

**Proxima Centauri**

Episode 1  
"Planetfall"

by  
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Part of a 13-part series inspired by

Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri  
PC CD-ROM 1999  
developed by Firaxis Games Inc

CHEERING.

EXT. IN FRONT OF CAPITAL BUILDING - DAY

A TREMENDOUS CROWD waves at CEO NWABUDIKE MORGAN as he addresses them from a podium almost a hundred feet above. He is dwarfed by the wide bulk of the futuristic capitol building: like an enormous ship's cabin engraved at the top with the emblem of Earth.

Morgan, dressed ceremonially in a quilted robe, raises a hand to silence the crowd. The motion obscures the Earth emblem behind him.

The crowd falls silent.

MORGAN

(in a booming, amplified voice)

I am like a proud father today. Not all of us have been traveling as long as myself and my colleagues on the council. Most of you were born here on the Unity. Many have died here. Now there are eight million of you on this single ship when once there were six.

He pauses to collect himself.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

It's been two-hundred years.

He lets the number settle in.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

I feel like I was a baby when I joined the crew at forty.

Titters from the crowd.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

That I am here to laugh with you, at 240 years old, is the sole pride of this man, Professor Prokhor Zakharov.

Behind Morgan, a line of robed figures stand under respective national flags: China, Russia, India, USA. Another flag, that of the EU, stands without a representative.

One of the figures, PROKHOR ZAKHAROV, a older man with smooth skin and shoulder-length white hair, steps from under the Russian flag to join Morgan at the podium.

He doesn't say anything, just looks anxious. He bows slightly then hurries back to his spot under the flag.

The crowd cheers less enthusiastically.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

But I have paid a price for this long life of his. I can never have children. I am sterile.

The new cheering quickly grows silent.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

That is why you, the merchants and the servicemen, the drones, are the future of the human race, not the elite.

Morgan gestures behind him at the line.

While the crowd erupts again in support, the officials under the flags shift uncomfortably.

The man under China, SHENG-JI YANG, glares coolly at the crowd.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

You are *my* pride, sons and daughters. All you see around you, every molecule grafted by Morgan Industries, is a monument to human ambition. Together you and I, CEO Nwabudike Morgan, will make that ambition a reality as we at last reach the final leg of our long journey and make Planetfall.

The crowd screams in anticipation. Morgan holds up his hands one last time and the crowd settles.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

But first, my friend and colleague Pravin Lal, who has been your chief administrator for the duration of this voyage, would like to speak to his subjects.

Morgan bows reverently and slips away from the podium. He is replaced by PRAVIN LAL from under the India flag.

He's a middle-aged man with salt-and-pepper hair covered partially by a bandage-like turban.

Lal glances sideways at the departing Morgan before stammering into the microphone.

LAL

Ahem. Um. Well, let me begin by saying with no uncertainty that none of you are 'subjects.' The U.N's mission was to put such things behind us when we were all elected to the Council 300 years ago. Since then, my job has been to keep the peace and guarantee that everyone on this proud ship have equal opportunities. We named it Unity for a reason. In two hundred years the U.N. Council has abolished scarcity for all necessary commodities, and with it the archaic concepts of wealth and war...

Lal's voice fades as it drifts gradually over:

EXT. THE TOP OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

The crowd like confetti below, and the speakers obscured by the onion dome of the capitol, where all the flags of the U.N. are decorated.

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - DAY

The tips of the trees sway in the breeze, obscuring then revealing behind them the distant capitol building and its crowded lawn.

EXT. BLUE SKY - DAY

Sunless, the sky (blue, yellow, gold) is illuminated evenly by electric diodes, a circuitlike pattern of glowing spiderweb that drifts past, with the fading trail of Lal's echoing voice.

Beyond it, the blue grows darker. Darker, until it's black.

Then, tiny pricks of light develop - stars - across the sky.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Lal's voice, a garbled, echoing whisper, emerges from the UNITY, a huge slate-colored generation ship with bubbles of artificial atmosphere. It thrusts past on a triad of roaring blue chemical rockets.

Groups of thin spokes project ribs, tubelike storage containers girded with solar panels from the narrow rear of the ship. The torso and head of the ship mount a variety of sensor equipment, pods, and mechanical modules that look like they might snap off under the slightest pressure.

The whole thing, a skeleton in the night, glows with an orange haze as it exits eclipse with CHIRON, an Earthlike - but orange - world.

In turn, Chiron glides aside revealing the blooming crest of a brilliant star, one of the two twins in:

TITLE OVER:

PROXIMA CENTAURI

INT. U.N. SECRETARY'S OFFICE - DAY

The door folds open and DEIRDRE SKY, a young woman in her early thirties with wavy black hair and a steady gaze, steps through.

From the other side of a pinewood desk, Pravin Lal spreads his hands in welcome. The gesture encompasses the whole room: ascetically arranged with scientific baubles specific to the office, not the incumbent. There's a charter on the wall, a prism, some lenses, and some petrified wood on a plaque labeled, "Redwood Ntl' Forest, CA, USA."

Curved windows open onto a scene of great natural beauty. Forests and rivers run under the artificial sky.

LAL

Welcome my dear. Did you like the speeches? Were they too long?

DEIRDRE

They were inspiring, Mr. Secretary.

LAL

Yes I was afraid of that.

Deirdre is distracted by a digital clock on Lal's desk counting down by the second from 0:6:21:58:05 or so (week, day, hour, minute, second).

DEIRDRE

It is an inspirational time.

Lal leans back in his chair. His smile is kindly and tired, beyond his apparent age.

LAL

I still remember when I believed  
in such a thing.

The woman ducks her head modestly.

Lal shakes his head.

LAL (CONT'D)

Morgan was right about one thing  
at least.

DEIRDRE

Sir?

LAL

We on the council have grown old,  
and the time that is upon us will  
belong to the young. That is why  
I asked you here. Have a seat.

INT. SUBSECTION B - DAY

Sheng-Ji Yang and LIEUTENANT CORAZON SANTIAGO, a sinewy woman in security uniform, patrol a long white corridor. It's reminiscent of a modern space shuttle, with lots of grating, tubes, wires, and circuits, the exposed guts of the ship.

The pair stop and glance down the occasional intersection while they talk.

YANG

Morgan was right about one thing  
at least.

SANTIAGO

Sir?

YANG

The council is aristocratic, even though we do not like to call ourselves that.

This kind of subject isn't Santiago's strength. She keeps a disciplined eye out for trouble and lets it wash over her.

YANG (CONT'D)

The signs have been there from the beginning. We rule disconnected from the needs of our subjects by a great gap of privilege, and we control the sole source of that privilege.

SANTIAGO

The serum.

Yang nods.

YANG

The serum. Young ones like yourself, the governed, cannot understand us ... what it must be like to live for hundreds of years. Just as we cannot understand you - what it means to be young and full of life.

SANTIAGO

We both protect the peace. Both on the same side. What's so different?

Yang smiles at his companion.

YANG

Your generation is more generous than you should be. Why? Because of you and I, and the other security forces here on the Unity. Whether you're aware of it or not, you are involved in a grand scheme of social engineering.

Santiago frowns.

YANG (CONT'D)

Perfect. You cannot believe you are being manipulated.

SANTIAGO

I trust my superiors. That's the only way to keep order.

YANG

Exactly. How could it not when your Commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage, and strictness. This is all he needs, no?

Santiago contemplates this.

SANTIAGO

The Art of War.

YANG

Very good.

SANTIAGO

You're a good teacher, sir.

YANG

Remember the lesson, not the one who gives it.

Santiago's smile is a tight little thing, but it's there.

SANTIAGO

Sir!

INT. U.N. SECRETARY'S OFFICE - DAY

Deirdre is now seated across the desk from Lal in a springy chair. No longer distracted, she follows Lal very carefully.

LAL

You have been invaluable to the scientific community here on the Unity, especially to Doctor Zakharov in the research lab.

He chuckles.

LAL (CONT'D)

Who, as you know, is not as great a botanist or geneticist as he is a theoretician.

DEIRDRE

He has a brilliant mind.



Lal gestures out the window at a crop field, glowing in the artificial sun.

LAL

Of course. But how much of this  
would we have without your work?

Deirdre blushes and shakes her head.

DEIRDRE

It's beneath him.

