg.

CAIR'HA

No. The egg is doing something. Hurry.

The egg below is still, but it is slowly glowing brighter.

The spirits below are vanishing one by one.

Rysar and Jared can see the light growing, and Rysar begins typing quickly.

JARED

Okay, Rysar, how much time?

Rysar lets out a plume of smoke as he quickens his speed again, but then a flashing light appears on his screen. He freezes.

JARED

What is it?

The egg is glowing brighter from originally a subtle glow to more of molten, violet metal. Cair'Ha looks back at them.

Rysar looks up, his eyes widening in horror.

RYSAR

The portal stone. It is down there.

Jared and Cair'Ha stare at Rysar for a second before looking down at the egg. Jared leans against the console heavily.

JARED

Fuck.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The S.S. Bond erupts out of the edge of the nebula, trails of the gas clouds trailing serenely behind the ship until the massive form of the voidrassil bursts behind the ship, snapping at its back.

The voidrassil fires a fireball at the S.S. Bond out in open space, and the S.S. Bond dodges, but the fireball hits its energy shield, causing the ship to spin suddenly.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The ship shudders, Amara cries out in pain, and the brightness in the room dims suddenly. Vie looks up in concern and sees the vague outline of the spirit as it rears up in pain, and Amara grimaces along with it.

Vie jumps over and grabs the spirit, holding it, and humming. The spirit pulses once, then fades back. Amara breaths out a

long sigh and looks thankfully back at Vie, and Vie nods to her. Amara looks forward and grabs the reins.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The energy shield of the S.S. Bond strengthens, and turns wide and u-turns back towards the nebula, the voidrassil slowing and waiting at the nebula's edge. It shoots a fireball at the incoming ship but does not move to intercept.

The S.S. Bond dodges and darts to the side, but the voidrassil does not turn to chase. Instead, it stills and turns back to the interior of the nebula, sniffing. It unfurls its wings, then dives back into the gas clouds.

INT. DERELICT - THE HUB - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The egg is glowing even brighter, a bulbous looking head shape similar to the voidrassil stretching at the top of the egg. As the three of them stare down into the spawning chamber, Vie's voice crackles into their ears.

VIE

The thing is coming! It's coming!

Jared and Cair'Ha look concerned at each other while Rysar keeps hitting keys on his holographic keyboard.

CAIR'HA

Vie? What?

JARED

Where's Amara?

AMARA

I'm here. Listen to her, I'm busy.

JARED

Are you fine?

AMARA

Surviving! Listen!

VIE

The big drassil turned back all of a sudden! We are not sure why, it was chasing us then stopped and turned around!

Jared draws both of his pistols.

JARED
We know why.

AMARA
Do you have the portal stone?

Jared glances at Rysar.

JARED
Soon.

AMARA
That soon better be an affirmative or
I have to get creative!

JARED
I hear you honey. We'll be out soon.

The comms cuts off and Jared turns towards Rysar.

JARED
You're certain the portal stone is in
there?

Rysar looks up from the console.

RYSAR
Yes. I can sense it now.

JARED
Can you do something about that?

Jared taps the glaring window. Rysar smiled.

JARED
Take that as a yes.

Jared points at Cair'Ha.

JARED
You and me, let's go.

Cair'Ha nods, goes to the door, and wrenches it wide open. Cair'Ha and Jared step through. Rysar gets up and begins drawing symbols on the panes of the windows, muttering to himself.

INT. DERELICT - SPAWNING CHAMBER - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The two of them descend into the spawning chamber. All of the spirits are gone, and even some of the small eggs have

deflated, becoming small sacs of fluid and nothing more

Cair'Ha vaults over the stairwell and hit the ground. He crushes several of the deflated eggs and strange plumes of vapor trails up. Cair'Ha quickly moves away from them.

Jared opens fire from the staircase onto the egg. It spasms, moving in all directions, its bulbous head with many pinpoints of light pulsating, its jaw stretching the membrane of the egg.

Cair'Ha steps forward, ripped an armored corpse of a Trannorian from the mound, and throws it into the egg. It tears into the side of it and makes the egg tilt, but it stays nearly whole.

The glow in the room increases and its head nearly tears through the membrane. Jared continues to open fire, moving along the edges of the room, while Cair'Ha picks up several other bodies and chucks them at the egg.

