



TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. AURELIUS OUTPOST - R & R CHAMBER - NIGHT

D'BRONZE sits on a stool at the bar, slurping from his mug. An exhausted S'SIERP fidgets with a rank pin on his jacket on a stool beside him.

S'SIERP

I've looked everywhere. No one's seen her and she hasn't taken any vehicles.

D'BRONZE

Then she can't be far. I say let her alone for a bit.

S'SIERP

But she shouldn't really be up and about so soon. She's just recovered from an almost fatal wound. Anyone else-

D'BRONZE

(claps a hand on
S'sierp's shoulder)
Ya worry too much. She'll show up when she wants to.
(slides a pitcher over)
Drink up, ya deserve it.

S'SIERP

I suppose I can relax for a little while.

D'BRONZE

(inclines his head to
the crowd)
I'd like to stay and talk but I've got me an audience.

D'bronze gets up from his stool almost bumping into TUVAL.

TUVAL

Have you seen Trovenus? He's not answering his comm device and no one seems to have seen him.

D'BRONZE

No, I haven't. Why don't ya ask Trianne? He or one of his men might have. I'll introduce ya.

D'bronze and Tuval walk over to where TRIANNE sits, now playing a soft melody on his pan pipe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

D'BRONZE (CONT'D)
 This 'ere is Tuval. He's the Vice
 Marshal of the Arcaneum.

Trianne bows his head in greeting.

TRIANNE
 It is an honour to meet you,
 Tuval. How may I be of help to
 you?

TUVAL
 I'm unable to locate Trovenus and
 he's not answering his
 communicator.

Trianne holds out a distinctive silver pin.

TRIANNE
 Is this it?
 (off Tuval)
 Mapat found it near the war
 salumsets resting place.

An expression equal parts frustration and concern crosses
 D'bronze's face as he realizes something.

D'BRONZE
 Did Mapat recount the war
 salumsets?

TRIANNE
 There is no need for it. They
 can't wander off and there aren't
 any predators here.
 (realizes)
 Unless-

D'BRONZE
 Someone takes them.
 (to Tuval)
 I've got a fressin' idea where he
 and Tazul are headed.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

SSSSSSS....

The flames rapidly sputter out as the wind picks up in
 strength.

NATHAN glances at it, scared. He's screwed and he knows it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The rakesh's red eyes GLEAM in the darkness. Hissing intermittently, its tongue tastes the air languidly.

Dinner's up.

It POUNCES toward a helpless Nathan

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

TAZUL and TROVENUS stand in front of a cavern wall. Tazul places her crest in the carved crest symbol there.

A low WHIRRING sounds as the wall CREAKS open to reveal:

INT. CATACOMB - SAFE HAVEN - UNDERGROUND

Tharad children curiously eye them as they step forward. Wary N'SIAHXX raises his n'kernl, threateningly.

NSIAHXX
(subtitled; tharad)
Why is he here?

TAZUL
(subtitled)
He wanted to help. Trianne sent me. Let's go.

TRESN tugs his brother's hand whispering something.

NSIAHXX
(subtitled)
Do you have any food?

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Trovenus and Tazul lead as the children follow closely behind on their own war salumsets.

CLOSE UP on Tazul as she listens intently. The distant sounds of a male screaming in pain can be heard.

Trovenus notices the change in Tazul's body language.

TROVENUS
What is it?

TAZUL
I'll scout ahead. You stay with the children.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAZUL (CONT'D)
(off Trovenus)
You promised.

Trovenus begrudgingly remains silent as Tazul quickly rides off.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Nathan lies quiet, unmoving, paralysed. Sweaty and semi conscious.

His ripped shirt reveals BLOODY, relatively shallow, puncture marks that run down his chest in a pattern.

The rakesh tastes the air as it takes its time savouring its meal.

SHINK! Its head falls away, decapitated. Black blood spraying like a GEYSER, as its body sways lifelessly to the sand.

To reveal Tazul, sword in hand, as we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

THE FERATU CHRONICLES

"The Chronicles Begin- Part IV"
(Gauntlet of Shadows)

Story by
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Teleplay by
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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

A solitary, battered A.T.V SKIMS fast above the rocky surface of the tunnel. Globes intermittently light the darkness here.

INT. ARMORED TANK VEHICLE (A.T.V) - NEXT

D'bronze steers the transport as Tuval eyes the surroundings appreciatively.

BANG! The transport SHUDDERS as something hits it. D'bronze looks down at his navigation panel.

ANGLE ON the navigation panel shows red alien symbols ominously FLASHING and a schematic of the transport, the tail section highlighted.

D'BRONZE
Repulsors 'ave burnt out.

TUVAL
What is it?

D'BRONZE
Repulsors don't just burn out.
When I touch down, follow my
lead, alright?

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Tazul removes a syringe-looking device filled with a yellow solution from her satchel. She FLICKS it before injecting it into Nathan's chest.

His eyes FLUTTER open as Tazul removes the empty syringe.

NATHAN
(groggily)
W-who are you?

Tazul ignores his question as she bandages his wounds.

EXT. ISA WRECK - DESERT - NIGHT

GENERAL NEMENS, SARA and ANN have made another smaller fire. The still blazing wreck smoulders away in the background.

SARA
And basically now your caught
 up.

General Nemens seems to take a moment to absorb what's been said.

NEMENS
 You three deserve a medal or
 commendation for courage when we
 get back to civilization.

SARA
 (bitter laugh)
 For what exactly, sir? Sheer
 blind luck or for managing to
 just kill things, before they
 could do the same?

NEMENS
 Sara, courage has never been
 about a lack of fear but of
 taking action in spite of it.

Ann straightens up, standing as she spots something.

ANN
 I just saw something near the
 shadows of the wreck.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

Tuval and D'bronze shelter behind the A.T.V as fire rains down on them. Each blast hitting the vehicle with a metallic PING.

D'bronze eyes the darkened crevices further afield. He grimaces as he spots a flash of red and black.

D'BRONZE
 Fressin' drakans.

He gestures and concentrates on the cavern roof above their attackers darkened hiding spot. It violently SPASMS.

TUVAL
 (alarmed)
 You'll cause a cave in!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

D'BRONZE
I know what I'm fressin' doin'.

His eyes narrow and the violent throes of the cavern roof
SPREAD to the walls, as the intensity rises.

