

EARTHRISE

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## TEASER

EXT. PROXIMA CENTAURI B - SPACE

A forest planet hangs in space lit by the light of it's star.

SUPER: PROXIMA CENTAURI B - 200 YEARS FROM NOW

EXT. A HEAVILY WOODED FOREST - NIGHT

Night life sounds echo through the trees. The peace is broken by humanoid figures racing madly through the darkness.

AWOOOOOOOO!

A howl. One of them looks back and we see it is an AQUATICA INSERE slave, a humanoid with fish like features. The misting device on his neck puffs to keep it's gills moist.

He takes off and gets a few faces before a round ball shaped object zips in front of him and pops open. An energy net envelops the slave, hurling him to the ground.

POP! ZZZMMMM! All over the forest, net pods open capturing other running Aquatica slaves. Out of the darkness steps a CANORA SLAVE HUNTER carrying a plasma rifle.

NEARBY TREES

Four humanoid figures remain frozen watching the scene from a distance. They are a family of cat-like FELINA INSERE slaves. The FATHER'S (20s) ears twitch in anger as he watches the canora tag its prey.

He restrains an anxious TEENAGE GIRL (13) and points as three other canora soldiers emerge to tag their catches. The MOTHER (20s) clutches their BOY (8) to her in fear. As the hunter turns to away the father nods and the four sneak off.

A DISTANCE FROM THE CANORA QUAD

The family quietly slinks through the trees. The boy looks around in fear as they move. A wrapping on his arm catches on a branch, partly pulling it off. A blue hologram encircling his left wrist blares light in to the darkness.

The mother drops to her knees to retie the wrapping, but before she can finish it begins flashing red.

## THE CANORA QUAD

The forearm display of the lead Canora soldier blinks and he whips around and glares into the forest, growling.

## THE FELINA FAMILY

The father looks from the boy to the mother in panic.

FATHER

RUN!

The mother grabs up the boy and they dash away. The three dodge around trees as they pick up speed. A net pod zips in front of the teenage girl and she freezes in fear.

BOOM!!!

A plasma bolt slams into it destroying it.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Three more explode. They look in the direction of the shots-

POLARIS, a figure in black stealth armor, de-cloaks in front of them, helmet concealing her face, plasma gun raised. She holsters it, grabs something from her belt and dashes over

POLARIS

Get down!

They all duck as she throws a softball sized object. It activates and zooms on it's own power into the trees.

POLARIS (CONT'D)

Cover your ears!

## THE FOREST

The ball zooms hundreds of meters into the woods zipping around the trunks. It stops and drops to the forest floor. Vapor sprays out of it.

Four net pods zoom into the air above it and begin buzzing around like flies. Canora soldiers creep out from the darkness sniffing the air. Plasma rifles up ready to fire.

FLASH! BANG!

A light explodes brighter than day as a high pitched screech drives the hunters to the ground clutching their canine ears in pain. The net pods drop nonfunctional to the forest floor.

## THE FELINA FAMILY

The felina wince at the sound and the father slowly stands.

FATHER

Polaris?

POLARIS

Is this all of you?

MOTHER

We're all that's left.

Polaris looks in the direction they came from in regret.

POLARIS

It can't be helped. We have to go.  
That won't keep them down for long.

TEENAGED GIRL

What was that?

POLARIS

Combo pheromone pod, EMP, and  
photo/hypersonic grenade. I call  
them doggie treats. Now move!

## EXT. A LARGE CLEARING - NIGHT

The five figures emerge from the woods and Polaris leads them in a dead run to the center and suddenly stops.

The family pull up short and stare in amazement as in front of them a line of light vertically splits the air revealing the interior of a cloaked shuttlecraft. Polaris gestures them in and the mother and kids don't hesitate.

POLARIS

In you get. Strap in for lift off.

FATHER

Thank you.

She nods and he climbs in, her right behind as the door slides shut. A few moments later the hunters appears out of the woods, looking around in confusion as they hear but don't see the shuttle rocket into the star filled night.

**END OF TEASER**

TITLE SEQUENCE: EARTHRISE

ACT I

EXT. PLANET BAK'LOR - SPACE

The beautiful Earth-like planet Bak'lor spins in space, it's yellow sun glowing warmly in the distance.

SUPER: BAK'LOR, CAPITAL PLANET OF THE BAK'LOREN IMPERIUM

INT. ROYAL FAMILY RECEIVING ROOM, IMPERIAL PALACE - DAY

Large white doors with intricate gold patterns burst open and a visibly angry Emperor ARTORIOUS SYLVANUS (75) storms in.

A member of the human looking Onan race, He wears an open white silk shirt with imperial purple and gold accents showcasing his impressive physique. A hologram baring his rank and the crest of his house displays on his right wrist.

COMMANDER REVA (35), a concerned Canora security officer wearing the standard black uniform follows behind him.

ARTORIOUS

And how does this keep happening,  
Commander Reva. Every day it seems  
yet more news of escaped slaves.

Reva stops at the foot of a raised dais as the Emperor ascends and reclines on an overstuffed lounge.

ARTORIOUS (CONT'D)

Wine!

Human slaves, scantily clad in sheer white silks to reveal their perfect figures, appear from behind the purple curtains hanging between gleaming white pillars surrounding the room. One places a full crystal goblet in his outstretched hand.

REVA

Majesty, the rebels aiding these  
escapes seem to have technology  
that enable them to evade us.

ARTORIOUS

And what do our most gifted  
scientists on Terra have to say  
about this.

REVA

They still study the few pieces of tech we've managed to salvage during our operations. Most self destruct automatically, Majesty.

Artorius contemplates this as he drinks his wine. He turns to the nearest slave.

ARTORIUS

Summon my children. I wish for them to attend me.

The slave bows low and departs to carry out the command.

ARTORIUS (CONT'D)

Perhaps one of them will have an idea on how to deal with this ongoing failure.

EXT. HIGH-END SHOPPING DISTRICT - DAY

The robe clad wealthy, lower nobility, and servants of the same browse among the open air storefronts of high end goods. Jewelry, art, and fashion are on display as GAVRYN CRELLIS (25) moves along the market with purpose.

His open chested white silks mark him as the slave of royalty and people clear out of his way when they see the ordomata hologram on his left wrist indicating his rank of High Attendant to the Royal House.

He stops at the entrance of a flower shop to peruse the blooms on display and the FLOWER VENDOR comes to greet him.

FLOWER VENDOR

Good day to you, Prime Attendant Gavryn.

GAVRYN

You have a lovely selection of flowers today, as always. However, Prince Enki seeks something new.

FLOWER VENDOR

I'm sure I can provide whatever his highness desires.

GAVRYN

Do you have anything from Terra? He has a fondness for their flora.

FLOWER VENDOR

I do, I do! Fresh sunflowers that follow the sun. Roses of every shade you can imagine. A flower they call "Bird of Paradise" is extremely popular at the moment.

GAVRYN

I think he'll want something truly unique. Something that stands out with just a single blossom.

FLOWER VENDOR

Of course! I have a few unique specimens in the back I keep for my most discerning clientele if you have a moment to view them?

GAVRYN

I believe I can make the time.

FLOWER VENDOR

Wonderful! If you'll follow me.

He turns and heads to the back, indicating to one of his assistants to watch the front. Gavryn follows.

FLOWER VENDOR (CONT'D)

I have something truly rare for you called a stargazer lily. A remarkable flower!

INT. FLOWER SHOP BACK ROOM - DAY

The Flower Vendor ushers in Gavryn, closes the door behind them, and activates a hidden device. A faint energy pulses over the walls.

FLOWER VENDOR

There. We can talk freely. What took you so long!

Gavryn reaches into his robes and pulls out a crystal data storage device and hands it to him.

GAVRYN

The Fumentarii are getting paranoid. They've shrunk the window for code authorizations. I had to wait until I knew they'd still be good when needed.

FLOWER VENDOR

Damn.

GAVRYN

It won't be long before we'll need another way to get Polaris and her cargo past the listening posts.

FLOWER VENDOR

I'll put it on the list. For now, I have new orders for you. Directly from Zenobia.

GAVRYN

And what does the leader of the rebellion want now?

FLOWER VENDOR

She wants you to get Enki to Earth.

GAVRYN

You can't be serious.

FLOWER VENDOR

Very. She's arranging an invitation from the Regent to the royal family and you are to see Enki accepts.

GAVRYN

The Regent? They hate each other! Why would she want-

FLOWER VENDOR

I don't know. I didn't ask. If you have questions, I suggest you take them up with her. On Earth.

PLING! Gavryn pulls out a crystal pad and groans.

GAVRYN

Perfect. He's been summoned by the Emperor. I have to head back.

FLOWER VENDOR

And the orders?

GAVRYN

I'll...figure something out.

FLOWER VENDOR

Liberum Terra, my friend.

GAVRYN

Liberum Terra.