Then another glow enters the room. Bright yellow and orange symbols glows from the window Rysar stands at, and a large, central symbol formed out of all of them, before transforming into a pool of molten orange energy.

The pool of orange energy contracts as a spear slowly formed out of it. The baby voidrassil in the center turns towards it, its face widening. Jared lets out another volley of shots.

JARED

Keep it from absorbing the energy!

CAIR'HA

Understood.

Cair'Ha lobs another body and reaches for another when he finds a large axe under one of the Trannorian bodies. He grabs it, hefts it in his hand, then charges the egg. The creature screams towards the two of them.

Cair'Ha leaps up, landing on the egg, and slices down. Shadow vapors spills out in condensed and gaseous forms as the head splits through the membrane, the miniaturized and fleshy face of a baby voidrassil exposed to the vacuum.

Cair'Ha backs away as the creature thrashes around, waves of energy from it being thrown in every direction. Cair'Ha gets hit by a wave and Jared gets glanced, knocking them both against the wall.

The creature begins pulling itself out of the sac, its form fizzing between solid and magical smoke. When Rysar's spear fully forms, its glowing, molten form coalescing into glowing metal.

The spawn of the voidrassil turns to Rysar, its black face and blinking, pinpoint violet eyes shuddering in the bright light of the spear.

A final burst of energy from Rysar dissipates the symbols, and the spear launches forward and through the head and body of the spawn.

Cair'Ha groans, a hollow, shuddering sound that emanates from his chest, and Jared groans as well a second later.

JARED

Did we kill it?

CAIR'HA

I believe so.

Jared and Cair'Ha look at each other and nod at each other. They get up slowly.

RYSAR

Hold you two.

Jared and Cair'Ha turn to him, and Rysar comes down the staircase slowly. His hands and eyes are glowing and he is pointing at both of them.

RYSAR

Neither move.

JARED

What?

Cair'Ha tenses, but his body shudders. His mandibles clench and he takes a step back.

Rysar steps over to the split body of the voidrassil and begins moving around the body parts. Moments later and a squelching sound, he comes back with the portal stone covered in black goop. Rysar attempts to smile, but he frowns.

RYSAR

I'm sorry about this, but Cloxy worked this out.

JARED

What did he work out?

Kurantao speaks from the doorway in Trannorian.

KURANTAO

Us.

From the entrance of the spawning chamber came Kurantao and Quizzret, as well as two other Trannorians with environmental suits and guns. Kurantao stands at the front with a large grin.

KURANTAO

You did it, Rysar. You're back in.
Where's the stone?

Jared looks back and forth between the two of them, jaw working, while Cair'Ha closes his eyes, his chest rising and falling slowly. Jared glares at Rysar.

JARED

You- you?

Rysar opens his hands, palms out towards Jared.

RYSAR

They offered me a place in their cult,
Jared, I could not refuse.

JARED

You- my wife, and this?

Jared raised his pistols at Rysar.

JARED

I'm going to kill you, you--

The two Trannorians and Quizzret raise their weapons and take aim at Jared.

KURANTAO

None of that, savage.

Jared grinds his teeth together and holds his aim at Rysar. Kurantao sighs and gestures at Rysar. Rysar speaks in English.

RYSAR

They want you to put down your weapon.
Cloxy wants you alive.

Jared sputters.

JARED

Why? To--

RYSAR & JARED

--keep his investment.

Jared holds his weapons, but his hands are shaking.

JARED

What about Amara?

Rysar is gradually moving down the steps, his eyes flicking between Jared and Cair'Ha.

RYSAR

If she lives.

KURANTAO

Quick, before I grow tired and kill him, bonus or not.

RYSAR

Please, Jared, I feel bad enough about your wife.

Jared's eyes widen, but he lets out a breath and lowers his weapons. Quizzret walks over to him and takes them from him and shoves him down.

JARED

Hey!

Kurantao looks over at Cair'Ha.

KURANTAO

What of him?

Rysar shook his head and looks suspiciously at Cair'Ha. Rysar speaks in Trannorian.

RYSAR

The valuable one is the daughter, and she's in the ship. Careful he--

Kurantao interrupts, smiling wide.

KURANTAO

Ah! Then she's as good as dead. The voidrassil will finish them.

