

FAYE OF AVALINE

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FADE IN:

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

A THUNDEROUS sound is building.

AVALINE, a powerful spaceship, appears as a distant shard. She seems small in comparison to her bright wake of light.

There is a MOAN as Star-Roller BANSHEE, a deadly enemy ship, emerges from the dark. She bears down.

A glow develops on Banshee's scorpion-like tail extension.

A BOOM - the glow suddenly expands.

An energy wave ROARS away. Ripples spread in all directions.

The wave edge overtakes Avaline, and auras around her flare.

Three more ships emerge, and rise to join with Banshee. All look menacing.

Glow begins to appear on each of their hull extensions.

From Avaline, the THUNDER of passage reaches crescendo.

Avaline disappears - bearing away in the direction of a distant galactic disc.

INT. SWARM PLANET XN41 - A CAVE - NIGHT

FAYE is backing into a dark cavern. Her features are obscured by deep shadow.

FAYE

Avaline?

AVALINE (O.S.)

Twenty Two?

There is a pause. Faye sounds annoyed.

FAYE

It's Faye. I'm in danger. I need a lift.

AVALINE (O.S.)

I can't reach you.

FAYE

You've left? You're -

AVALINE (O.S.)  
In Somberlin. The fleet were  
attacked. You will have to -

FAYE  
Get lost Avaline.

EXT. SWARM PLANET XN41 - HARSH TERRAIN - NIGHT

Faye bursts from a cave mouth into a rugged alien landscape.

She is revealed as human-like. Androgynous. Apparent age mid-twenties. Short fair hair. Slim, athletic physique.

Faye is a FACTOR - a biological entity, created to act for her ship. She is also rare - being fully independent.

There is a swarm in the sky. Indiscernible DARK SHAPES, scanning the area, and making a deep HUMM.

The dark shapes turn as one, and emit flashes of fire.

Faye runs with extraordinary speed. Columns of rock shatter, as the weapons fired from her pursuers hit ground.

Faye reaches an area of large, densely packed thorns. Despite limited clearance, she speeds in, and moves nimbly on.

The dark shapes pause, and resume their scanning motions.

Faye stops running and crouches down, breathing heavily.

FAYE  
I need help.

Two of Avaline's fleet ships, VIANT and KAE-UNE respond.

VIANT (O.S.)  
Roller Viant. Fleet forced to  
disperse. Attacked by Draka. I'm  
six years out - evading pursuit.

KAE-UNE (O.S.)  
Star-Roller Kae-Une. I've lost my  
pursuer, but I'm much further out.

FAYE  
Shit! Anyone else? That attack's  
rattled the locals.

Faye begins to run again. She changes direction, staying just ahead of the ensuing explosions. Cruiser BLADE calls in.

BLADE (O.S.)  
Faye! This is Blade. I'm Alantheon -

Faye stops and hunkers down.

FAYE  
Not part of our fleet -

BLADE (O.S.)  
I wasn't just passing by. Breaking  
through the Mandrin field. Four  
years out. Coming in, full speed -

FAYE  
Too far. Whoever you are - turn  
back.

BLADE (O.S.)  
I've gained arena - get ready -

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

An extra star, flickering wildly, appears above a star field.

Blade blasts by within a line of light. A ROAR. A brief view -  
enough to show she is a large stream-lined spaceship.

EXT. SWARM PLANET XN41 - CLEARING - NIGHT

Faye breaks into a clearing and stops running. She has been  
injured by the thorns. Black blood runs from many wounds.

She throws down a disc, from a tattoo on her right palm.

The disc expands to about four feet. She steps on - looks up.

BLADE (O.S.)  
I have it. Establishing roll by -

Faye checks back over the canopy. Dark shapes are closing in.

Faye sweeps her left arm around in an arc, and units like  
large dust particles are released from further tattoos.

She raises her right arm, and brings up a shield of light.

The dust particles explode amongst the dark shapes.

The survivors fire back, but Faye's shield holds up.

FAYE  
You better hurry up!

BLADE (O.S.)  
Stay still. Minimal deceleration -

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Blade fires a precise beam of light towards a distant planet.

EXT. SWARM PLANET XN41 - CLEARING - NIGHT

Faye is hit by a beam of light coming in at an acute angle, then gets pulled up and away as the beam sweeps by.

INT. CRUISER BLADE - INNER AREA - NIGHT

An area of organic and technological elements. A beam of angled light disappears, as Faye emerges through the floor.

RYAN, a male Factor, apparent age mid-fifties, is waiting.

Ryan smiles - then frowns when he sees her injuries. He offers a slim healing unit, and indicates a direction.

Faye staggers off her lift disc. It shrinks, and flies to her palm like a magnet.

Faye takes the proffered unit, and passes it over her cuts, which fade to scars as they walk.

RYAN  
I'm Ryan, fourth Factor of Cruiser Blade. We've been protecting your flank, covertly. No local tech of consequence, but the fleet were -

FAYE  
Attacked by Draka. I know.

RYAN  
They've dispersed already - competent - been finding better Enhancers. You alright?

FAYE  
What do you think? Avaline left me stranded!

RYAN  
We're here. You're onboard. Avaline took a big drain -

FAYE  
So she shot off to Somberlin!

RYAN  
It's not so straight forward.  
Regardless, we're heading on, and  
she'll want you back -

FAYE  
Well, fuck her.

Faye presses on. They reach a wider area, which contains a number of large esoteric devices.

Ryan drops a screen showing a galactic arm. The view zooms swiftly in, and reaches a little blue planet.

RYAN  
Detected this on the adjacent minor  
spiral. It looks promising -

FAYE  
We saw it too. Avaline wouldn't  
take the detour.

RYAN  
Enigma seven. It's an off-chance,  
but you should take a look.

Faye looks surprised.

FAYE  
Me? Send one of your own. It's way  
out - probably another swarm rock -

RYAN  
Straight back to Avaline then?

Faye looks over suspiciously, but doesn't reply.

Ryan's eyes change. Blade speaks through him, her voice calm.

BLADE (O.S.)  
My suitable Factors are engaged.  
There's guile and spite in these  
latest attacks. We need to find a  
counter.

Faye resents being manipulated. She gives a growl.

FAYE  
I need re-arming.

BLADE (O.S.)  
Of course.

FAYE  
I'll need an Acquisition as well.

BLADE (O.S.)  
I have a Unicorn ready. This way -

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Earth in the early 1990's. A high school's grassy enclosure.

MARK is a good-looking, albeit slim, and awkward teenager. He wears spectacles, has disheveled hair, and an acne problem.

He emerges from a school building, carrying a wooden box. He is distracted, perusing some papers.

ZAK is a tough young man. Very muscular. He is on a run, and makes no effort to avoid banging into Mark on his way past.

Mark is knocked back, and drops his papers. The wooden box hits down hard, spilling a number of chess pieces.

Zak slows, back-tracks.

ZAK  
Watch it Click! You almost tripped me up!

MARK  
You watch it, Zak - you lout!

ZAK sneers, and carries on running.

Mark picks up the papers and chess pieces, and walks on.

JASMINE, GRACE and EMELIA, attractive eighteen year old women, are chatting together. They see Mark walking by.

They whisper. Grace gives Jasmine a nudge. Jasmine shakes her head, but her friends smile mischievously.

GRACE  
Go on. It'll be a laugh.

Jasmine shows mild exasperation, then moves off towards Mark.

JASMINE  
Hi Mark. How you doing?

Mark looks surprised, as Jasmine falls into step.

MARK

Yeah - err - good.

JASMINE

Heard you're joining the army?

MARK

What? No, I'm going to university.  
Warfare and strategy.

JASMINE

Yeah? Exciting - I'd like to do  
that - I'm good at getting into the  
right positions.

She laughs. Mark smiles, but looks embarrassed.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Wanna go to the movies? There's  
this film -

MARK

Thought you were with Zak?

JASMINE

He's busy - football practice.

MARK

Don't know Jasmine. I'd like to,  
but he can get pretty pissed -

JASMINE

It's a movie! You wanna take me or  
what?

Mark slows to a stop, and looks over. Jasmine smiles.

MARK

Yes, if you're sure -

Emelia and Grace appear from behind Mark.

GRACE

Did I hear right? Zak's not going  
to be too pleased, is he Emelia?

JASMINE

Didn't say I'd accepted.

MARK

But you -

EMELIA

She's dating my brother, Click!

GRACE

You got a problem with that?

The women grin to each other, enjoying his discomfort.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Who'd want to get with you anyway?

EMELIA

Yeah, look at you. Jasmine? No way!

Jasmine is surprised by this, and looks annoyed.

JASMINE

Whoa! Don't tell me what I think!  
Hey Mark - another time.

Jasmine turns abruptly. Mark goes to follow, but Grace grabs his arm, and pulls him back.

GRACE

Ooo - another time! Still want to  
take someone to the movies?

Emelia and Grace laugh contemptuously.

Mark's friend DIZZY strides up. He is a handsome young man.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Oh God, it's him! Let's go!

EMELIA

Zak's going to hear of this.

The women go to catch up with Jasmine, who pauses, and looks back, before moving off.

MARK

Dizzy. I'm not sure if I'm pleased  
you turned up, or annoyed.

DIZZY

Lucky escape. Awful creatures! Come  
on. I've something for you.

Dizzy brandishes a book, as he leads Mark away.

Mark looks despondent. He groans, but takes the book.

DIZZY (CONT'D)

British Navy. Nineteenth century.  
The crews were unbelievable. Skill -  
ingenuity - Hmm. You alright?

MARK

I've had enough -

DIZZY

Ignore them. We'll be out of here soon. Let's go to Jake's? Addams Family!

MARK

I can't. I have to download some programs for my Uncle.

DIZZY

Boring. Classes tomorrow? No? See you at Jake's in the morning then.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

UNICORN ARGENT, a small craft with a long promontory, launches from Cruiser Blade, and heads away.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Faye is looking around a cosy control area. Screens open out upon the distant arm of a galaxy. Faye approaches ARGENT.

Argent is a mature female Factor. She is lounging on a sofa.

FAYE

You're Blade's Acquisition ship?

ARGENT

One of them. Welcome. I'm Argent - Unicorn Argent's only Factor.

FAYE

Faye. Avaline's twenty-second.

ARGENT

Yes. I'm supposed to get you ready. I've rarely seen an independent -

Argent rises, and walks around in an appraising manner.

She reaches towards one of Faye's thorn-scars, but Faye recoils with a snarl.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

At least I wouldn't have been abandoned on a swarm planet.

Faye looks hurt. Argent laughs.

ARGENT (CONT'D)  
 You're defying Avaline, not me.  
 Full prime? You could've drawn -

FAYE  
 I know what I could've done. She'd  
 taken a hit.

ARGENT  
 Maybe more dedicated than you seem.  
 So - want to go through with this?

Faye's expression hardens. Argent takes this as an answer.

Argent reaches up, and a new viewing screen scrolls down.

ARGENT (CONT'D)  
 Adaptation won't be an issue for a  
 Factor like you, but we need to  
 move fast. Look.

She brings up images of a barren and devastated planet.  
 Closer in, the images depict creatures dying in agony.

ARGENT (CONT'D)  
 Ex-En forty one. The planet we  
 lifted you from.

Faye is horrified. She shakes her head sadly.

FAYE  
 Dangerous - but they were  
 intelligent. What happened?

ARGENT  
 The Draka went back - eliminated  
 everything.

FAYE  
 Ugh! Senseless! Are we putting this  
 next place at risk of that?

ARGENT  
 If we don't find something soon,  
 it's at risk anyway.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - EARTH SYSTEM - NIGHT

Time progresses. Unicorn Argent flickers across space. She  
 slows, but is still moving at great speed as she passes the  
 outer planets of Earth's solar system.

She heads towards Earth.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - ADAPTATION AREA - NIGHT

Argent is lounging beside a bank of complex control units. Faye is shrouded behind an opaque panel. Lights flash within.

FAYE (O.C.)  
Haven't you finished yet?

ARGENT  
Stop whining. We got lucky. The physical transition's easy. I'm having more trouble deciphering understandings.

FAYE (O.C.)  
What do you mean?

ARGENT  
Verbal communication's fragmented. Societal norms are contradictory -

FAYE (O.C.)  
Don't go messing me up.

ARGENT  
Avaline will be annoyed enough you didn't go straight back. I've no intention of upsetting her further.

FAYE (O.C.)  
What did you do then? It made me feel dizzy!

ARGENT  
Your expression, emotion, and humor packs have been increased.

Argent manipulates the controls. Faye shrieks.

ARGENT (CONT'D)  
That about does it.

Argent rises, and goes across. The panel opens.

Faye's thorn-scars have gone. Her face is framed by styled blonde hair. She is more curvaceous, and wears garments reminiscent of Earth's 1990's American/European fashions.

Argent looks pleased. Faye looks at herself with horror.

FAYE  
You've got to be joking!

ARGENT

Phraseology - informal main sector.

Faye growls, and runs her hands down from her hair, over her chest, and along her hips.

FAYE

Don't give me that! Look at me! Too frothy - too heavy - too big.

ARGENT

It's a recognized model of form.

Argent drops a screen, and shows a sequence of 1990's television adverts. A glamorous woman eating chocolate - a line of super-models - a romantic kiss from a film clip.

Faye reacts with astonishment - begins to show interest - then abruptly draws away.

FAYE

Your receivers must be corrupted.

ARGENT

You need to be inconspicuous. Those body coverings are essential. They'll retract for serious action.

Faye takes a few steps. She is clumsy and uncertain.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

Flexible muscle control. You can release the dampers incrementally - or disengage altogether.

FAYE

Good. Ah! That's better.

ARGENT

It's a low gravity environment. Re-engage, or you'll cause more damage than these creatures will tolerate. Try not to harm too many.

FAYE

Are we ready?

ARGENT

And don't go giving them the looks you've been giving me. Facial expressions are important.

Faye smiles sweetly. She moves towards the lift zone.

FAYE

Sure about these targets? You said there were billions down there.

ARGENT (O.S.)

We're looking for Enhancers, not Combatants. You check! I spent ages on it. Not very grateful are you?