INT. ROYAL FAMILY RECEIVING ROOM, IMPERIAL PALACE - DAY

Prince CAECILIUS SYLVANUS (50) strides in scowling. He's dressed in high collar military style white and purple and followed in by a group of felina and canora slaves and Onan military advisors.

He scrolls through the crystal pad in his hand and heads to Reva while his group moves to his dais.

CAECILIUS

So your failures continue to climb,  
Reva. Perhaps your Canora need  
further incentive to show that lack  
of success will not be tolerated.

Reva's ears flatten against his head at the implied threat.

REVA

I can assure you, Highness, we  
spare no effort in pursuing these  
traitors.

AURELIA (O.S.)

Oh, do be sensible, Caecilius.

Princess AURELIA SYLVANUS (40), the incarnation of beauty, floats into the room, a small horde of human and felina slaves trail behind her. Silken robes of white, purple, and gold both cover her and accentuate her perfect figure.

She glides across the room to her own dais. A wine glass appears full in her outstretched hand without a word.

AURELIA (CONT'D)

You always jump right to punishment  
when a more subtle approach so  
often yields better results.  
There's a human saying you really  
should learn, brother. You catch  
more flies with honey.

CAECILIUS

Careful, sister. Your affection for  
the Invere slaves is showing.

AURELIA

As is your contempt for them.

CAECILIUS

I'm content to keep my philosophy  
firmly rooted in the superiority of  
our Onan genetic heritage.

He huffs over to his dais.

ENKI (O.S.)  
Someone's being closed minded  
again!

ENKI SYLVANUS (27) makes his entrance followed by Gavryn. He's the picture of nonchalance. His perfectly sculpted body barely covered by royal silken vestments, he bounds up to his dais and plops down. Gavryn places himself behind him.

ENKI (CONT'D)  
What did I miss?

CAECILIUS  
Nice of you to join us, Enki.

ENKI  
Father summoned and so I came.

Enki pops a grape in his mouth and chews with a smile. He pulls up a holographic display and peruses the information.

CAECILIUS  
Our illustrious Commander Reva reports failure in discerning the secrets of the rebel technology.

ENKI  
Earth can't figure it out? How interesting.

CAECILIUS  
Must you insist on calling it by that human name?!

ARTORIUS  
Stop antagonizing your brother.

ENKI  
(smiling)  
Yes, father.

LUCIUS (35), head of the Imperium's intelligence service, enters. A tall male Felina, he wears a black nondescript uniform, a small golden eye on the left breast. He stops at the foot of the Emperor's dais and bows low.

ARTORIUS  
That will be all, Commander Reva.

REVA  
Yes, Majesty.

He bows and retreats from the room, glaring at Lucius on the way out, which Lucius pointedly ignores.

CAECILIUS

And what does the Primus of the Fumentarii have for us today? More unsubstantiated whispers?

LUCIUS

(to the Emperor)

Majesty, we've managed to identify and eliminate a resistance group on Bellatrix IV. We also captured a small group of Aquatica slaves attempting escape on Promixa Centauri B.

The conversation between Caecilius, Lucius, and the Emperor continues as Enki turns to Gavryn.

ENKI

I hate these meetings. I'll definitely need some wine to get through it.

GAVRYN

Yes, Highness.

Enki leans across the lounge towards Gavryn and flashes him a private smile of affection.

ENKI

I'm bored. Distract me.

GAVRYN

(smiling mischievously)  
Your father might find that disrespectful, highness.

He pours the wine and hands it to Enki.

GAVRYN (CONT'D)

Your wine, my Prince.

ENKI

You're no fun at all.

The Emperor's voice cuts from across the room.

ARTORIUS

You can't be serious!

LUCIUS

The consensus of the Fumentarii is that either the resistance is based on Terra or receives a significant amount of help from there.

CAECILIUS

Palpelia would never allow that. The Concilium would string her up and bleed her dry at the merest hint of a human led rebellion.

AURELIA

Could she be using this as a play to retake the throne for her House? You've yet to name an heir, father, so maybe she sees an opening.

LUCIUS

The Regent of Terra has made her desire to return the throne to House Thurina well known, Majesty.

CAECILIUS

It would be madness of her to even try. She has nowhere near the support in the Concilium.

LUCIUS

Naming an heir could box her out if that is indeed her plan, Majesty.

AURELIA

Have you heard whispers that this is her intention, Lucius?

LUCIUS

Faint ones. The Duchess is most jealous of her Terran intelligence networks, Princess.

Gavryn sighs, not happy with his next move. He leans in close to Enki and speaks in hushed tones.

GAVRYN

I don't mean to speak out of turn, Highness, but there may be an opening here for you.

ENKI

Meaning?

GAVRYN

Volunteering to bear the royal flag to Terra and investigate this rumor surely would raise your standing in your father's eyes. Make being named heir more likely.

Enki considers the idea as he turns back to the conversation.

ARTORIUS

I am deeply disturbed at the idea of Palpellia using this slave runaway problem to her own advantage. Make it known Lucius, I will name my heir by year's end.

LUCIUS

Yes, Majesty.

ARTORIUS

Perhaps one of my children would care to investigate the Terran question?

ENKI

I'll do it!

CAECILIUS

You?

ENKI

Why not? I haven't been to Earth, sorry, Terra, in ages. I could use a vacation.

CAECILIUS

This isn't a vacation trip, Enki.

ENKI

Oh, relax, brother. It'll be a working vacation. Terra is the most beautiful pleasure planet in the Imperium after all.

ARTORIUS

Very well. I expect a full accounting of Palpellia's machinations when you return.

ENKI

Yes, father.

Enki pops another grape in his mouth, satisfied with himself.

INT. IMPERIAL PALACE HALLWAY - DAY

Enki and Gavryn walk side by side down a large hallway.

GAVRYN

Quite a bold move in there. I thought your brother was going to swallow his tongue.

ENKI

I do love riling him up. He makes it so easy. Though don't pretend it wasn't your idea.

GAVRYN

I merely suggested-

ENKI

You merely suggested a course of action that could elevate my position. I'm pretty not stupid.

GAVRYN

I'd never think of you as stupid.

ENKI

You want to be consort to an Emperor, there's no shame in that.

GAVRYN

You know my feelings have nothing to do with your rank.

ENKI

...Yes, I know that.

He stops next to a window and looks out over the capital.

ENKI (CONT'D)

But you got me into this, so I expect you'll be doing your part.

GAVRYN

Meaning?

ENKI

While I'm dazzling Palpellia and the Terran court with my incandescence, you'll be digging around finding out what she's really up.

GAVRYN

Me?

ENKI

Yes, you. Unless your stories about the servants knowing all the palace secrets were all talk.

GAVRYN

Slaves, not servants.

ENKI

Hey, you know I don't think of you like that.

GAVRYN

Not thinking about it like that doesn't make it any less true.

ENKI

I know, I'm sorry. Look, the first thing I'm doing when I take the throne is granting you your freedom. You can stand by my side as an equal, like you deserve.

GAVRYN

And the rest of my people?

ENKI

That's a much longer conversation.

GAVRYN

As long as we have it.

ENKI

We will. I promise.

He kisses Gavryn, smiling before continuing down the hallway.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Now come on, no more doom and gloom. We have a trip to paradise to plan. Any thoughts on a suitable cover story on why the playboy Prince of the Imperium wants to visit that misbegotten hag of a Regent on Terra?

EXT. EARTH - SPACE

The beautiful blue-green sphere of Earth spins, lit by the light from Sol in the distance.

SUPER: TERRA (EARTH)

INT. PALPELLIA'S SMALL RECEIVING ROOM, TERRA - DAY

PALPELLIA THURINA (45), beautiful but stern looking Onan, lounges in her opulent receiving room, ample bosom on display. The many human slaves in attendance are even more scantily clad than their Imperial counterparts.

DRUSUS (30), a tall male Felina stands before her waiting. His Fumentarii uniform similar to Lucius but with colored epaulettes marking his loyalty to House Thurina.

PALPELLIA

So the old fool has finally decided he's going to name an heir.

DRUSUS

Yes, your Grace.

PALPELLIA

Well, that certainly complicates my plans. Any word from our allies in the Concilium?

DRUSUS

Your name is still spoken first- after the three royals.

PALPELLIA

Cowards. What say you, Valeria? Any words of wisdom from the High Administrator of Terra?

VALERIA BEDEX (38, human), stands next to Drusus. Hair pulled back in a ponytail, she's dressed in a white uniform with a high collar mid-thigh length jacket. The blue and green symbol of Earth on her left breast indicating her position.

VALERIA

Profits from the sale of human slaves continue to enrich your duchy, your Grace. Assuming market stability and their continued preference by the gentry of the Imperium, your wealth will continue to eclipse everyone but the royal family itself.

PALPELLIA

Such brilliant analysis of a thoroughly unchanged position. However did you manage to convince my father to grant your freedom?



VALERIA

I asked nicely, your Grace. He appreciated my talents.

PALPELLIA

I'm sure he did.

DRUSUS

If I may suggest-

PALPELLIA

Oh, by all means! Suggest away! I'm sure to be riveted by your insight.

DRUSUS

The Emperor has made it well known his selection will be one of his children, and only those three stand ahead of you in the minds of the Concilium.

PALPELLIA

Yes, Drusus, I know that!

DRUSUS

If such a thing is so cemented in the their minds as inevitable, removing one might shake them enough to reconsider their options.

PALPELLIA

Remove faith in one and you shake faith in them all. Interesting. Such a move would require a considerable scandal to achieve.

VALERIA

There are some things even a Prince is forbidden from interfering with.

She idly raises her right arm, displaying her ordomata.

PALPELLIA

I never realized how devious your mind was, Valeria.

VALERIA

Merely attention to detail.

PALPELLIA

But which one to target?

VALERIA

I suggest the youngest. He is well liked among the youngest nobles in the Concilium and they have no love for his siblings. Shattering their faith in him could swing a considerable number to your side.

PALPELLIA

Drusus?

DRUSUS

I agree. Prince Enki is charming, but as the humans say, is as deep as a puddle.

PALPELLIA

You two rarely agree on anything. Very well. How do we get him here?

VALERIA

The Prince has a well known love for ocean locales and excursions. We've recently finished the new facility on the North American west coast. All the nobles of the Imperium are clamoring to be the first to experience the new crown jewel of Terran luxury. Offer him the first stay. He'll never be able to resist.

PALPELLIA

Raising the profile so even the lower ranked nobles will be clamoring to stay.

VALERIA

Exactly, your Grace.

PALPELLIA

Profit and a step closer to the throne. Perfection. Well, what are you waiting for. Make it happen!

BOTH

Yes, your Grace.

They bow and leave the room. Palpellia puts out her goblet, and a servant hurries forward to refill it.

PALPELLIA

Artorius, you old goat. Soon your throne will belong to me.

INT. CARGO HOLD OF THE SUPPLY SHIP ACER SACCHARUM - SPACE

Polaris stands before more than a dozen packed in insere runaway slaves, mostly Felina, Canora, and Avia families.

POLARIS

We're going on thrusters only  
through this sector. We're cloaked,  
but we need to cut all the power we  
can to ensure we're not detected.  
Try and get some sleep.  
(into comms)  
Begin the power down.

The ships lights lower. The children to whimper and the parents comfort them as Polaris leaves and closes the door.

INT. COCKPIT OF THE SUPPLY SHIP ACER SACCHARUM - SPACE

The door closes behind Polaris. She removes her helmet to reveal DEYANNA CABRERA (30), her dark brown hair spills over her shoulders as she sits in the copilots seat next to her Aquatica pilot, VEL (35).

He's wearing similar armor to hers with the addition of a hydration collar to keep the gills on his neck wet. His webbed hands rest on the controls as his larger than normal eyes scan the asteroid field spread out before him.

DEYANNA

How's it look out there?

VEL

Got a blip on the passive sensors  
at coordinates 102 mark 4. Could be  
an Avia patrol. I adjusted our  
route, but its gonna add hours to  
our trip through.

DEYANNA

They could use the rest.

She reaches over to give Vel's arm a comforting squeeze.

DEYANNA (CONT'D)

Sorry the Aquatica didn't make it.

VEL

Just one more crime the Imperium  
needs to pay for.

DEYANNA

And they will, Vel. They will.

VEL

You need some rest too, Deyanna.  
Get some shut eye. I'll keep watch.

DEYANNA

You sure?

VEL

Yeah, I got this.

Deyanna smiles at him and looks out in space one more time before laying her head back and closing her eyes as the ship slips quietly through the asteroid belt.

INT. ENKI'S CHAMBERS IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE - NIGHT

Enki lounges, idly munching on fruit listening to music as Gavryn enters reading a crystal tablet.

GAVRYN

You're not going to believe this.

ENKI

What?

GAVRYN

(reading)

The Duchess Palpella Thurina, High Seat of House Thurina, Regent of Terra invites Enki Sylvanus, of the House Sylvanus, Prince of the Imperium, to be the first to experience the wonder and opulence of Terra's newest and most exclusive royal vacation destination, Baja Paradisus.

ENKI

Palpella is inviting me to Earth?  
That's unexpected.

GAVRYN

Very.

ENKI

She's up to something. She'd never invite anyone from House Sylvanus without an ulterior motive.

GAVRYN

So its a trap of some kind.

ENKI  
Most likely. I say we spring it.

GAVRYN  
Are you sure that's wise.

ENKI  
I already told father I'd go to  
Earth to snoop for him. Besides,  
how else are we going figure out  
what she's up to.

He takes the pad from Gavryn and accepts the invitation.

ENKI (CONT'D)  
Now, stop worrying. Everything will  
be fine.

GAVRYN  
One of us has to worry.

ENKI  
Not tonight. Now enough of this.

He tosses the pad onto the lounge.

ENKI (CONT'D)  
I'm tired and I want to go to bed.

He kisses Gavryn and heads to the bedchamber. Stripping off  
clothes as he goes.

ENKI (CONT'D)  
You coming?

He passes through the double doors and his pants fly back  
into the room to land at Gavryn's feet.

GAVRYN  
You're incorrigible!

ENKI (O.C.)  
It's why you love me!

Gavryn chuckles under his breath and follows after Enki,  
closing the door behind him.

**END OF ACT I**

ACT II

INT. AURELIA'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

Slaves are scattered about the lavish room ready to serve. A trio of string players provide music. Aurelia reclines with a male and female slave as Enki reclines on separate lounge.

AURELIA

I've noticed you rarely attend our family gatherings with anyone other than Gavryn, brother. You seem quite taken with him.

ENKI

He is enough to tend to my needs. Having so many attendants around just started to seem, excessive.

AURELIA

You're Onan darling. Living life to excess is how we express our thanks to the gods. Why else rule the galaxy if not to relish everything it has to offer?

ENKI

I just think we could be better.

AURELIA

You'll need to rethink that if you expect father to name you heir.

ENKI

What makes you think I want that?

AURELIA

Enki, darling. This newfound interest of yours in the runaway slave problem is fairly transparent.

ENKI

I've been paying attention to it since my mother died.

AURELIA

Your mother always did have a soft spot for the insere.

ENKI

One died trying to save her.

AURELIA

And it may even have earned him his freedom if he'd succeeded, but if you want the Concilium's support you need to show them you'll be the glorious example of hedonism the Onan people expect.

ENKI

Father treated my mother as an equal, this is no different.

AURELIA

Your mother was a noble, a low ranking one, but still. And he kept the harem as was expected. You can never do that with Gavryn.

ENKI

I'm surprised you know his name.

AURELIA

I know a lot of things. Like the fact that someone may decide to use your very un-Onan like behavior to make you politically unsuitable for the throne.

ENKI

Is that a threat?

AURELIA

Merely an observation, dear brother. My machinations at the moment do not presently involve taking down family members.

ENKI

I'll keep that in mind.

AURELIA

Never let them see your weakness. I'd hate to see something untoward happen to you.

ENKI

I'm sure.

AURELIA

Shall I summon our dinner? I am absolutely famished.

ENKI

As you like. I suppose I shouldn't  
begin my journey to Terra on an  
empty stomach.

Aurelia laughs disarmingly and waves at an attending slave.

EXT. DEEP SPACE STATION - SPACE

The Acer Saccharum docks at a space station with large relay  
discs and storage facilities.

SUPER: DEEP SPACE RELAY STATION 5479

INT. COCKPIT OF THE SUPPLY SHIP ACER SACCHARUM - NIGHT

Docking is complete and Deyanna gets up out of her seat.

VEL

The coded message confirmed our  
contact is ready with the extra  
supplies we need, plus the new  
override codes.

DEYANNA

Now all we need is to get it all  
past Petrel.

VEL

Figured out how to do that yet?

DEYANNA

I'll think of something, don't  
worry.

VEL

Who me? Worry?

INT. STATION DOCKING RING - DAY

The air lock opens and Deyanna is greeted by PETREL (35) an  
Avia engineer dressed in a grey utility uniform.

PETREL

Welcome back to the hind end of  
space, Captain Cabrera.

DEYANNA

As always, it is a joy to be back,  
Engineer Petrel.



PETREL

I hope you'll find everything in order for your inspection.

DEYANNA

I certainly hope so. You know how much I hate extra paperwork.

PETREL

We all live to serve the Imperium, Captain.

DEYANNA

As you say. Let's get this over with.

INT. STATION COMM ROOM - DAY

Deyanna is in front of a large display panel built into the wall of a room filled with comm relay stations. Petrel nervously stands next to her watching her analyze readouts.

DEYANNA

Everything looks good. Signal integrity remained well within tolerances.

PETREL

I insist my team follow all the standard protocols to the letter.

DEYANNA

Excellent, if we're done here, I'll head down to oversee the completion of my resupply.

INT. STATION DOCKING RING - DAY

Deyanna looks over a crystal data pad as workers load crates onto her ship. One of them secretly hands off a data crystal to her before heading back into the station. Petrel passes him coming around the corner and walks over to Deyanna.

