



Scene 3B: Cuckoo in the Nest

Year 4398 (in the Modern Calendar)

Location:

In a large, theater-style Blue Phoenix, Inc. conference room, with 3d-projection equipment and the latest communications gear.

In 4395, following pre-established procedure, Taylor decided to let those in Falcon IV die to prevent the possibility of a bioweapon plague. Kevin Isley's body was left behind on the IMS-10. The Falcon IV capsule burned upon re-entry, in an unavoidably public and shocking manner. The video of the astronauts' funeral, with empty caskets, grieving spouses, and weeping children, left an indelible image connected with Blue Phoenix in the minds of the Emeran public. With no concrete proof about what happened, worldwide media - particularly the Tursan media - decided it was technical incompetence and gross mismanagement that led to the casualties. Attempts at alternate explanations were taken as a cover-up.

Business slowed. Investment dried up. As the months passed, the situation stabilized. As a monopoly in the space industry, Blue Phoenix could ultimately recover.

And then last night, the media was afire with the news: Tursa has launched a massive, vintage behemoth of a rocket, a class of vessel that has not flown in nearly seventy years. This morning, the vessel docked with IMS-10, and within an hour, IMS-10 was said to be open, operational, and occupied. Tursa has re-entered the space race with a vengeance, and Blue Phoenix must step up the tempo of their efforts, or resign themselves to playing second fiddle.

C. J. Orkney has called this meeting on how to keep Blue Phoenix's ambitious agenda for space, including the manned moon mission. It would likely require substantial extra funding from somewhere. But where?

In the end, it's **C. J. Orkney's call**. C. J. Orkney built Blue Phoenix from nothing, and if you're going to sell out to anyone, C. J. Orkney is going to be the one to smile and shake their hand.