FAYE

I - hmm -

ARGENT

You're welcome, Faye. Now, get on your lift - you bitch!

INT. COMPUTER WORKSHOP - NIGHT

A little workshop, full of electrical gadgets. There is a single entry door, and a set of stairs at the back.

Mark is sitting beside a computer screen. It shows a download bar, which is hardly moving.

Mark's Uncle GEORGE is sitting in an armchair nearby. He has a glass of whisky in hand. When he speaks he slurs slightly.

GEORGE

I don't understand. It's too much. I don't even know what a down-load is, really. I'm sorry Mark -

George has tears in his eyes. He is on the verge of a breakdown. Mark looks very uncomfortable.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I was alright for a while, after your Mum. But when my Marion -

MARK

Why don't you go get some sleep? I can finish off here. We'll go over it again tomorrow.

George gets up unsteadily, and make his way to the stairs.

GEORGE

I know. It's easier when I'm not around. You're a good lad Mark.

Once George has gone, Mark sighs. He looks close to tears.

Mark reaches for the book Dizzy gave him, but soon puts it aside. He takes his spectacles off, and rubs his eyes.

Mark begins to fall asleep. He hears a slight CREAKING noise.

He puts his spectacles back on, looks across, and is astonished to see Faye staring down at him.

Mark is very attracted to her. For a moment he can't speak.

MARK

I - ahh - err - We're closed!

Faye looks around at the items in the shop.

MARK (CONT'D)

You need to come back tomorrow, and speak to my uncle.

Faye frowns, and gives Mark an appraising look.

MARK (CONT'D)

That door's supposed to be locked.

FAYE

Me gustaria hablar contigo.

Mark does not understand Spanish.

MARK

What? How'd you get in?

Faye frowns again, and repeats the line in English.

FAYE

I'd like to speak with you.

Mark suddenly looks suspicious.

MARK

Wait a minute. This isn't right. Who's put you up to this? Was it Emelia? Or are you one of Grace's?

FAYE

I'm Faye of Avaline.

MARK

Yeah? Well Faye of whatever. You tell them I'm not listening.

FAYE

Tell who - what?

MARK

I won't be caught out again.

FAYE

You're not Mark Lorollon?

MARK

Yes. No. I mean yes I am! That's a bloody funny way to put it!

FAYE

When will you be able to speak?

MARK

Err - join me at Jake's tomorrow, alright? We'll play Addam's Family!

Faye thinks about this. Her response is guarded.

FAYE

You're - joking?

MARK

No. And if that's what you're doing - it isn't funny.

Faye smiles brightly, and then nods towards the computer.

FAYE

I have enhanced that.

Mark turns around and frowns. He collects the mouse, and clicks through a few screens.

MARK

Yes, Click - I know what you call me. Hey - that can't have finished already. Wow, they've all down-loaded! What did you do?

He looks back. Faye has gone.

INT. JAKE'S CAFE - DAY

Jake's is a general breakfast bar / cafe. There are numerous PATRONS seated around. Most of them are high school STUDENTS.

Dizzy is on an Addam's Family pinball machine by the door.

Mark enters and gives Dizzy a friendly tap on the shoulder as he passes by. Dizzy acknowledges with a nod.

Jasmine, Emelia and Grace are at a window table, perusing magazines of contemporary chic. They ignore Mark.

Mark goes to the bar, and buys a coffee from cafe owner JAKE.

MARK

I'd like a - oh - ah - thank you.

Jake takes his money, and hands a drink over with a grunt.

Mark takes the coffee across to an alcove, and gets settled.

Shortly after, Faye enters the cafe.

She smiles at people as she moves confidently to the bar.

Dizzy sees Faye, and loses a pinball. Other patrons stare. Everyone reacts as if a celebrity has walked in.

JASMINE

(To Emelia and Grace)

Who does she think she is?

Jake's demeanor suddenly brightens.

JAKE

Good morning, Ma'am.

Faye smiles at Jake, but moves straight on to Mark's alcove.

Mark has been arranging papers, and has not seen her yet.

FAYE

Good morning.

MARK

Woh! What's this? You're persistent alright - I'm not falling for it!

FAYE

Falling?

MARK

You saying you're not with Emelia?  
Or Grace? Or even Jasmine?

Mark looks across. Faye follows his gaze - Jasmine, Emelia and Grace are clearly aware of her presence.

FAYE

I don't know them.

MARK

Don't believe you. You said you were Faye of something, yes? What's going on? Where've you come from?

Faye takes the seat opposite Mark, then leans forward.

FAYE

Those are much better questions.

A WAITRESS moves across to the alcove.

WAITRESS

Do you want to order Miss?

FAYE

I'll have some of that - uhm?

WAITRESS

Coffee?

FAYE

Is it? Good. Thank you.

The waitress looks offended, and moves away.

Mark laughs, but his suspicions remain.

MARK

You're weird. What planet you on?

Faye smiles as if he has made a joke.

FAYE

I'm recruiting. For my mother. I mean, for my ship. She's called Avaline.

MARK

Look, this isn't going to work. I know every ship in our navy, the Russian navy - and most other naval powers as well.

FAYE

You study material and strategy. You study the tactics of war. It's why I'm here.

MARK

So?

FAYE

You're good, you're young - and you cheat. So does he.

Faye nods across to Dizzy, still playing pinball.

MARK

Are you from the examination board?

There is a commotion, as Zak and three footballers enter.

Zak sees Dizzy, and drags him away from the pinball machine.

ZAK

Where is he?

Dizzy pulls his arm back fiercely. Zak loses his hold.

Zak and Dizzy stare at each other for a moment.

One of the footballers taps Zak on the shoulder.

FOOTBALLER ONE

He's down there.

Zak turns from Dizzy, and strides down to Mark's alcove.

Emelia and Grace look pleased. Jasmine looks embarrassed.

ZAK

Hey. I want a word with you, Click.

MARK

Oh no.

Zak reaches the alcove, and sees Faye sitting with Mark.

ZAK

Woh - who's this? Friend of yours?  
Knock out! Bit old for you.

Zak gives Faye a telling wink.

ZAK (CONT'D)

I've someone else right now -

Zak grabs Mark, and hauls him up out of his seat.

ZAK (CONT'D)

Heard you hit on Jasmine?

Faye communicates with Argent - silent to all at Jake's bar.

FAYE (V.O.)  
Threat to one of my targets.

ARGENT (O.S.)  
If you intervene, keep it  
appropriate.

MARK  
It was a breakdown in  
communication. I think -

ZAK  
Emelia told me all about it. And  
no one cares what you think!

DIZZY  
She asked if he'd like to go to the  
flicks whilst you were doing  
practice. What's wrong with that?

Zak back-hands the side of Mark's face, knocking his  
spectacles onto the table.

ZAK  
I'll tell you what's wrong with  
that! I don't like it!

Mark reaches for the spectacles, but Zak slaps his hand away,  
grabs him by the shoulders, and gives a violent shake.

Dizzy moves forward, but two of the footballers block him.

Jasmine looks upset, and gets up.

Faye rises. She is behind Zak.

FAYE  
Let go of him.

ZAK  
Why?

Faye's hand reaches up between Zak's legs.

His sudden surprised expression indicates that she has  
gripped hold of his anatomy very tightly.

FAYE  
So I let go of you.

Faye tightens her grip. Zak squeals, and releases Mark.

Faye releases Zak, who wheels around savagely.

Faye smiles sweetly at him.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Go away.

Zak looks furious. Jasmine, Emelia, Grace and the footballer's are astonished. Dizzy has a big smile.

ZAK

You can't get away with that!

Zak aims a hard open-handed blow at Faye's face.

Faye grabs his wrist, and stops the blow from landing.

With her other hand, she sends an equally fierce open-handed blow of her own. It hits with great force.

Zak is knocked sideways to the ground.

Footballer One reacts. He tries to grab Faye by the neck.

Faye sweeps her right arm over, knocking his arms downwards.

She puts her left hand over her right fist, and propels her right elbow into her attackers face.

Footballer One is hurled back into his companions.

Zak gets up, roars with anger, and hurls himself at Faye.

Faye steps aside, grabs Marks spectacles, and pushes Zak on.

Zak smacks into the table, head first in a patron's breakfast. He slides along, and bangs against the wall.

Zak is barely conscious. Faye pulls him up and passes him over to Footballer Two.

FAYE

That was appropriate, right?

The remaining footballers still look ready to respond.

Faye, speaking harshly in Spanish, tells them go.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Ve ahora! Sal de aqui!

Dizzy opens the main door - encouraging them to move on.

The Footballers retreat, taking Zak and their injured friend.

Jasmine, Emelia and Grace get up, and go with them.

Faye smiles, and hands Mark's spectacles back to him.

MARK

When he said knock out - it wasn't  
an instruction.

Dizzy laughs. Faye looks over, and her smile broadens.

FAYE

I want to speak to you too.

DIZZY

Si, Senora.

Dizzy looks at Mark. They are both astonished.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Argent is looking down at planet Earth.

ARGENT

I've blocked local detectors. Some  
command factions had noted my  
presence. It was causing anxiety.

FAYE (O.S.)

Will you stop interrupting?

ARGENT

How's it going?

FAYE (O.S.)

Good. I've gained contact - minimal  
conflict.

EXT. TOWN PARK - DAY

Faye, Mark and Dizzy are walking through a park.

Mark and Dizzy appear surprised. They exchange dubious looks.

They reach a children's play area, and Faye begins to by-pass  
the obstacles in a way few humans would be capable of.

She leaps from a see-saw, and balances perfectly along the  
support-bar of another piece of equipment.

MARK

So you're from a ship that can  
travel between galaxies -

DIZZY

Or maybe a circus acrobat -

MARK

But you need us to confuse your enemies?

FAYE

Our enemies are sophisticated -

DIZZY

Well if they're so damn clever, how could we do anything to beat them?

MARK

Big problem. And what about principals - like nothing travels faster than light?

FAYE

Our ships travel dimensions.

DIZZY

Whilst light goes the long way round?

Faye laughs. She rolls smoothly off the support, onto a moving roundabout.

Faye leaps off the roundabout, and through the park gates.

She crosses a road, passes a dilapidated gothic hotel called Park-Line (relevant later), and takes a street into town.

EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY

Mark and Dizzy have to run. Mark narrowly avoids being hit by an automobile.

The two catch up with Faye.

FAYE

The Universe doesn't run to your interpretation of the rules.

MARK

Rules or not - how would we surprise them?

FAYE

Become an Enhancer.

MARK

A what?

FAYE

How would you win against an opponent who knows every strategy, and never makes a mistake?

DIZZY

Get rid of the opponent?

MARK

Disrupt - cheat - introduce chance -

FAYE

Your questions, the way you imagine things, it's unique - unpredictable - that's an Enhancer! You'd be given communication, and comprehension -

DIZZY

Whoa! Even if I believed all this, I'd never want to be turned into something else.

FAYE

You'd still be yourselves. It wouldn't work otherwise.

MARK

Why should we help your - what was it? Alantheons? How do we know the other lot aren't the good guys?

FAYE

I told you. We see benefit in liaison. The Draka are intent on -

DIZZY

Conquest.

FAYE

Domination - or destruction.

DIZZY

That's a step on! Bloody hell! You can't even get your story straight!

The three reach George's Computer Workshop.

DIZZY (CONT'D)

Faye, you're beautiful, imaginative  
- but I can't listen to this any  
more. Don't know where you found  
her Mark - but she's a keeper!

Dizzy turns away abruptly, and leaves. Faye is astonished.

FAYE

He doesn't believe me. Why doesn't  
he ask for proof?

MARK

We like you Faye. We don't want to  
know you're delusional.

Mark opens the door, and ushers her into the workshop.

INT. COMPUTER WORKSHOP - DAY.

Faye and Mark enter. For a moment, George looks  
uncomprehendingly at the pair in his workshop.

George recognizes Mark, and smiles. He staggers over to a  
cabinet, fumbles at the latch, and takes a whisky out.

GEORGE

I've been doing some work -

George heads upstairs, bottle in hand.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

It's important. You carry on. She  
looks lovely. Like my Marion -

Mark is embarrassed, he keeps his eyes cast down.

Once George has left, he shakes his head, and looks over.

MARK

That's why I couldn't leave. My  
Uncle. He'd fall apart.

FAYE

You have changers here.

MARK

George needs re-training. Well,  
rehab, first. Still might not work,  
and anyway, it would cost too much.

FAYE

This holds you back? What about  
Dizzy?

MARK

His family have - certain beliefs.  
They disowned him when he came out.

FAYE

This has to do with -

MARK

Cast him aside. Now he has to live  
in a real bad neighborhood.

FAYE

All these people. They won't exist  
soon, if you don't help me.

MARK

Faye, if you really believe all  
that space battle shit - it's not  
my help you need -

Faye looks hurt, and disappointed.

A brief pause - then she spins away abruptly.

Mark turns aside, but looks back as the door SLAMS shut.

Mark hits a desk in frustration. Then he frowns, as something  
dawns on him.

MARK (CONT'D)

Ask for proof? Ohh!

EXT. TOWN PARK - DAY

Zak, Jasmine, Emelia, Grace and two footballers lounge by a  
park bench. They are close to the gates, and the road.

Faye passes a distance away, but close enough to be noticed.

JASMINE

Who is she?

They look from one to the other, but no one tries to answer.

A few seconds later, Mark goes by the same distance away.

FOOTBALLER ONE

Zak! It's Click!

GRACE  
Let's get him!

JASMINE  
No Zak!

Zak gets up. He scowls and nods in Mark's direction.

They all start running.

Mark becomes aware of the gang chasing after him.

Startled, he turns aside, and runs out into the road.

A passing vehicle hits him with great force, and he is hurled back towards the park perimeter.

The vehicle slows a moment, but does not stop. All the vehicles moving behind it keep on going.

The group chasing are shocked. Grace looks horrified.

Faye is approaching a large open space - she suddenly stops.

ARGENT (O.S.)  
Your first target's been injured.  
Sending location -

Faye's clothing shrinks to a body-suit. She begins running.

Those chasing Mark have realized it is serious.

ZAK  
Let's get out of here.

Everyone runs, except for Jasmine, who hesitantly approaches.

