

ESCAPE POD

Written by

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BLACK... Then --

GREEN TEXT appears in the upper left corner, spelled out in a low-res, pixilated font.

As each letter materializes, it is accompanied by a synthetic *BEEP-BEEP-BEEP!*

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
LAUNCHING EMERGENCY PROTOCOL.

Pause. Then --

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Booting up ESCAPE POD SYSTEM.

The two sentences linger there in a moment of stillness... Then the ENTIRE SCREEN fills up as more text appears.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Escape pod..... A-68
Capacity..... 30
Travel class..... Premium

Air filtration system..... ONLINE
Water filtration system..... ONLINE
Gravity simulator..... ONLINE
Air lock system..... ONLINE
Computer navigation system.. ONLINE
Radio system..... ...

The computer pauses as it pushes through a series of complex algorithms. And then:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Radio system..... ONLINE

Connecting with PRIMARY NETWORK.

The text DISAPPEARS, then is instantly replaced with a NEW PAGE of computer text:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
AURORA TRANSPORT primary network.
Ship 16 in STARWAYS FLEET, a
subsidiary of Yáo-Shi Enterprises.

FIRE DETECTED on Deck A, room 1043.
Emergency protocol launched.

Beneath this, a diagram appears of the Aurora spaceship:

The ship is split into SIX DECKS (labeled A-F), all containing long rows of cabins, connected by narrow hallways.

On the bottom is a separate row of a hundred TINY RECTANGLES, representing the ESCAPE PODS. One by one, the phrase '**CONNECTED TO PRIMARY SYSTEM**' appears next to each pod.

On Deck A, one of the rooms is filled with flashing DIAGONAL LINES, and the emblem of a FLAME IN A CIRCLE. The room is numbered 1043.

ROOM 1041 starts flashing as well... Then ROOM 1045.

The rest of the diagram goes away as the computer focuses in on DECK A, letting the Deck A outline fill the screen.

Now rooms 1039 and 1045 are gone. The FIRE jumps across the hall to 1042. Then to 1040 and 1044.

A window of text pops up:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
SHIP-WIDE ALERT: Deck A evacuated
to lower decks.

By now, the fire has already reached room 1031, and continues to move, expanding cabin by cabin like a terrible virus.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Anti-fire system enabled. Rerouting
water supply.

The fire gets all the way to room 1025. It hesitates... Then the flashing in 1025 goes away. Then in 1027. And then 1029.

The anti-fire system is working. The fire is being put out.

1031: clear. 1033: clear. Room by room. The fire is backed all the way up to room 1037, when out of nowhere --

A PIERCING SIREN SOUNDS.

A WINDOW pops up:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
SHIP-WIDE ALERT: Fire cannot be
contained. SHIP-WIDE EVACUATION
mandated.

The diagram image pulls back to reveal the full ship again, and that's when we see it:

ALMOST THE ENTIRE B DECK IS COVERED IN FLASHING LINES.

The fire has also made significant progress on Decks C and D.

There's a terrific **BOOOOM!!** And the entire ship *shudders*.
(This is our first hint at a real world beyond the computer.)

Among the bottom row of escape pods, some of the rectangles switch from BLACK to GREEN, as the word **LAUNCHED** appears next to each one. Escape Pod A-68 remains where it is.

The sounds of a panic seep through the walls. We can hear PEOPLE SHOUTING and a hundred pairs of feet BANGING against the metal floors.

On the ship diagram, the fire continues to spread over Decks B, C, D, and now E.

A third WINDOW appears:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Anti-fire system overwhelmed.
System disabled.

And that's when it gets crazy.

We just have time to see that Deck B is 100 percent covered before it VANISHES from the diagram.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Deck B offline.

There's another big **BOOOOM!!**

More of the escape pods launch. Others are reached by the fire, and are now covered in flashing stripes, accompanied by the text: **ESCAPE POD DISABLED**.

And now, for the first time, the CAMERA PANS AWAY from the computer screen.

It circles around the port side of the ESCAPE POD, revealing a padded bench beneath a row of BLACKED-OUT WINDOWS, until at last it settles on...

The entryway: a complex, two-door system designed to double as an air lock.

A MAN arrives outside the airlock, visible through the door window: late 30s, chiselled good looks, cool-headed. Dressed in business casual.

His name is ROBERT DELMAR.

He punches a code into an unseen DOORLOCK. Tries the handle. It won't open.

ROBERT
(under his breath)
God damn it.

A WOMAN joins him at the door: DORIS MASLANKA. Built like a gorilla, and dressed in GRAY COVERALLS, with a CIGARETTE dangling from her mouth.

DORIS
Lemme try. Emergency Passcode is
'crew only.' Pretty fucking stupid,
but since when have these bastards
known how to run a ship?

She enters the code. A jet of STEAM bursts through the floor as the airlock pressurizes, then a BING and the doors SWOOSH open.

Robert strides forward and drops into the computer seat. He starts messing with the keyboard.

ROBERT
How long's it take to get this
sucker primed up?

DORIS
Five seconds. Escape pods boot up
as soon as the bridge launches
emergency protocol. All you'll need
is the --

ROBERT
Passenger confirmation code.

Doris grabs a FOLDER from a sleeve on the wall, opens it up.

DORIS
First page.

She hands it to Robert: on top is a loose sheet with the word JERICHO written in giant letters. Hard to miss.

He types it in.

COMPUTER

(TEXT)

Passenger confirmation code
accepted. Pull the RED LEVER to
launch escape pod.

Robert mutters to himself as he reads the message. He looks
up: a RED LEVER is stationed on the wall near the computer.

ROBERT

Escape pod's ready. Now we just
need people to fill it.

On cue, the doors swoosh open and a 250 POUND MAN in his 60s
blunders in, carrying a suitcase and wiping his face with a
handkerchief. His name is J. POTTER HUMPHREY.

HUMPHREY

Oh, thank goodness. I was worried
it'd be crowded.

Robert and Doris exchange a look: *are you fucking kidding me?*

HUMPHREY (CONT'D)

Well, why aren't we going? What are
we waiting for?

ROBERT

More people.

HUMPHREY

But the ship could fall apart any
second! We need to leave at once!

ROBERT

We're not going anywhere.

Robert bounds to the door to help a NEW ARRIVAL inside.

HUMPHREY

Don't you know who I am? I'm
Senator John Potter Humphrey. I
have a seat on the Galactic Union!

DORIS

Whoopdy-fucking-doo.

The MAN at the entrance is holding an unconscious, ELEVEN-
YEAR-OLD GIRL in his arms. He hands her to Robert as he
stumbles into the escape pod, COUGHING.

The man is mid-50s, and wears a WHITE ROMAN COLLAR with an
otherwise plain suit. He is FATHER FRANCIS GARDNER.

FATHER GARDNER
(through coughs)
I found her. On the other side of
the ship. She's passed out.

Robert lays her down on the bench.

ROBERT
Will she be alright?

FATHER GARDNER
I think so. But thank God I saw her
when I did. The smoke had almost
reached the floor. For a while, I
thought she was already gone.

By now, the corridor outside is empty, with none of the
frantic passengers running past. Sirens continue to WAIL.
Robert returns to the computer.

ROBERT
How's the ship doing?

DORIS
Like shit.

Eighty percent of the escape pods are either launched or
disabled, with more leaving every minute.

ROBERT
(quiet, to Doris)
I hate to admit it, but the old
man's right. We can't wait around
much longer.

DORIS
I reckon' we could hold out three
more minutes.

The ship SHUDDERS violently.

DORIS (CONT'D)
Maybe one.

AUDREY (O.S.)
Someone, please! Help!

They turn to see TWO MORE PEOPLE trying to squeeze through
the entrance: The first is AUDREY TISH (17): a chubby,
insecure TEENAGER with a black leather jacket and SPARKLING
GREEN & PINK HAIR.

She's struggling to fit a MASSIVE BASS GUITAR CASE through
the airlock.

Behind her is a 60-year-old MAN with a neatly trimmed MUSTACHE and a highly-decorated MILITARY UNIFORM (GEN. MARCUS T. ARMSTRONG).

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Forget the guitar! Just move!

Roberts grabs the bass case and pulls it inside, handing it off to Gardner so he can help the new arrivals through.

As soon as he's in General Armstrong wheels on Audrey.

GEN. ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR FUCKING MIND!
What do you think you're doing,
bringing that along! You could've
got us both killed!

Audrey fights back tears.

AUDREY
Up yours, Colonel Sanders! At least
I was smart enough to bring
something! And it's not a guitar,
it's a bass. Shows what you know!

She wipes her eyes and turns away. Humphrey takes in her cheap jacket and ripped jeans.

HUMPHREY
You're not from the Premium cabins.

AUDREY
Wha'? No, I was in the lounge when
the alarm went off.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
(under his breath)
You ask me, you should've stayed
there.

Audrey notices how few passengers are there.

AUDREY
This is it? I thought there'd be
more! There's supposed to be thirty
people here!

There's another terrifying RATTLE.

HUMPHREY
Forget them! Can we please get
underway?

FATHER GARDNER

I agree with the gentleman. If we stay much longer, we're not gonna make it.

ROBERT

Okay. Let's go.

AUDREY

But what about the people still on board?

HUMPHREY

What people!? Anyone left is probably dead! And unless we leave now, we'll be too!

AUDREY

She's not.

She points through the door. Everyone looks:

Sure enough, a FINAL PASSENGER is limping down the hall, clinging to a rail: a WOMAN in her mid 30s. Her name is JANE PARKER-FALLS.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

C'mon, lady, you're almost there!

PASSENGERS

Hurry up! You can make it. Just a few more yards! [etc.]

Robert is silent. His gaze drifts up to a STEEL PIPE lining the ceiling of the hallway. It is shuddering madly.

On the computer screen, every other escape pod has either LAUNCHED or BEEN DISABLED. The only one left is A-68.

BOOOM!! A fire-ball bursts out of the pipe, two hundred feet down the corridor. Jane looks around:

More fireballs burst at ten foot intervals. *Boom! Boom! Boom!* The fire is getting closer and closer to Jane.

ROBERT

She's not gonna make it.

He crosses to the computer, grabs the red launch switch, and SLAMS IT DOWN.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

What are you doing?!

AUDREY

You murderer!

ROBERT
Out of the way!

He pushes past them into the

AURORA CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

-- And runs toward Jane.

COMPUTER VOICE
Launching Escape Pod A-Sixty-Eight
in T-minus ten seconds.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The fire is a hundred feet away.

COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
Ten... Nine... Eight...

Robert pulls Jane's arm over his neck.

COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
Seven... Six... Five...

The fire is fifty feet behind them. Robert and Jane are
twelve feet from the door.

COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
Four... Three...

Six feet.

COMPUTER VOICE (CONT'D)
Two... One...

Robert lunges for the door.

ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

They land inside, just as the fire catches up with them!!
BOOM!!

COMPUTER VOICE
Launching escape pod.

The outer door slides shut, cutting the fireball in two.

Everyone lurches as the escape pod BLASTS OFF. Through the windows, we see the black of the launch chamber walls slide away as they're replaced by the STARRY EXPANSE of DEEP SPACE.

ROBERT
Fire! Fire!

The back of his jacket's ABLAZE. He untangles himself, throws it to the floor.

Doris grabs a FIRE EXTINGUISHER off the wall and levels it at the burning jacket: *KSSSCCHHHH!!*

DORIS
Motherfucker.

The flames are doused in white, powdery fluff.

And then, finally, everything is still... They all catch their breath, sizing up the situation.

The back end of the pod is a SOOTY MESS.

ROBERT
Everyone okay?

A few of them nod. General Armstrong looks out the window, visibly unnerved.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Good God...

The others follow his gaze: he's looking at the abandoned transport ship, clearly visible from their removed vantage point.

It's nothing but an empty wreck: a monstrous shell of CHARRED METAL, barely held together. Before their eyes the ship rips in two, its separate halves dragged apart by their own inertia. Millions of pieces float off into the abyss.

The Aurora is gone.

AUDREY
We're fucked, aren't we?

DORIS
Yep.

ROBERT
No one's fucked. These pods were built for just this sort of emergency. Everything we need is right here with us... And if it's not, we better learn to live without it, because this is all we have.

They regard the cramped vessel uneasily. One by one, they turn back to the window.

EXT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Their seven worried faces look on in silence.

We pull back, letting the ENTIRE POD fill the frame. As we keep going the ship gets SMALLER and SMALLER until it's hardly more than a lonely speck against the endless backdrop of EMPTY SPACE.

SNAP TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

ESCAPE POD

Then...

DAY 1

INT. ESCAPE POD - MOMENTS LATER

The survivors sit in shock. Exhausted... Frightened... Jane has her foot propped up on the bench. Robert's singed jacket is draped over a chair.

Audrey speaks through quiet tears.

AUDREY

So... what the fuck just happened?

Everyone looks up at her.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Fires don't just *start*, right? I mean, these ships --

She slams her fist against the wall.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

They're made to be non-combustible. So why the fuck'd this one combust?

GEN. ARMSTRONG

That's obvious. A solar flare. The exact same thing happened to my unit during the Triton Rebellion.

Audrey roles her eyes.

GEN. ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)
One minute, everything was normal.
The next: flash. Bam. The whole
ship was down in minutes.

ROBERT
It doesn't matter how it happened.
What matters is what we're going to
do about it.

JANE
There should be some sort of
emergency procedures list,
shouldn't there?

DORIS
Look in the folder.

Robert lifts the folder off the computer dashboard.

ROBERT
(reading)
Welcome to Escape Pod A-sixty-
eight. Your designated officer
is...
(pause)
Stanley Dwiggins.

He looks up. Seven people. No Stanley.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Unless he's hiding in the bathroom,
I don't think he made it.

HUMPHREY
Hold on. I thought you were our
designated officer.

ROBERT
My name's Robert Delmar. I'm a
criminal defense lawyer on my way
to Polis Veta for a case.

HUMPHREY
(to Doris)
And you?

DORIS
I'm just a mechanic. Don't know the
first fucking thing about being an
officer.

HUMPHREY

You mean *none of you* is the designated officer? How in tarnation are we supposed to run a spaceship then?

DORIS

Gimme a break.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

Will you calm down, sir?

HUMPHREY

A five million credit first class ticket, and they just seal me up in this tiny crate!

JANE

Well how do you think Stanley Dwiggins feels?

ROBERT

It says the escape pod was designed for thirty people. *Thirty*. And we number less than ten. That means a lot more than just Stanley Dwiggins didn't make it.

There is SILENCE as the implication of this settles.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Most the people who were supposed to be on this ship are dead. I think that puts whatever discomforts we might have a little bit in perspective.

Another silence.

JANE

So what's next?

ROBERT

(looking at folder)
Uh... Head count.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

That's easy. There's seven of us.

FATHER GARDNER

Eight.

He indicates the sleeping girl on the bench.

DORIS

Shit, I forgot about her.

JANE
What happened?

FATHER GARDNER
Found her unconscious. Figured the
smoke must've got to her.

JANE
I'd be happy to take a look at her
if you'd like.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
You're a doctor?

JANE
Eight years at Harvard Medical.

FATHER GARDNER
I'm sure she would appreciate that,
ma'am.
(to Doris)
Oh, and since there's a child on
board, maybe you could drop some of
the swearing?

DORIS
What the fuck is this guy's problem?

ROBERT
(looking at folder again)
Next... Oh, well, attend to any
injuries. Alright.

Jane is already kneeling at the girl's side.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
You were limping earlier, weren't
you, uh...?

JANE
Jane Parker-Falls.

ROBERT
Doctor Falls.

JANE
Doctor *Parker-Falls*. And don't
worry about me. As long as I keep
pressure off it, I'll live.

Jane doesn't look up from her patient.

ROBERT

Next. Establish contact with other
lifeboat vessels and any settlements
or planets that may be nearby.

He closes the folder.

DORIS

I can do that.

Robert surrenders the chair.

ROBERT

Good. I'll make an inventory of our
supplies. See how long we can last
out here.

Everyone turns away as they attend to their separate needs.
Robert finds a set of DRAWERS beneath the benches and starts
checking them one by one. Doris dons the HEADSET.

DORIS

Escape Pod A-Six-Eight to A-Six-
Seven. Are you reading me? Come in
A-Six-Seven.

She waits for a response. Nothing.

DORIS (CONT'D)

They must not've made it. I'll try
another one.

WITH JANE:

She uses a PEN-LIGHT to examine the girl's throat. Father
Gardner waits nearby, wringing his hands anxiously.

JANE

I don't think it's the smoke that
did it.

FATHER GARDNER

It's not? How can you tell?

JANE

There'd be more soot in her throat
and nostrils.

She peels back the girl's eyelid...

JANE (CONT'D)

-- And more irritation of the eyes.
There's a good chance it's shock.

(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

Her vitals have stabilized for now
so I think she's okay. Hell of a
thing for a kid to go through.

WITH AUDREY:

She snaps open the latches on her BASS CASE, and eases up the lid. Inside is a BLACK AND SILVER ELECTRIC BASS GUITAR, with a cluster of STICKERS plastered over the body.

Audrey props the guitar on her knee and starts tuning it.

Across the room, Armstrong looks up from the escape pod folder. He sees the stickers on Audrey's bass and stiffens.

WITH ROBERT:

He slides shut the food drawers.

ROBERT

We've got twenty cases. Eight
people, that should last us
almost... half a year.

DORIS

That long, huh?

She sits up, clutching her hand to the head set.

DORIS (CONT'D)

Hello? Hello!? Ah, hell. It musta
just been interference.

ROBERT

We can't be the only pod out here.

DORIS

I'll try widening the range. Usually
these radios are pretty reliable,
but it's possible we might've --

She's cut off by SHOUTING from across the pod: General Armstrong and Audrey are in a heated argument.

AUDREY

What do you know?! You're just
jealous!

GEN. ARMSTRONG

Of what? Last time I checked you
don't win trophies for being an
ignorant washout!

ROBERT
(sotto, exhausted:)
Jesus Christ.

He crosses the pod, joining Father Gardner, already trying to mollify them. Armstrong is pulling at Audrey's guitar.

FATHER GARDNER
Please. This bickering won't solve anything.

AUDREY
I'm an *artist*! You're just a trigger happy jerk who kills people for a living!

GEN. ARMSTRONG
I save lives! I served the G.U.! If it weren't for me you'd be dead of radon poisoning on one of Triton's moons!

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Fuck you!

GEN. ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)
No, fuck you, ignorant bitch!

HUMPHREY
Someone tell that girl to put a sock in it!

ROBERT
Both of you, *shut up*!

They actually quiet down.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
One at a time.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
My *entire generation* spent eight years fighting the Rebel Systems during the Triton Rebellion, and this uninformed blockhead goes and slaps their flag on her guitar.

He gestures to a DECAL on the bass: a LARGE, BLACK CIRCLE with THREE SMALL DOTS surrounding it, forming a triangle.

AUDREY
No. It's a symbol for freedom, and you're an idiot!

GEN. ARMSTRONG
You think I couldn't recognize their flag if I saw it?! The big circle's Triton Omega, and the little ones represent its three moons.

AUDREY

They represent affection, warmth,
and kindness, you monster.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

Affection, warmth, and--!? Those
are the exact same thing!

ROBERT

Okay, quiet! Cool it! ... General,
I'm sure she doesn't mean any harm.
Ma'am, that *is* the flag of Triton
Omega.

AUDREY

How do you know?

ROBERT

'Cause I opened a history book in
the last twenty years.

AUDREY

Well... So what?! Who cares if it's
part of some dumb war anyway.
That's in the past.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

Not to them, it isn't. There are
still dozens of radical factions,
insisting the war's not over.

AUDREY

You're making that up.

ROBERT

Both of you, stop it. General, let
go of the bass.

Armstrong releases his grip.

AUDREY

Thank you.

ROBERT

Those are "out there" problems,
okay? We have our own problems, in
here. It doesn't matter who we were
before, but for the next few weeks,
we have to let that person go.
Because unless we work together to
fix our problems *in here*, none of
us is going to make it home.

Armstrong eyes Robert up and down.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Hey... I recognize you. You were
that lawyer on the Sophie Triplet
Case, weren't you?

Robert shifts uncomfortably.

FATHER GARDNER
The what?

GEN. ARMSTRONG
He let three innocent girls get
sentenced to death, because the
prosecution was able to prove he
was addicted to lucid trioxymine.

HUMPHREY
Well I'll be--! I'm surprised I
didn't recognize you.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
I'm surprised the bar didn't take
away your licence.

ROBERT
That was ten years ago.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
You clean yet? Or are you still
waiting around to let more good
cases slip through the cracks.

ROBERT
I'm clean.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
For how long?

ROBERT
Does it matter?

GEN. ARMSTRONG
If we're going to be sharing a
room, I think we deserve to know.

Silence. Then...

ROBERT
Seven years.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Fair enough.

Armstrong turns away. Robert catches a look from Jane... She can see right through him.

DORIS

Uh, mister famous-lawyer-man? I've been trying to make contact on all channels but nothing's coming through. I think the problem's us.

ROBERT

The radio's dead?

DORIS

Looks that way.

She pulls out a scratched-up BABY-BLUE FIRE LIGHTER and ignites a cigarette.

DORIS (CONT'D)

It says it's fine on the comp-system, but I think that's just a glitch.

ROBERT

What do you reckon's the issue?

DORIS

Fire damage, most likely.

Everyone is quiet as they take in this new turn of events.

ROBERT

Can you fix it.

DORIS

I can fix anything. You drop a jalopy off Olumpus Mons I'll get it back to you in working order. But it'll take a couple days. Till then we're on our own. No outside communication with any other ship or system. Normally we'd wait for the lead pod to determine our destination, but since that's out of the question, we've gotta figure our destination out ourselves...

Everyone exchanges a look.

CUT TO:

A MAP OF THE GALAXY

It's displayed on the computer monitor. Robert, Jane, Gardner, and Doris crowd around it.

ROBERT
The Galaxy Positioning System has
us stationed here --

He enters a command. The map zooms in on a star system.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
The closest refuge is probably
Piraeus: an asteroid belt with a
service port on its largest rock.

JANE
How far is it?

ROBERT
About three weeks, Earth Time.

Humphrey is listening nearby.

HUMPHREY
Three weeks? I'm an important
member of the governing body. I've
got plans for the next three weeks.

ROBERT
Cancel them. You're spending the
month with us.

JANE
(quietly)
He's not the only one. My brother's
gonna be short one bridesmaid at
his wedding.

ROBERT
I'm sure he'll make it work. We
can't know for sure, but if I was
on one of the other escape pods,
that's probably where I'd go.

FATHER GARDNER
Very well. Piraeus it is.

Doris enters the coordinates. The computer responds:

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
New destination confirmed: PIRAEUS
OUTPOST.
(MORE)

COMPUTER (CONT'D)

Arrival Time..... 476 Hours.

ROBERT

The autopilot'll handle the rest.
Till then, we just need to wait.
We've got food. We've got water.
We've got a pressurized cabin. If
we keep out of trouble, I think
we'll be alright.

DORIS

We better be. 'Cause if something
goes wrong, nobody's coming to save
us...

INT. ESCAPE POD - LATER

A TABLE has been elevated from the floor. The passengers sit
around it, holding hands. Father Gardner leads them in grace.

FATHER GARDNER

Bless us, O Lord, and these, Thy
gifts, which we are about to
receive from Thy bounty. Through
Christ, our Lord.

We TRACK past their different faces. Gardner continues...

FATHER GARDNER (CONT'D)

In your hands, O Lord, we humbly
entrust our brothers and sisters of
the fallen ship *Aurora*. In this
life you embraced them with your
tender love; deliver them now from
every evil and bid them eternal
rest. We ask that those survivors,
on this craft and on others, are
safely delivered unto their
families and their homes... Amen.

PASSENGERS

(opening their eyes)

Amen.

They begin their meal.

HUMPHREY

Of course the food tastes like
crap. I had lunch with the Prime
Consul once. Now that was a meal.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

Really? What was the occasion?

HUMPHREY

Damned if I remember... And how the hell are we supposed to sleep in this damn thing? There are no bunks, no mattresses.

ROBERT

There are blankets and pillows in the cupboards. A few of us can sleep on the benches, the rest can use the floor.

DORIS

(mouth full)

The lights shut off at ten o'clock, Earth Time, just like the *Aurora*. Helps recreate sleeping conditions.

HUMPHREY

(more to himself)

Still don't think I'll be able to get any sleep.

Robert has been wolfing his food, and is almost finished. Father Gardner watches him with interest.

FATHER GARDNER

You eat fast.

ROBERT

What? Yeah.

FATHER GARDNER

Are you ex-military?

Robert nods.

ROBERT

What gave it away?

FATHER GARDNER

The way you eat. Like there won't be time to finish. My brother ate the same way. We lost him in the battle of Centaur Five. Six years into the war.

ROBERT

I'm sorry.

FATHER GARDNER

In my family, there were only two things you could be. A soldier or a priest. Hannibal was a soldier, so I went the way of the Lord. And to think I thought he was the lucky one when I was younger.

(beat)

Did you kill people?

(Robert nods)

And you had friends who died?

ROBERT

Yes.

FATHER GARDNER

Terrible. Is that why you take the, what was it? Lucid?

ROBERT

I don't anymore.

FATHER GARDNER

Yes, I forgot. Well, if you ever want to talk to anyone, about the war or anything else... don't hesitate to ask.

He claps Robert on the shoulder.

INT. ESCAPE POD - "NIGHT"

A CLOCK on the computer reads **11:39 PM**. The lights are dimmed, and everyone is asleep. Well, not quite everyone:

Robert lifts his head, looks around.

No one is watching. He pulls aside his blanket, gets to his feet. He checks the computer screen.

COMPUTER

(TEXT)

Arrival time..... 468 hours.

Robert steps over the other passengers, past Audrey, curled up with a stuffed animal, and Doris, SNORING LOUDLY.

He passes the GIRL, still unconscious on the bench, and steps into the airlock.

To the right of the airlock, between the two hatches is an EXTRA DOOR. Robert slides it open, revealing the CRAMPED ESCAPE POD LAVATORY.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Robert shuts the door, sinks onto the toilet. He reaches into his pocket, and removes a PILL BOTTLE and a DEVICE the size and shape of an INHALER.

He unscrews the bottle with trembling hands, empties it into his other palm. There are SIX TABLETS LEFT.

ROBERT

Fuck.

The hum of the spacecraft is steadily drowned out by the pounding of Robert's own HEARTBEAT.

He inserts two of the pills into the inhaler, clicks it shut, and shakes it vigorously. The heartbeat is getting louder, the shaking worse.

Robert hooks his mouth over the bottom of the device.

THUD-DUD. THUD-DUD. THUD-DUD.

He slams his thumb down on the top... *Vloosh!!* The substance is sucked into his system.

All the sound is instantly replaced by TRANQUIL SILENCE. Robert relaxes, his hands steady once more.

He leans back on the toilet, finally at ease.

He closes his eyes...

INT. ESCAPE POD - LATER

It's still dark. The clock now reads: **12:50 AM**. Robert's spot is still empty.

LIGHT shines through the crack below the bathroom door.

ANGLE ON: the UNCONSCIOUS GIRL, lying on the bench. She stirs. Her eyes FLUTTER OPEN.

She slowly sits up, surveys her surroundings. Bit by bit, she takes it all in: the claustrophobic chamber, the six sleeping strangers, the dim lights... Her eyes fill with panic.

She leaps off the bench and runs toward the airlock.

She stops at the OUTER HATCH, staring through the window at the utter loneliness of space.

Behind her, the bathroom light CLICKS OFF and the door slides open.

She spins around. At the exact same moment, the girl and Robert see each other. Robert is just as startled as she is.

She opens her mouth and SCREAMS!!!

ROBERT

No!

He kneels and covers her mouth.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Stop it! No! No screaming.

She relaxes. Robert keeps his hand where it is. He looks around at the other passengers: still asleep.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Okay. I'm gonna take my hand down now, but you can't make any noise, alright? You can't wake anybody up.

She stares at him. Robert interprets this as a yes. He slowly lowers his hand. Then...

GIRL

Aaaaauuuggghhhh!

He covers her mouth again. The girl stares at him, wide eyed. Gradually she calms down. Robert removes his hand once more. This time she's quiet.

He looks around the escape pod, settles on Jane.

ROBERT

(whisper)

Hey! Doctor! Jane Parker-Falls!

Jane wakes with a START. She looks around.

JANE

What is it? What's wrong.

(sees Robert)

Why aren't you asleep?

ROBERT

Never mind that. Your patient's up.

He steps aside... Jane sees the girl.

INT. ESCAPE POD - MOMENTS LATER

A COLD SANDWICH and a JUICE BOX are plopped on a table in front of the girl. Jane sits across from her.

JANE

Eat.

The girl stares at the food with distrust.

JANE (CONT'D)

It's not poison. You gotta get some sugar in you, and the food reduces drowsiness.

The girl pauses. Then hesitantly reaches for the sandwich.

JANE (CONT'D)

Good... Do you have a name?

No response.

JANE (CONT'D)

What do people call you?

Nothing.

JANE (CONT'D)

Do you speak?

The girl stops chewing... then NODS.

JANE (CONT'D)

English?

Another nod.

JANE (CONT'D)

How much do you remember of what happened?

BLANK STARE. Jane sighs, exchanges a look with Robert.

JANE (CONT'D)

Uh... Well. There was a fire. On the Aurora. And the ship burned up. Everyone had to evacuate. That's where we are now, we're on an escape pod.

She searches the girl's face for a reaction... Nothing.

JANE (CONT'D)

We found you unconscious. You were out for seven hours. But you're safe now. The autopilot's flying the ship and everything's going to be okay.

(beat)

Look. You gotta say something. Tell us your name at least.

Silence. Then...

GIRL

Are Ellen and Sam here?

She speaks in hardly more than a whisper...

JANE

Were those your parents?

GIRL

Aunt and uncle.

JANE

(looks at Robert)

Um, they're not here with us, but I'm sure they're fine, right?

ROBERT

Yeah. They're on a different escape pod. You know, there were a lot of them taking off.

JANE

I bet they made it.

GIRL

No they didn't. If they're not here then they're dead.

Jane and Robert are taken aback by her seriousness.

JANE

Maybe. We don't know that.

GIRL

I do.

There is silence between them.

GIRL (CONT'D)

My name is Jackie Schuchmacher.

JANE
Hello Jackie. It's very nice to
meet you.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY - FLASHBACK

FADE IN ON: a SPACESHIP, as seen from the ground. It flies
over us, through RED AND ORANGE CLOUDS.

The camera TILTS DOWN to a MASSIVE RUIN of bricks and
stone... This was once a very important building. Now it is
ASH. All about are SIGNS with: "STRUCTURE UNSAFE. KEEP OUT."

SUPER TITLE: **THREE MONTHS EARLIER.**

SEPTIMIUS (O.S.)
Tragic, isn't it?

PAN LEFT to a TALL MAN with a THICK, WAVY BEARD. This is
SEPTIMIUS.

SEPTIMIUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Seventeen years, four months, and
twenty-six days and it still hasn't
been rebuilt.

He turns to look directly at us..! Apparently we are seeing
all this from the POINT OF VIEW of an UNKNOWN CHARACTER.

SEPTIMIUS (CONT'D)
I'm from the Order. They told me to
meet you here.

His top few buttons are undone, revealing a TATTOO of the
TRITON OMEGA FLAG near his collar bone.

The man extends his hand. It is taken by the POINT-OF-VIEW
CHARACTER, who remains unseen...

SEPTIMIUS (CONT'D)
I have to admit, you're not exactly
what I was expecting... I suppose
that's why they picked you.

He removes a set of PAPERS from a LEATHER SATCHEL, passes
them to the POV Character.

SEPTIMIUS (CONT'D)
That's your assignment. Read it.
Memorize it. Burn it by morning.
(MORE)

SEPTIMIUS (CONT'D)

It involves a transport ship from Earth to the Veta system. Six week journey, leaves in three months. You have till then to prepare.

He turns back to the ruin.

SEPTIMIUS (CONT'D)

You know, I was there when this building fell... Eight weeks, we held it against the G.U., before they finally burned it down. Even now they pretend they were in the right, when they're the ones who invaded our planet, because of something that wasn't any of their business. And what they took away destroyed our way of life. Our economy, our social order, everything that held us together... And then they expect us to move on, and come back to the table like everything's the same.

Beat. He turns to look at us again.

SEPTIMIUS (CONT'D)

But in three months, all that's going to end. The fire they started will be repaid with a fire of our own, and Triton Omega will rise from the ashes. It all depends on you. Good luck, soldier.

He gives a farewell SALUTE, then turns and walks away...

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

DAY 2

INT. ESCAPE POD - "DAY"

Breakfast time. Half the group crowd around Jackie, eager to meet the newest passenger.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
So kid, where you from?

AUDREY
What's your Zodiac sign?

HUMPHREY

Any interest in G.U. politics?
'Cause you're in luck.

JANE

Okay, give the girl some room.

FATHER GARDNER

Do you remember me? My name's
Father Gardner. I'm the one who
found you.

Jackie shakes her head.

Doris emerges from beneath a control panel, a pair of goggles
strapped to her brow. She picks through a TOOLBOX.

DORIS

Listen, kid. Any of these assholes
start fucking with you -- you know,
really pleading for a beating --
lemme know and I'll take care of
them. Give them the old one-two.

Something SPARKS behind her.

DORIS (CONT'D)

Ah, crap --

She slides back under the panel, returns to work. Humphrey
takes a seat by Jackie's side.

HUMPHREY

That Doris is a wild one. Do
yourself a favor and don't grow up
to be like her. Not if you ever
want to land a boyfriend.

He GIGGLES and winks.

JANE

Alright, that's enough. Get lost.
Go make a new law or something.

Jane shews Humphrey away, takes his seat. She looks at
Jackie's half-eaten breakfast.

JANE (CONT'D)

You don't like dinner. You don't
like breakfast... Are you on strike
against eating?

JACKIE

It tastes like jello.

Jane considers the food. For scrambled eggs, it *looks* a lot like jello. It still has the boxy shape of its container.

JANE

Well... If we weren't stuck on an escape pod, and you could have anything for breakfast, what would you eat?

Jackie is silent.

JANE (CONT'D)

Try me. Cereal? Pancakes?

JACKIE

French toast.

JANE

Alright, french toast. Now we're getting somewhere.

JACKIE

The way my dad makes it, with blueberries in it, and lots and lots of syrup.

JANE

Does he always make you breakfast?

JACKIE

No. He's usually too busy.

JANE

Well, as soon as Doris fixes the radio, you'll be able to talk to him again.

BOOM! Smoke pours out from the hole where Doris is working.

DORIS

Fuck! Shit! Shit!

She emerges, COUGHING and waving away smoke.

An alarm starts BEEPING angrily. Doris moves to the computer and enters a command. The beeping stops.

ROBERT

What's the problem?

HUMPHREY

(jumping to his feet)
Another fire!?

DORIS
No. No problem. Connected the wrong
wire is all, but I took care of it.

ROBERT
And the radio?

DORIS
Should be good to go.

FATHER GARDNER
You fixed it?

They crowd around the computer. Jane gives Jackie a squeeze.

DORIS
Hold on, folks. Keep your pants on.

Doris types something in.

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Booting up RADIO SYSTEM.

Radio system..... .

They all hold their breath.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Radio system..... OFFLINE

Collective MOANS.

DORIS
Ah, dammit.
(typing)
Run... diagnostics.

Beat. The computer responds.

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
NO SIGNAL.

DORIS
Huh... Means the antenna's busted.
More fire damage. Good news is it
shouldn't be too hard to fix.

ROBERT
And what's the bad news?

DORIS
I need to go outside.

AUDREY
Wait, you mean outside of the
spaceship? Like, *this* spaceship?

DORIS
Relax. EVA's are a normal part of
spaceship mechanics.

She crosses to the airlock, pushes open the INNER HATCH.

Across from the bathroom is a rack with a SPACESUIT.

Doris fits a cloth COMMUNICATION CAP over her head, tightens
the strap below her chin.

DORIS (CONT'D)
Short-distance radio still works.
We can use that to talk.
(to Robert)
I'll need you to monitor my vitals.

CUT TO:

A COMPUTER DISPLAY exhibiting Doris' VITAL SIGNS: Heart rate,
blood pressure, intracranial pressure, and oxygen levels.

Robert sits at the console, overseeing the controls.

ROBERT
How we doing, Doris?

DORIS
Almost there.

All SUITED UP, Doris attaches TWO RUBBER TUBES from her
oxygen tank to her helmet. An ELECTRIC PAD on her left arm
goes from RED to GREEN. Text appears: **SUIT PRESSURE STABLE.**

She takes a deep breath, testing the suit's breathing
function, then attaches a TETHER to her space suit. She gives
Robert a THUMBS UP through the window.

DORIS (CONT'D)
All good. Depressurize the airlock.

ROBERT
Okay.

Robert adjusts a KNOB adjacent to the computer setup.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Lowering airlock pressure.

In the airlock, Doris watches a DISPLAY SCREEN on the wall convey the pressure of the room:

It falls gradually from 100%... To 50%... 20%... 5%...

And finally 0%.

On a different screen, the AIRLOCK OXYGEN LEVELS drop at a similar rate.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Airlock pressure zero. Opening
outer door.

He presses a BUTTON marked OUTER DOOR.

The airlock's outer door slides silently open, exposing Doris to the vast emptiness of space.

DORIS POV: millions of cold stars shine down on her. Her regular, heavy BREATHING fills the SOUNDTRACK.

She grips a handlebar and pushes off into space.

DORIS
Exiting airlock.

At the console, Gen. Armstrong leans over to watch the computer screen with Robert and Jane.

DORIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(through headset)
I'm approaching the antenna.

EXT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Doris crawls along the edge of the ship to the ANTENNA: a radio dish BLACKENED WITH SOOT.

ROBERT (O.S.)
(through headset)
How's it look?

DORIS
A little dirty, but nothing too bad. The problem's likely the service unit. It's this little Ke Xin Electronics bastard that keeps getting fucked up.

She maneuvers around the antenna to face a CHARRED HATCH COVER fitted below the dish.

DORIS (CONT'D)
You gotta open it with the
computer. Try X-E-U cover.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Robert types in a command.

ROBERT
(muttering to himself)
Open X-E-U cover.

His hand is TREMBLING.

JANE
You okay?

ROBERT
Wha'? Oh, it's just the --
(indicates the screen)
Nervous, you know. I'll be fine.

Jane nods, not convinced. Robert finishes the command.

INT./EXT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

There's a CLICK, and the hatch cover WOOSHES open, revealing the Ke Xin Electronics unit inside: a GRAY METAL BOX the size of a brick. She slides it out of the chamber.

The unit has been WARPED and MELTED by fire damage.

DORIS
Ohhh, yeah. I think we found our
problem. Thing looks like it was
swallowed by a pizza oven after a
trip through the smokestack of a
bull-dozer... I'll need to take a
closer look at it inside.