Drakan SCREAMS reverberate as D'bronze closes his fist,
causing the roof and walls to crumble. The dislodged rubble
entirely seals off that part of the tunnel.

Tuval scrutinizes the tunnel collapse, impressed.

D'BRONZE (CONT'D)
Let's move before any more show
up.

INT. THARAD SAFE HAVENS - NIGHT

Tazul and Trovenus look on as the tharad children are
enveloped with hugs and kisses from overjoyed and relieved
family members.

The elderly PRIME CHARRIC and TRIBE MYSTIC approach the
two.

PRIME CHARRIC
(bows his head to Tazul)
Las Maihjet.
(beat)
Did Nyserriah suf-

He stops unable to continue.

TAZUL
Not according to Trianne. She
died protecting her family.
(looks to Tribe mystic)
As did Nsema.

The tribe mystic SAGS disappointed by the news.

PRIME CHARRIC
You and-
(indicates Trovenus)
Your friend are always welcome,
Tazul. As a gesture of our
tribe's appreciation-

TAZUL
Consider it my attempt to repay
an old debt.

EXT. ISA TRUCK WRECK - NIGHT

Sara stands, her rifle trained on the flaming wreck.

ANN
(nervously)
Well? Can you see what it is?

Sara squints in the darkness as she tries to make out anything, if there's anything up ahead, near the shadows.

SARA
I can't see anything.

ANN
But I saw something! It's just
hiding and then when we all
relax, it's going to jump out and
kill us, I just know it!

SARA
Maybe you just....

ANN
I didn't imagine it!

General Nemens watches the two argue as he keeps an eye on the wreck.

NEMENS
How about this? Sara, you can
keep your rifle trained on the
wreck, in case there is something
hiding there and
(indicates to Ann)
You, Ann, can sit and calm down
before you hyperventilate. That's
an order. Alright?

Sara nods an affirmative as Ann sits down a slightly sheepish expression on her face.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Tazul and Trovenus ride through the desert. Tazul glances at a dark plume of smoke on the horizon.

TAZUL
(points to smoke)
I'll just leave him where the
other humans are sure to find
him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROVENUS
Why did you help him?

TAZUL
And let that rakesh and others
feast on his corpse?

TROVENUS
(not buying it)
He was already poisoned when you
reached him, wasn't he?

TAZUL
That's not the entire reason.
(off Trovenus' look)
Alright, it might have influenced
my actions. Slightly.

We stay on them as Tazul and Trovenus ride past. A makeshift sled is dragged behind Tazul's salumset, where a semi-conscious Nathan lies.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ISA WRECK - DESERT - NIGHT

Tazul and Trovenus step out from the shadows of the flaming wreck.

TROVENUS
(lowered)
We could have just left him near
the wreck. There is no need to
reveal ourselves.

TAZUL
I know what I'm doing.

SWITCH FOCUS to Sara who aims her rifle at the intruders.

SARA
Sir, I can't believe you didn't
retrieve a rifle from the truck.

NEMENS
(dry)
I apologize for being preoccupied
with more pressing concerns, like
searching for survivors and
trying to avoid incineration.

TAZUL
Triezp nyetas tharad?

Sara who still remains very suspicious, trains her weapon, steadily on them both.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN

Yni.

(off Nemens and Sara)
She asked if we understand
tharad.

TAZUL

I found one of your group lost
and injured. I've tended to him
the best I can.

ANN

(very quickly)
Nathan? You found him? How is he?

TAZUL

Is that his name?

She whistles sharply and a war salumset ambles over with a sled dragging behind it. Ann quickly rushes over before Sara or Nemens can react.

ANN

Nathan? Nathan!

His eyelids flutter as he stirs.

NATHAN

I must have died and gone
straight to heaven.
(coughs slightly; smiles)
'Cause I know an angel when I see
one.

Ann smiles, trying and failing to hide her relief and joy at him being alive.

ANN

(trying to be serious)
Spouting archaic, cheesy pick up
lines, won't save you from the
tongue lashing I'm giving you,
for being so... stupid.

Nathan sits up a little unsteadily.

NATHAN

(sly)
A 'tongue lashing', hmm?

Ann chuckles, pulling him into hug. He winces at this.

ANN

Sorry. Is it really painful?

Nathan nods a yes as she instantly releases him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACK TO Sara, Nemens, Tazul and Trovenus.

SARA

We're just supposed to believe
you're the 'good guys' like that?

TAZUL

You're saying you'd rather die of
heat and thirst, than accept my
offer?

Nemens looks like he's seriously considering whatever she's
offering but Sara's still not buying it.

SARA

Why would you want to help us?

TAZUL

I've got no quarrels with your
people.

Trovenus raises an eyebrow at that.

TROVENUS

(subtitled; chromlian)
What are you playing at?

TAZUL

(subtitled; chromlian)
Nothing.

Sara watches the exchange, intrigued and wary. Nathan
leans against Ann as they hobble over.

NATHAN

She saved my life. I say we at
least give her and her friend the
benefit of the doubt.

Nemens nods in agreement. The group looks to Sara who gives
in, with a "fine whatever", shrug.

TAZUL

Follow me.

INT. CATACOMB - SAFE HAVEN - UNDERGROUND

Three lumpy beds line the stone walls here. A silver
refrigeration unit hums in one corner.

Tuval watches the screen near the stone entrance, a
surveillance feed showing that the tunnel on the other side
is clear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns to glance at D'bronze who uses a small metal hub device, with a holographic projection screen. A maroon uniformed soldier, wearing a royal blue armband is on screen.

MAN

Understood?

D'BRONZE

Yeah, yeah. Just tell 'em to fressin' move.

The man's image FIZZLES out.

TUVAL

Why didn't you just contact him using your inherent abilities?

D'BRONZE

More secure this way.

He gestures to the walls and there's a white metallic glint to the stone at closer inspection.

D'BRONZE (CONT'D)

The underground's rich in nreishtin.

(taps his forehead)

'Cause of that- if I'd voiced I'd get sight jacked, for sure.

Tuval's brow furrows, equal parts confused and curious.

TUVAL

Sight jacked?

D'BRONZE

Didn't they teach you the basics?

TUVAL

My instructors thought it foolish to study the culture of an old ally, no longer in regular contact.

D'BRONZE

(shrugs)

Can't argue with that.

(pauses)

Seein' as we got to stay put 'til helps here. I've got nothin' better to do.

(pauses)

Ask away.