PETREL

Captain, I've been looking over the supply manifest and there appears to be some discrepancies.

DEYANNA

I'm sure it's nothing to be concerned about.

PETREL

I'm afraid I must insist on a thorough inventory. I can't have my station records-

DEYANNA

You know, Petrel. I noticed you've been skipping the weekly terradine flushing of the back up systems.

Petrel's eye's go wide.

DEYANNA (CONT'D)

You and I both know they only really need to be flushed once a month, but the protocols are clear. I'd hate to have to report it.

PETREL

But, Captain-

Petrel desperately tries to think of a way out.

DEYANNA

I'm sure we can both find a way to overlook these small... inconsistencies. Don't you?

PETREL

Now... now that you mention it, manifest tracking has been glitchy recently.

DEYANNA

I'm sure it's the same problem with the diagnostic logs. Always good to see you, Petrel.

She hands him the pad and heads back into her ship.

INT. PALPELLIA'S SMALL RECEIVING ROOM, TERRA - NIGHT

Palpellia lounges in her dimly lit chambers eating strawberries and watches several scantily clad male and female humans dance erotically to sensually thumping music.

BELCOS (45), an average looking Sanguine Priest, enters the room, stops, and stares at the dancers.

BELCOS

You sent for me, your Grace?

Palpellia looks over at him and smiles seductively.

PALPELLIA

Belcos, do come in and join me.

He crosses the room uncertainly and stands before her.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

I said join me, not stand there  
like a statue.

She pats the lounge by way of invitation.

BELCOS

I'm not sure that would be  
appropriate, your Grace.

PALPELLIA

I decide what's appropriate in my  
own chambers. Now sit.

He awkwardly sits down next to her, looking down at her  
barely covered form. Glancing away he fixates on the dancers  
as Palpellia activates a device on her left wrist.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Belcos, how long have you been the  
Sanguine liaison to House Thurina?

BELCOS

Fifteen years, your Grace.

PALPELLIA

Such loyalty is rare among your  
order. You are loyal aren't you?

She leans forward and begins seductively stroking the back of  
his head with her fingers. His eyes roll back.

BELCOS

Yes, your Grace.

PALPELLIA

Are you loyal to me?

His breathing increases noticeably.

BELCOS

Of course, your Grace. I am loyal  
to you and House Thurina.

The sex slaves are dancing inches from them, overwhelming  
him. He's hypnotized. Palpellia leans in and seductively  
whispers into his ear.

PALPELLIA

Such loyalty may require action on your part. Action some of your fellow priests may not understand.

She strokes a finger over his ordomata. Belcos comes out of the trance a little at the implication. She lightly strokes his ear and subtly turns his head to look at the dancers.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Do you like my Saltator, Belcos?

He nods, sliding into the spell again. She nods at the dancers and tease him with light touches.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Saltator train from childhood in the art of pleasure. Experiencing one is otherworldly, but four...

She licks his ear.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

For that there are no words.

His body shudders, eyes staring hungrily at the dancers.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Such a gift could be yours, if you pledge your loyalty to me.

Unable to tear his eyes off the dancers. He manages to nod.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Say the words, Belcos.

The dancers hands and bodies rub on him from all directions.

BELCOS

I...I...

PALPELLIA

Let me hear you say the words and this can all be yours.

She turns up the intensity of the device on her wrist.

BELCOS

I...I pledge my loyalty and fidelity to you Duchess Palpellia Thurina. My mind and body, whatever you require.

Belcos' eyes go wide. He gasps as they flash with light. The brief fear vanishes. Palpellia sits back and smiles in triumph as she deactivates the mind probe bracelet.

PALPELLIA

Well done, Belcos. Well done. Taste now the fruit of your fidelity.

The dancers disrobe themselves and him, aggressively kissing and licking his body while rhythmically rubbing against it.

With a click the lounge slowly converts into a plush surface big enough for the now five naked bodies. Sounds of sex grow in intensity and Palpellia resumes slowly eating the strawberries. Watching.

EXT. ROYAL STARSHIP BANDĂ SACRĂ - SPACE

Enki's starship soars through space on its way to Terra.

SUPER: ROYAL STARSHIP BANDA SACRA

INT. ENKI'S PRIVATE CHAMBERS ON THE BANDĂ SACRĂ - NIGHT

Gavryn and Enki lay naked in the large plush bed. Enki is cuddled up next to Gavryn, head on his chest.

ENKI

I wish it was all just us and we never had to leave this room.

GAVRYN

People would notice if a Prince of the Imperium disappeared.

ENKI

If they knew what it was like making love to you...

GAVRYN

Maybe.

ENKI

Hey, are you ok? The last two hours notwithstanding you seem distracted ever since we left Bak'Lor. It's not because I brought the harem?

GAVRYN

No, it's not that. I know there are certain expectations for how a Prince must travel.

ENKI

Then what's going on? Talk to me.

GAVRYN

Its just...

He looks down at Enki briefly, looks like he might say something, but instead looks away.

GAVRYN (CONT'D)

It's Earth.

ENKI

Really?

GAVRYN

Yes. I'm worried whatever contacts I have won't be able to help you uncover Palpellia's plotting.

ENKI

I am quite sure you can figure out, whatever it is. I trust you.

GAVRYN

You really do, don't you.

ENKI

Of course! I couldn't have fallen in love with you if I didn't.

Enki snuggles his head back into Gavryn's chest.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Now you better get some sleep before I decide I'd rather go for round four.

Gavryn kisses Enki on the head and plops his head back on the pillow and for a second looks like his heart may break.

**END OF ACT II**

ACT III

EXT. EARTH - SPACE

Earth hangs in space lit by the light of Sol.

SUPER: TERRA (EARTH)

The Banda Sacra exits hyperspace, assuming orbit. A large shuttlecraft departs the ship and begins its descent.

EXT. THE REGENT'S PALACE, BELIZE, TERRA - DAY

The shuttle descends through a clear blue sky over the waters of the Caribbean towards the large, beautiful, and imposing marble structure of the Regent's Palace.

EXT. REGENT'S PALACE PLAZA - DAY

Canora and Reptilia soldiers in their finest dress uniforms fill the massive space in front of the huge palace entrance steps, forming a welcoming honor guard. Nobles and Insere in livery stand by their houses atop the monolithic staircase.

The shuttle descends and settles on the far side of the plaza. A ramp descends to a huge purple carpet.

The massive palace doors open, Palpellia standing at the center. She's resplendently tacky in the colors of her house and wearing the crown of the Regent of Terra. Trumpets sound as she regally moves forward, stopping at the stair-top.

A few moments pass. The doors to the shuttle remain closed. The gathered nobles act restless. Palpellia's face changes from haughty pride to anger. Valeria looks at Drusus and leans in to speak softly to her.

VALERIA

Your Grace? Do you not intend to meet the Prince at his shuttle?

PALPELLIA

I will not descend to greet that overgrown child. I am the Regent of Terra. He can come to me.

DRUSUS

Your Grace, it is tradition for the ruling noble of a planet to greet a member of the Imperial family.

PALPELLIA

Tradition be damned. I will not lower myself to greet that boy.

DRUSUS

Of course not, your Grace. But some may think you assembled this for your own glory, not as a show of respect for the Imperial throne. That could make your future plans...more difficult.

Palpellia looks around and sees the other nobles chatting amongst themselves with furtive glances towards her.

PALPELLIA

Fine! Lets get this over with.

She descends the stairs and is followed by Valeria, Drusus, and a bevy of slave attendants. They make it to the carpet and the door still has not opened. She crosses the entire plaza to the bottom of the ramp and the door remains closed.

She and her party wait. Suddenly, the very air is filled with the sound of horns echoing off the walls. The shuttle doors open to reveal Enki in full royal regalia, splendid enough to make Palpellia look like she's wearing rags.

Palpellia glares up at him unmoving. Enki raises an eyebrow and tilts his diadem adorned head just slightly to the side. She growls under her breath and slowly ascends the ramp. She reaches Enki and bows low.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Welcome to Terra, my prince. All of the Imperium's subjects rejoice at this most auspicious occasion.

ENKI

Thank you for the warm welcome, Palpellia. You needn't have arranged such a glittering assemblage. I'd have been more than satisfied to be greeted merely by the Regent of Terra herself.

PALPELLIA

We could have done no less, your highness.

ENKI

I suppose you're right. It is what the people expect. Shall we?



He walks past her and begins down the ramp. Palpellia is forced to scurry to catch up as Gavryn and the rest follow.

PALPELLIA

I hope you are not overtired from your journey, Prince Enki. I have instructed a feast worthy of you.

ENKI

Excellent! I love a good party.

They reach the bottom of the ramp and Palpellia's group bow low to Enki. He walks right past them and they hurry behind.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Ah, Drusus. Lucius seems to think you're holding out on him with regard to intelligence.

DRUSUS

I can assure you, the Primus receives any and all pertinent information.

ENKI

Oh, I'm sure he does. Lucius thinks everyone is hiding something from him. Still, since I'm here I may as well look over your latest information on any rebels in this sector. Can't be too careful.

DRUSUS

I'll see to it at once, highness.

ENKI

Wonderful. I'll need something to put me to sleep at night. Now, I suppose I should address the assembled crowd?

PALPELLIA

If you wish, your highness. It is certainly not expected.

ENKI

Nonsense. They should know how grateful I am they all came.

He stops just in front of the first row of soldiers and presses a gem on the golden bracelet on his left wrist. His voice echoes throughout the plaza.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Soldiers and citizens of the Bak'Lor Imperium! I bring you greetings from my father, Emperor Artorius Sylvanus. I am heartened by this generous display of solidarity and support for my family and the throne. Rest assured I shall carry back with me your love and devotion, and assure him that the glory and strength of the Bak'Lor Imperium remains undiminished on Terra in the hands of House Thurina.

Cheers erupt. He turns to a red faced Palpellia.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Now, it has been far too long since I've had a glass of wine and I've been anticipating the excellent Terran vintages.

(beat)

You really should get out of the sun, Palpellia. It looks like your fair skin isn't handling it well.

He turns and proceeds through the cheering crowd as Palpellia's face goes nearly purple with rage.

INT. VALERIA'S ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - DAY

Valeria sits behind her massive desk working on multiple holographic screens, conferring with a Felina and human insere. The doors to her office open and Gavryn enters.

GAVRYN

You sent for me, Administrator?

VALERIA

Ah, yes. Prime Attendant Gavryn. We need to discuss some of the requirements for Prince Enki.

(to the insere)

That will be all.

The two insere bow and leave the room and she dismisses the screens. As doors shut behind the departing servants she activates a hidden device and an energy field pulses through the room. She comes around the desk to him.

VALERIA (CONT'D)

We may discuss the matter freely.

GAVRYN

I'm sure there are no secrets I  
have to share with you,  
Administrator.

VALERIA

Men always keep secrets, Gavryn-

Her face breaks into a smile of love and relief.

VALERIA (CONT'D)

-especially from their mothers.

She wraps him in a warm embrace which he returns.

GAVRYN

I've missed you, mother.

VALERIA

I've missed you too, my son. There  
are days I wish I'd never given you  
this assignment.

GAVRYN

The intelligence I've sent has been  
invaluable. It's helped free  
thousands.

VALERIA

As General Zenobia of the  
resistance I can see the value. As  
your mother, I don't have to like  
it. Now, we may as well renew your  
ordomata while you're here.

She places her palm on a spot next to a portrait of the  
Emperor and a full body scanner activates. The picture  
shimmers and disappears revealing a hidden compartment.

GAVRYN

Speaking of. Why am I here?

Valeria pulls out a Sigilium, a rod the size of her forearm,  
from the compartment. Gold in color, a small screen in the  
middle bears the crest of the Imperial Sanguine. Valeria  
activates the screen and a hologram appears.

VALERIA

Hold up your arm.

He holds up his left arm revealing his ordomata.

GAVRYN

Mother. Why am I here?

She manipulates the hologram, matching it to Gavryn's and holds it to his wrist. Blue energy jumps from the device to Gavryn and he grunts in pain and clenches his teeth.

The glow slowly moves up his arm and over his whole body before it retracts and settles on his ordomata and shuts down. He exhales in relief.

GAVRYN (CONT'D)

Gods, I hate that. The gene re-sequencing is very unpleasant. It's painless with the real thing.

He rubs his wrist as Valeria replaces the Sigilium.

GAVRYN (CONT'D)

So are you going to tell me your plan or leave me in the dark.

VALERIA

It's good news. I've decided to reassign you.

GAVRYN

What?! Why? I'm the highest placed asset we have. The information I have access to-

VALERIA

Will soon no longer be a factor.

GAVRYN

What does that mean?

VALERIA

Palpellia is making her move, and has decided to begin with Enki.

GAVRYN

You can't be serious.

VALERIA

I'm very serious.

GAVRYN

And you plan on helping her? She'd be more of a nightmare on the throne than any of them, besides maybe Caecilius.

VALERIA

I have no intention of helping her actually win the throne.

GAVRYN

Then why?

VALERIA

Her pride makes her sloppy, and I can use it stir up chaos in the Concilium. If I play this right I can eliminate both houses and then no one will have the strength to seize the throne alone.

GAVRYN

You're talking about civil war.

VALERIA

That's the only way this ends with our freedom.

GAVRYN

Even if you're right, how does she plan to eliminate Enki, kill him?

VALERIA

She's going to frame him for the theft of a Sigilium.

GAVRYN

How is she going to pull that off? The Sanguine are rabid about guarding them.

VALERIA

She used a mind probe to enslave her Sanguine priest. He'll steal the Terran Sigilium and plant it in Enki's quarters.

GAVRYN

Possession of a Sigilium by anyone other than the Sanguine is treason. He could be executed.

VALERIA

I doubt that. I'm sure they would demand it, but as you've relayed to me, Enki is the Emperor's favorite. He'll survive.

GAVRYN

Don't do this, mother. Enki is no threat to our plans.

Valeria gives her son a hard look.

VALERIA

Why the sudden concern for Enki?

GAVRYN

He's...he's...I...

VALERIA

Oh, my gods. You've developed feeling for him.

GAVRYN

No, it's not that I just-

VALERIA

You have! It's written all over your face. I sent you there to seduce him, not to fall in love with him.

GAVRYN

Mother, listen. I know he's different. If we help him take the throne, he'll help-

VALERIA

Have you lost your mind?! He's Onan! And a Sylvanus! His grandfather is responsible for the enslavement of Earth. Pleasure and power are all the Ona care about. I will not help a playboy narcissist onto the throne just because my son confused true feelings with a good fuck.

GAVRYN

Mother!

VALERIA

No! Enough! I've made my decision.

GAVRYN

But-

VALERIA

Tonight, you are to see he gets to the party and then get on the transport I'll have waiting to take you to a safe house. And you will tell him nothing. Is that understood?

GAVRYN

But-

VALERIA  
Is that understood?

GAVRYN  
Yes, General.

VALERIA  
Good. Now go and get your Prince  
ready for this evening. It'll  
probably be the last dinner he'll  
get to enjoy for a while.

She returns to her desk and watches as her son leaves.

INT. REGENT'S PALACE GRAND HALL - NIGHT

An enormous oval pillared hall is filled to the brim with revelers. Palpellia, Prince Enki and their entourages recline on lounges on a raised dais on one end looking down on the lounges of the gathered nobles.

Servants wend their way between the various groups with food and drink while nobles scheme, gossip, and engage in various levels of amorous behavior.

Live music accompanies the troupe of human and felina dancers entertaining the crowd.

ENKI  
I'll give you this, Palpellia. You  
can certainly throw a good party.

PALPELLIA  
It is my deepest honor to ensure  
the pleasure of my prince.

ENKI  
It seems everyone is in attendance  
this evening. Though I can't help  
but notice the Sanguine haven't  
made an appearance.

PALPELLIA  
They are singularly focused on  
maintaining order in the Imperium  
through the issuance of the  
ordomata. They very rarely attend  
these functions on Terra.

ENKI

Interesting. On every other planet they've seen fit to send at least one representative to the state dinner. Anything here on Terra I should know about?

PALPELLIA

Not at all. The status and rank of everyone is well cared for here by the Sanguine, under my stewardship of course.

ENKI

Of course.

He looks at her in thought.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Gavryn.

GAVRYN

Yes, highness?

ENKI

I seem to have had my fill of these Terran vintages. Send to the ship to have some of my Bak'Loran stock sent down will you.

GAVRYN

I'll see to it, highness.

Gavryn bows and leaves the hall as Valeria watches him go from her place amongst Palpellia's attendants.

INT. REGENT'S PALACE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gavryn strides down the hall past an intersection leading to Palpellia's chambers. He looks down the hall and pauses as he sees Belcos enter. With a deep breath he continues on.

EXT. PALACE - NIGHT

A small side door opens and Gavryn exits. A floating two person transport hovers nearby with its door open, the DRIVER waiting. Gavryn goes to it and puts a hand on to get in and stops. He looks back at the servant holding the door open.

DRIVER

The window won't stay open long. We gotta go.



He tries to get in again and can't make himself. After a deep breath he turns and races back into the palace.

INT. REGENT'S PALACE GRAND HALL - NIGHT

Palpellia eyes the dancer hungrily, eating strawberries. She motions over a slave and whispers to them, pointing out several dancers she's interested in.

BANG! The doors of the room burst open, and five Sanguine priests march in. Nobles and slaves part like water as they drive through them and stop before Palpellia. The music halts. She rises to her feet in mock rage.

PALPELLIA

What is the meaning of this? How dare you interrupt the welcome celebration of our beloved Prince Enki?

High Priest LORNO (50) glares at Palpellia before answering.

LORNO

The Duchess should be well aware the Sanguine would not interrupt such an august gathering without sufficient reason.

PALPELLIA

What reason could that possibly be?

LORNO

Theft of the Terran Sigilium.

He turns and holds up his right arm to reveal his ordomata has gone blood red to the gasps of the assembled crowd.

LORNO (CONT'D)

The holy relic that marks us all and maintains the ordered stability of the Imperium through our sacred genetics is gone.

He turns and hurls an accusing finger at Palpellia.

LORNO (CONT'D)

As Regent of Terra, you, Duchess Palpellia Thurina, are charged with its safe return and with the punishment of whomever committed this sacrilege.

The entire assemblage looks up at Palpellia with baited breath. She pulls herself up to her full height.

PALPELLIA

Drusus!

DRUSUS

Yes, your grace?

PALPELLIA

Lock down the palace immediately. No one goes in or out without my explicit authorization. Begin a search of everywhere and everyone.

DRUSUS

At once, your grace.

He scurries off.

PALPELLIA

I pledge to you all I will find the person who has committed this most heinous act of blasphemy. This treason against the very Imperium itself! We will recover the sacred Sigillum and I swear in the name of the Emperor himself that the one responsible-

She glances briefly in Enki's direction.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

-no matter their rank or position, will pay the price of their transgression.

**END OF ACT III**

ACT IV

INT. REGENT'S PALACE GRAND HALL - NIGHT

A muted buzzing of voices fills the halls as the assembled crowd waits expectantly. Palpelia remains on her lounge, Valeria at her side. Lorno and the other priests wait stoically for news of the search.

Drusus sweeps back into the room. It falls hushed as everyone waits on his report. He stops in front of Palpelia.

DRUSUS

Your grace, security confirms none have left the palace grounds since before the Sigilium could have been stolen. We have swept the perimeter and searched every slave and free Onan and are convinced the Sigilium has not left the building.

PALPELLIA

Good news at last. Tighten the sweep to the main palace.

DRUSUS

Already done, your grace. Only the Grand Hall, the chambers of your grace...and Prince Enki...remain.

Enki sits up on his lounge in sudden interest.

PALPELLIA

Scan this room immediately and let us see if the traitor is among us.

DRUSUS

At once, your grace.

He pulls out a device and begins a sweep of the hall.

ENKI

Such efficient security, Palpelia. To have conducted a thorough search so quickly. One might assume you were prepared in advance.

Drusus finishes his scan and returns to Palpelia.

DRUSUS

The Sigilium is not in this room.

VALERIA

That just leaves the rather delicate question of who's chambers are to be searched first, your grace. Yours, or Prince Enki's.

Shocked voices roll through the crowd. Enki glares at Palpellia. She smiles back at him.

PALPELLIA

I have nothing to hide of course.

VALERIA

Prince Enki?

He looks back and forth between Palpellia and Valeria, recognizing the trap he's been caught in. Then he smiles.

ENKI

What a wicked imagination you must have, Palpellia. The very notion I would steal it is absurd.

LORNO

Then you consent to having your quarters searched, your highness?

ENKI

Of course not. Imagine what my father would say about the precedent that sets.

LORNO

A crime of this nature overrides even the protections of the crown, Prince Enki.

ENKI

Not without proof. And so far I've heard none.

PALPELLIA

I can't help but notice your Prime Attendant has been absent for some time, highness. Where might he be?

ENKI

You heard me send him to arrange for wine from my ship.

PALPELLIA

Yes, I did indeed.

She looks at Drusus.

DRUSUS

Apologies, Highness, but no transmissions have been sent to your ship and he is one of the few my Fumentarii have yet been able to question.

PALPELLIA

Wherever could he be, Prince Enki. Your chambers perhaps?

Enki opens his mouth to answer but is at a loss.

LORNO

I must insist on the searching of your chambers, Highness. I'll send word to have the Emperor order it if necessary.

ENKI

Fine. In my presence.

LORNO

As is your right, Highness.

Enki glares at Palpellia, who smiles back in pure triumph.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ENKI'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Belcos overrides the locking mechanism to the doors and slips inside leaving the door slightly open. Gavryn emerges from the shadows and quietly follows him in.

INT. ENKI'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Belcos opens the doors from the antechamber and sneaks into the dimly lit bedchamber. He looks around the ample circular room and his gaze settles on the large bed with silken drapes spilling down from the ceiling.

He heads across the room, pulling out the Sigilium.

GAVRYN (O.S.)

I'm pretty sure I'm the only one with rights to that bed.

Belcos spins and sees Gavryn silhouetted in the doorway.

GAVRYN (CONT'D)

Now what would a Sanguine Priest be doing sneaking around the bedchambers of the Prince with a stolen Sigilium?

Gavryn strides towards him as Belcos looks down at the Sigilium in his hand in panic. He opens his mouth to try and speak and seems unable to form words.

GAVRYN (CONT'D)

Perhaps you're here to plant it? On orders from the Duchess in some futile attempt to frame him?

Gavryn stops before the panicked priest and stares down.

GAVRYN (CONT'D)

Now that, I simply cannot allow.

EXT. SUPPLY SHIP ACER SACCHARUM - SPACE

The ship careens through a chaotic nebula. Charged lightning flashes past the ship as it dodges around plasma funnels.

INT. COCKPIT OF THE SUPPLY SHIP ACER SACCHARUM - SPACE

Vel and Deyanna are strapped in their chairs as the ship shakes around them, Vel's hand firmly gripping the steering column and eyes locked on the nebula outside and the up front holographic sensor readings as he pilots the ship.

VEL

Remind me to thank whoever got us override codes for this sector.

DEYANNA

Come on, Vel. You know you love it. Living on the edge. Besides, it's just a light breeze for you.

Vel yanks the controls and they barely miss a plasma column that appears out of nowhere.

VEL

I prefer light breezes on a beach.

DEYANNA

You hate the beach.

He yanks it again, barely missing an asteroid.

VEL

Exactly.

DEYANNA

You'll get us through, Vel. You always do.

VEL

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

He yanks again as an ion charge flashes outside.

INT. CARGO HOLD OF THE SUPPLY SHIP ACER SACCHARUM - SPACE

The escaping slaves are securely strapped to anything that's tied down. The felina family hold each other tight, as the ship around them shakes and jerks wildly. Sounds of fear and terror mixed with crying fill the hold.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ENKI'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT

Enki approaches the doors to his chambers accompanied by Lorno, Palpellia, Valeria, Drusus, and a group of Canora soldiers following close behind.

ENKI

I assure you, Lorno. I have nothing to do with whatever is happening-

He comes to a stop in front of the doors as he sees them standing slightly ajar. He flings them open in concern and rushes through.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Gavryn!

INT. ANTECHAMBER OF ENKI'S CHAMBERS - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

Enki dashes into the room. Followed by the rest.

ENKI

Gavryn?

He stops in shock as he sees the form of Gavryn back out of the bedchambers slowly, his clothing disheveled and torn.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Gavryn, what's going on?

Gavryn turns to him slowly.

GAVRYN

He...I...

Lorno appears next to them peering into the bedchambers.

LORNO

What have you done?

Enki looks past Gavryn and sees the very dead body of Belcos, bloodied and mangled. The entire bed chamber is in shambles. Furniture smashed. Tables overturned. Glass strewn across the floor. Enki steps back and looks at his lover.

ENKI

Gavryn?

Gavryn says nothing. He merely looks at Enki in pleading and holds up the Sigilium, smashed and damaged beyond repair.

LORNO

By the gods!

PALPELLIA

Drusus! Arrest the Prime Attendant for crimes against the Imperium and the blood.

Enki stares helpless as guards surround Gavryn. Valeria barely contains her panic.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Take him away and have him questioned so we can determine how high this conspiracy goes.

**END OF ACT IV**



ACT V

INT. ENKI'S CHAMBERS IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE - NIGHT

Palpellia stands triumphant as Lorno takes the broken Sigilium from Gavryn and the Canora begin to escort him out. Gavryn looks pleadingly at Enki.

ENKI

STOP!

The Canora guards freeze in their tracks.

ENKI (CONT'D)

You will not take him away for questioning until I am convinced it's warranted.

LORNO

My Prince, we found him in with the stolen Sigilium standing over the body of a dead Sanguine priest.

ENKI

Which does not prove he had anything to do with the theft.

LORNO

We must question him, Highness. To determine what happened here.

PALPELLIA

Are you suggesting your slave is above the scrutiny of Imperial law?

ENKI

Not at all. But in five years, he has given me no reason to doubt either his loyalty or his veracity. Before anyone takes him from me, I will ask him what happened.

LORNO

That is highly irregular, highness.

PALPELLIA

I agree. How can we be sure we're getting the whole story?

ENKI

Enough, Palpellia. What are you insinuating?

(MORE)

ENKI (CONT'D)

That I am incapable of judging my own slaves? Or are you mad enough to accuse a Prince of the Imperium of orchestrating the theft of a Royal Sigilium?

Palpelia draws herself up and opens her mouth to answer-

VALERIA

I'm sure her grace is making no such accusation, Highness. She's merely pointing out the uncertainty of the protocols involved in such an unprecedented event.

She looks at Palpelia knowingly, who reassesses.

PALPELLIA

Administrator Bedex...knows my mind on this.

ENKI

The protocols can be addressed once I know they're necessary. Now, you may all stand witness.

He strides over to Gavryn, waving the Canora guards back. Gavryn continues looking down as if in shock, unmoving.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Gavryn?

He doesn't look up. Enki grasps his shoulder gently with one hand and softly lifts Gavryn's head to look in his eyes.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Gavryn. Are you with me?

GAVRYN

Y...yes...yes, my prince.

ENKI

I need you to tell me what happened here. How did the priest die? What happened to the Sigilium?

GAVRYN

I... I... I...

PALPELLIA

Clearly the slave has lost his faculties. Let the Sanguine see what they can get out of him.

Enki cuts a withering glare at her.

ENKI

He is my responsibility until I  
relinquish it, Palpellia. Now stay  
silent and in your place if you  
wish to keep it.

She reacts as if slapped and stands there quietly fuming.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Gavryn, it's ok. I'm right here.  
Now, tell me what happened.

GAVRYN

I...I had gone to tell the steward  
to send for supplies from your  
private stock on the ship.

ENKI

Go on.

GAVRYN

I decided to come to your chambers  
and call directly and make sure  
your favorites were included... I  
saw the priest sneaking in. So...I  
followed and confronted him. Then I  
saw the Sigilium in his hand...

ENKI

What then?

GAVRYN

He...he...attacked me. Tried to  
kill me. Screaming something about  
his loyalty to the duchess. He was  
mad. I tried my best to save the  
Sigilium, my prince. I tried...but  
there was nothing...

He breaks down in tears and Enki comforts him and then helps  
him to a chair. He turns to Palpellia and Lorno.

ENKI

He has answered for his actions to  
my satisfaction. No further  
questions of him will be necessary.

Lorno glares at Palpellia.

PALPELLIA

But surely we will need more than  
his word. A formal questioning-

ENKI

I'm sure the Sanguine will have questions for you regarding this incident, Palpellia.

LORNO

We most certainly will.

PALPELLIA

(shock)

But how can we be sure that's even what happened?

ENKI

Let's confirm it, shall we?

(to Drusus)

I presume you have the hallway outside my chambers monitored for security purposes?

DRUSUS

We do, Highness.

He pulls up a holographic screen and scrubs through footage of the hallway until the screen fizzles to static.

ENKI

Well, it looks like someone didn't want to be seen.

DRUSUS

My apologies, your highness. This shouldn't be possible.

ENKI

Hmm...Fortunately, I have security protocols of my own.

He activates the gold cuff on his left wrist. A hologram with the hallway at a different angle appears. He scrubs forward and stops on an image of Belcos at the entry pad, the Sigilium visible in the open satchel at his side.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Well, would you look at that.

He starts it and Belcos opens the doors slipping inside, followed shortly by Gavryn. He freezes the image and looks at Palpellia. Lorno gives her a hard look then bows to Enki.

LORNO

Apologies for invading your private chambers, Prince Enki. Clearly something else is going on here.

He cuts a glance at Palpellia.

ENKI

Think nothing of it, Lorno. You were merely doing your duty. Now I believe this concludes your business here this evening. Kindly dispose of that—  
 (indicating Belcos' body)  
 —as you leave.

Palpellia fumes. Drusus, Lorno, and Valeria bow low to Enki.

DRUSUS

At once, Highness.

He motions and the Canora guards make haste to clear the body away and exit the prince's chambers.

LORNO

Duchess, if I may confer with you?

She glares at Enki before marching out, Lorno on her heels.

VALERIA

I've summoned servants to address the needs of your bedchamber, Prince Enki.

Servants swarm through the doors as Valeria gestures instructions to them. Enki's slaves appear and stand ready.

ENKI

Your efficiency is a wonder, Valeria. Come, Gavryn, let us relax while the administrator's bees do their work.

Enki heads to the main lounge with Gavryn. As they sit, they're handed full goblets and Enki takes a sip.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Ah. Nothing like a fine vintage for the end of such a taxing day. I do hope the Duchess is not being too inconvenienced.

He clinks his goblet against Gavryn's and settles back.

EXT. REGENT'S PALACE PLAZA - DAY

The sun rises over the gleaming white palace.

INT. PALPELLIA'S SMALL RECEIVING ROOM, TERRA - DAY

Palpellia bursts into the room in a rage. Valeria and Drusus stand waiting. She grabs an ornate vase and hurls it against a wall and it explodes into thousands of pieces.

VALERIA

The conversation with the Sanguine  
did not go well, your Grace?

PALPELLIA

No, they did not go well, Valeria  
WINE!!!

She thunders across the room towards her lounge. Servants swarm from the alcoves and a full wine glass appears in her hand as she plops onto the lounge in frustration.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Gods I hate having to ask for  
things. Can no one do anything  
right around here?!

The servants look abashed and confused.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Get out! GO!!!

They disappear as quickly as they came.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

Those pompous fools questioned me  
all night about that idiot, Belcos.  
Me! Regent of Terra!!! Duchess of  
House Thurina!

DRUSUS

And did you assuage them of their  
concerns, your Grace?

PALPELLIA

You mean did I divulge the details  
of the disastrous plan I let the  
two of you talk me into? No. I  
managed to convince them it was a  
single priest's obsession and a  
misguided effort to impress me.

VALERIA

That satisfied them, your Grace?

PALPELLIA

Well enough that they won't be seeking any further action against me. They've decided the humiliation of this event before the Concilium is punishment enough.

VALERIA

Before the Concilium?

PALPELLIA

I am to make a formal report to them regarding this incident explaining why Sanguine priests may no longer serve as house liaisons for longer than two years. This will take MONTHS to recover from. In the meantime that idiot of a prince gets closer to a crown that should rightfully be mine.

DRUSUS

How so, you Grace?

PALPELLIA

Lorno is giving credit for solving this incident to Enki as a way of apologizing for "the intrusion on the royal presence."

DRUSUS

That is...unfortunate.

PALPELLIA

Unfortunate?! I should have thrown both of you to the wolves for suggesting this entire endeavor.

She lets that hang in the air for a moment.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

But as it is I need both of you to help me contain the fallout from this mess.

Valeria and Drusus exchange looks.

PALPELLIA (CONT'D)

I cannot, however, let that fop of a prince off for what he's put me through. Find me something, Drusus. Something. ANYTHING, I can use to string that boy up for good.

DRUSUS

Yes, your Grace.

PALPELLIA

Now go, both of you. And Valeria, send in my harem on your way out.

VALERIA

Which ones today, your Grace?

PALPELLIA

ALL of them! I have extra stress to work out today. And tell them to bring plenty of strawberries!

INT. VALERIA'S ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - DAY

Valeria enters her office, closing the door behind her. Gavryn stands up, turns to face her, and activates the privacy function. As it pulses through the room, she stomps across and slaps Gavryn full in the face.

VALERIA

What were you thinking?!!!

GAVRYN

I guess I deserved that.

VALERIA

You absolutely deserved that!

(hugging him)

Your whole life I've never been more frightened for you. The Sanguine would have left you in pieces.

GAVRYN

I think there was little chance of that, mother.

VALERIA

I gave you a direct order-

GAVRYN

You ordered me not to tell him about the plot, and I didn't.

VALERIA

No, instead you killed a Sanguine priest and destroyed a Sigilium. How could you be so careless?



GAVRYN

You know me better than that.

He grins at her mischievously and pulls out an undamaged Sigilium. She stares in shock before taking it.

VALERIA

But...how?

GAVRYN

I smashed the resistance copy badly enough they'll never know it wasn't the real thing and stashed this.

VALERIA

But how did you get it out of-

She indicates to the hidden compartment.

GAVRYN

You gave me access when I was 15.

VALERIA

That was a hell of a risk you took.

GAVRYN

And it was worth it. Now the resistance has an official Sigilium. Our agents will no longer need to renew their ordomata to remain undercover.

Valeria crosses to the safe and opens it, putting the Sigilium inside.

VALERIA

Sometimes you're too clever for your own good.

She reseals the safe and turns to look at him.

VALERIA (CONT'D)

Don't think I'm unaware this wasn't just for us.

GAVRYN

I'm right about him, mother. Enki is a good man. He can help us.

VALERIA

What if you're wrong? Are you prepared to choose if it comes down to him or the mission?

GAVRYN

That will never happen.

VALERIA

I hope not, for your sake. Because as much as I love you, Gavryn, if you force me to make that decision for you; if it comes down to your prince or the freedom of our people, I will burn the whole of Bak'Lor to ash, and I'll use him to light the pyre.

EXT. PLANET BAK'LOR - SPACE

The capital of the Imperium spins in space.