LAL

(talking over her)  
You are compassionate and  
intuitive. A young leader.  
And...

He pulls something out of a drawer at his desk.

It's a single syringe of clear incandescent fluid.

LAL (CONT'D)

You already have a son.

Deirdre, nervous, takes a deep breath.

LAL (CONT'D)

We need someone like you - a young  
person with a fresh perspective -  
on the U.N. Council. Since  
Garland's death...

He frowns.

LAL (CONT'D)

...we have had a spot to fill.

Lal extends his hands over the table. One holds the serum,  
the other outstretched in friendship.

She doesn't accept either. She blinks, quite overwhelmed.  
He retracts the serum.

LAL (CONT'D)

Think about it.

He sets the serum down on his desk. She takes his other  
hand and shakes it.

LAL (CONT'D)

Think about how much good you  
could do if you joined us at this  
time.

INT. SUBSECTION B - DAY

Santiago and Yang on patrol again. They've set a quick pace, and Yang is breathing a little heavy.

This amuses Santiago, who grins at him across her shoulder.

YANG

What do you expect planetfall  
will be like, Lieutenant?

SANTIAGO

I've read the briefing, sir.

The pair nod to a FUNCTIONARY who passes them in the corridor.

YANG

True, but you have lived your  
whole life here on the Unity.  
It's true we have trees, crops,  
an artificial sky in the  
biosphere. But you've never seen  
rain, or snow, or a wild animal,  
or eaten meat. We don't know if  
Chiron has these things, but  
you're still going to have a lot  
of learning to do when we land.

SANTIAGO

I'm used to hard work. We will  
stay disciplined, remember our  
orders, and triumph in the end.

He sighs.

YANG

You're confident because you are  
young and foolish. I am not  
afraid to admit I am uneasy about  
Planetfall.

Santiago looks at Yang in disbelief.

YANG (CONT'D)

Of course. All we know about  
Chiron is that it can support  
life. It is unfamiliar ground.  
Only a foolish general campaigns  
on unfamiliar ground.

SANTIAGO

But a soldier may fight anywhere.

Yang has a retort but it's cut off by an ALARM CLAXON.

The corridor lights go red and the two security officers have to pause to get their bearings.

Then Yang pulls a block radio from the belt of his uniform. He mutters something into it, lost under the noise of the claxon, then nods at his partner.

Santiago gestures behind them, and they rush down the corridor, the way they came.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - ON ALERT STATUS

Alert lights saturate the room with low-frequency red and infrared. Metals and white plastic on scientific equipment and computers that would have looked pristine under regular lighting are fuzzy and dark here.

An armored section of the wall has slid away revealing ranks of syringes, each effervescing a brilliant blue in the low light.

Nearby, the brown skin of SINDER ROZE, a young data technician with bulging eyes, is practically a shadow in the monochrome as she huddles under the gutted carapace of a network computer.

She jumps when a reinforced door at the edge of the room slides open on power. The silhouettes of Yang and Santiago, armed with long sling-arm repeating rifles and infrared headgear, storm through the door. Roze flings up her arms.

ROZE

Please don't shoot!

SANTIAGO

ID?

ROZE

Datatech Sinder Roze. I was on duty when...

She lets rest speak for itself.

Santiago glances at Yang, who nods. They relax their weapons.

YANG

What happened?

The security officers join her to get a better look at the area.

ROZE

Someone stole a vial of serum  
from the vault. I didn't see  
who. It was too dark and I hid.

Yang peers curiously at the hacked computer then down at her.

YANG

A very talented criminal.

Roze doesn't say anything. Santiago rubs her down with a scanner wand. Satisfied, she switches it off.

SANTIAGO

Perhaps one of those who thinks  
he's being manipulated?

Yang glances at Santiago and smiles.

YANG

Or *she's* being manipulated.

Santiago palms the head of her rifle. She narrows her eyes.

SANTIAGO

(to Roze)

Which way did she go?

INT. CHILDREN'S CRECHE - DAY

Nwabudike Morgan is giving a speech from the elevated end of a circular room. Children of a variety of ages and a couple of adults dressed in pastels line the walls and listen.

MORGAN

Youth.

He snaps his fingers.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Old age.

He lets this sink in.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

I grew up in just one second.  
Scary huh?

He smiles. Some low laughter.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

I'm not kidding. It was scary. I lost of a lot of things I cared about: my home, my family, my country. But I gained responsibility. I learned how to seize power when the opportunity presented itself.

He smiles to himself at some private joke.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

These were the skills that got me onto the Unity project. As you know, I built this ship. It was a great responsibility. It was a powerful opportunity. But once again I lost everything: my home the Earth, my new family, my country. I gave it all up to be here today, two-hundred years later. You are my family now, this is my country and my home. You are my children, truly. And I realize that I must relinquish it all - yet again - when we make Planetfall. We all will. It will be a new age, but there will be chaos and division as we rebuild our civilization on Chiron, I guarantee it. The Unity...

He shakes his head.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

What a name. The U.N. Council named this ship the Unity because they believe the human race can be united as one, without poverty and without wealth. A noble dream, especially after the lesson that was Earth. But what do those words mean really? United under who? Who owns the Unity? You? That's what they say.

He shrugs.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

I don't know. I believe their message. I do. We can be united, but only as owners in our own right. You - the youth - represent almost 100% of the people on this vast ship. I sometimes worry that those of us who the Council has deemed worthy of the longevity serum have lost touch with your needs... not just food and clothes, but your dreams as well. I think we have. I can see my own flaws. My children, know that whatever happens in the coming weeks, I, Nwabudike Morgan, will step aside when the time comes for you to take power for yourselves and lead the human race into its new age. I just hope I'm not the only one so willing to let go.

INT. OUTSIDE CHILDREN'S CRECHE - DARK

Santiago and Yang stand guard outside a door embossed with a child growing out of a sandbox. They keep a keen eye out for the thief.

SANTIAGO

We should be doing something useful, sir.

YANG

We are waiting.

Santiago frowns.

From down the hall, there are two flashes of light accompanied by the sound of LASER FIRE.

The soldiers come to, alert. Santiago begins to march forward but Yang holds up a hand.

YANG (CONT'D)

"To hear the noise of thunder is no sign of a quick ear."

SANTIAGO

And "cleverness has never been associated with long delays."  
Sir.

Yang chuckles.

YANG

Very good. Go on if you wish. I will stay here and guard the children.

She feigns disappointment then stalks down the hallway.

INT. SUBSECTION C - DARK

Santiago jogs around the corner then ducks back.

Two streams, laser beams, briefly punctuate the air in front of her.

SANTIAGO

Madre de dios. It's me!

She creeps out from cover this time.

Two security officers, a LEADER and a JUNIOR, squint at her over the tops of their rifles. They're spooked.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

What's the matter with you?

LEADER

Sorry sir! We thought the target was sneaking up on us again.

SANTIAGO

Is the target here?

She looks past them.

Warily, the officers nod.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's move. And keep your safeties on for God's sake. We're not going to kill her if we can help it.

The three of them suddenly stumble as the WHOLE SHIP SHUDDERS underfoot.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

What the...?

They don't have time to recover adequately before ULRIK SVENSGAARD, dressed in a functionary's uniform, appears behind the leader and fells him with a blow to the kidneys.

The ship SHUDDERS again and the JUNIOR staggers.

Svensgaard seizes the rifle from the guard as he falls and points it at Santiago.

She's just regained her bearings, but is ready.

She brushes the neck of the weapon aside with the back of her hand and knocks Svensgaard down with a blow from palm to chin.

The rifle discharges a slice of light to her side. She grabs it as he falls, spins it around.

He stumbles upright, confronted with the muzzle of the gun.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

That was undisciplined.

Startled, Svensgaard stumbles back a little into the waiting arms of the junior, who seizes him across the neck from behind.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

You're under arrest, obviously.

She tosses aside the rifle and moves toward Svensgaard, but he grabs the junior's hand and squeezes out underneath his elbow.

Svensgaard holds the junior from behind, a pistol pressed against his head.

SVENSGAARD

*That* was undisciplined.

Santiago moves at him.

SVENSGAARD (CONT'D)

Don't think I won't shoot.

She stops. Svensgaard looks at her with a wild gaze. He laughs.

Santiago surges forward. Her face lights up with a flash.

She seizes someone and takes him down, but it's not Svensgaard.

It's the other officer, a heat scar disfiguring half his face and neck. Obviously dead.

She glances between her dead subordinate and the paralyzed leader.



The ship RUMBLES like thunder.

INT. CHILDREN'S CRECHE - DAY

Morgan's audience claps as he finishes making a round of the room.

He shakes the hands of the last couple CHILDREN, impressionable boys with wide eyes, before returning to his podium at the head of the room.

The clapping reaches crescendo. Morgan, out of the corner of his eye, checks his wristwatch.

INT. OUTSIDE CHILDREN'S CRECHE - DAY

A wild-eyed Svensgaard rounds the bend and faces Yang at the other end of the hall.

Yang doesn't look at all surprised. He's pleased, even, and is not afraid to gloat.

YANG

I knew you would come this way.

Svensgaard, agitated, raises his pistol.

SVENSGAARD

Don't think I won't shoot.

YANG

You are shaking.

SVENSGAARD

What?

YANG

Your aim will not be good enough to pierce my armor unless you steady your hand.

Svensgaard laughs, a little wildly.

SVENSGAARD

I'm a very good shot.

YANG

But not a very experienced killer.

For some reason this strikes a chord. He frowns.

SVENSGAARD

What?

Yang raises his rifle.

YANG

It's a killer's job to look at death dispassionately. And calmly. Look. My hands are steady.

Yang squeezes the trigger and a razor of light slices through Svensgaard's thigh. He screams and collapses on the useless limb.

YANG (CONT'D)

You have something that doesn't belong to you.

Yang begins to approach Svensgaard. Closer.

SVENSGAARD

The serum belongs to everyone.

Sweating profusely, Svensgaard extracts the syringe of serum from his pocket and jams it into his neck. He groans as his veins swell with the blue fluid.

His eyes fix on the approaching shape of Yang, then snap shut as the soldier knocks him out with a jab from his rifle.

INT. DEIRDRE'S ROOM - DAY

Deirdre's syringe of serum lies on a translucent table.

Fragmented reflections from the serum and the glass slash at the earthy decor of her room: hemp curtains cascade behind a budding flower bed mounted halfway up the wall. A net with vines partially obscures a standard cell ceiling lined with cathode tubes.

Deirdre picks up the syringe and contemplates it seriously.

She leans her head to the side, exposing her neck, and is about to take the shot when, reflected in an encased photograph of the earth on the wall, she sees her seven year-old son, CHARLES, dressed in pajamas, enter the room.

She hides the syringe.

DEIRDRE  
Charles! You've finished  
packing?

The boy nods, as serious and gentle as his mother.

CHARLES  
Will the planet be like that?

Deirdre glances at the photograph of Earth.

DEIRDRE  
I hope not!

She kneels in front of the boy and begins to mop at his face with her sleeve.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)  
The old Earth was really dirty.  
It was even worse than your face  
is now.

CHARLES  
Did you clean it off?

DEIRDRE  
We tried.

Charles wriggles a little.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)  
It was so dirty that eventually we  
couldn't live there. Kind of like  
your room. It's really important  
that we take care of our new home  
and treat it well. And that we  
have leaders willing to make it a  
priority.

She rubs her neck nervously as she corrects her frock.

CHARLES  
Priority?

DEIRDRE  
It means "most important thing."

She frowns and pulls him in for a kiss on the forehead.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)  
We all have to decide what that  
is for us.

Charles smiles weakly. He's tired.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)  
And right now for you it's  
getting right to bed. You've not  
forgotten to brush your teeth  
have you?

He shakes his head slowly.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)  
You're almost a good example.  
Now get going.

She turns Charles around and sends him out of the room.  
She watches him carefully as he ambles through a door in  
the corridor outside.

Inscrutable, she stands up and returns to the photograph of  
Earth.

She removes the serum from her pocket and considers it  
grimly. Then she sets it back on the translucent table.  
She leaves.

The syringe dances a little on the glass as the ship  
RUMBLES.

INT. NUCLEAR REACTOR - DAY

Intense light emanates from a host of orange rods in the  
power chamber, a section of the reactor separated by huge  
safety-glass windows and an airlock. Steeped in the orange  
glow is a DEAD WORKER in a hazmat suit. The glass on his  
helmet has been cracked and his face swims down his skull,  
which is missing a few teeth. Somewhere, a Geiger counter  
GIGGLES.

The ship continues to RUMBLE, stronger here at its source.

A seal blows on a fuel pipe and black fission gas rushes  
out and covers the floor thickly.

Now the HISSING of the gas, the deep RUMBLE of the ship,  
and the relentless DRONE of the reactor core itself drowns  
out all but a tiny fraction of the audible spectrum.

The figure of FOREMAN DOMAI in a hazmat suit appears at the  
window and looks in. He dashes urgently out of sight.

A red light on the chamber side airlock flashes orange.  
Domai is explosively disgorged in the room by the metal  
cylinder of the airlock door.

He picks himself up, heavy in his armor, then stumbles to the suit of the dead worker. He looks in and his mouth drops open.

INT. REACTOR CORE - GLOWING

The light from the various conductive materials in the core blurs colors together so completely that a GROUP OF WORKERS in hazmat suits are indistinguishable until one moves away from the pack. He's running.

A SECOND WORKER follows close after. This one is faster and grabs the first figure by the shoulders, taking him down slowly in the decelerated physics of the core.

SECOND WORKER

(compressed and  
distorted)

You're not going anywhere.

FIRST WORKER

(same)

Get off of me!

SECOND WORKER

You would betray us, wouldn't you? You would!

FIRST WORKER

You would! You talk about revolution! Have you forgotten your duty to the Council?

SECOND WORKER

No, I haven't forgotten. I feel its scar. Don't you? Morgan was right; we've been branded - owned since the start! Don't you feel it?

FIRST WORKER

What I feel are a friend's hands around my neck.

SECOND WORKER

Promise you won't tell them about the meeting.

FIRST WORKER

Tell what? That Morgan has made your dreams crazy? He's planning to take over, man!

SECOND WORKER

He wants to give the power to us.

FIRST WORKER

Fool. No one can give power.

The first worker shoves the second off of him with his foot. He hauls himself upright on some machinery.

The second worker, recovering, swings and clips the first across the face. The first clutches his helmet and withdraws.

Behind them, a writhing ball of color, the group of workers, begins to resolve - they're fighting amongst themselves.

DOMAI (O.S.)

STOP!

Domai appears at the core entrance, a smashed door at the end of a catwalk fifteen feet up. No one can hear him.

He stomps down a flight of wire steps and shoves his way through the brawl.

All around them, the room tears itself apart: long gray wires SPARK and fray. Pipes BURST and bubble over with fluids that follow no unifying principle: flowing up, down, sideways, they paint the scene like spilled oil paint.

In the chaos, Domai is slashed by shrapnel from an exploding conduit. He reels, then stumbles against a valve with a keypad near a cluster of verticals in the center of the room.

He frowns at the device, then hurriedly jabs at the keypad, inputting numbers.

The valve begins to turn. As it rotates, the orange light dims and the room stops exploding. The air sharpens.

DOMAI (CONT'D)

Silence!

The group of workers stops fighting. They turn to see what's happened.

DOMAI (CONT'D)

What is this about? Some argument over rights?

WORKER

(sarcastic)

What rights?

ANOTHER WORKER

We're overworked. We hardly even know our kids.

WORKER

The Council doesn't understand. They have no future. No children. They died long ago.

ANOTHER WORKER

What they have none of is our support! Without the workers they have nothing. And deserve nothing. Morgan understands!

Mutters among the group.

DOMAI

You're right.

They fall silent.

DOMAI (CONT'D)

The entire colonization effort depends on our work. And our sacrifice.

His gaze falls sadly on the first worker who was assaulted.

The man has lost a few teeth. For a second Domai sees the desiccated corpse of the dead worker from outside in his place.

He shudders.

DOMAI (CONT'D)

We ... we are not appreciated like we should be. Not even by each other. We are brothers. We are also protectors. Those two duties are tantamount. Look at what you've done!

The workers look around, as if for the first time. Some notice the wrecked machinery, others their injured comrades.

DOMAI (CONT'D)

Destruction is never the answer for a builder. We are engineers. Our job is to make things run, not make things stop.  
(disgusted)  
Get back to work.

Muttering, the workers disband to various points in the room. Some limp, others hang their heads as they begin the repairs.

Domai holds up his arm and looks at it. A wedge of shrapnel has sliced through a strip of his hazmat armor. The perimeter of the slash has begun to blacken and peel away.

A strip of skin, a deep unhealthy orange in the glow, is visible underneath.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

Zakharov hunches over an electron microscope and frowns.

From a nearby network terminal, Roze studies him. The station across from her has not been fully repaired since the robbery, and wires still spill out of their casement.

ZAKHAROV

What would be the projected  
lifetime of human brain cells  
exposed to the same level of  
radiation?

Roze enters some information into the computer.

ROZE

Unaffected.

Zakharov sighs.

ZAKHAROV

(to himself)

The quantum model is disrupted.  
The radiation generated by a  
modern network system influences  
the neurological signal too  
profoundly for it to remain  
independent.

(disappointed)

The biological model is still  
superior.

ROZE

The biological model?

Zakharov pulls away from the microscope and squints irritably at his assistant.



ZAKHAROV

You. Still, Deirdre will be pleased to hear it.

ROZE

I'm pleased to hear it.

She blinks.

ROZE (CONT'D)

Why am I the biological model?

ZAKHAROV

It seemed fitting somehow: you have an innate understanding of network geography, you're independent, and you're unpredictable.

ROZE

How flattering.

ZAKHAROV

I don't know whether being called "very human" is really flattery. Still, it helps that your neurals stand out in a network stream.

ROZE

What are they doing there?

Zakharov smiles slyly.

ZAKHAROV

All these people getting so upset about my serum being stolen. Silly. I'm not working on the serum anymore.

ROZE

What? Is there something wrong with it?

ZAKHAROV

Of course not. It's a brilliant invention. But it's incomplete. Its recipients can't have children, and eventually we'll die, either of extreme frailty, disease, by falling over - or something else. It's not an 'immortality' serum, just a genetic cocktail. This...

He gently rests his hands on a messy circuitboard in front of him.

ZAKHAROV (CONT'D)

This is the future. Well - it will be.

He laughs at himself.

ROZE

What is it?

ZAKHAROV

You're showing an awful lot of interest for a lab assistant.

He finds this funny.

ZAKHAROV (CONT'D)

No, I think you've heard enough. You're a gifted datatech Miss Roze, but who knows what other gifts you have?

INT. SECURITY OFFICE

Yang, bespectacled, examines a blown-up photograph of Sinder Roze on a wall-mounted monitor. Behind his desk, Santiago paces anxiously.

YANG

Professional hacker, thief, spy, saboteur, infiltrator, black ops technician, anarchist, and rebel.

Santiago is hardly paying attention.

YANG (CONT'D)

Born Asa Wright in Trinidad to two professors. Was a wanted hacker for three years before being arrested for illegal asset transfer from a Morgan Industries bank account in 2054. It looks like the company offered her clemency in return for her services. She designed the network system here on the Unity.

Yang turns to his deputy.

YANG (CONT'D)

Not a bad punishment: long life,  
a permanent job, and access to  
all sorts of research data.

SANTIAGO

We already have the criminal in  
custody. We should deal with  
him.

YANG

All in good time.

SANTIAGO

You have all the time in the  
world, don't you?

Yang looks hawkishly at her over his spectacles.

YANG

I merely look at death  
dispassionately.

SANTIAGO

Another empty saying. This isn't  
about death, it's about justice.

YANG

I think you had better see the  
psych chaplain about this.

SANTIAGO

I don't need counseling. I need  
justice for Officer Rhys. He  
should be... we should be more  
disciplined.

YANG

(stern)

Very well. Then I'll make it an  
order.

INT. TEMPLE - SUNNY

A pantheon of religious symbols watch over this spacious  
room, each embedded at the head of a worship area tailored  
to their respective faith.

Sunlight from large windows that look out onto the  
arboretum saturates the rich fabrics and symbols of the  
pantheon. Under the figure of the Christian cross prays  
MIRIAM GODWINSON, her red hair afire in the sunlight.

Her lips move, but the whispers that fill the hall are from a variety of WORSHIPPERS, each paying respect.

Santiago approaches and stands behind Miriam. Santiago crosses herself before the symbol above them.

MIRIAM

You are quiet on your feet.

Miriam turns and observes Santiago with glittering eyes.

SANTIAGO

I am.

MIRIAM

You are troubled.

Santiago opens her mouth, then closes it.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

You believe in God.

SANTIAGO

(angry)

I try.

MIRIAM

Then kneel next to me.

SANTIAGO

I came for counseling.

MIRIAM

... so that you don't bother the others!

Blushing, Santiago joins Miriam in front of the altar.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Now what is the matter, child?

SANTIAGO

(whispering, at first  
hesitant)

I saw someone killed in cold  
blood.

MIRIAM

... That is always hard.

SANTIAGO

Don't pretend you understand.

MIRIAM  
I do understand.

Santiago is silent.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
My brother was killed. I saw it  
happen.

She smiles.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
Perhaps you want to hear how I  
dealt with the trauma?

SANTIAGO  
Let me guess. You turned to God.

MIRIAM  
In a sense. I went to the person  
responsible for the murder and  
asked her why she did it.

Miriam's smile disappears.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
I learned the real reason she  
killed him. I was able to  
forgive her. Even understand  
her.

SANTIAGO  
So I should speak to the killer.

MIRIAM  
If you can find it, you must face  
your fear.

SANTIAGO  
(annoyed)  
My fear?

Their eyes meet, and Santiago looks away. Miriam nods -  
exactly.

MIRIAM  
God will protect you.

Santiago gets up and massages her knees.

SANTIAGO  
You have strong knees.

Miriam smiles thinly. Her hand appears out of her clothes with a rosary. She offers it.

Embarrassed, Santiago takes it and hides it in a pocket. She turns to leave. Then she turns back.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

What did she say to you? The killer?

MIRIAM

She said, my brother loved me too much.

Santiago frowns at her, then silently strides out of the hall.

INT. ARBORETUM - DAY

Artificial sunlight slips through a stand of white pine onto Deirdre Sky. In a forester's uniform, she carves a new shoot from the white wood and plants it in the soil a few feet away in the sun.

She's got it just about snug when she hears a twig snap behind her.

She turns suddenly to see Pravin Lal, hands in pockets. He smiles and bows a little.

She nods.

DEIRDRE

How can I help you, Mr. Secretary?

Lal holds up a hand.

LAL

Lal will do, assuming you've accepted my invitation?

DEIRDRE

(flustered)

I - uh. It's a big decision.

LAL

Yes, a great one.

DEIRDRE

I just need a little more time to figure it all out. Is that okay?

LAL

I wish it were. I need your answer before Planetfall.

DEIRDRE

What? But that's in less than a week. We'll be very busy until then.

LAL

You're not the only one.  
(pensive)  
Something big is happening. Soon we will all have to choose sides. I want you to make the right decision.

DEIRDRE

What do you mean?

LAL

You are young. I don't mean to offend when I say: impressionable. And absolutely invaluable. If he hasn't already, Morgan or one of his agents will very much want to acquire your assets.

DEIRDRE

CEO Morgan? Morgan Industries was socialized years ago. Besides, they've never seen much use for what I do. I don't understand exactly what you're saying, Mr. Secretary.

Lal pauses at the reuse of his title. He puts a hand on her shoulder.

LAL

Perhaps that is for the best.

INT. PRISON CELL

A pair of overbright cathode tubes in the ceiling oppress Svensgaard, dozing on a palette. He rests one hand on the bridge of his nose for shade.

The other hand, obscured by the length of his bandaged leg, fiddles with the MANACLES that bind his ankles together.

He pretends to snore, cut short when Santiago enters through a door of two-way glass.

Svensgaard lifts the hand from his face and squints at her steadily.

SANTIAGO

If I were you I wouldn't risk it.  
Trying to escape.

SVENSGAARD

I have a feeling that's a lie.

SANTIAGO

You being an expert. Or is  
murder your speciality?

This bothers Svensgaard. He puts his face back under his hand.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Even if you could get out, I  
would hunt you down. This whole  
ship is a prison for you.

SVENSGAARD

Not just for me.

SANTIAGO

Yes of course. Your accomplices.

This isn't what Svensgaard meant. He shakes his head.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

How many are there?

SVENSGAARD

Eight million.

SANTIAGO

No one here supports you.

SVENSGAARD

I support them. Like Robin Hood!

He grins a mouthful of white teeth. He's playing with her.

SANTIAGO

(angry)

Does that include the one you  
murdered outright?

Svensgaard's mood changes completely. Now he's serious.



SVENSGAARD

I had no choice. I couldn't let you take the serum back.

SANTIAGO

Why?

SVENSGAARD

Because there are people out there who need it more than those aristocrats on the Council, people like you and me who can use it to free ourselves from them.

SANTIAGO

But why? Earth gave the council authority over everyone on this ship.

SVENSGAARD

Only for the duration of the voyage. We needed to survive for two hundred years in this metal box - and they've done a good job keeping us alive, I'll admit that. But now Planetfall approaches. Do you think they'll just give up that power so easily? How could they? One doesn't give power. If we want to experience democracy and freedom like the Earth men did, we'll have to take it back. These technologies, like the serum, are the first step toward reclaiming our rights.

SANTIAGO

Too bad you're going to be in prison for the rest of your life.

SVENSGAARD

At least I can afford to wait a hundred years for freedom, now that I've taken the serum. You can't. But don't worry, somehow I doubt freedom is that far away.

He grins.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK

A saint's halo of glittering stars surrounds the profile of Pravin Lal.

Seated on the sill of a long vacuum window, he stares past his own reflection at the scythe-like rim of Chiron, orange, red, and blue against the void.

Santiago's entrance is betrayed in the glass.

SANTIAGO

Sir?

LAL

Did you see that just then?

SANTIAGO

See what, sir?

LAL

There was something out there,  
following us.

Lal frowns; his eyebrows stab deeply down into his face.

SANTIAGO

I came to deliver the report on  
the prisoner, sir.

LAL

(vague, unlistening)  
It seems like there's always  
someone following me around these  
days.

SANTIAGO

(uncomfortable)  
My conclusion is that the man is  
deluded and still quite  
dangerous. He questions the  
authority and even the sanity of  
the council.

LAL

Sooner or later they will be  
strong enough to move against us.  
Then it will be over. Two-  
hundred years of work, snatched  
away by humanity's most faithless  
fancy - revolution.

SANTIAGO

...he thinks there's someone out there planning a -

Then she hears him. She blanches.

Lal's eyes perk up again. He sees something out in space.

LAL

There! There it was again. Did you see it?

Santiago glances at the window then back at Lal. She puts her report next to him on the sill, then takes a worried step away from him.

SANTIAGO

It's all there. Sir. The ravings of a madman.

LAL

I saw it. It was there. The end of the Unity!

Santiago leaves as quickly as she can.

INT. MIRIAM'S BEDCHAMBER - DARK

Miriam sleeps the sound sleep of the righteous. Her room is spare, but ample. She has a little shrine at the foot of the bed, several scattered books on theology or psychology, and a glinting crucifix above her bed. All is quiet - quiet enough to hear the THRUM of the ship's engines perform their last few days of work.

Then, the room is totally illuminated. The thrum of the engines becomes chopped up and distorted. The gaps fill with a sound like electronic whispers.

Discomfited by the steady, overpowering light, Miriam stirs. Then consciousness returns to her and she gasps. She sits up in her bed.

Her one eye, cracked open to a sliver of blue iris beholds a great, cloaked figure at the foot of her bed. It eclipses the source of light behind it.

Then it speaks in a distorted, deliberate voice that echoes in her head:

FIGURE

Your time : arrives. Your worth  
: to be measured : studied :  
judged. Speak now : for your  
kind.

Miriam splutters. She makes several false starts but is quick to regain her wits. She is no less awed for it.

MIRIAM

Can it be... is this a dream? I  
would recognize an angel  
anywhere, but in a dream. My  
God, I can feel that you are  
holy.

FIGURE

You feel : Resonance.

MIRIAM

I am your servant, Samandiriel.  
Ask me anything! I will obey.

FIGURE

Describe : your purpose.

MIRIAM

My purpose is to serve God and to  
spread his word.

FIGURE

Spread : where?

MIRIAM

(fiercely)  
Everywhere!

FIGURE

Everywhere : superset of Planet.

MIRIAM

Yes! We will form a new Earth,  
more like heaven, on the planet.  
We will not fail our charge  
again!

The angel is silent for a moment.

FIGURE

Your kind : will be judged : as  
one.

As quickly as the figure arrived, it is gone. The engines THRUM steady again and all is dark.

Miriam looks back and forth for any sign of the angel's presence. She finds nothing and shivers, exposed and alone amid a maelstrom of twisted bed sheets.

INT. PRISON CELL

Svensgaard sits up eagerly and winces as Morgan strides through the door to his cell.

MORGAN

Good work.

Svensgaard eyes the camera in the corner of the cell. Morgan waves impatiently.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

I've bribed the guards. So much for the Council's wantless economy.

SVENSGAARD

Where have you been? I've got them thinking I'm content to sit here forever. I think I've almost convinced myself.

MORGAN

Don't worry Ulrik. Of your many crass and disgusting properties, delusion does not number. I couldn't come any sooner without raising suspicion. Now I am here, where is the serum?

SVENSGAARD

The serum?

MORGAN

Tell me where it is. Do our incompetent guards have it?

SVENSGAARD

(askance)

I injected it.

Morgan's mouth forms a hard line.

SVENSGAARD (CONT'D)

I had no choice! Their security was too tight. They would have taken it from me.

MORGAN

Or perhaps you are too greedy for your own good. I underestimated you, Ulrik. It will not happen again.

He turns around and begins to walk out.

SVENSGAARD

Wait! What about the serum?

MORGAN

There are other ways. I have many investments. One of them will capitalize.

SVENSGAARD

And me?

MORGAN

Yes, I thought that would come up. You are an exhausted commodity. Perhaps you will see me again when you have reacquired some value. Until then your instinct for self-preservation will have to get you out of this - in the same way it got you in.

The door swings open. Yang stands in the doorway. He bows obsequiously. After Morgan has passed out of the room, Yang peers in at Svensgaard and smiles to himself.

The door slams shut.

SVENSGAARD

I've got your exhausted commodity right here, Mister Morgan.

He spits.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE

Santiago stands with her hands on her hips as Yang enters through another heavy door.

SANTIAGO

Why aren't you at your post?

Yang is in a good mood. He lets the insubordination go.

YANG

CEO Morgan paid our prisoner a secret visit. He didn't want to be recorded.

SANTIAGO

What? You take orders from the CEO now?

YANG

Don't be so childish. Of course I knew there was a connection. I thought maybe the prisoner was trying to assassinate Morgan at the children's creche, but it didn't add up. Svensgaard almost certainly had an accomplice with resources and talent, correct?

Santiago nods, following a few steps behind.

YANG (CONT'D)

At first I thought it was Roze. After all, she could probably have hacked the serum vault and bypassed the security system. But then Morgan paid me a visit. He offered a bribe, and it suddenly made sense. Here is a man, I thought, with tremendous influence and resources, with almost everything in the world except access to the council's source of power.

SANTIAGO

The serum.

YANG

Once again, correct. And now that he knows his servant Svensgaard has failed I suspect he will leave him to us.

SANTIAGO

But why would Morgan want access to the council's power?

Yang looks hard at his student.

YANG

Surely you have noticed that Morgan is planning to overthrow the Council.

Santiago backs away from Yang.

SANTIAGO  
Not you, too.

Yang shrugs.

YANG  
We have known for some time now.

SANTIAGO  
(agitated)  
Well, what are you going to do  
about it?

YANG  
Nothing.

SANTIAGO  
Nothing?!

YANG  
We cannot upset the balance of  
things this close to Planetfall.  
We must keep the peace.

SANTIAGO  
That is weakness! He will take  
advantage of it.

YANG  
He already has. That is why he  
is speaking so openly against us.

SANTIAGO  
Then there is nothing we can do.

Yang smiles.

YANG  
We can wait.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - BRIGHT

Deirdre, in lab coat, works intently over a series of test tubes filled with solution and shallow beds of plankton.

On the other side of the room Zakharov wrestles with his own experiment on the computer. Roze sits next to him in a diagnostic chair, her head hooked up to a pair of diodes, apparently asleep.



The reinforced door slides open and Morgan enters confidently. He pats Zakharov on the back on his way to Deirdre's station.

Zakharov gives him a hard look. Roze cracks open an eye and watches with interest as Morgan pulls Deirdre aside.

DEIRDRE

What can I do for you, Mister Morgan?

MORGAN

I hear the U.N. has offered you a place on their Council.

DEIRDRE

You have?

MORGAN

I would like to make you a counteroffer. Morgan Industries feels like it has not invested thoroughly enough in sustainable practices for the new era.

DEIRDRE

(stiff)  
That's true.

MORGAN

Make no mistake. The Board and I care very deeply about preserving life. That is a priority for us. Life is the fundamental currency.

DEIRDRE

(wry)  
I thought your business traded in energy.

Morgan shrugs disarmingly.

MORGAN

Life energy. The point is that we as a society will be expending a great deal of 'energy' in the coming weeks. It will be a trying time for us all. There will be confusion.

DEIRDRE

I suppose that's inevitable.

MORGAN

Morgan Industries wants to enlist your official support. In return we will provide you the authority to regulate the handling and use of colonization materials. What do you say? Under your oversight, people will know they can trust Morgan Industries to be green and safe in the dangerous times to come. You benefit, the people benefit, the planet benefits, and the company grows. There will be a considerable conservation of 'energy'.

Deirdre raises her eyebrows and thinks about this. Then she becomes suddenly wary.

DEIRDRE

Is that a threat?

Morgan glares at her for one almost unnoticeable moment. Then he's all pacification.

MORGAN

(jovial)

A threat? Of course not. It's not good policy to threaten boardmembers.

DEIRDRE

Boardmembers?

MORGAN

We couldn't have you directing policy without a nice title. Still, we can't offer you extended life. But we can offer you a meaningful life, full of opportunities.

(lower)

And if we were to get our hands on a sample of the serum, well, we could offer both.

DEIRDRE

(outraged)

A threat, a bribe, and treason? Just because you're two-hundred years older than me doesn't mean I'm a child! I refuse your offer - unconditionally.

(MORE)

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me I have plenty of work to do, all of it meaningful.

She turns her back on Morgan. He tries not to show his fury.

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Miriam, Lal, and Yang sit under their respective national flags at a semicircular auditorium (the spot reserved for Zakharov, under Russia, is empty). A lowered platform at the center holds a sickly looking Foreman Domai, who has been summoned.

LAL

This quorum of the Council has convened on short notice to accelerate the colonization process. To do this, in part, we have decided the velocity of the Unity must increase by thirty percent.

DOMAI

Thirty percent? Honored councilors, why?

YANG

The speed is within specifications.

DOMAI

But not the labor. The drones are already unhappy with their hours and working conditions, and the situation in the power plant has become dangerous. My men are fighting among themselves and with the ship every day just to keep it from falling apart under the stress you're putting on them right now.

The council members convene.

YANG

(to the others)

Morgan will not be able to move once colonization begins.

MIRIAM

We may lose the allegiance of the drones if we push the engineers further.

LAL

We have to risk it.

The other two councilors nod, Miriam reluctantly. Then Lal addresses Domai once more.

LAL (CONT'D)

We must reach Chiron's orbit as quickly as possible.

DOMAI

We may not get to Chiron if we don't get rest and proper medical attention. Some counseling might also be in order. We're stressed almost to breaking, just like the ship. I don't think I can hold onto all the moving parts much longer.

Domai has to steady himself. He's not looking so good.

LAL

We won't get to Chiron if we delay, either. At least, none of us will. Tensions are high across the entire ship. There are likely to be riots, even an insurrection if we can't focus people on the important issue right now: colonization. If you can get us to orbit in two days then we can prevent this disaster and you can have all the rest you like.

YANG

You must be disciplined.

MIRIAM

You must be devout.

LAL

You simply must.

DOMAI

(angry)

In two days we'll all be dead from radiation poisoning or exhaustion. The venting system alone could go at any minute, drowning the whole deck in superheated gas. Our shielding is degraded, our magnetics are-

LAL

I'm sorry, foreman. You're going to have to make it work somehow. We know your history - your work during the arbor riots is legendary - we know you well enough to tell you're a man of peace. You're a negotiator. You're a pacifist, as we are. Please heed us when we say that peace is the goal of everyone in this room, and our edict.

Domai is pensive for a moment. Then he bows his head and backs down.

DOMAI

I will do what I can to keep the peace.

LAL

We know you will.

MIRIAM

We all will. God is watching over us.

INT. NUCLEAR REACTOR - NIGHT

A group of workers, out of hazmat suits but still in uniform, loiter anxiously on the "safe" side of the reactor chamber. Several slump dejected on any object flat enough to sit or sprawl on. All are tired and sick.

The entrance slides open, admitting the formidable Domai. He has the workers' full attention.

FIRST WORKER

What did they say?

DOMAI

We must accelerate the work schedule.

(MORE)

DOMAI (CONT'D)  
 No breaks for two days, then we  
 rest as long as we like.

Angry mutters from the assembled. The first worker snorts.

FIRST WORKER  
 So much for your amazing  
 negotiation skills.

DOMAI  
 On this the Council and I agree.  
 We must finish this mission. And  
 we must do it together.

The first worker looks behind him at his brothers.

FIRST WORKER  
 Two days with no rest? What  
 about medicine? What about  
 rights?

DOMAI  
 (defeated)  
 I've done what I can.

FIRST WORKER  
 You've done nothing!

DOMAI  
 Sometimes that's the right thing  
 to do.

FIRST WORKER  
 You don't speak for us. I'm  
 going to strike. Who's with me?

The first worker makes for the door, but Domai blocks his way.

FIRST WORKER (CONT'D)  
 So the peace maker wants a fight  
 after all.

Domai stands fast as the first worker lumbers up to and plows into him. The two men grapple, gritting their teeth. Their feet scrape across the ground, each pair sliding away from the other, looking for more purchase to push with.

The pair sways, looking almost weightless as one force neutralizes the other. Then they teeter.

Domai's jaundiced eyes roll as he is pushed toward the door.

All at once he swings aside like a pivoting door and comes down on the first worker's shoulder with his close hand.

All the energy of the first worker hits the ground, back first, with the resounding double WHUMP of emptied lungs.

DOMAI

Enough!

He springs away from the downed man.

DOMAI (CONT'D)

Go. I can't stop all of you. Or stay and help me finish our mission. If I have to I'll fix the ship myself and probably die for my effort. But then, you'll die for all my effort, too.

The first worker scoffs as he gets up from the ground.

FIRST WORKER

Come on. Morgan will fight for us. And when things get rough, he won't back off so easily.

The first worker lets that sink in, then he goes out.

Three or four of the workers, many of them sick, follow him out with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE

Santiago, with her feet up on a console, watches the camera feed from Svensgaard's cell.

His aspect has changed completely since their encounter. He scowls to himself and stares hopelessly at the door.

Santiago no longer gloats. She ponders her prisoner with pity.

She glances down at the rosary Miriam gave her. She fingers it, her anxious thoughts almost palpable in the air where they linger until she comes to some conclusion.

She closes her eyes and begins to pray. Whispers.

SANTIAGO

(in Spanish)

When I am lost I have always  
relied on my blood and my  
instincts;

(MORE)

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

they guide me well enough in matters that involve just me. But now I feel myself involved in matters with implications beyond me. Implicated are friends and enemies both. I can trust neither. The only one I can trust is you, Lord, to show me which path is the right one, and which the wrong. I pray to you, as I rarely do, now in a moment of need. Reveal your will to me.

While she prays, something interesting happens on the Svensgaard channel. The door slides open and Sinder Roze sneaks in.

She hurries Svensgaard up from his pallet and forces a sling-arm rifle into his hands which he uses to prop himself up like a crutch. Svensgaard's shackles fall away: his own handiwork.

Alternately tending to him and glancing defiantly at the security camera, Roze disappears with her rescue through the door. It slides shut.

Santiago opens her eyes. She blinks, astonished at the empty cell on the security camera.

She stands up, glares at the rosary, and flings it away from her.

She seizes a firearm from a cabinet by the door, then rushes out.

INT. OUTSIDE SECURITY OFFICE

Santiago nearly knocks over Yang making his way back to the security office.

YANG

Why aren't you at your post?

SANTIAGO

The prisoner's gone! I don't know how. I was undisciplined. I closed my eyes.

YANG

I see. We can't worry about this right now. The Council has forced Morgan's hand.

(MORE)



YANG (CONT'D)

He's making his move right now.  
The time for waiting is over.

SANTIAGO

He can't have gone far. I'll hunt  
him down! I'll hunt him! This  
ship is a prison!

YANG

Pull yourself together! I need  
you now.

SANTIAGO

But he'll escape. We have to  
hunt him down on our own terms.

YANG

Forget him. The Unity is at  
risk!

Yang drags Santiago, crying in rage, down the hallway.

INT. RESEARCH LAB

Intensely, Zakharov makes some last-minute changes to a  
circuit board on the table with a tapering scientific  
instrument.

He sprays the board with an antistatic spray then slides it  
back into a decapitated computer nearby.

Zakharov presses a button and the thing hums to life.  
Zakharov is giddy as he waits for the network computer to  
boot up.

ZAKHAROV

At last! Prokhor, you are a  
genius.

The computer's monitor flickers from "INITIALIZING" to  
"FIRMWARE MODULE LOADED" to "A.K.I. [zeta symbol] vers. 5"

Pleased, Zakharov makes sure that a scavenged pair of  
speakers and microphone are attached properly to stripped  
wires in the decapitated computer.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(whispering)  
Don't leave me.

Zakharov, surprised, bumps his head on the computer's  
casing. He pulls out, amazed.

ZAKHAROV

Eureka!

WOMAN'S VOICE

(stronger now)

Don't leave me.

ZAKHAROV

(delighted)

I would never!

As the last word leaves his lips, the ship bucks and shakes. The lights flicker and the network computer dies.

Zakharov staggers at another tremor, his shaky hands trying to catch tools as they clatter to the floor.

He looks, worried, around him. This is not good.

INT. SUBSECTION B - ON ALERT STATUS

Sinder Roze glares around her at the flickering lights as she hacks into a terminal she's ripped from the wall. She plugs a portable keyboard into the exposed guts of the machine and watches the small display carefully.

Svensgaard stands guard, nervous and somewhat impotent on his single good leg.

SVENSGAARD

Hurry!

ROZE

Sorry, there's a lot of system noise for some reason. Wait.

She sees something in the mess of data on the display. She pushes herself, typing at least 100wpm.

ROZE (CONT'D)

Found them. They're on their way to the Children's Creche with about twenty soldiers.

SVENSGAARD

The Children's Creche. How appropriate. Thank you my dear. Now, I have some business to take care of.

He sets off at a limp.

ROZE  
(reminiscent of the  
voice in the lab)  
Don't leave me.

Svensgaard stops and turns around. He sighs.

SVENSGAARD  
Perhaps you can be of some use.

The ship shudders once more. Roze has to jump up and keep him from falling over.

She smirks at him.

INT. REACTOR CORE - SEARING ORANGE

A vast amount of energy is channeling through this room, so much that the fuel pipes, solid metal under normal conditions, writhe and wriggle like snakes, sealed fast to the verticals at the center of the room.

Foreman Domai dashes back and forth, giving orders and flipping switches.

DOMAI  
(over a tremendous  
cacaphony)  
Jesus Christ! What's this! We  
need that fuel pump diverted!

One of the pipes whips around and, as if to prove it's still solid titanium, breaks the back of a TERRIFIED WORKER with a SNAP.

Another worker drags the corpse out of the way and takes his place. He puts his whole weight into a lever that seems to relieve the pressure on the pipes. They settle into contorted shapes torn by hideous stretch marks.

Domai listens carefully, following the sound of mounting pressure from the fuel fluids as it hisses into the wall, then up past the catwalk, and into a transparent transducer near the top of the room. BLACK PLASMA jets in from an entrance pipe.

The pressure is measured in the hundreds of thousands of kilopascals (kPa) by a capacitance monitor bolted to the side.

He breathes a heavy sigh that's lost in the RUSH of a cracking collant tank behind him. He spins around to see

another worker staggering brainlessly in the vicinity, his hazmat suit smoking.

DOMAI (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
My God, what have I done?

The myriad of explosive noises around him begin to DISTORT and CHOP, the gaps replaced by a sound like ELECTRONIC WHISPERS.

Domai, suspicious of another mechanics failure, casts his gaze around for the source.

An eddy of thick poisonous smoke clears and he sees it: the cloaked figure that visited Miriam in her bedchamber, its white halo totally consumed by the intensity of the atmosphere.

Domai knits his brow to get a closer look. It speaks to him calmly, in a voice that echoes inside his head.

FIGURE  
Nothing.

Then it turns to look at something next to him. Domai follows its gaze to a tank of nuclear waste, marked with the appropriate symbol. The whispering grows louder.

A web of racing cracks trace the plastic shield and in an instant it SHATTERS.

Domai screams as tons of corrosive waste wash his sizzling body down the reactor floor.

The figure is gone.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Whispering. Even out here beside the bulk of the UNITY, it Resonates.

The apparently placid ship becomes small against the huge, looming shape of Chiron, with visible clouds, a green sea, and curious, reddish land.

Farther away, even the planet is small: a crystal ball, an orange, a marble in the thumb of ANOTHER SHIP. An alien ship like a ziggurat in space.

The whispers are deafening here.

## INT. CHILDREN'S CRECHE

Morgan, flanked on one side by the first worker, addresses not a crowd of children and teachers, but a mob of FARMERS, WORKERS, and SOLDIERS, all angry, and armed.

MORGAN

The time has come at last. It will only be ten hours before we reach Chiron's orbit, but we will arrive not as we are now - as subjects - but as true citizens, each and every one. We will own land; we will own the government; but most importantly we will own ourselves.

The crowd cheers.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

The Council's vision of a future where ownership does not exist disenfranchises us all for their greed. And who can blame them? For two hundred years they've owned everything. We needed to survive. They provided that important service, and their price: everything. It was agreed. You see, need and greed are of the same elemental behavior. Economic behavior. But the terms of our forced Unity have changed now that we approach Chiron. Great wealth awaits those who recognize this as our opportunity to seize it.

Morgan's last sentence begins to break up and the gaps fill with distorted whispers.

The mob, distracted from their leader, look around for the source. The lights flicker. They begin to become uneasy.

Morgan frowns, but doesn't lose focus. He raises his hands to mollify them and addresses them once more.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Brothers...

The first worker beside him looks askance.

A jolts sends the mob sprawling. Things begin to POP and CRACKLE in the electricals along the ceiling.

LAL

(distorted, over  
loudspeaker, and choked  
as if with guilt)

To all crew and passengers: this  
is Pravin Lal, Secretary. Report  
to your designated escape pods  
immediately. Repeat. Report to  
escape pods for immediate  
evacuation.

The mob begins to scatter, dispersing to the exits on  
either side in a panicked stream. Morgan spreads his  
hands.

MORGAN

(shouting)

Where are you going? It's a  
trick!

The ship jolts again, flattening some of the rebels who are  
then trampled in the rush.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Don't let yourselves be ruled by  
fear. We must stay together!

INT. OUTSIDE DEIRDRE'S ROOM - NIGHT

A panicked Deirdre staggers through the hallway to her room  
as the ship shakes itself to pieces around her.

Lights explode, straight surfaces of metal crumble as rip  
force drags the ship to and fro.

DEIRDRE

(crying)

Charles! Are you in there?!

Her door opens inward, but not totally. It's blocked by  
some debris on the other side that's too heavy for her to  
push.

Once she realizes this, she squeezes her head into the  
opening for any sign of her son.

He's there, unconscious on the floor beyond the debris, a  
cracked suitcase filled with belongings still gripped in  
one tiny hand. He rolls over, almost animate as the ship  
rocks. Shampoo and soap fall out of the suitcase.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)

Charles! I won't leave you.

A shower of sparks from above illuminate his peaceful expression then settle like flowers around him.

DEIRDRE (CONT'D)  
(despairing)  
Wake up, please!

Then the door buckles a little next to her.

Lal is at her side, pushing as hard as he can. Deirdre joins in.

LAL  
I knew I'd find you here.

DEIRDRE  
I won't leave him! Not for you,  
and not for me.

After one last concussive explosion in the depth of the ship, the air begins to rush, HOWLING through the door opening.

Special alarms sound. Charles is dragged away before her eyes.

Deirdre screams.

LAL  
The deck is decompressing. We  
have to go.

DEIRDRE  
I told you, I'll never -

She doesn't get any further than that. Regretfully, Lal stabs her with an electric prod. She spasms a little bit in his arms.

He hauls her away.

INT. SUBSECTION C - NIGHT

Santiago, Yang, and a platoon of SCARED SOLDIERS march down the flickering corridor to the Children's Creche ahead.

YANG  
We have to finish this.

Even Santiago wavers, body and spirit, as hell rains down. A MECHANICAL GROWL, as if from devils, dispirits them from all around.

SANTIAGO  
Sir-- the evacuation order..!

YANG  
It's a trick! They've sabotaged  
the ship. We have to stop them  
before it's too late!

SANTIAGO  
It *is* too late!

YANG  
"The quality of decision is like  
the well-timed swoop of a falcon  
which enables it to strike and  
destroy its victim."

Santiago stares at him in horror. Yang catches the glance,  
and slows.

YANG (CONT'D)  
What is sacred, Lieutenant?

Her look dissolves into obedience once more. She shakes  
her head, but can't meet his gaze.

SANTIAGO  
The chain of command is sacred.

YANG  
Only Unity is sacred. But it  
amounts to the same: loyalty unto  
death.

At last they reach the ensymboled door of the Children's  
Creche, cracked by stress.

Santiago watches Yang worriedly. The scanner by the side  
of the door scans his hand print.

The computer accepts his identity. The door CLANKS, then  
swings open.

SANTIAGO  
Move!

Without so much as a deep breath, Santiago charges through  
the breach at the head of her platoon.



INT. CHILDREN'S CRECHE - DIM

Santiago holds position by the open door and directs her squad to fan out along the sides of the circular room. They quickly cover the open exits on either side.

After the last soldier pulls out of the gap, the door suddenly swings closed and locks. Santiago whirls, confused, at the sound.

MORGAN

Ha ha ha.

She whirls back again, pointing the lamp mounted on the nose of her rifle around in the dusty darkness.

A dusty Morgan stands up from beneath the shape of his capsized podium.

His eyes glow in the full glare of Santiago's lamp.

SANTIAGO

What have you done?

He shrugs.

MORGAN

(amazed at himself)

Nothing.

Santiago waves down her eager troops.

SANTIAGO

Open the door.

Morgan frowns at Santiago. He doesn't know what she's talking about.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Go on.

Morgan walks at gunpoint to the scanner and puts his hand on the plastic. It buzzes negatively.

MORGAN

That was fast. I haven't even been tried yet and my handprint has already been erased. Whatever happened to your Council's precious rights?

Morgan pretends to ponder this.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Oh, yes.

Ignoring him, Santiago pushes his hand aside and uses her own. It buzzes.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Well, well. I guess you're trapped here. I on the other hand...

The ship RUMBLES. Somewhere, a CRACK. The calamity spooks Santiago and her troops like cats startled by thunder. Well-trained cats.

SANTIAGO

We don't have time to burn down this door.

MORGAN

(grim)

I think that's the general idea, soldier.

SANTIAGO

He said, loyalty unto death.

MORGAN

That's what we in the business call an escape clause.

Another shudder.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

... Speaking of escape.

INT. OUTSIDE CHILDREN'S CRECHE

Yang, frustrated, puts his hand on the scanner. It buzzes negative.

He hits it with his fist, then precedes to bang uselessly on the heavy metal door.

YANG

Lieutenant! God damn it!

He backs up and shoots it with his rifle. No effect.

ROZE

I've had the computer lock it.

Yang's eyes widen. He turns around slowly and sees Svensgaard, rifled, leaning on Roze, pistoled, in the hallway behind him.

ROZE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

YANG

(to Svensgaard)

I underestimated you.

SVENSGAARD

People have been saying that a lot to me lately.

Yang starts to lift his rifle, but Roze shakes her head very seriously.

He lets it rest.

SVENSGAARD (CONT'D)

Something else you said to me:  
you said I was a thief, not a  
killer.

(pause)

You were right.

He lifts the rifle he was using as crutch and shoots Yang with a single clean pulse. Yang screams and collapses on his leg, half-severed from his body and smoking. It juts out at an unnatural angle.

Yang props himself up against the locked metal door and whimpers.

SVENSGAARD (CONT'D)

I'll leave the actual killing to  
the ship.

He looks around the shaking, flickering corridor.

SVENSGAARD (CONT'D)

We're free! Come on, Roze.

Svensgaard limps away. Roze stays behind, looking down at Yang with pity.

She removes a scrap of circuitboard with attached antenna from her pocket and tweaks something on it.

Behind Yang, the door clanks and begins to swing open.

Roze doesn't stay to see what's behind it. She runs after Svensgaard.

INT. CHILDREN'S CRECHE - NIGHT

As the vault door opens, Yang is deposited face-up across the sill, unable to move.

His eyes wander from one side of the room to the other, but even from his upside down point of view it's obvious there's no one there.

A tear breaks from the corner of Yang's eye and travels down his scalp.

INT. RESEARCH LAB - ON ALERT STATUS

Zakharov, head in hands, waits for the end. The network computer in front of him is dead, but the woman's voice still speaks that same sentence, over and over again from every speaker in the room.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Don't leave me.

Zakharov sobs.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Don't leave me.

Lal's evacuation warning drones on top:

LAL

(guilty)

To all crew and passengers: this is Pravin Lal, Secretary. Report to your designated escape pods immediately. Repeat. Report to escape pods for immediate evacuation. This is a recorded message.

The security door slides open.

Zakharov stands up. He peers into it. There doesn't seem to be anyone there.

He hears gasping. Suddenly Yang, bleeding everywhere, hauls himself over the sill of the door into the room.

ZAKHAROV

Sheng-Ji? What are you doing here?

YANG  
You're not -- him? -- I thought  
he would come back -- for the  
serum.

ZAKHAROV  
Yang, your leg!

YANG  
I look at -- death --  
dispassionately.

Yang looks at his shaking hands and frowns.

YANG (CONT'D)  
Or not.

The woman's voice, which had stopped during their  
conversation, as if listening, chimes in again.

WOMAN'S VOICE  
Don't leave me.

Zakharov looks back into the room.

ZAKHAROV  
I'm sorry.  
(to Yang)  
I'm going to save you, old  
friend.

YANG  
(protesting)  
The Unity...!

ZAKHAROV  
... is dead.

Zakharov pulls Yang painfully up against him and hauls him  
out of the room.

The speakers are silent.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

The Unity erupts across its length with spurts of  
suffocated fire and tiny, desperate escape pods. It  
strafes into Chiron's atmosphere.

The front section burns a fierce red and begins to  
disintegrate. Molten particles of metal strip away under  
friction and spiral out into space or impact against  
portions of the ship further aft.

The frozen base of the ship, dominated by the great, formant engines, reflects the hollow gaze of Proxima Centauri in the distance.

INT. MIRIAM'S ESCAPE POD

Through a vacuum window Miriam glimpses the dying Unity and the vast, bald face of Chiron. Her pod spins toward the planet. It's dizzying, but she looks on calmly, consumed by her thoughts.

MIRIAM

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth."

Her voice cracks.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

We have been judged --- unworthy.  
Forgive me, Lord.

EXT. PLANETFALL - NIGHT

A battered escape pod lies steaming and half-submerged on the beach like a burning mountain. It sizzles under waves of heavy rain.

A polygonal hatch on the exposed surface of the pod pops off and scatters like a leaf into the sea. From the steaming gap emerges the soot-blackened but recognizable face of Santiago.

She holds up a curious hand against the rain. She's never seen rain before and it amazes her, almost as much as the apocalyptic horizon.

A fiery storm of pods and flaming ship parts plummet to the planet's surface, some crashing against the barren brown land as wreckage, others slashing down in hissing jets on the deep blue sea.

She catches her breath. Turning, her wide eyes follow the spectacle over the shore where the sand on the beach meets low, red hills of coral.

SANTIAGO

Hello, planet.

As one, the hills begin to move. They are composed not of polyps, but millions of slithering red worms. In a mass they rear up, threatening.

A SCREAM breaks from all around. It's the unreal scream of an angry planet.