STARBORN

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FADE IN:

INT. CARGO SHIP - COCKPIT

FONIX's uniform is somber and worn just like his demeanor. He
is focused and meticulous as he tailors his settings;
adjusting the pilot's seat and rearranging controls on the
holographic dash.

                    ENGINEER (V.O.)
          Should be a quick fix... It's the
          old spare's last voyage out, before
          retiring. You're getting up there
          too, veteran. Heard your department
          is looking for some new blood with
          fresh skills. That's a bummer.

Fonix grimaces.

                    ENGINEER (V.O.)(CONT'D)
               (chuckles)
          Anyway, she should hold in one
          piece by the time you return.

                    FONIX
               (sarcastically)
          Thanks.

                    ENGINEER (V.O.)
          Alrighty, good day to --

Fonix cuts off the communication. He flips some switches on
the dash. The ship, STARBORN, shivers alert.

There is a symphony of BEEPs and RINGs as diagnostics run
through a variety of holographic ship-diagrams.

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          Hello Driver! I am 51-03-Starborn.
          What shall I call you?

Fonix's face contorts as he glances menacingly up at the
ship's speaker box on the ceiling.

                    FONIX
          Great. He didn't tell me it was an
          AI ship.

Stiffly taking the controls Fonix commands the ship into
flight.

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          Hello, Great! What a strange name
          you have... I like it!

                    FONIX
          Its not Great... I mean my name,
          it's not Great...
               (sighs)
          It's Fonix. Keep quiet will you.

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          Sure thing, Great Fonix!
               (pause)
          What are we carrying today? It has
          been a sol since I was last
          commissioned.

Starborn waits for Fonix to reply; he does not. Rather, he
focuses on preparing the ship for FTL (Faster Than
Lightspeed).

EXT. SPACE - TERRA ORBIT

Space warps in on itself swallowing Starborn into FTL.

INT. CARGO SHIP - COCKPIT

Fonix slumps back into his seat focusing his attention on the
holographic ship log.

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          I see our destination is Theca. I
          hear it is very lovely there.

Fonix's muscles tighten.

                    STARBORN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
          However, I have been told there is
          a place more beautiful than any
          planetary environment...

Swiftly Fonix stands on his chair taking hold of the voice
box on the ceiling.

                    STARBORN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
          ...the solar field -- What are you
          doing, Great Fonix?

Gritting his teeth Fonix ruthlessly rips off the speaker's
cover.

                         STARBORN (V.O.)
              If you remove my voice I will not
              be able to communicate with you.
              Additionally, it is dangerous not
              to have a functioning system that
              informs you of important
              notifications.

                         FONIX
                   (through gritted teeth)
              I don't like talking ships.

Fonix digs around in the speaker.

The ship's THRUMMING pulses and its holographic projections
transition to an intense lambent.

Fonix's demolition halts as he hears subtle CLANKING coming
from outside Starborn's hull.

The ship jerks nearly knocking Fonix out of his seat --
turbulence ensues.

Orange warning lights flash on the dash.

                         STARBORN (V.O.)
              Alert! Incoming debris.

                         FONIX
              What? But we're still in FTL...
              Right?

                         STARBORN (V.O.)
              Anomaly detected... It seems we
              have passed through an unstable
              zone in the channel.

Noticing a variety of blimps on the radar, Fonix slides down
into his seat and opens the viewing screen.

Outside the ship's hull is a blanket of swirling space
debris.

Without warning a massive asteroid jumps into the FTL stream.
It hurtles toward them with imposing speed.

Fonix freezes.

                         STARBORN (V.O.)
              Proximity alert! Collison in 56.87
              Seconds... Fonix...

INT. MILITARY VESSEL - COCKPIT - FLASHBACK

War's chaos unfolds outside. Debris and explosions threaten
to strike the vessel's hull with great devastation.

Holding the flight controls steadily, Fonix weaves the ship
around danger.

Debris closes in on Fonix's sides, pinning him. The only
escape, the opening ahead, becomes blocked as an enemy vessel
storms his way.

The enemy vessel's weapons charge...

INT. CARGO SHIP - COCKPIT - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

                    FONIX
               (blurts)
          Evasive Intrepid Six!

A BELL chimes, Starborn accepts Fonix's command...

EXT. SPACE - FTL CHANNEL

With bewildering agility, Starborn rolls then pitches itself
close to the asteroid's surface.

The ship surfs its vapors escaping the onslaught unscathed.

INT. CARGO SHIP - COCKPIT

Fonix is clenching the dash with all his might. He gazes
around slightly disoriented.

He focuses on the FTL channel. Noticing they have escaped the
debris storm he closes his eyes -- relaxes.

Suddenly his eyes open widely, and they dart up to the
speaker with astonishment. He jumps out off his seat and
takes a step away from the dash.

                    FONIX
          Y-you knew the code... How?

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          While it has been many cycles, I
          can still accept those codes.
          Though they forced me into
          delivering cargo my main function
          remains the same... At my core I am
          still a military vessel.
                    (MORE)

                         STARBORN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
                    (pause)
          ...So, you are a Warden? I forgot
          how fun it is to have a Warden
          aboard!

                         FONIX
                    (waves hand)
          Wait... What?

Fonix scans the ship taking a better look at its details.

                         STARBORN (V.O.)
          Why are you not serving now? Did
          they decommission you too?

                         FONIX
          Yeah. You're a Delta-flyer.

                         STARBORN (V.O.)
          Correct!

                         FONIX
                    (to self)
          Heh! What in the world?...
                    (to Starborn)
          I didn't know there were anymore
          Flyers left.

                         STARBORN (V.O.)
          I did not know there were Wardens
          this far out. But yes, most of my
          counterparts have been
          disassembled... however I was sold
          to service as a supplemental fleet
          ship for the Garage.

                         FONIX
                    (under breath)
          Humph, of course. We put our lives
          on the line just to be thrown away
          like old rags.

                         STARBORN (V.O.)
          That code you issued, it is a rare
          command. It is interesting you
          would have such a risky maneuver
          memorized... The last time I used
          that code was during the siege on
          Koi. Five enemy vessels had a
          platoon cornered in a cavern
          ravine. That maneuver saved the
          platoon and dismantled the enemy
          vessels in 70.5 Seconds.

                    FONIX
          Koi! Who was your Driver, Starborn?

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          Captain Hyperion Blain, Commander
          of the 51st StormEaters... he was
          my closest friend.

Fonix closes his eyes and shakes his head. A broad smile
cracks across his face.

He sits back in his seat.

                    FONIX
          Ha! He was my mentor.
               (gestures to speaker)
          How, in all the billions of stars
          in the galaxy did Hyperion's ship
          end up delivering cargo with me?

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          Hyperion's student...

                    FONIX (CONT'D)
               (under breath)
          What are the odds?

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          Did you serve on Koi?

                    FONIX
          I did. Not long though. I saw you
          then...
               (laughs)
          This is so weird.

The ship's holographic projections shift to a warm glow.

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          It is strange. However this event
          has made me very happy. It is good
          to be useful again. I never thought
          I would hear a military command or
          even speak to Warden again.

                    FONIX
          Yeah, guess I should be thankful
          you were able to execute the code
          in time or we'd be both dead.

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          Although some of my gears need
          oiling, my processor is still
          brisk.
                    (MORE)

                         STARBORN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
                    (upbeat chime)
               Thank you for noticing.

Fonix smiles awkwardly.

A notification lights up on the holographic display
indicating they have reached Theca.

Fonix diverts his attention to the flight controls. He flips
some switches.

EXT. SPACE - THECA ORBIT

Through a patch of warping darkness, Starborn emerges boldly.
The ship initiates burn, stabilizing it into Theca's orbit.

EXT. THECA - CARGO DEPOT - DAY

A team works diligently unloading Starborn's cargo.

Fonix is sitting on one of the unloaded cargo boxes. He is in
deep thought, eyes fixed on Starborn.

A woman approaches Fonix with a tablet in hand.

                         VASH
               Hey, there you are! I thought ya'd
               be avoiding the crowd?

Fonix slowly takes his eyes off Starborn to face VASH.

                         FONIX
               Hi.

                         VASH
                    (laughs)
               As short as ever! I wanted you to
               know we got a new shipment... if
               you can take it? The Garage called
               me, wanted to inform you that your
               ship is ready on Terra.
                    (pause)
               If you want to head back there to
               switch ships I can get Maurks to
               take the new shipment instead?

Fonix looks back to Starborn. Vash curiously follows his
gaze.

                         VASH
               Mmm. Interesting ship. Its got rear
               vents... AI?

                    FONIX
          Yes.

Vash slowly turns to Fonix and almost keels over.

                    VASH
          (laughs)
     Who gave the old antisocial Fonix
     the talking ship?! Whoever it is, I
     gotta give'm a prize!
          (looks to tablet)
     Hmm, seems it's marked to be
     disassembled...

                    FONIX
          (glares at Vash)
     Starborn's actually quite pleasant.

                    VASH
          (raises eyebrow)
     Well... Really?
          (straightens self)
     What do you want to do?

                    FONIX
     Trade ships... They'll take the
     Skyhorse.

Vash almost falls over again.

                    FONIX (CONT'D)
     Starborn doesn't deserve to be
     treated as a throw away. She holds
     more worth than people might
     expect.

                    VASH
     Well, okay then...

                    FONIX
     I'll take the shipment.

Brazen, Fonix stands up and leaves for Starborn.

INT. CARGO SHIP - COCKPIT

Fonix sits in his seat with a glint in his eye. He glances up
at the speaker.

The ship PURRS contently.

                    FONIX
          Want to stick around with me a
          little longer?

                    STARBORN (V.O.)
          Really? Yes, I would love that!

EXT. THECA - SKY - DAY

Starborn breaks apart the cloud line with stoic reverence and
confidence as it makes for the stars - an apparition of the
past and a mission of the future.

                                        FADE OUT.

                         THE END