INT. CAVERN - UNDERGROUND

DOAKS and the female officer seen previously, COLLINS, watch on as other drakan soldiers frantically work to clear the rubble from those trapped underneath.

COLLINS

If a more subtle approach had been taken. We'd have captured Mazakelli.

DOAKS

You mean if I had followed your proposal?

(dismissive)

He'll have to resurface eventually.

COLLINS

Then what was the entire purpose of the creatures' distraction? To demonstrate your inability, to utilize a planned distraction, to our benefit? Or your ineptitude as commander?

Soldiers nearby curiously watch the heated exchange.

DOAKS

(coolly)

That's enough. Do not forget who you're addressing.

Doaks swans off, his leather coat sweeping behind dramatically.

Collins watches him leave with a withering, death glare. She shares a significant, "something's got to be done" look with the nearby soldiers, before we:

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

The group consisting of the four humans, Tazul and Trovenus progress down an underground tunnel on foot.

SARA

Pretty simple security. Someone could easily steal an access crest, if they wanted to get down here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAZUL

That's the rear guard's
responsibility. They patrol the
underground regularly. There are-

FLASH TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

A clutch of drakan soldiers suddenly SPRING out from an
alcove, firing away. Pulse fire STRIKES everyone down- with
Tazul and Trovenus the only ones still standing.

They instinctively fire back, stumbling painfully as more
pulse blasts hit them.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

Tazul's hand instinctively goes to her stomach. The humans
look at her oddly.

SARA

Something wrong?

TAZUL

Don't move another step.
(to Trovenus)
Backtrack to the safe haven we
passed ten mescas ago.

TROVENUS

What of yourself?

TAZUL

I'm capable of looking after
myself. Take the humans and stay
there until I re-

GENERAL NEMENS

If something's going on, I expect
to be involved in any decision
making, that affects my people.

TAZUL

I don't have time for this drez.
Go with Trovenus before they spot
you.

Nemens backs down at her tone. Trovenus nods to Tazul
before beckoning for the humans to follow him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tazul glances in the distance and there's a darkened alcove two hundred metres away.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL

Tracking shot of a cavern as drakan soldier #1, decked out in crisp red and black marches into view.

The soldier stops as if sensing something. His pistol ready, his eyes scour the area as he sniffs the air.

Nothing's there. He relaxes.

REVERSE ANGLE shows a feminine shadow flank his own in the dim light.

The soldier reaches an alcove where fifteen soldiers congregate chatting, obviously on break. A soldier looks up at the new arrival.

SOLDIER #2
Seen Tzimce?

The other soldiers chuckle at some in-joke.

SOLDIER #1
Fress you.
(sighs)
How long you still goin-

SNAP! Soldier #1 never finishes the sentence. His neck at an odd angle, he SLUMPS to the ground, revealing a blurred indistinct figure behind him.

SOLDIER #2
(panicked)
Shidako!

He HURLS a deadly ball of fire at the figure who blurs over to another soldier in the blink of an eye. This soldier clutches his throat, blood SPURTING.

The fire hits the cavern wall harmlessly.

SPED UP shots as the soldiers CONVERGE on the figure. Weapons firing, fire balls hurling. Very fast, quick cuts of the fight indicate this is all happening extremely fast. Some drakans escape, COALESCING into shadows.

Screams and shouts of pain erupt as one by one the soldiers fall.

One soldier rolls around in pain, ABLAZE, having caught the flaming balls of death from his comrades in the chaos.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The blurred figure SHIMMERS sinking into shadow, making short work of those remaining.

Four shadows SHIMMER into solid form, CRUMPLING to the ground, dead.

We return to normal speed with the lone mysterious figure remaining. All the soldiers now lie dead.

The figure crouches beside the still blazing away corpse.

The figure COALESCES into a stunning, woman in her thirties. A lithe brunette wearing all black leather. There's something in her eyes, a hardened edge of someone who's grown up too fast and a deadly calm. This is SELENE ESSEX.

Using the flaming corpse, she lights a CHAATU stick, a cinnamon coloured stick, that strongly resembles a cigarette.

She places it to her lips as she stands.

As Selene admires her handiwork exhaling the smoke languidly, we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ALCOVE - THE UNDERGROUND

Tazul runs weaving and dodging pulse fire from the drakans, here. She FIRES back, hitting the two closest.

Tazul dives behind a rocky outcropping as another round of blasts, follows her, ricocheting off the rocks.

She pulls out a shiny black metallic disc that she presses in the center, causing blades to extend from the sides.

Tazul THROWS the disc into the midst of her pursuers.

BOOM! An explosion rips through the group with shouts of alarm and pain. The cavern trembles from the blast's impact.

Tazul warily stands to check for any survivors. The dust slowly settling to reveal that her drakan pursuers are all dead.

FWUMP! Pulse machine fire ERUPTS.

Tazul DIVES to avoid it. Even with her extremely fine tuned reflexes she's struck three times as she goes down. One in her left arm, her back and side.

The hits throw her off as she STUMBLES and SLIDES roughly down a rocky shaft. Her sheathed sword RIPPED from her side at the sudden drop.

Her head CRACKS against a rock outcropping. Slamming her unconscious as her body CRASHES to a halt at the bottom.

We TILT UP to see a figure looking down at the prone Tazul. ZOOM IN reveals it's Drakeford, who smiles maliciously.

DRAKEFORD (V.O.)

Target successfully captured.

INT. CATACOMB - UNDERGROUND

Nathan and Ann sit on one bed. Nathan's head is resting on Ann's shoulder. General Nemens sits on the other.

Sara and Trovenus remain standing.

The loud sounds of pulse fire and shouts of pain echo from outside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARA
I don't care what she said-it
sounds nasty out there-

ANN
Sara! Are you insane?!

Sara turns to leave as Ann quickly leaps from the bed, so sudden that Nathan winces at the jarring movement. She grabs Sara's arm, trying to stop her.

ANN (CONT'D)
You can't be serious.
(Off Sara)
Come on, you hardly know her.

Trovenus, Nathan and Nemens watch the scene play out.

SARA
(breaks from Ann's
grasp)
That didn't stop her from helping
Nathan, regardless of whatever,
her motivations are.
(beat)
I can't just stand here, it's
not...right.

Ann's dumbfounded. She can't think of something to argue with that. Sara glances to Trovenus as she starts to leave.

SARA (CONT'D)
You coming?

Trovenus nods, following her. Ann sighs in frustration as she watches them leave.

