

## Chapter 6: The Furies

(A series of distorted, disconnected messages. Voices of C and B levels from the past)

(Sci fi door opens)

Jin: Navi. (Navi panting, as if she had been running fast) Is something wrong?

Navi: Jin, come with me. I need to show you something.

Jin: Ok, just give me a few minutes, I need to finish adjusting the...

Navi: Now. I need you to come with me, now.

Jin: Ok. (The two leave the room in a hurry) Where are we going?

Navi: Derry's room. The console in his chambers. Everyone in the ship needs to see this. (Navi uses the hair sample to open the biometric access point. Keyboard strokes) Do you know what these are?

Jin: The ship's master table. Coordinates. Earth, the Solar System, the Local Group.

Navi: The original navigational plans for the ship. The ones that we've been completing. Now look at this. The original data log for the ship. Remember how I said we needed to run tests, to

get read outs on the ship's mass, it's energy output? Look here. Look at what it says, for the ship's tonnage. And engine power.

Jin: Zero pounds, zero miles per hour. What does that mean?

Navi: The simplest parts of the whole design, missing. It means that the original plans were never lost, Jin. They were deleted. Derry deleted them. He never wants this ship to get to its destination.

Jin: Why would he not want that?

Navi: There's something else. Come with me, to the Simulator. (Door opens, handheld console starts up) The Simulator draws from the Archives. But other things can get in there, too. It has a kind of memory of its own. Especially when it's being used so much. It took some digging, but I found a server with old corrupted files. Watch.

(Distorted sound, and choppy, half-finished recordings of Derry interacting with unknown crew members)

Jin: There's so many.

Unknown Crew Member: You need to let me into the Archives, we have to find the ship's destination!

Derry: All things in their time, my friend. Patience is a great virtue...

Jin: I can't believe how many of these there are. And how far they go back. (Terrified pause) How...old is Derry? This is more than just one generation before me. This is far, far more.

Navi: I don't know. I really don't know. (Takes a deep breath) We need to do something about this.

Jin: I know. We need to show everyone aboard the ship these files. But Derry will see to it that never happens. (Sighs) Ok. I have a plan.

Navi: What? What should we do?

Jin: Wait in your room for a couple hours. Just...act normal. Do work, watch something, don't let anyone who might see you think something's amiss. I'm going to speak with Libby. I'll come to you when I'm done.

(Sci-fi door opens)

Libby: Jin! I haven't seen you in ages. What have you been up to?

Jin: I'll explain later. But right now I need your help.

Libby: About what? Is...everything all right?

Jin: We don't have much time. Please pull up the crew member charts from the Archives. I want to look at their access credentials.

Libby: Yes sir. (Keyboard typing) There they all are. Which one are you looking into?

Jin: Derry.

Libby:...sir?

Jin: Can you lock the access on his file?

Libby: May I ask why?

Jin: We need to be the only ones to access the Archives. Navi and I. So please. Block the biometric access, and allow us to upload our own.

Libby: You're asking me to block Derry's biometric access, in favor of your own? This feels like mutiny. I need a very good reason to do this, Jin. And I will be mentioning this to Derry, by the way.

Jin: We found some files, on old, unused servers hidden in the Archives. There were...recordings, of people I never knew. People well before my time. Derry's been up to more than we could have ever imagined. Everyone on the ship needs to see what he has hidden in the files.

Libby: (Tensely) Sir...I think it is within my rights to now invoke Article 3 of the Chain of Command Protocol. There is clearly a conflict within the A level unit, so per the letter of Article 3 I am permitted to refrain from acting until I have double authorization.

Jin: I'm not asking you as an A level, Libby. All of that...it needs to go away for good. Derry can't be trusted anymore. He's trying to play us against one another, to sabotage the navigational plans and any chance of finding a new planet. I want to get into his personal files and find out

why. In the mean time...Navi and I are going to address the crew as a whole. There has to be a new way of doing things, a way that will be better for all of us. That's why...I come to, not as an A level. My whole life I've just been an A level. An engineer, a function of this ship. You're the only one I ever felt like I could trust. You practically raised me. For someone just hatched from a frozen embryo, you were the closest thing to a...(emotional, cuts himself off). I really need you for this, Libby.