Zak begins to run, but pauses for Jasmine's sake. They are the only other pedestrians nearby, when Faye arrives.

Mark's limbs are at unnatural angles. His spectacles lie broken.

FAYE  
Oh no.

As she goes to assess Mark, Faye's clothing re-establishes.

Jasmine stops, astonished by the transformation.

Jasmine continues to approach, until Faye glances up with an angry, feral look - and growls.

Zak grabs Jasmine, and pulls her back. He looks frightened.

ZAK

That wasn't our fault. Come on -

Jasmine allows herself to be pulled away.

Faye scans Mark's injuries with her hand.

ARGENT (O.S.)

He can't survive. Unfortunate.  
These things happen every day down  
there. Checking next target.

Faye stands up slowly, reluctantly. She looks very upset.

She steps back, and turns away.

Faye pauses, then wheels around, and scoops up Mark's body.

At a peripheral point, under a tree, Jasmine stops running.

Zak tries to drag Jasmine onwards, but she resists - so he gives up, and runs off.

Faye carries Mark to an open space in the park, away from the road. The area is deserted.

Faye gets onto her lift disc, and sends up her shields.

ARGENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He'll need major adaptation. If we  
do this, it will change him beyond -

FAYE (V.O.)

You said he was the best. Now lift  
us!

ARGENT (O.S.)

I'm a Unicorn, not a Cruiser. Give  
me a moment! Oxygen - gravity -  
pressure - O.K. Bringing you in.

Jasmine watches in astonishment, as an angled beam of light pulls the lift disc upwards. She alone has seen.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - INNER AREA - NIGHT

Faye and Mark arrive. Argent indicates an adjacent chamber, and Faye hurriedly carries Mark across.

A viewing screen scrolls down. It shows Jasmine looking up.

Argent frowns, considers, then follows Faye.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - ADAPTATION AREA - NIGHT

Faye is beside Argent, who is manipulating a control unit.

Mark is lying on a pallet of fibers and tendrils. He looks pale, but his acne has gone.

ARGENT

Extensive repair. Undamaged areas required as much work as damaged ones. For compatibility. Bit of a mess. He's like you now.

FAYE

That's an insult?

Argent looks over, clearly annoyed. Faye backs down.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Hmm. What about his mind?

ARGENT

Functioning, with increased mental acumen. I've implanted Enhancer material. Some elements were needed to keep him alive. The rest won't be activated - unless he chooses.

Mark's eyes flicker open. He feels around for his spectacles.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

Hello Mark. I'm Argent. You don't need the external optics any more.

Mark touches around his eyes. He is surprised. He looks at Argent, takes in the ship environment - then turns to Faye.

MARK

You have to do something about my Uncle George.

Faye and Argent look at each other in surprise. Then they look at Mark. They smile.

MARK (CONT'D)

I changed my mind. I'll be one of your bloody Enhancers!

INT. GEORGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

George is lying on his bed. He is snoring heavily.

Argent places a hand above George's face, and concentrates.

After a few seconds, she turns to Faye and Mark, who are watching from the far end of the bed.

ARGENT

Easy. You go get the other one.

MARK

I want to make sure he's alright.

ARGENT

Minor enhancements. Nothing forced. He'll understand things better, that's all. You can check later.

FAYE

This is nothing compared to your injuries. Let her get on with it.

EXT. BETHEL NEIGHBOURHOOD - NIGHT

An urban area, poorly lit, leading to a shabby neighborhood. Faye walks with usual confidence. Mark is getting uneasy.

MARK

I never went to Dizzy's hood. I don't like the look of this.

FAYE

Why not?

MARK

Can't you see? Didn't realize it was this bad. I think -

Mark stops talking, as WILD, Zak and four other WILD-GANG MEMBERS emerge from the shadows. Wild has a fierce looking DOG, which begins GROWLING and straining on its leash.

Zak tries to hide his shock at seeing the pair.

WILD

What you doing here?

MARK

Uhh - friends of Dizzy.

ZAK

Dizzy - Soul Ravens. You? Walking! You survived? How the hell -

Wild is in charge - he cuts in on Zak.

WILD  
Why'd you come in on our side?  
That's not polite.

MARK  
Ahh - ahh - yes, we got lost. Look,  
we'll leave. We're going.

ZAK  
Harmless. That one - she's nasty.

WILD  
O.K. You can go. But she's staying.

MARK  
What? No way, come on -

Mark steps forward. Three Wild-Gang members draw knives.

FAYE  
Move back, Mark.

Faye launches herself at the nearest - gang member three.

She kicks away his knife, then propels him into a fourth gang member so fiercely that they bang heads and fall down.

Wild releases his dog.

Faye spins towards the dog. A flash pulses out from her, in every direction. She snarls with incredible ferocity.

A deep WHOMP. The four standing are thrust back.

The dog cowers, whimpers - and runs away. Wild is astonished.

The gang are reduced - less energetic - anxious. Their breathing becomes labored, but none of them back down.

Faye leaps at Wild, and kicks him in the stomach.

Wild doubles over - Zak takes a combative stance.

Faye easily slips past Zak's first strike, and lands a punch.

Zak flies back and gets cut by a knife thrust from the fifth gang member, as they clash and fall.

The sixth gang member bears down upon Mark.

Mark brings his right leg up to a horizontal position, and kicks out from the knee.

Marks kick sends the Sixth's knife flying.

Mark and the Sixth look at each other in surprise.

The Sixth recovers first, and punches Mark in the face.

Mark staggers back - Faye shouts to distract his assailant.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Hey Lucky!

The sixth turns, as Faye hurls her lift disc. It expands to about a foot as it streaks from the tattoo on her palm.

The Sixth is felled by a slashing injury across his shoulder. He shrieks and goes down hard.

Faye's lift disc shrinks and flies straight back to hand.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Lucky it's a shallow one -

Wild rushes at Faye, who drops down very low, lifts him as he goes over, and hurls him on into the wall.

Wild hits the wall, and collapses - unconscious.

Faye spins, arm back - lift disc ready to strike.

The gang members are now really afraid. Three and Four, who had been knocked down, and five who stabbed Zak - run away.

The sixth is rolling on the ground, groaning. He manages to stagger up, and goes off after them, clutching his shoulder.

Zak struggles up. His arm is bleeding, but it is not a serious wound. He backs away, and goes to check on Wild.

Mark looks at him, then across at Faye.

MARK

That's twice! And Zak's an expert  
in martial arts!

FAYE

That was foolish - you alright?

Mark dabs at his nose. There is a trickle of black blood, but the light is poor, and he doesn't notice the color. He nods.

MARK

I didn't know I could do that!

FAYE

I know. I'm impressed.

Faye smiles, and then leads him away.

FAYE (CONT'D)  
Argent's given you sequences -  
muscle-memory - it needs practice.

MARK  
No need for you to practice, was  
there?

Faye's eyes suddenly blaze, and Avaline speaks through her.

AVALINE (O.S.)  
That's because I'm a Warship!

Mark reels back in alarm.

Faye stops, and immediately regains control of her voice.

FAYE  
Oh fuck!

AVALINE (O.S.)  
Twenty Two?

Faye looks at Mark apologetically, then turns away.

FAYE (V.O.)  
It's Faye! Faye, remember? - And  
don't you ever do that again!

AVALINE (O.S.)  
Don't prime into my energy grid  
then.

Mark reacts with surprise. Faye realizes he can hear them.

FAYE  
What do you want?

AVALINE (O.S.)  
An incident. You're needed -

FAYE  
Well I'm busy. I've found an  
Enhancer. There may be more -

AVALINE (O.S.)  
Blade has been informed. Her  
Unicorn has been released. She'll  
bring you to Somberlin.

FAYE  
Hey - just a minute -

Avaline drifts out. Faye looks exasperated.

MARK  
Was that Avaline?

ARGENT (O.S.)  
Faye! I have to lift you  
immediately.

Faye groans, throws her lift disc down, and pushes Mark on.

MARK  
What is it?

FAYE  
I don't know. I'm wanted back.  
Sounds like an emergency.

A beam of light reaches down, and pulls them both away.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Argent is reclining, calmly manipulating multiple units,  
which scroll in towards her. Displays drop from the ceiling.

ARGENT  
Avaline demands your return.  
Blade's asked me to take you back.

Mark watches with consternation as the view of his home  
recedes. In a few seconds, even Earth's sun is a dot.

Seeing this, Mark staggers to the sofa, and sits down  
heavily. He takes a few deep breaths.

Argent rises, and looks across to Faye. Neither of them are  
able to comprehend his discomfort. They ignore it.

ARGENT (CONT'D)  
So, you drew a bit of power?

FAYE  
It didn't work out too well.

Mark can't believe they are taking the departure so calmly.

MARK  
Hey! What about my Uncle?

ARGENT  
George wasn't my only concern you  
know. Other seeds to sow. But I  
guarantee - he's fine.

MARK

You sure of that?

Argent treats this with contempt, and turns to Faye again.

ARGENT

Two days to the Ig point. Another four to the rendezvous. We're going to Avaline. Better get him ready.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - INNER AREA - NIGHT

A martial arts exercise. Faye and Mark are circling each other, in an open space. Both are wearing body-suits.

MARK

I'm fed up with this.

FAYE

Get better, or anyone who can fight will subdue you.

MARK

I'll never be as good as you.

FAYE

That's not the point.

Faye attacks Mark - striking high right, then low left. Mark blocks her once, but gets hit.

MARK

Ow! Dammit! That really hurt!

FAYE

No it didn't! Fine, I'll divert - defend instinctively. Go! What ships do we have?

Faye advances and thrusts. Mark turns, or steps aside.

MARK

Acquisition ships. General purpose - Mining. Some are fast high tech -

Mark indicates around, at the ship they are on.

FAYE

Go on -

MARK

Freighters - Ten, Twenty, Thirty-Teraton - they carry the anzanite!

FAYE  
What's that?

MARK  
Power source - construction  
material. Used to fuel or build.

FAYE  
Yes. Essential. Ships! Continue!

Faye attacks. Mark tries to defend.

MARK  
Fast Capital ships are Cruisers.  
Other Capital ships are weapons  
platforms - Rollers, Star-Rollers,  
and - ow!

Faye hits Mark hard across the shoulder.

FAYE  
What?

MARK  
Thunder-Rollers.

Faye stops.

FAYE  
That's not logged in your  
translations.

MARK  
My own interpretation. It suits.

FAYE  
Thunder-Roller? It suits Avaline  
alright.

Mark smiles. Faye launches herself at him again.

Mark deflects her with a quick move, which puts her off  
balance. She reels away from him.

Both look surprised. Faye smiles with appreciation.

FAYE (CONT'D)  
That's more like it.

Argent arrives and interrupts them.

ARGENT

It's all in there. Takes time to unlock. Come. Here's something he mustn't miss.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Argent takes a look around. She shows Mark a distinctive icon on a volume display, then opens a viewing screen.

They are heading towards three huge inward-pointing spiky constructions. Semi-circular elements link these spikes into a ring. The center is so dark it blocks out the stars behind.

ARGENT

Ig mode - secondaries on encounter.

FAYE

Thunder-Rollers and Cruisers create their own exit portals. Everything else -

MARK

Hey - no one's at the controls!  
What? This is? - Woh!

There is a sudden acceleration towards the dark centre.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - IG POINT - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent is sucked down into the Intergalactic transfer gate, and emerges into a mirror area in a different galaxy.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

There is much vibration. Units scroll out towards Argent. She makes adjustments and the turbulence quickly settles down.

ARGENT

We're through. Somberlin. Entry's dangerous. These portals are set - every ship has to jump in on them. Looks clear - maintaining defense.

Argent peers ahead. She becomes aware of Mark watching to see what she will do. Units continue to scroll out. She laughs.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

Precision manipulators! I'm a Factor, Mark - not a pilot.

FAYE  
Very close linked. Unlike me and  
Avaline.

MARK  
(To Argent)  
Bloody hell - you're the spaceship?

Argent sends him a knowing smile. Mark is stunned.

ARGENT  
We've gone Ig. Your first  
Intergalactic jump.

MARK  
I feel sick.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Time advances. Unicorn Argent heads towards a star cluster.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - INNER AREA - NIGHT

Faye and Mark are seated. Mark is viewing an entertainment  
tablet, and eating a hamburger. There is a drink beside him.

MARK  
Argent's a good cook!

FAYE  
Sustenance replication.

Mark looks in her direction. She appears tense. He puts the  
tablet aside, and offers her a bite of the burger.

MARK  
You're getting more sullen the  
nearer we get.

Faye looks across. She shakes her head, and looks away.

MARK (CONT'D)  
Argent's warned me to hang back.  
Says there are tensions?

FAYE  
Argent should keep her mouth shut.  
She doesn't know everything - and  
nor does Cruiser Blade either.

Mark looks surprised. He sits back, and retrieves his tablet.

Faye sighs, and shakes her head again.

FAYE (CONT'D)

They don't like me. Avaline. My sisters - well, most of them. My favorite was killed.

MARK

Why?

FAYE

Her name was Lena. Why was she killed, or why don't they like me?

MARK

Both.

Faye moves in closer.

FAYE

Avaline near crippled a Draka Star Roller, but the ship recovered. Came back stronger - malicious.

MARK

You saying Lena was murdered?

FAYE

In revenge for battle damage.

MARK

Was she responsible for it?

FAYE

Course not! It was retaliation - hunted down by Banshee's Factors.

MARK

Banshee?

FAYE

The ship Avaline damaged. Lena's killing was utterly vindictive.

MARK

Despicable.

FAYE

We were close - both full prime - and that's the answer to your other question. Avaline wanted elites, so she gave us outright independence.

MARK

What's wrong with that?

FAYE

Of six, two reached maturity. With Lena gone, I'm the only one who can draw power. Unconstrained. I even make my own liaisons -

Faye and Mark have moved intimately close. Mark looks hopeful. Faye realizes, looks embarrassed, and draws back.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Avaline regrets it now. My other sisters resent it -

MARK

Wish I could draw on some family power. My parents died on a boat trip. Went away for the weekend. Never came back. My aunt died soon after. My uncle turned to drink -

Mark's voice catches. Faye is aware, but can't deal with his emotion. She proceeds with her own concerns.

FAYE

Lena never provoked. Never drew energy. I've tried to be like her - they still don't want me around.

MARK

At least you have people who don't want you around.

FAYE

At least you don't have people who don't want you around!

Faye and Mark look at each other, both irritated. They realize, and smile self-consciously.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

From the control area, Argent looks back into the ship.

ARGENT

Hey! Avaline's in view.

Faye and Mark come through. They look at the screens ahead.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

She's twelve thousand years away.

Mark observes a massive ship. It looks like a huge shark.

MARK

Some magnification. Woh! That's Avaline?

ARGENT

You're looking at a Thirty T-Ton freighter. That's Avaline - there.

Argent points towards a streamlined element, which then rises independently, less than a quarter of the freighter's length.

MARK

Oh. She's - small!

Faye has the beginning of a smile. This stops abruptly. She looks very annoyed - Mark discerns immediately.

MARK (CONT'D)

Okay, I get it! Irrelevant. She's still dangerous.

This infuriates Faye further. Argent tries not to laugh.

FAYE

Avaline isn't small.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent approaches Avaline. There is a low THUNDER.

Unicorn Argent docks. She is dwarfed by the Thunder-Roller.

INT. AVALINE - ACQUISITION SHIP BAY - NIGHT

Faye and Mark step out from Unicorn Argent, onto a wide platform. Mark is awe-struck by the alien vista.

Factor JAYN moves to greet them. She is slim, mid-forties.

JAYN

Welcome home Faye. Welcome aboard Mark.

FAYE

This is Jayn. One of my sisters. She's unusual. She's reasonable.

Jayn and Faye smile warmly. Jayn directs them into the ship.

Factor AVA soon joins them, and walks alongside.

Compared to Jayne, Ava is an altogether harder, older and more dangerous looking woman. Faye sends her a frown.

JAYN

You won't be with us very long, I'm afraid. We have a situation. He's not going to be of much use.

MARK

I'm one of Avaline's Enhancers -

AVA

Faye says you're worth considering -

FAYE

Back off, Ava! I made a choice -

AVA

Blade's involvement in this hasn't been overlooked.

FAYE

Blade said we took a big drain. Doesn't look much like it?

AVA

An Eb of thirty. Replenished at Starbase Emerald. We're back in shape. By the way - you look weird.

Mark keeps his head down. Ava strides on ahead.

Mark now looks questioningly across to Faye.

FAYE

Ava - Avaline's first. Not so reasonable.

MARK

What's an Eb?

INT. AVALINE - STRATEGY ZONE - NIGHT

The four reach an area where a display shows star systems.

Some Factors are directly linked to units. Others attend to multiple scroll-controls. They all smile warmly at Faye as she arrives, then resume their operations. Mark notices this.

Jayn points to the centre of the display, which shows two green flag-lights, encircled by two translucent orbs.

JAYN

(To Mark)

Avaline - and Thirty Freighter Tor.  
The outer sphere's glider range. We  
strike everything here.

MARK

Everything?

JAYN

It's a dimension wave.

She sounds irritated, and glances across at Faye.

FAYE

He's still figuring things out.

AVA

Arena Energy Bleed. Capital ship  
tech. Acquisitions, and Factors  
like Faye have the weapons you  
understand.

Faye sends Ava an angry look, then pulls Mark aside, and  
gestures towards the translucent orbs.

FAYE

Ignore her. Check your thoughts.  
Glider's a medium ship weapon. We  
strike multiple, selected targets -

MARK

A hit drains power. Eb - Energy  
Bleed - it's there. What targets?

JAYN

None in our current encounter  
range.

FAYE

What are we doing here?

AVA

Escorting Tor to the Arion Ig  
point. A Ten-Teraton, heading for  
Heliodor, was badly drained, but  
got into Emerald.

Icons light up as Ava speaks, and points to places on the  
display. Mark watches.

MARK

I can't see the Ten?

AVA

That's because she's docked.

MARK

Avaline's moving out of range.

AVA

You're starting to keep up.

(To Faye)

Realized where this is heading?  
Argent's being re-armed and  
provisioned.

FAYE

Argent? You want me to operate from  
Blade's Acquisition ship? I see.  
Any support from Avaline this time?

AVA

If she could be in two places at  
once, she wouldn't need you, would  
she?

Ava stalks out. Faye and Mark watch after her.

FAYE

Why is she always like that?

JAYN

She's most closely linked. When you  
come back, it reminds us of Lena.

Faye is upset by this. She grabs Mark, and hauls him away.

FAYE

I'll try not to come back so often  
then!

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent launches from Avaline, and heads towards a  
distant star cluster.

AVALINE (O.S.)

I can't leave a Thirty to defend a  
Ten. The Ten's called Rhy-Ar. She's  
being stalked, and the Draka have  
reinforcements on the way.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Faye, Mark and Argent are listening to Avaline, and looking incredulously from one to the other.

AVALINE (O.S.)

She'll have to head out soon. Won't be easy, but get her to Heliodor. Her anzanite's badly needed.

FAYE

Not easy? That's an understatement.

AVALINE (O.S.)

She took a big Eb. Rhy-Ar's not herself at the moment. You might find her a bit - irrational.

Avaline's voice fades out.

ARGENT

So not only is she trapped - she's neurotic as well.

MARK

Well don't look at me. I studied tactics - not how to rescue crazy space freighters!

ARGENT

Course set for Emerald. You'll have to be really careful. Roller Cray lost two Factors on this operation.

FAYE

I know. I checked.

MARK

Whoa! Two killed already? Why are we even trying this?

FAYE

I thought that would've been obvious. And she's distressed - not crazy!

Faye looks angry. Argent looks sympathetic.

Mark is discomfited by both reactions.

MARK

What the hell am I doing here?

He paces in an agitated manner.

MARK (CONT'D)

Alright then - do we have a plan?

ARGENT

It's an Alantheon Starbase. Rhy-Ar has a chance if she moves out undetected. So Faye prevents enemy Factors from relaying information.

MARK

Bang them on the head?

FAYE

Direct methods work.

MARK

Not always.

FAYE

That's why we find Enhancers.

Mark sighs. He paces away again, then suddenly turns back.

MARK

Do Draka recognize Capital ships and freighters the way we do?

ARGENT

Yes. All significants flag straight to display. They get identified when they fire, or close in.

MARK

What about a craft like you?

ARGENT

Acquisitions? We're irrelevant - a dot, even when we do get close.

MARK

Freighter speeds are comparable to Capital ship right?

Faye sighs with exasperation. Argent bumps against Faye's shoulder, to stop her complaint.

ARGENT

Setting Cruisers aside, they're broadly matched. I'm very fast too.

Mark frowns, and takes a few more paces around.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

Before you ask - I don't have glider. Some Arena Energy Bleed but nothing remotely powerful enough to trouble a Draka Star-Roller.

MARK

Alright - I have an idea.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - STARBASE EMERALD - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent is heading towards Starbase EMERALD, which has the appearance of a huge colony of coral.

Ships docked along its tentacles include Freighter RHY-AR.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Argent, Faye and Mark are observing their approach.

MARK

Why do we have to dock?

ARGENT

Because Starbase's are ridiculously defensive, and prohibit lifts.

A panel scrolls across, and Argent selects the landing site. The view of the Starbase changes slightly.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

Communication's in the news. Area shrouds, blocking local sends.

FAYE

Enemy Factors at work. Stay onboard, so I can reach you.

MARK

I'm coming with you Faye.

FAYE

No. You'd be a hinderance.

MARK

I need to get to Rhy-Ar.

ARGENT

She's imposed security lock-down. He'll have to meet with one of her Factors, and that won't happen unless you take him in.

Mark smiles. Faye gives Argent an annoyed look.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - STARBASE EMERALD - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent comes in to dock at Starbase Emerald.

INT. STARBASE EMERALD - PIAZZA - DAY

Faye and Mark are walking around a beautiful green piazza. A vibrant area of many elements - both technological and bio.

The piazza is busy, crowded with life forms. Some are exotic. Faye and Mark smile at each other.

FAYE

Gravity forty per cent greater than Earth. Feel alright? We've been getting you acclimatized.

Mark gives a nod. He is looking around with great interest.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Rhy-Ar's expecting us. Should have a suitable Factor ready.

Faye leads him into a side-street, and they go through a vine-clad door, illuminated by a colorful arch.

INT. STARBASE EMERALD - DRUG-BAR - DAY

The pair enter what appears to be a tropical glasshouse. Subtle, sombre MUSIC. Steam rises from plants and liquids. There are many life forms here, some partially camouflaged.

They whisper, as they weave towards a peripheral figure.

FAYE

That's Rhy-Ar's second. Careful now. There are spies about.

MARK

As if I wasn't nervous enough.

Rhy-Ar's second Factor JANELLIAN is sitting with her back to them, a cone-shaped container in hand. She is by ANEMONE, who looks like a sea plant, semi-submerged in a fountain pond.

FAYE

I'm -

JANELLIAN

- I know who you are. I'm  
Janellian. And that's what you will  
call me. Not 'of Rhy-Ar', not  
second Factor either, understand?

Janellian turns around. A mature woman of about forty -  
drugged, fractious. She gives them a hard, appraising look.

Mark is intimidated. Even Faye looks disconcerted.

Janellian lowers her voice.

JANELLIAN (CONT'D)

There's a Draka Star-Roller out  
there, waiting to Eb me to  
fragments - and your Avaline's left  
me stranded!

FAYE

Sounds familiar.

MARK

She left Faye stranded too!

JANELLIAN

What the hell is this?

FAYE

Our new Enhancer. He's going to get  
you to Heliodor.

Janellian looks at Mark with derision. She turns aside.

JANELLIAN

Hey! I need another Renweed.

A pair of tendrils extend from Anemone. One takes Janellian's  
cone. The other drops a spongy substance into her hand.

Mark looks across at Faye, who shrugs and shakes her head.

MARK

Look, I know you might think -

JANELLIAN

I'll have another drink as well.

Another tendril extends, and proffers a new cone.

Mark reacts to this. He scowls, and slaps it away.

MARK

Right across the universe, and it's the same story? I'm fed up with this! You want to survive Janellian? You want Rhy-Ar to survive? Then get me onboard.

Anemone's tendrils snake about in an aggravated manner.

Mark's reaction surprises Faye. Janellian is utterly shocked.

JANELLIAN

I can't - can't! I'm being watched!

MARK

I'm counting on you being watched.

Janellian, only momentarily defensive, switches straight back to abrasive. She turns from Mark with disdain.

JANELLIAN

He's an idiot - idiot! They slaughtered those two sent by Cray.

FAYE

Cray sent unsuitable Factors.

JANELLIAN

Well the Drakas didn't! They're only tracking me, but you try get onboard Rhy-Ar, and they will act.

Anemone chooses this moment to retaliate, and thwacks Mark with a tendril.

Mark is more surprised than hurt, but Faye snatches hold of the tendril, and squeezes. Anemone shudders and froths.

Janellian turns back to Mark, and speaks confidentially.

JANELLIAN (CONT'D)

She's renowned. I'm not a combat Factor, you know. She's Faye of Avaline. I'm not like her. No - no!

MARK

Nor am I, but we want them to know she's here. Part of the plan.

FAYE

Janellian. The Drakas are really going to know I'm here!

Faye emphasizes the word really. She releases Anemone.

Anemone shrinks down into her pond. Janellian stands up.

JANELLIAN  
Alright Miss Deadly. Let's go.

INT. STARBASE EMERALD - PIAZZA - DAY

Faye, Mark and Janellian make their way across the busy piazza, keeping watch for any who appear to be following.

FAYE  
Recognize anyone?

JANELLIAN  
They have sophisticated shrouding.  
No-one's been able to find them.

They reach a side street.

JANELLIAN (CONT'D)  
The main way's well covered. Might  
be best to go down here. It's still  
dangerous. They'll block our sends.

MARK  
So you could have found them by -

JANELLIAN  
Yes I could, but I'm not suicidal!  
This leads to the Dock-line. Hope  
you're as good as they say Faye.

The three enter the side street.

A second later, FUUG and EDAX, two human-like bipeds, break from separate nearby groups, and head for the side street.

INT. STARBASE EMERALD - SIDE-STREET - DAY

Faye, Mark and Janellian are walking briskly.

The side street has narrowed into a tubular passage. Faye looks back, and sees Fuug and Edax running towards them.

FAYE  
Here we go. Not too fast. We can't  
send. There may be others ahead.

At the narrowest point, their pursuers extend their arms, and hurl a barrage of dark particles towards them.

Faye throws up her shield and the particles explode into it, some rebounding into the floor, sides and ceiling.

Fuug and Edax are forced back. The three move swiftly on.

INT. STARBASE EMERALD - DOCK-LINE AREA - DAY

Faye, Mark and Janellian emerge into a large open area, full of bullet-shaped travel PODS.

Fuug and Edax are still in pursuit, now a distance behind.

Faye turns and throws small items back into the side-street.

Tiny units ricochet down, and the street fills with smoke.

JANELLIAN  
Mist and marker tags?

FAYE  
I'll explain later. Come on.

Janellian moves up to the nearest pod, and bangs on the side.

She ushers Faye and Mark inside as soon as it starts to open.

JANELLIAN  
Line fifty. Level three. Get going!

A mechanical arm reaches down, and attaches the pod onto a hard wire about twenty feet overhead.

The pod starts to move. The wire takes it alongside a ledge at the end of the Departure Zone.

ARKO, a third human-like biped, much bigger than Fuug and Edax, races from the shadows of the ledge - and leaps across.

INT. STARBASE EMERALD - DOCK-LINE POD - DAY

Janellian watches the departure zone recede, and turns to the other two with a smile.

JANELLIAN  
Good - good. We're away. Contacting  
Factor one. Ah! I still can't send.

There is a THUMP. A serrated lance smashes down through the ceiling, and pierces Janellian's right shoulder.

The lance draws back up, ripping flesh apart.

Black blood HISSES out from a horrendous wound.

Janellian screams. Mark shouts in alarm.

Faye sends her shield up against the pod's ceiling.

FAYE

Get back - heads down.

Mark and Janellian draw back, as Faye throws a unit of her tattoo dust, and extends her shield behind it.

A huge BANG. The entire far end of the pod is blasted away.

Faye drops the shield, leaps to the jagged edge of the opening, and uses broken spars to haul herself around.

INT. STARBASE EMERALD - POD ROOF - DAY

Arko punches Faye hard as she lands on the upper surface.

Faye staggers at the edge, but curls up, and rolls across the roof. She barely manages to stay onboard.

The pod is now traveling at speed through deep chasms within the Starbase structure.

Faye tries to get up, but Arko spins, and kicks her.

Faye goes back down, rolls aside, and throws her lift disc - but it is deflected far into the distance by Arko's shields.

Arko smiles, and backs off. His eyes turn dark. A sibilant female voice speaks through him.

BANSHEE (O.S.)

Just like your sister.

Arko extends his arm, and the lance telescopes forth.

Faye leaps up. A flash pulses in every direction. This is similar to her release against Wild's gang, but stronger.

A deep WHOMP. Arko is hit hard, and staggers back. He takes a deep breath.

FAYE

Now you know what you're up  
against.

Faye brings her own shield up.

Arko recovers quickly. He looks confident.

BANSHEE (O.S.)  
That isn't going to work.

Arko moves in, slashes with the lance, and sweeps Faye's legs from under her.

Faye lands heavily. She looks frightened, and beaten.

BANSHEE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Draw what you will. I'll absorb it.

Arko stabs down at her.

Faye raises her hand. Her lift disc - on it's return trajectory - severs Arko's lance. She rolls to a crouch.

Arko discards the broken lance, advances, and grabs for her.

Faye leaps, and tries to smash his arm away with her left hand, but gets caught. Arko gives a big grin.

Faye rolls in, and delivers a right-hand punch to his face.

Arko is stunned, but there is no immediate sign of this.

Faye is trapped, and desperate. She hits repeatedly with her free right hand.

Arko's grin remains in place, but his arms fall to his side.

Faye now steps free, and delivers three mighty punches.

Arko's legs give way.

He drops to the roof of the pod, and slips over the side.

The pod is now very far up. Arko's body goes spinning out of sight. Faye snarls ferociously.

AVALINE (O.S.)  
I felt that!

FAYE  
So I let him kill me? If Lena'd  
done that, she'd still be here!

Faye looks bitterly out to space, as the pod surges on.

INT. STARBASE EMERALD - DOCK-LINE POD - DAY

Faye swings back down into the main body of the pod.

Mark looks up. He is pale, traumatized.

He is doing his best to support Janellian.

Janellian is groaning. Her appearance has altered. Broader forehead - enlarged eyes - shrunken nose.

MARK

She's - it's bad -

The limb on Janellian's left has divided into two, with tentacled ends in place of a hand. These are clutching at a gaping wound on the right, where her other limbs should be.

MARK (CONT'D)

Her arms. They came right off!

Mark is trying to staunch a flow of black blood, but it is bubbling through, and streaming out of the damaged pod.

Faye moves up, and pushes him back.

FAYE

Not as bad as you think. Her adaptation's failing, that's all. We can recover the limbs. Help me.

Faye pulls a slim healing unit from a pocket.

She points it at the right shoulder, then pulls Janellian's supporting limbs away.

The unit emits a wafer thin stream of particles, which begin to cover the wound.

Janellian screams, and struggles, and her blood splatters the pair. With Mark's help, Faye pins her in place.

A few seconds later, it is done. Janellian sighs.

JANELLIAN

I can send. You got the bastard.

FAYE

Of course.

JANELLIAN

That thing hunting Rhy-Ar. No ordinary Star-Roller. Banshee - she's been seriously enhanced.

FAYE

Banshee? She killed my sister.

JANELLIAN

Freighters call her the screaming ghost. We hate her.

FAYE

We have that in common. She thought Rhy-Ar had been left undefended.

JANELLIAN

Sorry about earlier, Faye. We've been let down many times.

Janellian looks over at Mark.

JANELLIAN (CONT'D)

He was scared - didn't panic. You found a good - good Enhancer.

FAYE

I think so. We'll fix you, soon as we get to Argent.

Faye collects the severed limbs from the floor, and smiles.

She hands the limbs to Mark, who looks shocked - and then crestfallen, as Janellian's head lolls to one side.

MARK

Ohh. She's gone.

A pause. Faye moves Janellian's head back up.

FAYE

No. Her functions are suspended.

INT. STARBASE EMERALD - FREIGHTER DOCK - DAY

The damaged pod sweeps down into the freighter dock.

Factor JANRIO is waiting for them.

She looks exactly as Janellian did before her injury, and has much the same attitude.

JANRIO

I'm Janrio - Rhy-Ar's first. What a mess! Give her here. What? She's my twin! Move - stop staring!

Faye releases hold. Janrio takes Janellian, and hauls her over her shoulder. She heads for a gigantic ship at the dock.

JANRIO (CONT'D)  
Quickly. This will be investigated.

Faye and Mark rush up after her - and an opening appears. Mark is still carrying Janellian's limbs.

INT. FREIGHTER RHY-AR - MAIN RECEPTION - DAY

The party arrive in a large reception area. Janrio hands Janellian to Factor RHY-AR TEN, a four armed biped.

Mark offers Janellian's limbs, which are taken as well.

JANRIO  
Take her to -

FAYE  
Lift area. We're sending her to Argent. Better repair facilities.

JANRIO  
Lifts are prohibited. We'd have to undock and depart - but we can't. You didn't neutralize the threats.

FAYE  
Deliberate. Meet Mark, our new Enhancer.

Mark smiles self-consciously. Janrio regards him in a manner as severe and unimpressed as Janellian had initially been.

EXT. STARBASE EMERALD - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent detaches, and moves away from Emerald.

Ten Teraton Freighter Rhy-Ar detaches, and also moves away.

INT. FREIGHTER RHY-AR - CONTROL - NIGHT

Faye, Mark and Janrio observe their departure in Rhy-Ar's control area. Tall screens show Emerald receding from view.

Monitor units scroll in. Janrio takes a brief look about.

JANRIO  
Clear - and Janellian's been lifted across to Argent. So where now?

MARK

Look as if you're going to  
accelerate, but stay close in.

FAYE

He means don't enter detection.

JANRIO

We'll vector close behind the star.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - STARBASE EMERALD - NIGHT

Rhy-Ar orbits the local sun, and slows on the far side.

Unicorn Argent comes in towards Rhy-Ar, also on the far side  
from Emerald. She looks minute by comparison.

ARGENT (O.S.)

I have the 'tow lines' ready, Mark.

INT. FREIGHTER RHY-AR - CONTROL - NIGHT

Mark is pacing around, looking nervous. He turns to Janrio.

MARK

Alright. Argent's going to simulate  
your flag, but she'll need anzanite  
containers to make it plausible.

Janrio looks outraged. Faye swiftly interjects.

FAYE

You'll have to release ten percent.

JANRIO

Fifteen. Anything less and the flag  
could be relegated to Acquisition.

MARK

Fifteen then. Argent is going to  
take them towards Heliodor -

JANRIO

So they'll destroy the containers,  
thinking they've got Rhy-Ar?

MARK

Argent gets clear. That's the first  
part. Better to lose fifteen  
percent than a hundred.

JANRIO

We've tried decoys! They send ships  
for the debris - and realize.

MARK

Yes - well - the second part  
requires you to do something  
extraordinary.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent is passing by a star field. Bands of light  
form a cone, which reaches back to gigantic containers.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Argent is on her sofa, concentrating - observing a volume  
display, and many screens. Controls scroll towards her.

A new screen drops down. There is a small red dot in the  
centre, pulsing gently.

Argent rises, and calls through to the rear compartment.

ARGENT

Check this. I think it's her.

Janellian strides into the control area. She has been  
restored to her original appearance.

Janellian takes one look at the new screen, and looks  
anxious. Argent scrolls a unit towards her.

JANELLIAN

Heliodor - Heliodor! Urgent! Will  
require med-repair upon docking.  
You're closer than our escort.

STARBASE HELIODOR (O.S.)

Acknowledged. Now keep quiet and  
get your anzanite down here!

Argent hits a control - Janellian's unit scrolls back in.

ARGENT

Fooled the Starbase. A tight send -

JANELLIAN

Leaked from an injured Factor. Did  
it convince?

Argent checks and adjusts her display. A red flag appears.

ARGENT

There's a Star-Roller emerging from  
the Skar passage.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

The Draka Star-Roller Banshee, comes MOANING through an  
arrangement of stars.

Banshee slows. An intense glow appears on her scorpion-tail.

Glow expansion. An Energy wave pulses, with a BOOM - ROAR.

INT. FREIGHTER RHY-AR - CONTROL - NIGHT

Faye, Mark and Janrio are watching a volume display.

On the display, an orb of light ripples out from a red flag  
in a nearby star-field - and a green flag disappears.

JANRIO

Shit! Argent -

FAYE

Or our decoy. Attack signature -  
it's Star-Roller Banshee.

MARK

Right. Accelerate! Get after her!

JANRIO

I'm a freighter.

MARK

She doesn't know that.

JANRIO

Did Avaline tell you I was mad?

FAYE

She said you were irrational.  
Argent said you were neurotic.

JANRIO

What?

MARK

I think you're angry. Work it out  
later - but get going!

Mark looks fiercely at Janrio. Her eyes and voice change.

RHY-AR (O.S.)  
I like you, Mark Lorollon.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - STARBASE AREA - NIGHT

Rhy-Ar turns, and with the Starbase local sun blazing behind, makes a heavy RUMBLE, as she heads into space.

INT. FREIGHTER RHY-AR - CONTROL - NIGHT

The volume display view telescopes in. Banshee is now a ship-icon. Warning scrolls reveal her potential.

Faye and Janrio glance at each other - both clearly anxious.

Mark notices small red lights moving towards her.

MARK  
What are those?

JANRIO  
Acquisition ships. She's recalling.  
We're not hidden any more. Turn  
back - we can still get away.

MARK  
Why recall if she knows who we are?

FAYE  
We recognized her strike signature -  
She's not identified us yet -

MARK  
Turn now, and she won't need to!  
Keep straight at her -

FAYE  
Go in like a Capital, readying  
maximum energy bleed.

JANRIO  
You're crazy. Both of you!

The display shows Banshee continuing to approach. The red dots ahead of her begin to disappear.

JANRIO (CONT'D)  
She's almost in range.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Banshee collects her final Acquisition ship, then turns away. Her engines glow, and WHINE, as she accelerates.

INT. FREIGHTER RHY-AR - CONTROL - NIGHT

There is a change on the display. Faye is first to notice.

FAYE  
She's turned!

MARK  
Speed up! Give chase!

JANRIO  
Give chase?

FAYE  
Do it! She's falling for it.

Faye and Janrio look at each other in realization.

The trio begin CHEERING. Janrio slaps Mark on the shoulder. Faye gives him a hug.

JANRIO  
Rhy-Ar's become a Thunder-Roller!

FAYE  
Well done Mark.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Banshee retreats towards a distant star-field.

Freighter Rhy-Ar veers away, towards a small side-cluster.

INT. FREIGHTER RHY-AR - INNER AREA - NIGHT

Time has passed. Faye and Mark wear different clothing.

They are in a dimly lit lounge area. Mark is seated, studying an electronic tablet. He looks relaxed and well.

Faye glances over a couple of times, before seating herself beside him, a little closer than necessary.

FAYE

Rhy-Ar's Acquisition ships are reclaiming the ditched anzanite.

MARK

That's good.

FAYE

Banshee only landed one hit. How did you know she'd run?

MARK

She thought it was enough. The flag had gone. Banshee's Factors knew Rhy-Ar hadn't fully replenished, and your presence meant she anticipated retaliation. Avaline.

Faye ponders this.

MARK (CONT'D)

My friend Dizzy gave me a book. An English Sea-Captain used a similar tactic over a hundred years ago.

Faye looks across at Mark, and then away.

MARK (CONT'D)

Still nothing from Argent?

Faye shakes her head.

They remain close. Their body language indicates a desire to get closer, but there is tension between them as well.

They stay silent for a while, before Mark speaks quietly.

MARK (CONT'D)

Can I ask about Janellian? Four arms - black blood - her head. Is that what you really look like?

FAYE

Would it matter?

Mark can't answer. Faye waits, then continues.

FAYE (CONT'D)

She's six limb freighter. I'm four limb combat. We all have black blood. Our appearance depends on the adaptation.

MARK

Guess I don't really care. Well, I do, but I want you to know -

AVALINE (O.S.)

Twenty-Two - Faye?

FAYE

Avaline. Where are you?

Mark sighs. Faye notices, and smiles at him.

AVALINE (O.S.)

Still with the Thirty. I've had word from Rhy-Ar. Well done. Stay with her to Heliodor. Also. You might be right about Lena.

FAYE

You used my name.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - STARBASE HELIODOR - NIGHT

Freighter Rhy-Ar approaches Starbase Heliodor. This also looks like a coral colony, but a different shape to Emerald.

INT. FREIGHTER RHY-AR - CONTROL - NIGHT

Faye, Mark and Janrio are looking out at Heliodor, and note an approaching Acquisition ship.

Janellian strides through into the control area.

JANRIO

Well - well! Welcome home!

Janrio goes to greet her twin. They smile and touch arms.

Mark laughs and whoops. He goes across to greet Janellian.

JANELLIAN

Just been lifted - lifted across.

MARK

You're all back together! Where've you come from?

ARGENT (O.S.)

Told you I was fast.

Faye and Mark smile broadly.

FAYE  
Argent - you horror!

ARGENT (O.S.)  
Compliments later, Faye. Get on  
your lift. We need to speak.

Mark and Faye make for the lift area, but turn to say  
goodbye. Janrio and Janellian are standing side by side.

MARK  
You look after yourselves.

JANELLIAN  
Thank you Mark. Faye.

JANRIO  
Rhy-Ar is grateful. Won't forget.

Faye and Mark smile brightly, then exit the control area.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent moves away from Freighter Rhy-Ar.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Argent rises from her sofa, as Faye and Mark come through.

