

INT. TRANQUILITY DINING ROOM

All are present except Gonzo, who is still on the bridge. Sergio and Autumn, now fully clothed, relate their story as the others listen intently.

SERGIO

Captain, you asked why the Syndicate wants me...us...so badly. It's complicated. I'll streamline it as best I can. I assume we're running out of time before you have to turn us in.

Nika checks her timepiece.

NIKA

26 minutes.

SERGIO

For some time now, at the behest of the Coalition of Planets, my research has almost exclusively been in the field of teleportation.

VAL

Really? You mean like "Beam me up, Scotty"...that kind o' thing?

SERGIO

If that is a Star Trek reference, then, yes, that sort of thing.

AUTUMN

And it's closer to being a reality than you might think, thanks in large part to my husband.

CAPTAIN

I'm guessing the Syndicate wants that technology all to themselves.

SERGIO

It would seem so.

NIKA

And you end up in those pods how?

INT. SERGIO'S RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY [FLASHBACK]

The following events unfold as they are described...Sergio in his lab with Autumn...both are knocked out, injected with a serum, and dragged into another room, where the pods await them.

AUTUMN (V.O.)

Kidnapped...with the assistance of Sergio's own staff. Apparently, the Syndicate had infiltrated his research complex. He was working late. I stopped by for a visit. We were in his lab when suddenly, everything went black.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TRANQUILITY DINING ROOM - NIGHT

LIZZY

But why both of you?

SERGIO

My wife is an accomplished medical doctor and surgeon, one of the Coalition's finest. I'm sure the Syndicate greatly values such services. Plus, she would be insurance to make sure I do as I am told.

NIKA

Captain, we can't turn them over to the Syndicate. We've already forfeited our payoff anyway.

JEB

You don't know that for a fact. Long as they get these two, what does it matter if they're in pods or not?

NIKA

Because we violated the contact. They will use that as an excuse not to pay us!

JEB

Oh...so we go on the lam from the Syndicate...that's real smart!

VAL

Nika! Jeb! Enough!

Nika and Jeb settle back into their chairs with Jeb sporting that familiar scowl once again.

VAL (CONT'D)

As captain, it is my decision. I will do what's best for this crew...and my ship.

Just then, Gonzo's voice is heard over the intercom.

GONZO (V.O.)

Captain, the syndicate ship has hailed
us.

Val walks over to the dining room comm and picks up the handset.

VAL

(over the comm)

Be right there.

(to the others)

Well...I guess it's showtime.

NIKA

Captain...what are we going to do?

It's obvious from his facial expression and posture that the
Captain is agonizing over this decision and hasn't yet made it.