INT. UNDERGROUND SHAFT

Tazul's eyelids FLUTTER as she comes to. She grimaces as she tries to sit up. But FAILS. Her movements very clumsy and slow.

DRAKEFORD (O.S.)
The Velcus finally decides to
grace me with her attention.

Tazul painfully CRANES her neck to look up. Whatever she's been hit with, is in full effect.

DRAKEFORD (CONT'D)
(noticing her movements)
You like that?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRAKEFORD (CONT'D)

I mix a smidge of rakesh venom and dwalt shavings in my shaktoun cartridges. Though come to think of it- I should have upped the concentration in your case.

(pause)

Oh well, I can always have fun, shooting you again.

He HEAVES his impressive, imposing pulse machine gun into her sphere of vision. Drakeford noticeably disappointed by her lack of response.

DRAKEFORD (CONT'D)

Ai! Aren't you going to beg or say something?

Tazul finally looks at him directly, acknowledging him. The expression on her face equal parts, regal, unbowed and dismissive.

TAZUL

You don't even *exist* to me, Lentud.

INT. UNDERGROUND

A massive fire fight between the drakans and the maroon clad, royal blue arm banded, AURELIUS REAR GUARD. The drakans seem to have the advantage, tucked up in a high vantage point, despite their smaller numbers.

GRRRL! A drakan screams as an enormous furred, black and grey wolf/lion hybrid, POUNCES on him, ripping his throat out.

The drakans attention momentarily drawn away from the soldiers below as they try to take out the fearsome creature.

The BLASTS of their pulse rifles seem to have no effect on its thick hide. The beast not slowing down in the slightest as it MAULS, SLASHES and RIPS to SHREDS the closest soldiers.

The remaining drakans run for it as the creature's attention is on its closest attackers.

Running SMACK straight into another contingent of rear guard soldiers that block off all possible escape.

The expressions on their faces say it all, they're already dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACK TO the beast as it SLASHES the last drakan here. The fur around its face and neck matted with blood. Off screen pulse fire and screams can be heard.

The creature CONVULSES, its form shuddering and morphing gradually into a more human visage. An extremely well dressed, young man in his twenties.

Blood covers his entire face and neck. An air of arrogance and superiority drip off him. This is ZAIZEL RENIR.

ZAIZEL
(disdainful)
Drakans.
(snaps his fingers)
Do *not* keep me waiting.

HOPKINS, a servile man also wearing maroon with a royal blue armband, scurries over, a towel in hand.

HOPKINS
(bows)
Sorry your highness. It won't happen again.

Zaizel takes the proffered towel, wiping his face free of blood. He spots someone off screen and his mouth turns into a contemptible sneer.

ZAIZEL
Your purpose was to assist me, not disappear without *my* permission, to do harn know's what.

NEW ANGLE reveals Selene who coolly regards him.

SELENE
I don't answer to you.

ZAIZEL
Don't take that tone with me, half-breed.

A flicker of rage crosses her face, this is definitely a sore topic.

SELENE
(deadly)
There are techniques of killing, that not even the most skilled green shirt can trace, if it was used to assassinate someone.
(pointedly)
Don't tempt me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She saunters off before Zaizel can string together a retort.

Zaizel throws the now blood soaked towel at Hopkins.

ZAIZEL
(annoyed;snaps)
Don't just stand there! Bring me
another one!

INT. UNDERGROUND SHAFT

An enraged and indignant Drakeford FIRES down at Tazul. The pulse fire RICOCHETS off the cavern wall, disrupting some dust and rock.

DRAKEFORD
Do I exist *now* you uppity bitch?!

Tazul doesn't flinch she's not threatened at all.

TAZUL
You can't kill me. Your superiors
want me alive.

Drakeford frowns, she's right, much to his displeasure.

DRAKEFORD
They didn't specify *how* alive.

TAZUL
(unimpressed)
I've survived assassinations from
far better marks than yourself.
Don't *attempt* to threaten me.

Growling, Drakeford aims his weapon at her. His finger PUSHES down the trigger....

THWACK! Drakeford CRUMPLES out of shot. The pulse fire erratically ricochets off screen.

Sara stands there, her rifle wielded as a club. She looks down at Tazul.

SARA
Need a hand?

INT. CATACOMB - SAFE HAVEN - UNDERGROUND

Tuval SWIGS from a stout brown bottle sitting on one of the beds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

D'bronze has his head inside the refrigeration unit, rummaging.

D'BRONZE

...So the drakans demand the seat as Ducifer had won the challenge. And by rights could claim the spoils.

ANGLE ON inside the refrigeration unit. There are rows of brown stout bottles. Clear bags filled with either red, blue or white fluid line most of the shelves here. D'bronze grabs a bag with red fluid.

He places the bag onto a stone topped heating device. The fluid inside bubbling slightly.

D'BRONZE (CONT'D)

But the 'relions refused to recognise it in light of what happened after.

TUVAL

(shudders at a memory)
Trovenus once described it to me.
That's what started the war?

D'bronze flips the bag to the other side.

D'BRONZE

To be fressin' honest, they were all itchin' for somethin' to fight about.

D'bronze picks up the bag, tearing the bag open, hungrily.

D'BRONZE (CONT'D)

Ya sure you don't want anythin' else, 'cept ale?

Tuval shakes his head, vigorously.

TUVAL

Extremely. I appreciate the offer though.

D'bronze shrugs as he GULPS down the contents. He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand.

D'BRONZE

...Yeah, so they were all seethin' under the surface. Ducifer just-

A low but insistent series of beeps and clicks interrupts him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As D'bronze and Tuval quickly glance to the surveillance screen, we:

INT. UNDERGROUND SHAFT

Tazul's far from grateful. Sara's just made the situation a lot *more* complicated.

ANGLE ON Drakeford still knocked out and tied up with rope around his wrists and ankles.

TAZUL

I can't move. Just go before he wakes. *Now!*

SARA

I'm not stupid. I've already tied his hands and feet. Look I'll help you out if you're injur-

TAZUL

(urgent)

You don't know what your dealing with. Run!

At Tazul's urgency Sara's head SNAPS back to where Drakeford lies- but he's not there!

Only the ropes still tied and knotted, remain.

POV shot of Drakeford as Sara GRIPS her rifle and glances around warily.

A black shadow COALESCES behind her silently. It's form SHIMMERS and resolves, it's Drakeford!

