

## [Scene 4D]

### 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. As things got tighter and tighter, the offers from the Emeran military got tougher and tougher; they'd give you money, but you'd have to mortgage your soul to the military. All of your plans would stretch out further and further, giving them more and more opportunity to put Blue Phoenix completely under their control. 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 really struggling, 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 auditing firepower - big guns and tax accountants to ferret out any financial "improprieties". 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!