SUPER: BAK'LOR, CAPITAL PLANET OF THE BAK'LOREN IMPERIUM

INT. ROYAL FAMILY RECEIVING ROOM, IMPERIAL PALACE - DAY

Enki stands before his father's raised dais, Gavryn attending him, having just finished reporting back on his trip to earth. His brother and sister and the requisite servants are in attendance. Lucius stands just to his father's right hand.

ARTORIUS

A most interesting adventure you seem to have had, my son.

ENKI

It was an eventful trip, father. Certainly eyeopening.

ARTORIUS

A Sanguine priest violating his vows to impress a noble. Who ever heard of such a thing. Lucius, you truly had no knowledge of this?

LUCIUS

Drusus was just as baffled as we are, your majesty.

ARTORIUS

Was he now. Well, Enki, you've definitely impressed me.

CAECILIUS

Father?! He utterly failed in his mission to bring back evidence of rebel activity on Terra.

ENKI

You're right, brother. What I did was uncover a plot designed to frame me, embarrass the royal family, and put Palpellia a step closer to the throne.

AURELIA

Well said, brother. You are cleverer than you look.

ENKI

Thank you, sister.

CAECILIUS

But-

ARTORIUS

I am satisfied in this matter, Caecilius. Your brother may not have made progress on uncovering how the resistance is spiriting our slaves away, but he did manage to take that sow Palpellia down a few pegs and bring honor to House Sylvanus. Well done, my son.

ENKI

Thank you, father.

ARTORIUS

Keep this up and you may yet earn the title of Crown Prince. Now, go. Enjoy some well earned respite.

Enki bows and exits the room followed by Gavryn.

INT. ENKI'S CHAMBERS IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE - DAY

Enki and Gavryn enter the prince's antechamber as slaves are setting out food and drink.

ENKI

You may all go. I wish to be alone with my Prime Attendant. See we are not disturbed.

They all exchange knowing glances, bow, and exit. Enki activates the privacy field and pours them both wine.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Quite a successful trip. My father seemed very impressed.

GAVRYN

Impressed? He practically named you the heir! It's everything we could have hoped for.

ENKI

Hmm...is it?

GAVRYN

What do you mean.

ENKI

Is it everything WE could have hoped for?

GAVRYN

Wha- Of course. Why wouldn't it be?

Enki sits on the lounge and indicates Gavryn to join him.

ENKI

I've been meaning to thank you for taking care of that priest for me. Such a thorough job you did. Looked like he put up quite a fight.

GAVRYN

It surprised me as well. Didn't think he had it in him.

ENKI

I'm sure. Too bad the Sigilium was destroyed.

GAVRYN

Yes... What is this about?

Enki leans over and looks into Gavryn's eyes.

GAVRYN (CONT'D)

Enki, what are you doing?

ENKI

Trying to decide if I'm a great fool or you are one of the best liars I've ever met.

GAVRYN

(laughing)

Enki, if this is one of your foreplay games it needs more work.

ENKI

Does it.

He activates a holographic screen in front of them. Enki's chambers in the Regent's palace. Gavryn swallows hard.

GAVRYN

There were recording devices in the bedchambers?

ENKI

They're mine. Sometimes you need to be away and I'd rather watch us than visit my harem.

GAVRYN

Enki, I-

ENKI

Shhh. Keep watching.

The screen shows Gavryn speak to Belcos, then Belcos tries to dash past him and Gavryn effortlessly snaps his neck. He stands over the body for a moment, then bends and swaps out the real Sigilium with the one concealed at his waist.

He then slowly and methodically smashes the room with the body of the dead priest and the fake Sigilium.

GAVRYN

Turn it off!

He leaps up and across the room. Shoulders heaving in panic.

ENKI

You know, I thought my brother was ruthless. But this?

GAVRYN

(turning to him)

I can explain.

ENKI

Oh, please do. I'm sure it will be a most impressive story.

GAVRYN

Enki, I've never-

ENKI

Never what? Lied to me? I think we both know that's not true.

GAVRYN

I...

ENKI

For five years I have trusted you.  
For five years I've given you my  
body, mind, and soul. I've shared  
my bed only with you, something my  
people famously do not do. I've  
told you the secrets of my heart,  
things I've told no one else.

GAVRYN

I know-

ENKI

And now to find out it's all been  
based on a lie!

GAVRYN

No! Not a lie. Yes, I've kept  
things from you. And it killed me  
every minute not telling you. But I  
never lied about loving you.

ENKI

Then what is this?! Explain it.

GAVRYN

I... I... I can't.

Enki looks at Gavryn. Crestfallen. He turns his back on him.

ENKI

Go.

GAVRYN

Enki-

ENKI

Go. If I can't trust you... I'll...  
make up some excuse about the  
trauma you endured on Terra. No one  
will question it. Just go.

Gavryn tries to speak. Nothing. He turns and walks to the  
door. Reaches out to open it- and can't. He turns back.

GAVRYN

How much do you love me?

ENKI

What?

GAVRYN

How much do you love me?

ENKI

How can you ask me that?

GAVRYN

Because I do love you. So, I'll tell you the truth. Once I do, you'll have to make a choice. One that will change things forever. So, how much do you love me?

Enki crosses the room to him and takes his face in his hands.

ENKI

With all I have and all that I am.

GAVRYN

(aside)

Mother's going to kill me.

ENKI

What?

GAVRYN

My name isn't Gavryn Crellis, it's Gavryn Bedex.

ENKI

Bedex, you mean Valeria-

GAVRYN

Is my mother. And she's not just the Chief Administrator of Terra, she's also General Zenobia, leader of the Resistance based on Earth.

ENKI

You're a rebel spy.

Enki walks over to the lounge and sits down hard.

GAVRYN

Five years ago I was sent here undercover. I've used my position to acquire information and to help thousands of slaves escape.

ENKI

No wonder the resistance is always one step ahead.

Gavryn nods and sits next to him.

ENKI (CONT'D)

Why did you kill the priest?

GAVRYN

Palpelia mentally compelled him to plant the Sigilium. My mother went along with the plan because she thought it would lead to the civil war she believes is the only way to free our people.

ENKI

Not a bad plan. Would have been rough for me though.

GAVRYN

I disagreed. I think there's a better way, but she ordered me to stay silent.

ENKI

So you killed him-

GAVRYN

I saw an opportunity to swap our Sigilium copy for the real thing, and to protect the man I love from being framed for treason.

Enki gets up and crosses the room in thought.

ENKI

You said you had a better way? A better way to free your people.

GAVRYN

Yes. To put you on the throne.  
(crossing to him)  
You are the kindest and most generous Onan I've ever met. I've seen your heart. I know you know the slavery has to end.

ENKI

You really think I can win the throne?

GAVRYN

I do.

ENKI

Then let's make a deal. You help me secure the throne, and I promise once I'm Emperor I'll free your people.

Gavryn smiles widely and shoves out his hand to shake Enki's.



GAVRYN

Deal.

Enki looks down at it confused.

GAVRYN (CONT'D)

It's an old Earth custom. You shake it to signify an agreement.

ENKI

Can't we just fuck instead? Our way seems much more fun.

Gavryn laughs and throws his arms around Enki.

ENKI (CONT'D)

My brother will kill us if he learns what we're up to. As for my sister-

GAVRYN

Then we'll face them as we've faced everything. Together.

EXT. HIDDEN PLANET OF FREEHOLD - SPACE

A blue-green planet circling yellow star hangs in space, both surrounded by a purplish blue nebula.

SUPER: HIDDEN PLANET FREEHOLD

EXT. FELINA VILLAGE - DAY

The Acer Saccharum shuttle roars out of the sky and settles down on the outskirts of a Felina village. A nearby lake sparkles in the sun. Adults emerge from the village to greet it and children scurry about them in laughter.

The doors open and the two felina adults slowly step down from the craft with their children. Deyanna appears in the open doorway, helmet on, and steps down as well. META (40), felina leader of the village steps forward and greets them.

DEYANNA

Four more for you, Meta. It's been a rougher journey than most.

META

Welcome to Freehold! Our hearts rejoice seeing more of our family home. Come. Rest from your travels. There is food and drink for all.

MOTHER

Is this...is this real?

META

Yes, sister, it is real. Your journey is at an end.

FATHER

How can we ever thank you, Polaris?

Deyanna removes her helmet and smiles back at him.

DEYANNA

No thanks are necessary.

FATHER

You are Onan?

DEYANNA

Free human, but sister to all insere, free and slave alike.

META

Will you stay and dine with us?

DEYANNA

I wish I could, but override codes only last so long.

META

Good journey then. May we see you again soon.

MOTHER

Wait. There must be something we can do to repay you.

DEYANNA

Welcome those who come behind you with open arms. And live. You have made it to the promised land. You are free.

Deyanna boards the shuttle, its engines already spinning up for lift off. As the doors shut, the adult felina gather and welcome the new arrivals. The shuttle lifts off as the Boy joins the other children running and jumping in the grass, his laughter mingling with the chorus of others. Free.

FADE TO BLACK.

**TO BE CONTINUED**