He GRABS Sara roughly, knocking the rifle from her hands.

He PINS her arms behind her, with only one arm despite Sara's violent struggling.

Drakeford DRAGS Sara over to the shaft's sphere of vision, he glances down at Tazul.

DRAKEFORD

She belong to you?

Tazul's concern and frustration is palpable. She can't do anything but she attempts to appear unaffected.

Drakeford SNIFFS Sara's hair appreciatively.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRAKEFORD (CONT'D)
You got yourself one quality
catch.

He viciously STABS Sara in the stomach.

Savagely GUTTING her, before she can even react. Drakeford drops her and LICKS the blood off his blade, in one smooth motion.

DRAKEFORD (CONT'D)
Pity.
(beat)
Now where were we?

INT. UNDERGROUND

Trovenus STEALTHILY makes his way across in the cavernous network. His pulse cannon drawn and ready.

He SPOTS Sara sprawled on the floor. Drakeford's attention focused on a hole in the rocky ground.

INT. UNDERGROUND SHAFT

Drakeford smirks down at Tazul.

DRAKEFORD
(amused)
You actually cared for that shank
of flesh?

TAZUL
She was harmless.

Testing herself, Tazul surreptitiously clenches and unclenches her fists. Revealing that the paralysis has worn off, already.

INT. CAVERN - UNDERGROUND

Trovenus steps passed Sara. She GROANS in pain, semi-conscious. Blood soaking her shirt.

He adjusts a setting silently on his cannon.

BZZT! Drakeford's hit by a blue PULSE. There's the sound of crackling energy as he painfully SPASMS on the ground. His eyes roll upwards as he goes still.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Trovenus looks down the deep shaft barely making out Tazul at the bottom.

TROVENUS
Are you able to climb out?

TAZUL
(nods)
Help Sara.

Trovenus rushes out of sight of the shaft. Tazul quickly gets to her feet. She eyes the high shaft wall.

She JUMPS and HEFTS herself up at the midway point of the wall in an almost impossible display of acrobatic skill.

BACK TO Trovenus RIPPING his jacket. He presses it firmly to Sara's wound, trying to staunch the blood flow.

She's pale, her lips already blue and cyanotic. Sara's lost a significant amount of blood already.

FOCUS ON Tazul as she climbs up and out of the shaft at last. She looks at the unmoving Drakeford, sprawled out.

TAZUL (CONT'D)
You kill him?

TROVENUS
He's stunned. Should be out fo-

SHINK! Tazul smoothly DECAPITATES Drakeford, her retrieved sword in hand.

Trovenus looks deeply appalled. He opens his mouth to protest-

TAZUL
(firm)
Don't. He deserved even less mercy than that.

Tazul takes in all the blood as she crouches at Sara's side. She seems conflicted for a second before BITING her own wrist. Blood dripping, she places it to Sara's mouth.

TROVENUS
What are you doing?!

TAZUL
She's fading. I can hear it. This is the only way.

Trovenus' mind is racing. He's shocked and confused.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROVENUS

You think she'd want that?

TAZUL

It's to save her life.

INT. CATACOMB - SAFE HAVEN - UNDERGROUND

We return back to the scene, the wall CREAKS with the low WHIRRING as the wall slides open.

Tuval instinctively raises his weapon at the intruder. D'bronze places his hand on the weapon.

D'BRONZE

Help's arrived is all.

(to off screen person)

Took ya fressin' time.

NEW ANGLE shows that the intruder is Selene, the ghost of a smile on her features.

SELENE

Well, it's only to help you.

(pointedly)

I had to take the long way, after one of the tunnels collapsed.

D'BRONZE

Any idea where the prenka is?

SELENE

You don't know?

D'BRONZE

I couldn't sight jack her, didn't want the wrong kind of attention from the drakans or anythin'.

SELENE

If you ask people nicely for everything, nothing ever happens.

CLOSE UP on Selene's eyes delving into the darkness of her pupils, before we:

FLASH TO:

INT. VOICESCAPE

There's a gaussian, ethereal feel here. Selene stands in a deserted but sumptuously decorated bed chamber. A draught tussles the maroon curtains, bearing the aurelian crest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SELENE (V.O.)
Where are you?

Selene clutches her head as she's assaulted by a flurry of too fast images.

FLASH TO:

EXT. DESERT - EARLY MORNING

Unrelenting hard rain pours down heavily on a massive, bloody battlefield where many soldiers lie dead or dying.

Among the fallen, some are dressed in maroon military uniforms while others are in red and black uniforms.

FLASH TO:

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Lucif CRUMPLES, blood spurting as a fist sized hole is punched clean through his chest.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. VOICESCAPE

Selene's back in the bed chamber. She closes her eyes, trying to concentrate on something.

SELENE (V.O.)
(to herself)
Focus.

FLASH TO:

EXT. UNDERGROUND SHAFT

A gaussian tinge to the underground from Tazul's POV, as she takes in the cavern, the injured form of Sara beside her and Trovenus nearby on guard duty.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CATACOMB - SAFE HAVEN - UNDERGROUND

Selene shakes her head to clear it. She notices D'bronze and Tuval both watching her, one expectantly the other intrigued.

SELENE
(to D'bronze)
And that's, how an involuntary
sight jack is done.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SELENE (CONT'D)

(beat)
Soft touch.

D'BRONZE

Come on, let's get the fress
movin'.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. CAVERN - UNDERGROUND

Tazul's eyelids CLOSE for second as she holds her wrist to Sara's mouth. Trovenus scrutinizes Tazul's appearance. She's tired, grimy and blood spattered.

TROVENUS

Even with your gifts- you taunt death so recklessly. Perhaps you -

TAZUL

Why do you think everyone calls me, The Velcus?

TROVENUS

Do you believe you're invincible?

TAZUL

(shrugs)

Practically, almost.

(beat;softer)

People always die instead of me.

For a beat, Tazul's vulnerable- guilt and weariness seem to bear heavy on her as she's lost in some painful memories of the past. A glimmer of a haunted young woman beneath the brave and confident exterior.

Perhaps she's too tired now to care about appearances.

TROVENUS

(knowing)

I'll find the other humans.

Inform them of what's transpired.

INT. ARMORED TANK VEHICLE (A.T.V)

Selene steers the transport as D'bronze and Tuval sit beside her.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - NEXT

A convoy of military vehicles mostly A.T.V's and A.S.P's follow Selene's vehicle.