Cair'Ha suddenly disappears, his speed making him seem to vanish. His axe is now poised at Kurantao's throat, ready to slash. Kurantao freezes and the rest of the Trannorians aim their weapons at Cair'Ha.

RYSAR

As I was saying, he knows our language.

JARED

What are you doing Cair'Ha?

Cair'Ha's mandibles twitch slightly as he stares down Kurantao.

CAIR'HA

They have no desire to aid us, Jared. They have written off your wife and my daughter.

Kurantao looks down at Cair'Ha, his lips quivering. Cair'Ha's own arm is steady, but his body is quivering slightly.

Rysar notices and keeps his glowing hands raised, and continues to speak in Trannorian.

RYSAR

Put the axe down, Cair'Ha, and you may live.

Cair'Ha keeps his eyes on Kurantao, and continues speaking in Trannorian.

CAIR'HA

You are the same scaleback I beat in the station. You wish to see how I can use an axe?

Kurantao grimaces and shook his head.

JARED

What do you mean? Cloxy sent them.

Cair'Ha speaks in English.

CAIR'HA

Cloxy cares nothing for your well

being, only your economic value. The portal stone is worth sacrificing the ship and your wife.

Jared looks between Rysar and Kurantao, then at Quizzret. He grabs one of his weapons and gets up, the barrel down as he looks between the Trannorians and Cair'Ha, before coming to a decision.

JARED

It's true, Cloxy doesn't give a shit about us.

Rysar speaks in English.

RYSAR

Jared--

Jared shoots Rysar in the side. Rysar yelps and falls down the stairs. Now Quizzret anxiously looks at Jared and Cair'Ha, aiming at Jared first then alternating back and forth. Rysar groans at the bottom of the steps.

Jared looks down at him and grimaces.

JARED

You though, I thought you had something better in you.

Jared glances at Cair'Ha.

JARED CONTINUED

Think we can kill these bastards?
Steal their ship?

Cair'Ha tightens his grip on the axe and looks Kurantao dead in the eye. The Trannorian leader widens his eyes.

CAIR'HA

Yes.

JARED

Let's do this.

Cair'Ha slashes the throat of Kurantao, blood spilling and hanging in the air. He kicks Kurantao's thrashing body towards one of the Trannorians in the back before moving quickly to follow up.

Jared begins firing at Quizzret and Quizzret dodges one shot but gets hit in the shoulder. He falls to the ground

thrashing, and Jared focuses fire on the Trannorian behind him.

Trannorian #3 that Kurantao fell onto hits the dirt and tries pushing Kurantao off. Cair'Ha side steps and hits the Trannorian in the face with the butt of the axe, knocking him back on the ground.

Trannorian #4 ducks for cover in the doorway, firing shots from cover at Jared.

Cair'Ha kneels by the Trannorian #3 and smashes his face in, destroying the environmental suit. The Trannorian gasps, letting go of his gun, and thrashes around.

Cair'Ha moves towards Trannorian #4, but as Trannorian #4 peeks out to fire at Cair'Ha, Jared hits him in the face, sending him floating off into space. Cair'Ha nods at Jared, and they both look grimly at Rysar

Rysar is standing, looking at them both with his hands glowing, but when Cair'Ha speeds towards him, he opens his hands.

RYSAR
Don't! I give!

CAIR'HA
Can you get us on the ship?

Before Rysar replies, Jared holds a gun to Quizzret's head.

JARED
Answer the man.

RYSAR
Yes! Yes I can!

Jared fires a shot into Quizzret's head, killing him.

JARED
Good.

A bright flash suddenly erupts, blocking out the doorway and blinding Rysar, Cair'Ha, and Jared.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - SEVEN MINUTES AGO

The voidrassil steampowers its way through the nebula,

ignoring the S.S. Bond at its side. The ship flies close to the voidrassil's face, its white shield glancing off the side of it.

The voidrassil's eyes lock on the ship for a brief second before tilting away and breathing a fireball at the ship, which the ship barely dodges.

They clear through a large gas cloud, the derelict ship appearing in the distance.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - DAY - SIX MINUTES AGO

Amara grits her teeth, clutching at the white reins in her hands.

AMARA

Nothing is working. Nothing is working.

Vie scuttles around, making each strand as strong as possible. Each strand glows brightly, and the cloak is like a wedding train, spread throughout the room.

VIE

Maybe we can get in front of it?

AMARA

Even if we could, there's nothing we can do. None of our weapons work on it.

The ship trembles as a wave of black vapor crashes over the ship, the wave of black energy blocking out their view to space.

Amara grimaces and glances at the mug that had fallen on the ground, coffee splattered across the floor.

AMARA

Kid, can you make the spirit strong?
Bind it and me together?

Vie blinks up at Amara and her mandibles chatter. Amara looks at her, her bright, white eyes glowing.

AMARA

Can you?

Vie nods.

VIE

I can, but... why?

AMARA

The boys need our help. There's only one thing I can think of to stop this thing, and that's ramming this ship down that things throat.

Vie looks down at the floor.

VIE

Is it... what my father said.

Amara looks away, then back at Vie.

AMARA

I know it is a lot to ask but... I want them to live. Need to give Jared a chance.

Vie fidgets, then looks up at Amara.

VIE

There might be a way, but I do not know what will happen to you.

Another wave of black energy washes over the ship causing it to tilt and rumble.

Amara closes her eyes.

AMARA

Do it.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - DAY - FOUR MINUTES AGO

More than halfway to the derelict now, the S.S. Bond shines brightly and it powers ahead, speeding double the speed of the voidrassil. It howls silently in the vacuum, sending a wave of energy out, but nothing else.

The S.S. Bond stills a moment, lining up with the voidrassil's path.

INT. S.S. BOND - BRIDGE - DAY - TWO MINUTES AGO

Amara's eyes are closed, and then she takes in a deep breath, and opens her eyes.

VIE
Are you sure?

Amara looks at Vie and nods, smiling sadly. Vie looks down, and begins gathering the large cloak behind Amara. Amara looks ahead, and begins breathing deeply, in and out.

Vie gathers all the white cloth into her arms, and then she looks up and sees the stick spirit, standing over Amara and staring at Vie. It tilts its head at Vie.

Vie nods, walks up to the spirit, and holds the cloak up to it. It leans down and touches its head to the cloak.

The whole outline of the spirit flares brightly for a moment and every strand in the room is suddenly blazing with power. Then the spirit melts into the cloak.

Amara begins floating upright, white light like beams shining out of her eyes. She holds the reins tightly in her hands.

Vie grabs the cloak, wraps it into her hands, then stretches the glowing white energy and throws it at the ground.

EXT. NULAR NEBULA - SPACE - NOW

The white energy around the ship suddenly roils in power, blazing in a white inferno and bathes the whole region in white light. The voidrassil roars and speeds up, shooting black and violet fire at the ship.

The ship bursts from the glare, looking more like a comet than a ship, its energy spilling off it and dissolving the violet and black fire in front of it.

The voidrassil recoils, trying to stop its forward momentum, but the ship pierces through its face, the bright light only appearing through its mouth, until it pierces through its whole body.

White cracks shows throughout the voidrassil's body, until it eventually explodes in a nova of black, violet, and white energy.

The S.S. Bond drifts, its momentum dissipating along with its glow. The blazing white light gradually diminishes, until it is nothing but a normal ship.

EXT. DERELICT - SPACE - LANDING PAD - NOW

Jared, Rysar, and Cair'Ha stare transfixed at the nova of energies that is disappearing. Rysar is standing in front of Cair'Ha, his mouth gaping.

The Esclair is situated next to the shuttle, dwarfing the shuttle's side. A ramp leads up to its underbelly, where the three of them are standing.

RYSAR

How? They killed it? How could--

Jared glares at Rysar, which cuts Rysar off. Jared looks at Cair'Ha.

JARED

We need to go.

Cair'Ha nods and they all three make their way onto the ship. The ramp closes behind them. A few seconds later, the Esclair takes off, and moves towards the last sparks of the energy nova.

INT. S.S. BOND - MEETING ROOM - DAY - TWO HOURS LATER

Vie is laying down on the couch. She slowly blinks awake, her chest humming slightly, and she slowly moves her hands to her head. Large hands holds hers and she looks up.

Cair'Ha is sitting next to her on the floor. Vie gasps and grabs onto Cair'Ha's hand, but falls back, grasping her head with her free hand.

CAIR'HA

Careful, little bug, you tired yourself out.

VIE

Did we... help?

Cair'Ha's chest let out a mild thrum.

CAIR'HA

You saved us all, from what I understand.

Vie's eyes widens.

VIE

The human! Amara! Was she eaten up?

Before Cair'Ha could say, Jared comes up to both of them, carrying steaming mugs of liquid.

JARED

No, not eaten. Close, but she's alive.

Vie looks up at Jared and tilts her head.

VIE

She is not gone?

Jared sets both mugs on the table and purses his lips.

JARED

No, not gone. A little crazy, but-

Amara's laugh cuts in as she interrupts Jared.

AMARA

Don't mess with her, Jared.

Vie looks past Jared and Cair'Ha to see Amara sitting in a chair, sipping a mug, a large, fluffy blanket wrapped around her. Her hair and her eyes have gone completely white and she looks tired. She smiles at Vie.

AMARA

I'm not sure what you did, Vie, but I can feel the spirit now.

Amara tilts her head, and her eyes glow slightly. The spirit's outline appears behind her, and Vie gasps.

AMARA

You're right. It was sad, but I think we understand each other now.

Vie breaths out slowly, and Cair'Ha pats her hand.

CAIR'HA

Go to sleep, little bug. You need the rest.

A tone echoes in the room. Amara, Jared, and Cair'Ha grimace. Amara stands up, letting the blanket fall away to reveal her jacket, pants, and boots, with her guns at her sides.

Jared stands next to her, and Cair'Ha stands to block Vie. Amara looks around, nods, then activates the console.

Cloxy's face appears, its glowing, gaseous eyes moving

rapidly.

CLOXY

Captain Espinosa. You are looking well.

AMARA

I imagine that would be notable, if you planned on me dying.

Cloxy stays silent for a moment.

CLOXY

I do not see the Trannorian here. Where is Rysar?

JARED

You mean, where is your double agent? The backstabber supreme?

(beat)

We have him tied up.

Amara smiles at Jared tiredly, then glares at Cloxy.

AMARA

You set us up as fodder for the voidrassil and have another crew get the bounty. That's about right?

CLOXY

You have the stone?

Jared pulls out the portal stone, its smooth surfaces gleaming with many hues. A large, black stain covers more than half of it.

Cloxy's eyes all focus on it, then looks at Amara.

CLOXY

What is your price?

Amara smiles and looks at everyone. Jared gives her the thumbs up, and Cair'Ha slowly nods.

AMARA

What we want, is how priceless it is to see you react as we keep this for ourselves or sell it to anyone other than you.

Cloxy rattles its metal, its eyes spinning.

CLOXY

I will pay you double what you asked!

JARED

Whoa wait, honey, let's think about this.

Jared crosses his arms, and Cloxy stares down at them.

JARED

Thought about it. No. Really no.

Cloxy wheels around to face Cair'Ha.

CLOXY

If you help me, I will make sure the Hath know nothing of where you are. I will protect you forever if you bring this to me.

Cair'Ha stares at Cloxy.

CLOXY

Protection for you and your daughter. Please, I need this to go home.

Cair'Ha laughs, a low rumbling sound emanating from his chest. Amara, Jared, and Vie all look surprised, while Cloxy looks as if he has been struck.

CAIR'HA

You make your homes out of the flesh of others, Fr'Dinnian. You do not deserve a home.

Cloxy's face darkens, his eyes spinning.

CLOXY

I will make sure you all suffer. Amara, Jared, you will never have employment, and you, you Hath degenerates, will be hunted by your own--

Amara cuts off the transmission and breaths a sigh.

AMARA

It is nice doing that.

She looks over at Cair'Ha.

AMARA

You really sure? You don't get your
ship home.

Cair'Ha nods, and kneels next to his daughter.

CAIR'HA

The place I envisioned would have been
fruitful and safe.

Cair'Ha rubs Vie's shell slowly as Vie stares up at him.

CAIR'HA

Vie wanted to save your life. She sees
value in these things, in your lives.
Maybe.. living in exile isn't what she
wants.

He looks over at the two of them.

CAIR'HA

How can I ignore what my daughter
wants?

Jared puts his hand around Amara's shoulder and whispers
something in her ear. Amara laughs and pretends to push Jared
away. Cair'Ha looks at them for a second, then looks down at
Vie, who slowly gets up, and gives Cair'Ha a hug.

FADE OUT: