

[Scene 4E]

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 after the disaster of the Falcon IV at IMS-10, investors became very skittish. You knew the Emeran military was interested, so you made a quick deal, before they could figure out just how big of an advantage they had in the negotiations. If you hadn't, the government wouldn't have given you those lucrative contracts and cash under the table, all of which you've plowed back into Blue Phoenix. You thought that the deal would have purchased you a little more time, but clearly the Parliament has caved to greed and Tursan pressure. There are commercial enemies who want to get at your technical expertise, the military wants more access to your spacecraft, and the Tursans don't like easy Emeran access to space. The government thinks they can handle this better if they have it all under their control. Emera will never reach Bery. Fools! Morons! *Rething* idiots! A wet kestrel still flies!