INT. CAVERN - UNDERGROUND

Sara's eyelids FLUTTER as she's regaining consciousness. Tazul immediately withdraws her wrist.

Sara coughs as she stirs awake.

SARA
(slurred)
W-what did you do?

TAZUL
(soothing)
Nothing. Don't speak.

SARA
(slurred)
Y-You did. I, I can feel it b-b-
burning. Sssomething's insside
I,I can feel it-it's fixing.....

Sara's eyelids flutter shut. She's out cold again, wiped out.

INT. UNDERGROUND SHAFT

Zaizel leads a large contingent of rear guard soldiers. They have the upper hand and superior numbers. Easily driving out the now, mostly fleeing drakan forces.

Zaizel's body CONVULSES shuddering and morphing into the beast again- he POUNCES on a drakan with a GROWL. Off this we:

INT. CATACOMB - UNDERGROUND

Ann paces or rather hobbles nervously. From the looks of it, General Nemens and her are in the midst of a heated argument. Nathan sits back passively.

ANN
You could have stopped her-

NEMENS
And as I've been telling you for
the last twenty minutes- I don't
hold people against their will.
With your recall ability I'm
surprised you've made it this
far.

That's it! Nathan steps in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATHAN

With all due respect, shut the hell up sir. Before I'll be forced to do it for you.

Nemens is thrown by Nathan's sudden outburst.

The moment's broken, by the catacomb entrance SLIDING open. Trovenus enters, his mottled yellow hands speckled and stained with blood.

Ann picks up on his grim expression.

ANN

Where's Sara?

INT. CAVERN - UNDERGROUND

Ann, Nathan and Nemens RUSH over to where Sara lies. Tazul sits crouched by her side.

Ann BOGGLES and freaks out at the sight of all the blood soaking Sara's shirt and Trovenus' makeshift bandages.

Tazul gives Trovenus a frustrated look that clearly shouts "Why did you bring them here?".

Trovenus shrugs exasperated, his body language clearly saying "I tried my best".

ANN

Oh god, oh god. What happened?
(accusingly to Tazul)
This is all your fault! She came looking for you.

Nathan and Nemens spot the decapitated Drakeford a few steps away.

TAZUL

(off their looks)
That's what happened. She's going to be-

CLICK! Tears already streaking her face, Ann aims Sara's rifle at Tazul's head.

At point blank range.

INT. UNDERGROUND SHAFT

Doaks, Collins and a small group of survivors catch their breath here. The sounds of shouts, pulse fire and the pounding of boots outside indicate there's a hell of a skirmish going on.

COLLINS

According to my intelligence
there should be a hidden escape-

DOAKS

No. We're staying right here.
Failure is not-

SHINK! A stunned Doaks gasps in pain, a dagger firmly impaled in his chest. Collins grips the dagger with a deadly smile.

Doaks' gaze darts over to the others for help but they look on dispassionately and unsympathetic to his plight.

COLLINS

Your failure.

As Collins twists the dagger with a malicious grin, we:

INT. CAVERN

An increasingly desperate and unhinged Ann holds the rifle at Tazul's head.

ANN

(suspicious)

How do we know it wasn't *you* who
stabbed Sara? No one actually saw
anything-

TROVENUS

I can-

ANN

(snaps; agitated)

Someone who *isn't* another alien!

NEMENS

You've got a valid point but-

NATHAN

(insistent)

Ann, please put the weapon down.
It's not going to help Sara.

Tazul's more offended at the turn of events than scared.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAZUL

(to Ann)

Go ahead. I must warn you though,
they won't be as understanding.

REVERSE ANGLE shows the reinforcements rushing onto the scene. D'bronze, Selene and Tuval leading the soldiers. The rear guard spilling out from A.T.V's and A.S.P's.

The reinforcements quickly surround them.

Ann wavers a little, her gun still pointed.

NATHAN

(calmly)

Come on, babe. Just hand it
slowly over to me.

There's a long tension filled beat as Ann considers this.

The soldiers surrounding them, warily watching her in anticipation.

Ann numbly DROPS the rifle as Nathan pulls her into a hug.

She SOBS.

The emotional toll of the last two days events, finally getting to her.

Trovenus SAGS noticeably in relief. Tazul looks on, almost sympathetically as Nathan attempts to comfort Ann.

Tuval envelopes Trovenus in a manly bear hug. Relieved and grateful at Trovenus' lack of injuries.

TUVAL

Thank Chromati's providence.
You're safe.

D'bronze and Selene are at Tazul's side as she stands.

D'BRONZE

(looks over Tazul)

Looks like ya got yourself into
more drakan trouble than I did.

He ruffles her hair affectionately- an older brotherly type gesture.

WHACK! Selene CLIPS Tazul over the back of her head.

TAZUL

Ai! What the harn was *that* for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SELENE

Just checking. Brain's still there. Use it next time.

Trovenus approaches the three.

TROVENUS

Perhaps we should leave for Ta Verion in light of the injured.

TAZUL

(nods)
Ta Verion.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE UNDERGROUND - GATES OF TA VERION

The procession of A.T.V's and A.S.P's stop as it reaches-

A solid stone wall that stretches in all directions. Breathtaking in size and scope. Ancient carvings of violent battle scenes cover it as far as can be seen.

There are two prodigious solid stone gates with a noticeably metallic gleam to it. An AURELIAN clan crest embossed on each gate.

The aurelian of each crest fashioned of solid gold, a circle of maroon surrounding it. Large diamonds, ruby and rose quartz STUD the gates.

Put simply, the gates of Troy would pale at the comparison.

Nathan and Nemens look out from their seats in an A.S.P driven by a soldier. Awestruck.

NEMENS

Don't see that everyday.

SHIFT FOCUS to Trovenus and Tuval in another transport. They take in the sight admiringly.

TUVAL

(impressed)
The legends of Ta Verion are true.

SHIFT FOCUS to Tazul, Selene and D'bronze in another A.S.P. Tazul smiles fondly at the gates.

TAZUL

Home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRUNK! The lower half of the gates unlock and slide down, allowing entry.

EXT. TA VERION - CITY SCAPE

A leisurely PAN of an impressive sprawling underground city. A beautiful synthesis of ancient stone architecture-noticeably reminiscent of the Roman and Byzantine eras.

ZOOM IN on a multilevel white building, an ancient though impressive work of art- domed roofs and intricately patterned windows. A large blue crescent etched on the side.

PUSH IN to the wide doors of the building, also stamped with the blue crescent, that slide open to:

INT. MEDICAL CENTER

Painful murmurs of those being treated and the hum of machines can be heard as we track down the white hallway passed rooms and doors.

We stop on Ann, Nathan and Nemens who sit on a long blue seat.

Harried people, clad in white and blue uniforms cast the trio, curious or suspicious glances as they occasionally walk passed.

FOCUS ON a white door that all three impatiently look to, as we:

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINATION ROOM

Sara lies awake, on a bed. She's been given a clean shirt, that's pulled up to reveal her bare stomach.

ELROND, a dark skinned man in his fifties, with kind eyes, examines her stomach. Almost finished cleaning off all the dried blood.

There's a patch of very pale skin but no sign of a stab wound anywhere.

ELROND

Do you feel any pain or soreness
when I do this?

Elrond gently presses down on the pale, newly formed skin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARA

No I don't. Why is that?

ELROND

Your wound's healed itself quite nicely.

SARA

The miracles of alien medicine, huh?

(serious)

Thank you.

ELROND

(nods)

Your welcome.

WIDEN to REVEAL Tazul sitting on a bench, her legs swinging restlessly, silently watching the scene.

ELROND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Are you going to tell her?

TAZUL (V.O.)

No. Why confuse her human mind further?

ELROND (V.O.)

I can do nothing, to ameliorate the side effects she'll experience, within the next week- if that's what you assumed.

TAZUL (V.O.)

Oh, well. The humans will be leaving the planet soon. She'll just have to handle the withdrawal on her own.

Elrond's expression indicates he doesn't agree with her but he lets the issue drop for now.

ELROND

(to Sara)

I'm finished. You can leave.

As Sara hops off the examination table Tazul sidles over. She holds an aurelian crest medallion that dangles from a gold chain.

TAZUL

Here. You earnt this. If you ever need to contact me-

Tazul presses the inset red gem, red symbols snake and coalesce on the wings of the aurelian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAZUL (CONT'D)

My sequence is this-

She pushes in an eight symbol sequence.

TAZUL (CONT'D)

(shrugs)

If you forget it - just speak
into it. Ask for me.

SARA

Thanks. I'll remember that.

EXT. AURELIUS ROYAL PALACE

A majestic and ancient wonder of architecture. A sprawling building surrounded by beautifully maintained courtyards. Massive fountains and statues are placed throughout.

INT. AURELIUS ROYAL PALACE - INNER SANCTUM

Trovenus and Tuval stride down a hallway. ROYAL GUARDS, all wearing elaborate uniforms consisting of royal blue and gold tunics, underneath maroon jerkins, block their access further.

The ranks part to allow someone to the front- it's Zaizel as self-important as ever.

ZAIZEL

No one can see his eminence. My father is occupied. Return in two days time.

TROVENUS

You must understand, the *time sensitive* nature of our need to meet.

ZAIZEL

I do. That still does not-

OLD MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Let them pass.

ZAIZEL

But father-

OLD MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Zaizel. Do *not* argue.

Zaizel deflates slightly, embarrassed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ZAIZEL

Very well. Let them pass.

Zaizel nods to two royal guards who hold open the ancient doors.

Zaizel strides into the room first, disappearing out of view. The contingent of royal guards following except for the two still holding the doors.

Tuval looks to Trovenus as they step forward.

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. AURELIUS ROYAL PALACE - THRONE ROOM

The royal guards have now taken up a perimeter guard, each standing alongside the walls of the room in the background.

Zaizel sits in the left throne of a magnificent pair of intricately carved thrones. Two empty lesser thrones sit to Zaizel's left.

In the right throne, a man in his late fifties with a receding hairline sits. This is KING AURON RENIR. An air of authority and wisdom surrounds him.

Trovenus and Tuval are startled by the sight as they notice:

A busy network of thin tubes protrude out of his back and arms. Through the clear tubes, blood can be seen continuously flowing in and out, connected to a purring metal obelisk.

TROVENUS

(recovers)

My deep apologies. If I knew I would not have-

AURON

(raspy)

The process takes two solar days. Time you do not have to waste, indulging an old man's vanity.

Auron holds up a thin black data sheet. He gives it a final cursory once over.

AURON (CONT'D)

From what I've read of your requests and my daughter's account of your assistance-

(pauses)

I would be very hard pressed to deny your offer. Despite protests.

Auron subtly glances at Zaizel.

TROVENUS

(Bows his head)

Lo Mokol, your eminence! The legends of your fairness and benevolence are indeed genuine.

Unseen by Auron, Zaizel rolls his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURON

I appreciate the flattery but it isn't required. I took the liberty of sending a battalion to your ship, with the first shipment's requirement as detailed in the information you supplied.

(beat)

It should be arriving there at this moment.

Trovenus and Tuval both bow their heads.

TROVENUS

Once again, thank you your eminence.

They turn to leave but-

AURON

Field Marshal, there is something I need to ask you, before you depart.

TROVENUS

What do you wish to know?

AURON

I must ask everyone to leave the room, first.

(looks at Zaizel)

You as well.

A concerned Tuval looks to Trovenus. Trovenus nods a "go, I'll be fine". The royal guards quickly follow as does a reluctant Zaizel.

AURON (CONT'D)

It is a matter of grave importance.

INT. MEDICAL CENTER

Nathan and General Nemens look on, amused. Ann has wrapped Sara in a bear HUG, unwilling to let her go.

ANN

I thought you were going to die.

SARA

So did I for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN

I lost it- I was prepared to shoot that girl's head off when I thought you were....

Ann's chin trembles. She's on the verge of crying again.

SARA

Hey, hey no tears. We survived.
(beat)
Ahh, could you let go now?
Oxygen's starting to become an issue.

They finally break apart.

ANN

Sorry. Guess it hasn't sunk in yet. You being completely healed and all. It's a miracle.

Sara looks at Nathan and Nemens. She quirks a quizzical eyebrow at them.

SARA

What no hugs?

NATHAN

It's ahh, good to see you're alright and everything.

NEMENS

You gave us all a good scare back there.

Someone clears their throat off screen to get the relieved group's attention.

REVERSE ANGLE to see it's Tazul.

ANN

(uncomfortable)
Sorry about the whole threatening to shoot you thing, earlier. I didn't really...I sort of lost it when I saw all Sara's blood and...