Libby: I remember when you were a kid. You were always so curious. I was a C level, teaching you the basic functions of the ship and lessons from the Archives. Every lesson ended up being twice as long as planned. When teaching basic repairs, if I showed you one wire, you wanted to know how it was connected to the entire ship. If I showed you the story of the Mission, you wanted to know the names of every person who had ever been aboard. You always had so much enthusiasm for everything. (Sighs) And I too, always felt like I was just a function of something or other. Everyone just asking me to perform a role. With you...I saw you grow up, Jin. I've always wanted what's best for you. You know, you've never talked to me about Navi.

Jin: I feel like I've talked about her a great deal.

Libby: Her function, yes. Her role, yes. But how do you feel about her?

Jin: (Pause) She's...incredible. She really is incredible.

Libby: I think she could make you very happy. I would love to see that.

Jin: So will you help us then?

Libby: (choosing her words) I will help you. I will do what's best for you. As always.

Jin: Thank you. It's going to be soon. I'm not sure exactly, but I'll tell you then. When we make a move, he may try to seize control of the ship's functions. I need you to write a secret override so we can prevent him from doing that. Give us control of the ship, shutting and locking the doors, accessing the security drones.

Libby: (Deep breath) I want you to know that I genuinely care for you, Jin. That's why I want to tell you now, you're not the first person to try to overthrow the order of the ship.

Jin: What?

Libby: When I was young...you weren't even hatched yet...there was conflict between Derry and the A levels at the time. It boiled over into violence. A number of C and D levels were killed in fighting.

Jin: You've never said a word about this before.

Libby: It doesn't make for the most pleasant conversation. Derry prevailed...he had the support of the majority of the C levels. So that decided it.

Jin: Then we'll gain their support. Everything we're proposing will directly benefit them.

Libby: It won't be that easy. They're not likely to change from what they've always known. You're liable to get yourself killed if you go through with it.

Jin: There's no choice. Derry is going to prevent us from getting to Empyrean. We either make a stand here, or all die anyway. Navi and I are going to act no matter what. Now, will you help me with this?

Libby: I'll do what's best for you, Jin.

Jin: Good. (Softly) Thank you, Libby. I'll give you a signal when it's time to act.

Libby: Very well. I'll wait for the signal then.

(Navi's chambers)

Navi: (Device starting up) Hello? Is this recording? Testing, testing. (Plays speech back) Ok. Hey Cus, it's Navi. I mean, Jan...(with a laugh) Me. It's me. I just wanted to say hi. I hope they're treating you better back there. I had Libby send some things back to you, I hope they got there. Still working on bringing you up here, but they're pretty resistant to it. I have a plan to fix that though. In the mean time...I know it must be boring and lonesome back there. I patched through an update to that console by the boilers where we always watched things. You should be able to access it yourself, to watch things from the Archives in your spare time. All you have to do is...(Sci fi door opens. Navi swears under her breath, and begins typing on a keyboard to give illusion of work)

Flo: Hello.

Navi: Hey!

Flo: Just hear to change your sheets and gather any dirty clothes.

Navi: Yes, thank you. They're in that bin in the corner.

Flo: Very good. I'll change the bed first. (Works for a moment. Navi clacking away on keyboard)  
So how's the work going?

Navi: Good. It's...very difficult, but I'm making progress at least.

Flo: That's good. (pause. Then, with hushed awe) So you really think you found a new planet?

Navi: Well, I didn't find it. But yes, it's real. No doubt about that.

Flo: Incredible. Can you see it?

Navi: No, not really. You can't really...see Empyrean. It was too far away from Earth's telescopes when it was discovered. But by analyzing the patterns and disruptions in electromagnetic waves coming from it, we know the planet is rich with water and oxygen.

Flo: Wow....and you know how big it is?

Navi: Yes. You can calculate its size by measuring the effect of gravity on the wavelengths coming from it. It's about Earth's size. Very reasonable gravity, maybe a little lighter than Earth's. Its distance from its star is such that the temperatures are very mild. And that rotation of the planet....short winters, long, gradual summers.

Flo: Are there living creatures on it?

Navi: (pause) Yes, I...think it's reasonable to assume there are. With all that water and oxygen and position from its star, it's an ideal climate for carbon based lifeforms to develop.

Flo: Thinking, intelligent creatures? That could build ships such as this?

Navi: I'm not sure about that. No radio signals or other signs of high technology were detected from the planet.

Flo: So no high tech people. Still...creatures, animals. Plants too?

Navi: That's even more likely. The oxygen and CO2 colorings suggest a bounty of vegetation.

Flo: I can't wait to see it. (Goes back to work) I work with plants and flowers a lot. In the greenhouse. That's why I'm Flo the Flower (chuckles). I'm sure you'd consider it a waste of time. What's growing flowers compared to navigating between galaxies?

