

[Scene 4C]

C. J. Orkney

Reth this. You hate losing your last chance to launch, your last chance to prove to those fools in the Parliament that you were right all along, your last chance to prove Blue Phoenix's viability in space - which would bring in the money you need to continue. You would give anything to finally finish what you started so many years ago. Almost anything; you are **not** going to lose Taylor on a rushed rookie flight on untested equipment, no matter how much expertise is sitting in the other seats.

The problem is that you wouldn't make any deal for the Tersan bioweapon from IMS-10, even though you knew it could come back to haunt you. It was a gamble, maintaining a moral stand, not responding to the lucrative bribes and favorable contracts in exchange for providing samples to the Emeran military. There were even feelers from the Dribians, offering large sums of money and promising to bribe the right officials to look the other way at treasonous actions.

As a result, Blue Phoenix is in a real financial bind. You've quietly mortgaged everything you own, sometimes more than once, in order to get Phoenix One off the pad.

When it was clear that you were not going to supply the bioweapon, your enemies in government and business tipped the balance against you, pushing the Parliament to cave to greed and Tursan pressure. The call made it clear - they're coming with overwhelming military firepower and overwhelming legal firepower - big guns and warrants for everyone's arrest, on a litany of flimsy charges and manufactured crimes. You'll be so tangled up in trouble that you won't be able to make the necessary payments, and Blue Phoenix will slip from your grasp, into greedy hands with no vision, who will sell your technology and your spacecraft for military use. Emera will never reach Bery. Fools! Morons! *Rething* idiots! A wet kestrel still flies!