SARA

Ann. You're rambling.

TAZUL

I accept your apology. I would have done the exact thing had the situations been reversed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAZUL (CONT'D)
 (smiles devilishly)
 But I wouldn't have hesitated.

Ann laughs weakly, as she gives Sara a confused look, that asks, "she's just joking right?".

SARA
 So how goes the hunt for finding
 us some wheels?

Tazul frowns, confused at the phrase.

TAZUL
 I *assume* by that, you mean
 transport. I had Uvere hack into
 your primitive communication
 systems. One of your
 (struggles)
 Heleeco turns will be at the
 coordinates I provided.

Sara smiles at Tazul's mangling of the word.

SARA
 Thanks.

INT. AURELIUS ROYAL PALACE - THRONE ROOM

Trovenus stares unsure, dumbfounded even. Auron sits calmly in his throne watching him.

AURON
 My father constantly spoke of how
 your grandfather was a great
 mentor to him when he was crowned
 at such a young age.

Trovenus seems to be at a loss for words but he manages to collect himself.

TROVENUS
 My grandfather regaled me with
 those tales as well. I yearned to
 live them myself as a youth. But,
 I'm still uncertain as to what
 exactly, you wish me to do.

AURON
 I am dying. I say this not to
 garner sympathy but out of
 practicality. My wife, bless her
 beautiful soul, passed on some
 centuries earlier. When I do die,
 the seat shall fall to my
 children.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURON (CONT'D)

And there in lies the problem.

(pauses)

I wish for them to both share the throne but it has traditionally fallen to the eldest. I foresee much strife even if my wishes are heard.

TROVENUS

Your children do not get along?

AURON

(chuckles)

They do. As well as siblings can. It's their supporters that do not. I fear shall I die suddenly, the clan will be torn apart by their factions inability to coexist. Something we can't afford at this time of unrest.

TROVENUS

You want me to act as mentor and advisor to your children?

AURON

Yes in a general sense. But what I really desire is someone of your wisdom and experience, able to counsel my daughter. To reel her in from the rash situations she seems to find herself in.

TROVENUS

She's always that reckless?

AURON

(smiles)

Tazul's a wonderful exendenti. Strong minded, brave, willing to die for her clan. Popular amongst the military and citizenry.

(sighs)

But she's not ready to handle the responsibility of ruler, yet. She's easily led astray into "situations". My son fares no better, too easily swayed by ambition and lust for power.

Trovenus processes the information.

TROVENUS

How long do I have to give you my answer?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AURON

As long as needed for you to come to one. Your answer has no bearing on the continual weapon shipments that your people will receive. You have my oath.

TROVENUS

I shall seriously consider it.

EXT. DESERT - MORNING

It's the start of a new day, a magnificent sun rise lighting up the sky.

Ann, Nathan, General Nemens and Sara watch it. Appreciating its beauty and symbolism in companionable silence.

ANN

(breathes in)

God, I love feeling alive.

SARA

Yeah, it certainly beats that dead feeling.

ANN

(play punches her)

You know what I mean.

SFX: FWOOP, FWOOP, FWOOP.

A black helicopter hovers above.

Sand is DISRUPTED as the helicopter comes lower and lower, coming down to land.

Preston sticks his head out as the helicopter lands. Its blades still rotating furiously.

PRESTON

That's all of you?

(off their expressions)

Let's get out of here.

The four quickly pile into the helicopter. It quickly takes off again.

INT. HELICOPTER - MORNING - NEXT

NEMENS

What's the status of the evac?

PRESTON

Almost complete. A staggered evac's the only way to solve the shortage of available off world transport. Priority's been given to injured personnel first.

NEMENS

The evac safety point?

PRESTON

Closest planet with sufficient facilities, to cope with our influx, planet X 272330.

(pauses)

I've been handed the task of informing you that- only three of you could squeeze a lift on the last ship. It's leaving in twenty minutes.

Sara catches the nervous and unsettled look shared between Ann and Nathan.

NEMENS

How many's staying? And for how long?

PRESTON

Last count one hundred and fifty. Can't say. As early as three to four weeks but it could be as long as six months. My bet's on three months. Seems a nice number.

NEMENS

As General I should be the one to remain whilst you-

SARA

No. I'll stay. You three should go.

(to Preston)

You're staying right?

PRESTON

Yeah.....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARA

Then I'm staying. The matter's settled.

NEMENS

You sure? I don't want you to feel pressured into it.

SARA

I'm sure.

Ann PULLS Sara into another bone crunching bear hug.

ANN

No complaining. This has got to last me for the next few weeks or months. You're the bravest person I know. Stay safe for those who love you.

SARA

(smiles)

Ann, I'll be fine.

EXT. IMPERIUM DESTINY - MORNING

The sunlight dances off the sleek metal body of the Imperium Destiny.

Tuval and Trovenus are the only ones still remaining outside the ship. Trovenus has returned to wearing his maroon hooded robes, once more.

TUVAL

You should be there when we return to the Grand War Council with the good news. Enjoy Zamsell's discomfort.

(beat)

What about your family? Don't you wish to see-

TROVENUS

I have already explained my reasons. Please ensure they receive my recording.

TUVAL

I still don't understand completely. Why not return to the retreat? What about the novices?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROVENUS

The novices will understand.

(pauses)

I've found something here, I
thought was forever lost to me.

TUVAL

That is?

TROVENUS

(smiles)

Purpose.

Tuval and Trovenus bear hug.

TUVAL

I shall keep in touch, always.
May Chromati's providence smile
down on you.

TROVENUS

You as well, old friend.

EXT. ISA MAIN BASE - MORNING

Preston and Sara stand amongst the tents. Watching the last
of the white space craft take off in the distance, from the
runway.

The main base is no longer a hive of activity, most of the
personnel gone.

PRESTON

You didn't have to stay for me,
you know.

SARA

Who said I was?

Preston surprises her with a passionate kiss.

PRESTON

(cheeky)

How about now?

Sara leans in intimately close. Her arms encircling him.

SARA

I'm all yours.

Her head rests against his shoulder. Her eyes closing as
she finally relaxes. Safe, for now at least.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESTON

As much as I hate to interrupt
with business. I have to ask- did
you get a clearer idea of what
actually happened, to our missing
personnel?

Sara opens her eyes and looks to Preston.

SARA

Not yet. But I do know someone
who should.

We STAY ON Sara's determined expression for a beat, before
we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW