



Dou find it hard to quell your nerves as you approach the gate. The Clergy agent hovering in front of it stares at you - or so you assume. The spiked mask doesn't move.

“Do you have an appointment?” it inquires.

“Yes. We have an appointment with Clergywoman Saomaine.”

The guard is silent for a moment, no doubt accessing the Clergy net. “Your appointment is for you only, Captain Elite. Your companions will wait here.”

The thought of arguing is expunged from your mind the minute it occurs to you.

Five minutes later, you sit across from Saomaine in a sealed room.

“We appreciate the help, Clergywoman.”

Saomaine offers no facial expression whatsoever. It takes a particular kind of human to consider – and succeed in – joining the Tavir Clergy. “And I am sure you can also appreciate that this makes us even.”

“Of course.”

She holds you in her intense stare for another few seconds, then pulls a hardsheet out from somewhere under the table. She stretches her arm across the table, green robes billowing beneath her sleeve, and deposits it in front of you.

Your eyes pass over it. “What am I looking at?”

“Another clue. We arrested a man who also claimed he was searching for the Machine. He tried to offer this to me as a bribe.”

“What happened to him?”

She ignores you. “Make what you can of that sheet right now. Then I will destroy it.”

You immediately start studying it...



Act I
Scene 4

ASTC

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