Mark goes across, and gives her a hug.

MARK  
We thought we'd lost you!

FAYE  
What happened?

ARGENT  
I detached soon as Banshee targeted  
the anzanite. Headed back to  
Emerald. The Factors you left there  
were still a threat to other ships.

MARK  
The two who followed us from the  
bar to the dock-line?

FAYE  
I hit them with markers.

ARGENT

They got away. It turned out there were two others you didn't tag. All already gone. En-route to Heliador, I intercepted some of their sends.

FAYE

By sheer chance?

ARGENT

I was being careful. Banshee was one of the ambush ships. After she lost Avaline, she tracked you.

FAYE

In Waydor?

ARGENT

Mark would call it 'Milky Way'. They located his planet. That's where they're heading.

MARK

What? Banshee's Factors have gone to Earth? Why?

ARGENT

Free thinking organic entities. Billions of them. Blade's asked me to check. She doubts Avaline would sanction your involvement though.

FAYE

Who cares what Avaline thinks?

MARK

She said get Rhy-Ar to Heliador - and we have done.

ARGENT

It's what I thought you'd say. Good. I'm fast enough to get there ahead of them, but with only three of us, we'll have to be creative.

EXT. DEEP SPACE. IG POINT - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent speeds through the Ig transfer point.

In the galaxy beyond, she heads for a distant spar of stars.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Faye and Argent are speaking quietly on the sofa.

ARGENT

The Drakas have a reliable source of Bio-Enhancer, at a convenient location. When Banshee's Factors report, she'll destroy the species, if only to deny access.

FAYE

Shit! That figures -

ARGENT

Blade's in Tayreen - but on her way. She wants us to stall -

FAYE

I got lucky on Emerald. This is a neutral location, but even if it weren't - four combat Factors, and only two of them tagged?

ARGENT

Mark's repair required accelerated adaptation. Speed, weight gain - it's unobtrusive, but substantial.

FAYE

He's not suited for combat.

ARGENT

You might be surprised. We should find local support as well. I sowed a few seeds. Which brings us to that other matter -

Faye frowns. She looks troubled.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

He's going to find out anyway.

Mark enters the area. He has heard this.

MARK

What am I going to find out anyway?

ARGENT

Mark! How long have we been away?

MARK

I don't know. It's been a blur. Three weeks? Maybe four?

FAYE

Update your time slip! Back home,  
five years have passed.

Mark looks dumbfounded. He drops down into a seat.

ARGENT

That wasn't the way to do it.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent speeds towards Earth.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - INNER AREA - NIGHT

Faye and Mark are getting ready to return to Earth. Argent is  
manipulating an adaptation unit.

Faye gains standard nineties clothing. She looks at her new  
apparel with disgust, then gives a resigned shrug.

Mark reacts indifferently to a denim jacket and trousers.

ARGENT

Mark - about George -

MARK

I told you! I don't want to know!

ARGENT

Are you going to be alright?

MARK

Give me some time there. On my own.

FAYE

We have to separate for now.

MARK

And where will you be?

FAYE

Raising support. Meeting command  
factions.

MARK

I don't think you'll get very far.

ARGENT

Here!

Argent throws a tiny disc towards Mark. Mark catches, then inspects the tattoo on the palm of his right hand.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

You get your own now. That one has good shielding. Know how to use it?

Mark throws his lift disc down, steps on as it expands, and brings up the shields. Argent acknowledges.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

Alright. Off you go.

EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY

Mark walks up to Uncle George's computer workshop, but finds the place is boarded up.

He bangs on the door - no response.

Mark steps back, and shouts towards the upper floor windows.

MARK

George? Are you there? George?

DAVE, a passer-by, is strolling down the street. He pauses.

DAVE

Wasting your breath. That place's been derelict last three years.

MARK

I know someone who lived here.

DAVE

The company moved on. Took up in that manor building on Park Street.

MARK

What - the old Park-Line Hotel?

DAVE

Yeah - used to be. It's Gee-Vee Headquarters now. You know it?

Dave indicates down the street. Mark smiles in thanks, and sets off in a hurry.

Mark passes by a woman struggling to pacify a crying toddler, whilst also pushing an infant in a baby-buggy.

He glances across as he goes by, then stops, and stares in surprise. The woman is Emelia.

Emelia would have been too pre-occupied to notice, had he not stopped so suddenly. She looks up indignantly.

MARK

Emelia?

Emelia looks as if she is about to speak. Then she gasps, looks really frightened, and hurries her charges away.

EMELIA

Come on - come on. We're going.

Mark is disconcerted. He tries to talk, but she is soon gone.

Mark moves on to what was once a gothic-style hotel, by the park. A sign over the entrance now reads 'George's Voyage'.

MARK

Gee-Vee? No way!

Mark crosses the street, and enters the building.

INT. G.V. HEADQUARTERS - ATRIUM - DAY

A high-tech company headquarters. The atrium is busy with VISITORS and EMPLOYEES. SECURITY GUARDS are positioned about.

Employees are in uniform, visitors wear executive clothing, in contrast to Mark's denim. A security guard approaches.

SECURITY GUARD

I take it you have business here?  
The reception desks are over there.

Mark acknowledges, and heads in the direction indicated.

He waits awkwardly, until receptionist MANDY glances up from her computer, and looks pointedly at a seat in front of her.

Mark sits down. Mandy continues with her work a while longer.

MANDY

So - what can I do for you?

MARK

I've come to see George Lorollon -

MANDY

Do you have an appointment?

MARK

Ahh, no, not as such, but I think  
he'd like to see me.

MANDY

George Lorollon - head of Gee-Vee - one of the most influential people on the planet. Why do you think he'd want to see some kid who's just walked in off the street?

MARK

Wow! Ah! Oh - he's here then?

Mandy opens a drawer, and passes over a document.

MANDY

Try this. To be honest, I've more chance of dating Robert De Nero.

MARK

He will want to see me. I'm -

MANDY

Come back when you have an appointment.

Mandy turns back to her computer.

MARK

Look, you don't understand -

MANDY

I'm very busy. You better go -

Aware of an incident, Grace (from Mark's school) moves up behind Mark's chair. She is wearing a supervisors uniform.

GRACE

Something the matter Mandy?

MANDY

Some kid demanding to see George Lorollon. I've given him the form, but he's reluctant to leave.

GRACE

Ah, right. Look, I'm sure you've a very good reason -

Grace suddenly stops, as she looks down at the person in the chair, and properly sees Mark's face.

MARK

Hello Grace.

Grace is shocked. She narrows her eyes, looks more carefully - then to Mandy.

GRACE  
Get me Marion.

Mandy pouts, hits a button on a telephone control unit, and passes the phone across to Grace.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
Didn't have to do this a couple of years ago, but since she, you know -

Marks feigns understanding, then the phone is answered.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
Ivy? It's Grace. Where's Marion? Is George free? No. I've someone here he's going to want to see. Course it's urgent! Coming straight up.

Grace hands the phone back, and beckons for Mark to follow.

As Mark rises to go, he speaks aside to Mandy.

MARK  
Good luck with your date.

INT. G.V. HEADQUARTERS - EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

A plush open-plan office area. Windows overlook the city. EXECUTIVES and their STAFF cluster in groups.

MARION is giving instructions to two suited male Executives. She is a stern, but good-looking woman in her early fifties.

Marion dismisses the men. IVY, an officious looking subordinate, stays by her.

An elevator arrives, and Grace leads Mark into the office.

MARION  
Have you any idea who I've just had to cancel? This had better be good -

GRACE  
It's Mark!

Marion frowns. Grace emphasizes the name.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
Mark! He's come back!

Marion suddenly realizes what Grace is saying.

MARION

I know they never found the body,  
but really, let's face it, George's  
nephew died that day -

Marion strides across, and gives Mark a disdainful look.

MARION (CONT'D)

This kid? Eighteen? The real Mark  
would be twenty three by now.

GRACE

I grew up with him. Knew him really  
well. I don't know what's going on  
here, but this is him - it's Click.

MARK

You still call me that?  
(To Marion)  
Who are you?

MARION

You really don't know? Ah! Did I  
forget to introduce myself? I'm the  
V.P Of G.V. Industries. Marion Ing.

MARK

My Aunt Marion died when I was  
nine. You look nothing like her.

Marion is affronted. She instructs Ivy.

MARION

Get a security detail in here now!  
And you - you get back to work!

Grace retreats to the elevators. Ivy collects a cordless  
phone, and presses the buttons with appreciable speed.

GEORGE (O.C.)

My new partner also happens to be  
called Marion.

Mark spins around. George has entered from a side office.

George and Mark stand and look at each other for a moment.

George looks older, but wiser, and healthier. Mark starts to  
smile. George's face suddenly crumples.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Oh my boy!

The two of them stride towards each other, and embrace. They both have tears in their eyes.

Grace also has tears in her eyes. She pauses by the elevator.

Marion sends an angry look in Grace's direction. An elevator arrives. Grace gets in, and departs. George notices.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

This is my nephew, Dear - it really is. This is Mark.

George smiles, releases Mark, and holds him at arms length.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I knew you'd come back! An accident. But they couldn't find the body. Nearly killed me -

MARK

There was nothing I could do -

GEORGE

I got totally blasted! Crashed out for days! Something changed after that. I stopped drinking -

The stairwell door flies open, and three uniformed security GUARDS crash in, led by Dizzy.

MARION

Stand down.

Dizzy looks around, and sees Mark. He looks really shocked.

GEORGE

I found someone who knew.

George walks across to Dizzy, and slaps him on the shoulder.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Dizzy heard of an incident - a gang getting hammered. Zak injured. No one really believed, but the woman - I'd seen her too, in my store.

MARK

Faye held back. Zak got knifed by one of his own. Dizzy - you were going to Uni - what happened?

Dizzy hesitates, and seems conflicted. Then he smiles hugely, goes across, and gives Mark an affectionate bear hug.

DIZZY

Where the hell have you been?

MARK

You wouldn't believe me.

GEORGE

Come! Tell us everything.

Marion is irritated, as George leads them to his office.

ARGENT (O.S.)

Mark! There are combat Factors closing in on your position!

MARK

Oh shit!

GEORGE

What was that? Who said that?

MARK

You heard her too?

The faint THRUMMING of a helicopter begins to get louder.

Mark turns for the elevator. George beckons to the others.

ARGENT (O.S)

Not that way. Mark - I can't lift you yet. That building's too big. Get into the office. I'm coming in.

GEORGE

Who the hell is it?

MARK

George - that's Argent. Trust her!

EXT. EARTH - NORTHERN HEMISPHERE - DAY

Unicorn Argent rolls out of orbit, hits Earth's upper atmosphere, and becomes a fireball.

The heat-glow recedes, as she streaks towards the surface.

Unicorn Argent passes a Boeing 747. Her wake turbulence sets it veering away. She is at least twice it's size.

INT. G.V. HEADQUARTERS - EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

As Mark's party reach the side office door, a helicopter drops into view of the far-side windows.

There is an EXPLOSION, as Fuug and Edax blast in.

Those gathered closest are thrown to the floor.

Shattered glass rips through many others. Mark's hand gets cut by one of the flying shards.

Dizzy ushers Mark, George, Marion and Ivy through the door.

INT. G.V. HEADQUARTERS - SIDE OFFICE - DAY

Dizzy slams the heavy door shut, and engages the locks.

ARGENT (O.S.)  
Mark! Shield the windows!

Mark directs his shield against the wall and windows.

A moment later, another BLAST, as the windows are blown away.

Mark throws the lift disc down, and it expands to full size,

MARK  
Stand on this. Do it now!

Despite obvious shock, George and Dizzy step onto the lift. Marion and Ivy hesitate.

Unicorn Argent descends to a horizontal position opposite, filling the outside view.

Ivy gets onto the lift, but Marion veers aside with a horrified gasp, just as Mark re-sets his shield around it.

The door is smashed part-way down.

Those on the lift disc are swept across to Unicorn Argent, who immediately streaks away.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - INNER AREA - NIGHT

Mark, George, Dizzy and Ivy arrive aboard Unicorn Argent.

GEORGE  
Marion! No!

George tries to rush back towards Marion's last position.  
Mark and Dizzy restrain him.

Ivy moves away, bewildered - as Dizzy helps George to a seat.

Argent walks up. She looks concerned. Mark is angry.

MARK

Those two attacked us in Emerald!  
You said you were faster!

ARGENT

I am - or I would've provided you  
with a shroud! Means Banshee  
planted those sends I intercepted.

Mark motions towards George.

MARK

You changed him!

ARGENT

I opened a new path. He took it! As  
did you. You hurt?

Argent has noticed Mark's hand.

MARK

Glass shards. Nothing.

Mark checks, and looks shocked. He is bleeding black blood.

Argent hands him a small flat unit, identical to the healing  
emitter Faye had used on Janellian.

ARGENT

Sort yourself out. We have worse  
things to worry about.

INT. MILITARY COMMAND UNIT - OFFICE - DAY

Faye is standing in an office, flanked by two SOLDIERS. On  
the walls are maps, charts, and pictures of attack aircraft.

WALTON, a senior uniformed Officer, is studying a blurred  
image of Unicorn Argent on his computer. Faye is irritated.

Argent connects. She and Faye communicate silently.

ARGENT (O.S.)

Banshee's Factors are here already.  
Mark was attacked.

FAYE (V.O.)  
Is he alright?

ARGENT (O.S.)  
Safe. Fortunately it was the two  
you tagged in Emerald. The others  
remain concealed. It was fast. They  
were ready. I had to go down.

FAYE (V.O.)  
You've been causing a commotion?

ARGENT (O.S.)  
I'm back in orbit, hidden - but the  
locals aren't happy. Better abort.

FAYE (V.O.)  
Alright. There'll be casualties -

ARGENT (O.S.)  
No. I've activated a seed. You'll  
get help - unexpected source.

A BLEEP. A message comes through on Walton's computer.

Walton reads it, hits a side-command, then turns to Faye.

WALTON  
You don't just stroll into a  
facility like this. It would've  
been easier to tell the truth. Too  
late now. It's out of my hands.

FAYE  
Good. You haven't listened to a  
word I've said.

A KNOCK. Jasmine (from Mark's school) enters the room, and  
salutes. She is a Captain, and has a special forces insignia.

JASMINE  
Ready Sir.

Walton nods towards Faye.

WALTON  
She's a level seven. Tell your  
people I expect a full report this  
time. Tell them that's an order.

Jasmine gives a contemptuous salute, and escorts Faye out.

EXT. MILITARY COMMAND UNIT - ENCLOSURE - DAY

Faye, Jasmine and three special forces ESCORTS emerge from a featureless office wing into a wide enclosure.

Jasmine marches them along the perimeter, and brings them to a halt by a doorway.

JASMINE

Wait here. You - come with me.

The escorts look uneasy, but do not challenge her orders.

Jasmine gives a subtle sigh of relief, as she leads Faye into the enclosure. Faye looks across quizzically.

When they reach the centre. Jasmine stops.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Recognized you the moment I saw the alert. A boy - injured near a park. You checked him, then disappeared. I want to know about Mark Lorollon?

Faye shows the tattoo on her palm.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

I saw. Why do you think I brought you out here?

Faye smiles. She throws down her lift, and steps on.

She points, and Jasmine defiantly steps on with her.

FAYE

Argent - I'm not alone.

Faye brings up her shields, and they are snatched away before the three escort soldiers are able to react.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - INNER AREA - NIGHT

Faye and Jasmine arrive at the lift area.

Mark is using the healing unit. George is seated - Dizzy stands close by. Ivy is wandering around in a daze.

Jasmine is pleased to see Mark, but the surroundings amaze her - and she is shocked to see George and Dizzy.

Mark is equally surprised. Still annoyed, he snaps at Faye.

MARK

What's this? School reunion? Why not invite Zak along as well?

His words hurt, and have impact. Jasmine responds bitterly.

JASMINE

That really would be something. Zak's dead.

Mark is astonished. He looks to Dizzy for confirmation.

DIZZY

He treated you bad Mark, but it was envy. He had a hard time. We all did, living in Bethel.

JASMINE

He took his own life, in the end. Where've you been Mark?

Mark is speechless. Jasmine waits, then goes across to Dizzy.

Faye looks hard at Dizzy and Jasmine, then stalks behind Argent. They communicate privately.

FAYE (V.O.)

Why? Does she even know?

ARGENT (V.O.)

She'd seen you lift. Latent awareness - same as George. Dizzy was engaged as backup.

FAYE (V.O.)

Those 'seeds' were sown in too narrow a margin, and they held compulsion.

ARGENT (V.O.)

Too little time. I had to act. Our first visit had consequences.

Mark responds to Jasmine, as Faye rounds back.

MARK

I haven't been away for five years - that's how long it's been for you. To me - it's been three weeks.

JASMINE

Sure it has. What is all this?

Mark struggles to find a reply. Faye steps up beside him.

FAYE

He's telling the truth. And this?  
We're in high orbit - on a very  
advanced ship.

Jasmine looks at Faye and Mark as if they have gone mad.

DIZZY

I would have laughed, but I saw it  
from the outside. It's true!

FAYE

'It' has a name -

ARGENT

Later. There's something else.  
Another ship's been detected. Far  
more powerful.

Argent drops a volume display, an extraordinary sight for the  
new arrivals. She indicates an ominous red light at the edge.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

This is Banshee. She'll disregard  
all life on this planet. She's  
sixteen hours away. Check your  
thoughts.

Argent's eyes shine - her body becomes momentarily effulgent.

A subtle WHOMP. George, Jasmine and Dizzy instantly become  
more alert, as if a secret word has woken them from a trance.

Argent sends privately to Faye.

ARGENT (V.O.)

Latency withdrawn, but engagement's  
limited. They were only set to  
prepare.

Faye is impressed, but more concerned about the enemy flag.

FAYE

Where's Blade?

ARGENT

Still coming, but she's unable to  
help. Everyone is.

MARK

Faye, contact Avaline. We're out of  
our depth. The sight of her might -

FAYE

She'd never leave the Thirty for this! We're on our own.

ARGENT

Not quite. George has an integrated communication system.

George looks mildly surprised. He acknowledges.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

Jasmine has access codes for crude, but effective transmitters.

Jasmine looks sharply at Argent, but she also acknowledges.

JASMINE

Except I disappeared with a level seven prisoner. Won't have security privileges much longer.

ARGENT

Trust me, all communication in that regard has been redacted.

JASMINE

Impressive. Are you the Captain?

ARGENT

It - doesn't work that way. But for now, assume I am.

FAYE

Sounds like you have something worked out?

ARGENT

Perhaps, but first we have a problem. No sign of the ship that brought those Factors over here.

FAYE

An Acquisition straight from Emerald could be long gone.

ARGENT

Yes. Time slip probability - two years. They've had plenty of opportunity to establish.

MARK

That's when Grace said things had changed. George, When did Marion arrive on the scene?

GEORGE

Two years ago. Same as -

Faye, Mark and Argent immediately turn towards Ivy.

Ivy is at the far end of the compartment. Her appearance has changed. Head - hair - skin. She snarls like a feral beast, brings up a shield, and hurls a lift disc from her palm.

It streaks towards Faye. Argent leaps in front.

Ivy's disc decapitates Argent, then deflects into the hull.

Argent goes down in a spray of black blood.

With spontaneous shouts of despair, Faye and Mark hurl their own discs - but Ivy's shield thrusts them aside.

A third disc flies from Argent's torso, streaks below Ivy's feet, and creates a second shield around her.

Ivy suddenly looks panicked, and leans sideways, desperately trying to resist something.

A moment later, she is swept out of the side of the ship.

EXT. SPACE. EARTH ORBIT - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent is orbiting Earth. Ivy goes tumbling from ship and planet, into open space - screaming.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - INNER AREA - NIGHT

Argent's head rolls sideways on the floor.

ARGENT (V.O.)

Don't fuck with me, bitch -

Argent's eyes go blank. Faye and Mark run to her remains.

Argent's destruction is complete. They kneel down in anguish.

Faye gently collects the head, and puts it beside the torso.

A shroud scrolls up from the floor, and covers the body.

Faye and Mark look at each other, unable to speak.

George, Dizzy and Jasmine are also deeply shocked. Jasmine eventually speaks.

JASMINE

The Captain - she was the only one who knew what to do.

FAYE

You don't know what you're talking about! We're onboard Argent.

MARK

She was unique - and our ship link.

Faye points to the next compartment.

FAYE

Advanced facility. We'll create another.

Mark brushes away a tear, and nods. Then he has an idea.

MARK

Why waste time - what about you?

Faye looks surprised. She shakes her head.

FAYE

Bad idea - we don't get on - she's devious -

MARK

You don't get on with Avaline either! At least Argent's here! Our planet's in trouble Faye. You're an independent. You can -

Faye holds up a hand to silence him. She looks up.

Two units scroll down, Faye puts her hands to them.

Faye's hair shortens, and her clothing adapts to apparel favored by Argent. Her other features stay the same.

Argent speaks through Faye. Her first words convey indignation.

ARGENT (O.S.)

Devious indeed! Linking to temporary Factor. Emergency protocol. Unfavorable arena. Options limited to -

Faye closes her eyes, and concentrates.

MARK

What's happening?

ARGENT (O.S.)  
We're sorting things -

The units detach. Faye's eyes open. Her usual voice returns.

FAYE  
- Out. Argent has a plan. George -  
I need access to all your systems.  
They'll co-ordinate ground stations  
- which Jasmine will deliver.

GEORGE  
Why? What are we doing?

FAYE  
Creating an illusion. Positional  
exchange - we'll use the moon to  
deflect Banshee's targeting.

GEORGE  
My technology isn't remotely  
capable of that.

FAYE  
It will be enough. Give me a link -  
Argent can harness these elements -

MARK  
But what about Banshee's Factors?

FAYE  
They'll be lifted pre-attack. It's  
an opportunity. A few seconds to  
deflect, and send a simulation.

DIZZY  
What of?

FAYE  
Annihilation. Pre-prepared, from a  
similar event on another planet.

JASMINE  
Suggest we've been destroyed? This  
enemy will really do that?

FAYE  
If Banshee believes, she won't  
waste further energy. But yes - she  
really will do it. And we haven't  
much time. Let's go.

Faye throws her lift disc, and steps on, bringing Jasmine  
alongside. Mark follows suit with George and Dizzy.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

A clear and balmy day. STUDENTS are milling around.

Faye, Mark, George, Dizzy and Jasmine are moving between the students and buildings, with growing anxiety.

MARK

Why would you think to put it here?  
You sure we're in the right place?

GEORGE

Yes! Hidden in plain sight -

JASMINE

Even from you, by the looks of it!

George stops at the corner of an old building, and notes a modern one opposite. He leads them across to a sturdy door.

George puts a finger to a side-panel, and the door opens.

GEORGE

There. Video monitoring as well.  
Best keep an eye open though.  
Dizzy, would you mind?

Dizzy takes position, guarding the entrance.

Faye stops, as if listening to something. Mark notices.

FAYE

It's Argent. Something she doesn't  
like. Banshee's Factors did find  
you soon after we first went down.

MARK

You think they know where we are  
already? Bloody well hope not!

FAYE

I set a potent shroud. It prevents  
local detection and sends. Won't  
cut their links with Banshee though  
- I'd better check.

MARK

We'll wait.

FAYE

No need. Our own sends aren't  
affected. Let me know when George  
is ready.

INT. G.V. INDUSTRIES COMPUTER CORE - DAY

Mark, George and Jasmine walk down a well-lit corridor.

GEORGE

There are six major centers, but  
this little unit is the global hub.

MARK

Let's get it linked fast.

The corridor opens into a large room, banked full of computers. There is an office area, and desk at the side.

Two well-armed GUARDS are by the desk. OVERSEER JOHN, a distinguished man in his mid-fifties, looks nervous.

George strides across - Mark and Jasmine hang back.

JOHN

Mister Lorollon! Good to see you. A  
surprise, so soon after Miss Ing -

GEORGE

After what?

Marion appears from behind one of the computer banks.

MARION

Hello George.

GEORGE

Marion! I thought you'd - what's  
happened?

Marion holds up a small computer unit, and smiles.

Mark ushers Jasmine back, and silently sends to Faye.

MARK (V.O.)

Faye! It's a trap! Marion's here.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Faye's clothing adapts to body-suit. Dizzy looks amazed.

FAYE

Watch out!

Faye looks up, and brings her shield above them.

Fuug is on the roof. His lift disc slices down, hits Faye's shield, and rebounds skywards.

Faye turns, perceiving movement from the side.

She adjusts her shield to repel a barrage of tiny fireballs, released by Edax, who is racing in.

Fuug drops from the roof, whilst Faye is occupied.

Dizzy tries to protect her. He dives between, and swings a punch, which connects well - but with limited effect.

Fuug counters with a casual lash of the arm, and Dizzy is thrust violently away.

Dizzy's intervention allows Faye an opportunity to re-adjust.

She rolls, and avoids being trapped between her attackers.

She glances at Dizzy, who stays motionless after going down.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Disengage dampers altogether.

She gives a shudder. Her appearance hardens significantly.

EDAX

You're going to join your sister.

FAYE

No, you bastards. I'm going to avenge her.

Faye crouches, snarls, and leaps in towards them.

INT. G.V. INDUSTRIES COMPUTER CORE - DAY

Marion approaches George. She dangles the computer unit.

MARION

I've been naughty, George. I installed this myself. Take a look.

Marion compresses the unit. All the computer banks begin powering down with dull WHIRRS. She brings her shield up.

MARION (CONT'D)

Oops! Gee-Vee Industries appear to have suffered catastrophic failure.

John checks his screens in dismay. The guards look confused. One of them draws a gun, but is unsure who to aim at.

George approaches Marion in anguish.

GEORGE

Why? I cared more for you than the  
business! Marion -

MARK

George - run! She's not really -

Mark activates his shield, a moment before Marion releases  
her lift disc.

The disc SCREECHES in a semi-circle, instantly slicing  
through George, John and the guards.

Blood sprays across the area, as the four fall.

Mark's shield protects Jasmine and himself.

Marion's disc ricochets from them, and splits a bank of  
computers, before returning to hand.

JASMINE

Run! Get away from her.

Mark surveys the scene in horror. Jasmine tries to pull him  
away, but he is heavier and stronger than she is expecting.

Mark roars in despair. He leaps in towards Marion.

Jasmine backs into the approach corridor. She draws a hidden  
side-arm, and fires twice - fast and accurate.

The bullets deflect. Marion flashes a brief look at Jasmine.

Marion easily avoids Mark's enraged physical attack. She  
steps aside, and hits him hard.

MARION

You again! Where is she?

Marion's powerful blow sends Mark reeling back. Jasmine  
watches in horror.

MARK

You won't find her. A helicopter?  
Your Acquisition ship's gone!

Mark attacks again. Marion avoids him more narrowly this  
time, but her counter-blow audibly CRACKS a rib.

MARION

It was recalled. We have something  
better on the way.

Mark backs off, in obvious pain.

Marion has a cruel smile. She is enjoying this. She moves in.

MARION (CONT'D)  
Best you can do - Enhancer?

Marion strikes viciously, but Mark employs the same feint he used in training against Faye.

Marion gets thrown. Her head bangs against a computer bank.

Marion is temporarily stunned, but now blocks the way out.

She clears her head. Her appearance becomes chillingly alien. Her eyes turn black. She makes a low hissing sound.

BANSHEE (O.S.)  
Quick death or pain? Where is she?

Mark backs away, looking frightened. Then his eyes widen.

Marion becomes aware of a change. She spins abruptly.

Jasmine has withdrawn. Faye emerges from the corridor.

Faye's appearance has reverted to androgynous. Shorter hair, more angular features, less curvaceous. She looks strong, and very dangerous. Black blood smears her clothes and features.

FAYE  
Your guards were shrouded out. One  
of your tactics.

Faye approaches cautiously.

FAYE (CONT'D)  
Struggling with our Enhancer? How  
you going to cope in a real fight?

Marion hisses, spits, and launches herself.