Navi: No, no I wouldn't. I really don't know anything about plants or growing. You do it all yourself?

Flo: Yes. Just me in the greenhouse, for the most part. I maintain twelve beds of soil samples, and monitor the carbon dioxide and nitrogen levels consistently. I have to justify diverting nitrogen from the ship's supply every so often, but it's not too much, so I get away with it.

Navi: Is that where food is grown?

Flo: No. Much more efficient to use molecular templates and chemical printing for bulk food orders. Growing plants is more recreational. I try to have a variety at all times. Hydrangeas, water lilies, lilacs, tulips. I'm always trying something new. Would you like me to bring you some flowers? Liven up this space a little.

Navi: Yes, I would like that very much. Thank you.

Flo: All right. I think I have something special in mind for you. Well, I won't bother you anymore. Good luck with your work, Navi. I mean that.

Navi: Thank you, Flo. (Flo exits. Navi goes back to recording a message for Cus) Sorry, I got distracted. All you have to do is enter your name as a password in the main screen and you should be able to get into the console. There's one more thing. We're about to do something big, something that's never been done before. And it might be dangerous. So whatever happens to me, just know how much I care about you, and how grateful I am for everything you've done. Things are going to change here. I'll see you soon, Cus. I promise. Not down in the back of the ship. Up here, with everyone else. (Recording ends)

(The main assembly of the ship)

Derry: Good evening, everyone. Unfortunately this meeting must be brief. I will get to the point immediately.

Mech: (Under his breath) That's a first...

Hun: Shut up!

Derry: I know your daily lives are filled with a great amount of stress. The mental requirements of our lot in life are indeed quite strenuous. I am afraid that our two chief analysts, Jin and Navi, have succumbed to these pressures. They have become angry, erratic, wholly unbalanced. I believe that they will act rashly in the coming days.

Nut: How so? Are they gonna do somethin'?

Derry: I'm not sure. This is why I address you all as one. There are many things we do not enjoy in our daily lives. But your perseverance and faithfulness to the greater good has kept us all alive so far. So, if they decide to act in some brazen, dangerous way, I must ask that you do what is best for the ship. What is best for the greater good.

Flo: So is there not a new planet we're going to? Was any of that true?

Derry: I'm afraid not, my dear. My initial suspicion proved to be correct—that talk of a new planet was the D level girl's gambit for gaining leverage over us. I fear that this deception has taken on a life of its own. They will use the false promise of a new world to coax you all into doing more and more work, with little in way of reward.

Mech: It has been a brutal couple of weeks.

Nut: I'll say. My legs are still killing me.

Derry: Related to that topic, I think it would be appropriate for me to reward the extra work you've been burdened with. If Jin and Navi are removed from their posts, in a temporary, disciplinary fashion, of course, the excess energy and food templates currently in their use can be redirected to the rest of you. Larger energy rations means longer recreational hours, and larger food rations, with a richer, greater variety of options (the C levels all whisper excitedly)

Mech: That does sound pretty nice...

Nut: Sir, can I speak?

Derry: Yes, by all means.

Nut: I was just thinking, I don't know Navi really. But Jin always seemed like a nice, fair fella. I can't imagine him going crazy and trying to get us all killed like this. Is there a chance maybe this is all a big misunderstanding?

Derry: I wish it were, good lad. But Jin has been in this stressful position for a long time. He is no longer the dutiful, compassionate young man we all once knew. That is why I believe it is time for a series of promotions. Mana, your competence, reliability, and great wealth of experience would make you a fitting replacement.

Mana: Sir....thank you, sir.

Derry: Hun and Mo, you are two truly focused and energetic young people. I think you could ably step into the gap created by this situation, and rise to the occasion as B levels.

Mo: Thank you, sir!

Hun: It would be an honor.

Flo: Sir, what about Libby? Does that mean she's being demoted as a B level?

Libby: Yes....does it mean that?

Derry: Of course not. There is plenty of work to go around still. She is as capable as anyone for her role. She will remain in her position.

Libby: Thank you, sir.

Derry: I believe this is the best course of action for the ship. Are there any objections?

Bree: No. By all means...(venomously) Send her back to where she belongs...

Mech: Whatever. I guess nothing's really changing....

Hun: That's the spirit, Mech. You're a real go-getter.

Derry: Are there any objections, from the current B levels?

Mana: Well...(thinking) no...Per Article 5 of the Chain of Command Protocol, it is possible to demote a member of the ship if approved by popular consensus. Which is what we're achieving right now.

Derry: I'm glad you understand that. Libby?

Libby: (Tense, unhappy) No objections.

Derry: Good. As of right now, Jin and Navi are officially demoted. Now this doesn't mean things need to escalate further. Give them a wide berth for now, I will try to talk to them and make them understand their new roles, and what they can do to redeem themselves. Otherwise, we'll continue with business as usual. Please meet here at this hour tomorrow for a play's rehearsal. I believe I've selected one with a very appropriate theme....

Navi: Ok, so let's go over the plan again.

Jin: When they gather in the main hall tomorrow for rehearsal, we give the signal to Libby. She'll override Derry's security clearance, locking the doors to the hall and giving us access to the security drones. Then we'll speak to the group. We'll bring Cus up from the back of the ship, and make Derry open up access to the archives. And open up any personal files he has, so there are no more secrets on this ship.

Navi: I think we need to be in the main hall with them, when we make the address.

Jin: That's too dangerous. They could overpower us.

Navi: Not if we have the security drones protecting us! We need to be with them, in person. As a show of good faith. To show that we're trying to help them, not dominate them.

Jin: Yeah...that's true. That's a good point.

Navi: You are certain we'll have access to the drones, right?

Jin: Yes. Libby said she would help us. Hun and Mana bluster about their importance, but Libby really is the key player. She knows all the systems. If she turns on Derry, he doesn't have a chance. And there's no one I trust on the ship more than her. (Warmly) Her, and you...

Navi: I'd say the same for you. Now how will the C levels react when we do all this?

Jin: I believe they will support us. The whole point of what we're doing is that they won't be C levels anymore. They'll be allowed into the A level suites, they'll have access to the archives. They'll have an actual stake in the society of this ship. How can they say no to that?

Navi: That's true. (Takes a deep breath) If anything happens to us...

Jin: We'll be fine...

Navi: But if something does...

Jin: We'll find each other. I promise.

Navi: (Takes a deep breath) Are you ready?

Jin: (On a handheld com device) Libby. Now's the time. We're heading up to the bridge. (Clicks off com device) I'm ready.

(The main hall)

Mech: (clears throat) "Oh king Apollo, since right well thou know'st, What justice bids, have heed..." (groans loudly) Why I am I saying all of this again?

Mo: Hold! Remain at your marks. Mech! I swear, you are such an idiot at times. (steps forward)  
Now, as your stage manager, why do we need to hold again?

Mech: I just don't get the scene. What's the point of it, again?

Derry: You are the hero, appealing to the gods for their intervention against unjust fate.

Mo: Yes, the hero appealing to the gods. That is why you need to step out...**BOLDLY**...and  
**PROJECT**...for once in your life...so we, as the audience, can understand the stakes.

Mech: But, why am I appealing to the gods? I still don't understand.

Mo: Do I have to hold your hand for everything, Mech? It was like this when you were all small children. I suppose you don't remember that. I herded and corralled you back then, too.

Derry: I can answer your question, Mech. This play, from Aeschylus, is actually the first known depiction of a trial in history. Reason and due process, gifts of the gods, if such gifts ever existed, intervening against the emotional lust for revenge. Carry the scene not just for your character, Mech, but for all that will come afterwards. A quote that may give context: "Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about. All democrats object to men being disqualified by the accident of birth; tradition objects to their being disqualified by the accident of death."

Mo: Yes, carry the scene for all that will come after. It is quite important, after all. All right, everyone, places again! We're going to take it from the top, again! (Giggles) I actually rather like doing this. You are easier to shepherd around now that you're grown.

Flo: Bree, can you adjust my wings? I can't quite reach the clasp, it's beneath my shoulder...

Hun: You don't have to worry yourself with that, Bree. Don't leave your mark. Flo, hold still, I'll get it.

Bree: The Erinyes, immortal spirits of vengeance...with cardboard wings that need to be adjusted constantly...

Mo: What was that?

Bree: Nothing...

Mo: For that, Bree, I'm going to need you to be off book for the remainder of the night.

Bree: What? Really? Just me?

Mo: Yes, just you. And we'll do as many retakes as we need. It's important to get you up to speed with memorization. Ok everyone...places. From the top (claps).

Nut: Ok, from the top, from the top.... (Clears throat) 'First, in this prayer, of all the gods I name...' (There is a sudden sound of electronics powering down. The metal doors all shut) What the hell?

Flo: What's going on?

Mech: We're locked in!

Mana: Libby, can you get access?

Libby: I...don't know...(The others whisper in confusion)

Derry: (Calmly, wryly) Now for the real performance of the night...

Jin: (Over the intercom) Please be calm, everyone.

Navi: You aren't in any danger. We don't mean you any harm.

Jin: But we need to discuss some things, all together. Libby, if you will...

Libby: Yes, sir...(Libby punches a code into a console. The doors reopen)

Mana: Libby, what are you doing?

Hun: You're in on this with them, huh?

(Computer voice) Security drones, activating. (Hulking metal footsteps)

Mech: What are those things...

Mo: Stay back everyone! Get away from them! (The group crowds over in the hall. The drones enter the all, along with Jin and Navi)

Navi: I'm sorry we have to bring these.

Jin: They're for our protection.

Navi: But it was important that we speak to you, in person. All of you. We only want what's best for you. We're all stuck on this ship together. Our fates are all intertwined.

Jin: But something has gone very wrong here.

Navi: We have some things we need to show you all.

Mana: This is a violation of every single protocol in the book..

Derry: This display does not make you seem very friendly, or trustworthy...

Navi: Once we show you, you'll all believe. We'll power the security drones down then. But we need you all to come with us, to the A level suites. The order of this ship needs to change.

Nut: Ok, I guess we'll come with. (Mech slaps Nut on the shoulder) Ow!

Mech: You're just going to go along with this?

Nut: I don't know. Aren't we always just going along with something or other?

Flo: Navi, what kind of things do you have to show us?

Mo: Shut up, Flo. Stand back...

Derry: See everyone? I believe this proves my point about them.

Hun: Everyone keep back!

Mana: Stay clear of the security drones.

Jin: Easy, easy.

Navi: Please believe us, we don't mean any harm.

Jin: Libby, shut the doors behind us. We'll come forward...show that we don't mean any harm.

Libby: Yes sir. (The doors shut)

Navi: I have had, in the last few weeks, more happen to me than in the rest of my life. So I understand if you are feeling overwhelmed or confused.

Jin: But you will all see how a new order will change things for the better. Derry has been lying to you and manipulating you from the beginning.

Navi: We're going to show you all the secret files from the archives. The things he has been hiding.

(The others begin whispering)

Flo: Is it true?

Derry: Do you hear them speak, my friends? I'm the same person I've always been, a humble director of plays. And now they accuse me of being some great villain...I wish I was that impressive. They are clearly delusional with conspiracies.

Hun: Can we deactivate the security drones?

Mana: No...we don't have the access codes.

Mo: Who does?

Mana: Libby...

Jin: Libby, stand over here. (Libby moves) Behind us.

Libby: Yes sir....

Bree: So you are with them, Libby?

Hun: Mech, Nut, on the count of three, you're going to attack the security drone on the right...

Mech: What?

Nut: Those metal arms are the size of girders...

Hun: You're going to fight to defend your ship, or else you'll be charged for treason.

Mo: Same for you two, Flo and Bree. The one on the right...

Flo: We could get killed...

Mo: Do as I say!

Libby: (Almost tearfully) Jin...please. We need to de-escalate this. I can't let them get hurt...

Derry: No you can't, Libby. No you can't....

Jin: We can't back down, Libby. We have to see this through. We have to stand together. You really thought you could turn Navi and I against each other, Derry?

Derry: I didn't think I could turn you two starry-eyed young upstarts against each other, no. I did, however, believe I could goad you into doing something as stupid and dangerous as this. It seems as though I was correct...Libby, if you will.

(Libby sobs a little, and punches a code into the console)

Computer Voice: Security drones, deactivated.

Jin: What?

Navi: Oh no...

Jin: Navi, try to get them back up...

Navi: (Entering a code) I can't...she changed the code...

Derry: Please escort Jin and Navi to their new quarters in the back of the ship. Don't harm them. But they will need some time to think on their actions...

Hun: Grab them!

Nut: Jin, if you'll come with us...

Jin: No, get away from me!

Mana: Here, grab his other arm! (A struggle as the C levels overpower Jin and Navi)

Navi: Stop, get away from me!

Bree: Quit fighting! It's over.

Mo: You're only making this worse...

Derry: Be sure to keep them separate from each other...

Jin: Libby, how could you do this?

Libby: I'm sorry...I just didn't want anyone to get hurt...

Jin: Navi!

Navi: Jin! (Hun and Mo laugh, the cries of Jin and Navi fade away as they are carried off to be imprisoned)