Faye avoids this initial lunge with a deft roll, which puts her between Marion and Mark.

Faye now snarls savagely, and counter-attacks at speed.

Splayed finger-stab to the chest - knee to the kidneys.

Marion lashes out in response. She punches, claws and gouges.

The combatants spin. A hard, ugly fight.

Faye is hit, and hurt, but absorbs the damage.

One claw-strike opens a deep cut across Faye's cheek.

Faye staggers, and reels away.

Marion comes at her, but Faye regains her discipline, blocks effectively, and launches a fresh attack.

Faye delivers a deft stamp to the calf. Marion pitches back.

Faye follows up fast, connects with two hard punches, and completes the maneuver with an elbow to the heart.

Marion falls to her knees. She looks up. Banshee speaks.

BANSHEE (O.S.)

I'm on my way, Faye of Avaline.

Faye strikes again, with two fast blows of tremendous force.

Marion falls dead. Faye snarls even more ferociously, but becomes aware of Mark watching her - and stops.

She is embarrassed. Her Earth-form begins to re-establish, but does not revert completely.

FAYE

I - ah -

MARK

Thank you - again - you -

FAYE

We have to get moving.

MARK

But George -

Mark moves across, and flinches. He steps closer.

George has been severely lacerated. His eyes are blank. Mark drops to his knees, head bowed, weeping.

He looks up, almost hopeful, as Faye moves close - but Faye shakes her head, and puts a consoling hand on his shoulder.

Jasmine, also in great distress, moves up beside Faye.

Eventually, Faye steps back.

FAYE

We have to go.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Faye, Mark and Jasmine emerge from the Core area.

FAYE

Would've been with you sooner, but -

Outside the entry door, Fugg and Edax lie dead. A FRESHMAN is attending to Dizzy, who still lies injured.

Other students are standing around looking confused, and traumatized. There are SIRENS sounding in the background.

FAYE (CONT'D)

A trap. Your warning came in time.  
It would have been us otherwise.

Mark notes the bodies of the Factors, but pays no real heed. He goes across, and kneels by Dizzy, who is unconscious.

Mark is in tears. Really traumatized. The freshman moves away.

FAYE (CONT'D)

They attacked. Dizzy didn't  
hesitate.

Faye kneels opposite, and scans Dizzy's head with her hands.

FAYE (CONT'D)

He saved me. Took a blow from a  
Draka combat Factor. You did too -

MARK

Is he going to be alright?

FAYE

Yes. He'll survive.

Jasmine has stayed back. She approaches.

JASMINE

Mark, I'll look after him. And -  
George - you know - I'll sort it.  
Gee Vee's gone, you won't need me  
any longer, right?

Mark stands up, and looks at Jasmine. She meets his eyes, with tears in her own. She smiles wistfully.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Always trying to be cool. No time  
for sensitive, or kind. I should  
have stood up to them, like he did.

Jasmine suddenly wraps her arms around Mark.

JASMINE (CONT'D)  
Come back soon, Mark. Don't leave  
it five years next time.

Jasmine holds, and then releases Mark. He steps away.

Faye stares at Jasmine, then irritably throws her disc down.

FAYE  
Banshee's still coming.

Mark sighs, and throws his own lift disc down.

MARK  
Thank you Jasmine.

Jasmine watches the two of them get swept skywards, then turns away, with tears in her eyes.

An ambulance, with sirens WAILING, arrives at the site.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Mark is on the sofa, with his head in his hands. Faye is pacing around, checking multiple screens and scrolls.

FAYE  
Argent's more advanced than we  
realized. She forecast every  
maneuver, even the most extreme.  
There's no fallback. Nothing.

She looks across, sighs, and sits down beside Mark.

FAYE (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry. I know how much George  
meant. I don't do this very well -

Mark looks up. No tears. He is sad, but determined.

MARK  
At least you try. The ships aren't  
so disassociated either.

FAYE  
I care. I get angry. Factors have  
emotion. Ships don't.

MARK  
They're still evolving. Avaline  
cares more than she admits.

FAYE

Where did that come from?

MARK

From a word you said - vindictive -  
to explain why Banshee killed Lena.

FAYE

Lena was worth the effort -

MARK

You remind them of her. Jayn said  
that. Banshee wants to destroy  
Avaline but she wants to hurt her  
too. So now she's after you -

FAYE

Huh! She'd be doing her a favor!  
Avaline left me behind remember?

MARK

She knew Blade was heading in. She  
cares. Your sisters don't dislike  
you -

Faye looks surprised, and starts to shake her head.

MARK (CONT'D)

They respect you. I've seen it!

Faye cuts him off.

FAYE

Mark! She calls me Twenty Two -

MARK

She tries to keep you hidden -

FAYE

She feels nothing for me!

MARK

Well you tell Banshee that! Marion  
could have killed George any time!  
They attacked - came soon as they  
knew who I was. Not for me - for  
you! Ivy aimed at you - not Argent.  
Every trap was for you!

Faye takes a breath. She paces around, processing this.

MARK (CONT'D)

We can't fight. Can't hide. So we  
run - and taunt her. Draw her away.

Screen views shift. Unicorn Argent speaks through Faye.

ARGENT (O.S.)  
She's no Factors left to collect.

EXT. SPACE. EARTH ORBIT - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent turns from Earth, and blasts into deep space.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

MARK  
Is that you or Argent?

FAYE  
Argent got carried away. We're fine  
- and it's both of us!

Faye brings down a display, and points to an Ig point icon.

FAYE (CONT'D)  
We're heading here. Banshee changed  
direction. Argent insulted her on  
my behalf.

MARK  
Good. She's better at it than you  
are. Faye, it's time. Reach out.

Faye sighs. She turns to a screen.

FAYE  
Avaline? It's Faye. I'm in danger.

A pause. There is no response.

FAYE (CONT'D)  
Aboard Unicorn Argent. Four Factors  
eliminated - all Banshee's. I'm  
being pursued. Heading for  
Somberlin gate, Waydor side.

Silence. Faye continues to focus on the screen, peering out.

A tear falls. Faye cannot hide her hurt and disappointment.  
She turns aside.

FAYE (CONT'D)  
Fuck you then!

Mark goes across, and takes her hands.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Thought so. Didn't think she'd ignore me completely -

MARK

You're still Factor-linked to Argent. It might have affected the send.

Faye smiles sadly, and shakes her head. She looks at Mark with affection, and rests her head on his shoulder.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Time advances. Unicorn Argent heads on into space.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Mark is pacing around. Faye is seated on the sofa.

Mark sits beside her, and brings down a volume display. He indicates their green flag, a red flag, and an Ig point icon.

MARK

We've been skirting. Now we're here. What does this mean?

Faye studies the display, and scrolls in some side units.

FAYE

Banshee's vectored off - dropped speed. We might make it through.

MARK

Why would she do that?

FAYE

No idea. Perhaps she's decided we're insignificant after all?

Mark examines the display.

MARK

It's something else. What did we miss? Underestimate attack range? Bloody hell! What's that?

EXT. DEEP SPACE. IG POINT - NIGHT

Three dark, powerful ships emerge through the Ig point, and ROAR away in different directions.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Volume display. Three new red flag-lights appear one after the other, emerging from the Somberlin Ig point.

Faye leaps up, and checks additional displays.

MARK

Tell me those are Acquisition ships?

FAYE

Wouldn't show this far out. It's the rest of her fleet.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent veers hard away from her current course.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Mark is startled by the drastic adjustment.

MARK

Woh! Extreme! What are you doing?

FAYE

Those are Capital ships!

MARK

But we're heading towards Banshee!

FAYE

They're almost in range! Can't retreat - it would lead them back to Earth.

MARK

We're not going to survive this, are we?

Mark looks intently at her for a moment, then smiles.

Faye steps forward, and embraces Mark.

Mark puts his arms around her, and they kiss passionately.

They eventually break from the kiss, but stay close.

FAYE

We're going down, Mark - let's end it like a Warship?

An enhanced voice peals through the cabin.

AVALINE (O.S.)  
 You're already a Warship. I  
 received your send - and it's our  
 trap now!

EXT. DEEP SPACE. IG POINT - NIGHT

Thunder-Roller Avaline, Star Roller Kae-Une, and Roller Viant  
 blast in through the Somberlin Ig point.

AVALINE  
 Avaline. All targets - maximum  
 oppose. Eb now!

KAE-UNE  
 Kae-Une on maximum. Eb now!

VIANT  
 Viant on maximum. Launching glider!  
 Eb now!

A glow appears on peripheral units on all three ships.

A weapon like an ultra-streamlined Acquisition ship, drops  
 from Viant, and streaks away with an ominous WHOOSH.

A BOOM - all three glows expand.

Three energy waves ROAR. Ripples spread in all directions.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

The first of Banshee's fleet ships gets hit by glider, a dart  
 of intense light, shuddering through space. Auras flare.

A moment later, the energy bleeds arrive.

More auras flare, as the ripples strike.

The first Draka ship is destroyed in a halo of light.

Banshee's two other ships take damage, as energy bleeds hit.

The second ship disintegrates, as it goes past a giant star.

The remaining Draka ship turns SCREAMING towards a  
 distinctive side cluster.

Banshee turns aside.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

FAYE

She came! The fleet came! Two ships  
zeroed - one running -

MARK

Faye! Banshee's out of their range -  
but our course change has brought  
us into hers!

FAYE

Shit!

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent peels away.

Banshee begins curving towards the same distinctive star  
cluster as her remaining fleet ship.

An intense glow appears on her scorpion-like tail unit.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

MARK

We're not clear! Total defense!

FAYE

Already engaged - but that's way  
too strong for Argent. Sorry Mark -

Faye and Mark hold on to each other.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

An extra star, flickering wildly, appears above the  
distinctive star cluster.

As Banshee's tail unit reaches maximum glow, she is hit by a  
ferocious energy bleed.

Deep ripples cause multiple aura flares. Banshee's energy  
bleed is disrupted. The attack glow blinks out.

Banshee's third fleet ship, escaping towards the cluster, is  
rolled over, and destroyed by the same attack.

Cruiser Blade blasts by. A deep ROAR. A line of light.

BLADE (O.S.)  
You're safe Faye! Time this malice  
was removed!

FAYE (O.S.)  
Blade!

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Faye and Mark check their display.

FAYE  
Blade won't get a second strike -

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Banshee has turned for deep space. A sound of THUNDER is  
building. Her light wake is enormous.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

FAYE  
She's going Ig!

MARK  
From here? You said only Thunder-  
Rollers and Cruisers could do that?

FAYE  
Serious repair enhancement! She is  
a Thunder-Roller now!

MARK  
If she gets away she'll come back  
for Earth. Faye - draw power! Fire  
it through Argent!

Faye raises her hands. Two scrolls snap down, and attach.

FAYE  
Avaline will hate us.

EXT. DEEP SPACE. IG POINT - NIGHT

A pulsing aura flares around Thunder-Roller Avaline, as if  
she has been hit by a major energy bleed.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

Light envelops Faye, and her eyes blaze with power, pulsing in the same rhythm as Thunder-Roller Avaline's aura.

Faye suddenly issues an inhuman scream of pain and power.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

An intense glow appears on Unicorn Argent's promontory horn.

A BOOM - the glow suddenly expands.

An energy wave ROARS away. Ripples spread out in all directions. In the periphery, a distant galactic disc.

CLOSE IN

Banshee is tiny compared to the blinding white of her light-wake. The THUNDER of passage is beginning to reach crescendo.

The ripples of Faye-Argent's energy bleed begin to encroach.

A moment before Banshee makes the escape point, the wave-edge arrives - and auras flare.

Banshee explodes in a massive blast of light and energy.

INT. UNICORN ARGENT - CONTROL - NIGHT

MARK

You got her!

Faye collapses into Mark's arms.

They kiss passionately.

Their kiss is interrupted.

AVALINE (O.S.)

Twenty Two? I felt that.

Faye and Mark look over at a screen which has lowered. It shows Ava, Jayne, and some of Faye's other sisters.

Faye smiles rebelliously.

FAYE

I'm not surprised.

AVALINE (O.S.)  
 It's what I hoped for. Faye! No one  
 - anywhere - has a Factor like you!

Faye's sisters start smiling. They begin to applaud - then  
 break into to cheers.

Faye and Mark witness this emotional outbreak in amazement.

AVALINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Mark, you are astonishing. We  
 acknowledge our Enhancer.

Cheers continue for Mark. Avaline's screen begins to fade.

AVALINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Blade, you have our gratitude -

Avaline fades out, as Blade calls through.

BLADE (O.S.)  
 Faye - I'm coming in.

FAYE  
 You're not part of our fleet!

BLADE (O.S.)  
 No. Right now, you're part of mine!  
 You saved your planet, Mark. It  
 will be defended now.

Blade's voice fades. Faye and Mark smile.

A thought occurs to Faye, and brings a hesitant frown.

FAYE  
 This action is done. You're not  
 obliged to remain. You can return -

MARK  
 I've nothing to go back to.

FAYE  
 Jasmine cares for you -

MARK  
 I would've been so pleased to hear  
 that - once - before I met you -

ARGENT (O.C.)  
 He's staying? That worked out well.

Faye and Mark look in astonishment, as Factor Argent emerges  
 from the rear chambers, and drops herself into the sofa.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

You're released Faye. You were an excellent temporary, by the way. And that repair. I warned you it would change him -

MARK

You saved me Argent! But you - how?

Faye and Mark have tears in their eyes. Argent looks down.

ARGENT

What this? She's my only Factor. Of course I keep a reserve.

Faye and Mark are overwhelmed. Argent smiles warmly.

ARGENT (CONT'D)

Sentimental, apparently. I've even acquired a liking for you two. Good work. We're home.

EXT. DEEP SPACE - NIGHT

Unicorn Argent docks aboard Cruiser Blade - as Avaline, Kae-Una and Viant move alongside.

AVALINE (O.S.)

Faye - Mark. I have work for you -

FAYE (O.S.)

What? Already?

ARGENT (O.S.)

Ship feelings haven't evolved as far as you thought.

There is LAUGHTER. The ships turn towards a beautiful nebula.

A ROAR. They accelerate away in a blaze of wake-light.

THE END