Doris hooks the device onto her belt.

DORIS (CONT'D)
Alright, you can shut the hatch.

ROBERT
Right, closing X-E-U hatch.

Robert moves his finger over a computer key.

DORIS (O.S.)
Wait a sec.

He stops, about to hit enter.

DORIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I wanna take a look at the
connecting wires, see if they need
any work as well.

ROBERT
Alright, go ahead.

Doris reaches inside the chamber to access a wire.

Robert waits. His hand starts to tremble again. He clenches
it into a fist.

A RINGING COMES IN -- growing louder and louder. His
HEARTBEAT pounds in his chest. **THUD-DUD. THUD-DUD.**

Robert takes deep breaths, starting to SWEAT. He clamps his
eyes shut. The RINGING INTENSIFIES, as the screen --

FADES TO WHITE. The heartbeat falls out, overwhelmed by the
inescapable RINGING.

ROBERT POV: He opens his eyes. An image comes slowly into
focus: TEXT... the COMPUTER SCREEN... Something FLASHING...

Jane is shouting but we can't hear her over the ringing.

Slowly her words become clear:

JANE
Robert... Robert!

NOISE comes flooding back in as the ringing dies out: *Frantic
BEEPING, Doris shouting over the intercom:*

DORIS (O.S.)	JANE (CONT'D)
WHATDAFUCKISGOINGON!!	Robert, what are you doing!

Robert steadies himself. He reads the text on the screen.

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Hatchway malfunction. OBSTRUCTION
in passage.

EXT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

The hatch has *CLAMPED SHUT* on Doris' arm. She wreathes, trying to pull it free.

DORIS
Open this thing back up!

INT. ESCAPE POD

Her vitals have gone ballistic: heart rate skyrocketing, oxygen going down.

Jane pushes Robert out of the chair, pulls the headset on. She hits the key releasing the hatch cover.

JANE
Doris, your suit's been punctured,
you need to get inside.

The other passengers stare in complete shock.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
What's happening over there?

JANE
Computer malfunction.

Robert stumbles into a corner, steadies himself.

Doris arrives in the airlock.

JANE (CONT'D)
Shutting outer door.

She hits a switch. The outer hatch slams shut.

JANE (CONT'D)
Pressurizing airlock.

Doris' BREATHING has intensified. There's a HISS of steam as the airlock repressurizes. The computer diagram shows the pressure rising: 10%... 30%... 75%... 100%

Doris unscrews her helmet, gulping up air.

The inner door slides open. She stumbles in and collapses into a chair.

Jane is at her side at once.

DORIS
(through heavy breathing)
What. The hell. Was that?

JANE
It was an accident. It won't happen
again.

Robert watches from a corner, his breathing slow but steady.
Jane catches his eye over Doris's shoulder...

INT. ESCAPE POD - LATER

CLOSE ON: The fried XEU, sitting on the table. A hand enters
frame, holding a screwdriver, and removes the lid.

WIDER - Doris is sitting at the table, having changed out of
her spacesuit. She examines the inside of the unit.

The others surround her, awaiting the result.

DORIS
Hmm. Shouldn't be too hard to fix.
Gimme twenty-four hours, I do
another EVA, put this doodad back
and voila! We rejoin the civilized
world.

FATHER GARDNER
That soon, huh?

DORIS
You bet, Padre.

INT. ESCAPE POD - "NIGHT"

The passengers are once more sleeping beneath their blankets.
Doris is SNORING LOUDLY.

As before, Robert rises from the floor and carefully makes
his way to the airlock.

He opens the bathroom door and flicks on the LIGHT to find --

JANE PARKER-FALLS, staring straight at him... In WHISPERS:

ROBERT
What the--!?

JANE
How many capsules do you have left?

ROBERT

What the fuck are you talking about?

JANE

Skip it, Robert. I've seen a hundred cases just like yours.

(off his look)

Iris distortion, hands shaking, constant sweats... I figured you were on lucid the moment we met.

Robert considers her.

ROBERT

Four.

JANE

That's it?! *Four*?! That won't even last the week!

ROBERT

Relax, I'll handle it.

JANE

Like you handled it this morning? What happens when you have another 'accident'? Or when you run out of pills and it starts getting worse?

ROBERT

If I'm such a liability, why'd you cover for me?

JANE

I don't give a shit if the others know. But it matters to *me*, since I know what's gonna happen when you start getting withdrawals, which given what you just told me, will happen a lot sooner than I hoped.

ROBERT

Gimme a break.

JANE

No.

She grabs his arm and YANKS him across the pod to the KITCHENETTE.

ROBERT

Hey, what're you doing?

JANE

I'm gonna get that crap out of your system.

Jane pulls out a FIRST AID KIT, starts rummaging through it.

ROBERT

What!? No! The only way to get it out is sweat, vomit, and a shitty fucking headache and I'm not doing that right now.

JANE

Well, here's what happens if you don't. First you'll start getting migraines and you'll lose hearing in both your ears. That's day four. On day six, your vestibular system goes haywire and you lose your sense of balance. If you're lucky after that you'll go into a coma, but if not, you'll lose your ability to swallow, your liver will self-destruct, and there's a twenty-eighty chance you'll go blind. *Then* you'll go into a coma. And then you'll die. Also, somewhere along the way, you'll definitely lose control of your bladder and your bowels.

ROBERT

Shit.

JANE

Exactly. Believe me, that stuff takes weeks to finish a first-rate tour through Robert Delmar, and if you're as hooked as I think you are, it'll find a way to fuck up pretty much everything about you.

ROBERT

So, I guess it's the easy way or the hard way.

JANE

They're both hard ways. We're just doing the one that won't kill you.

Jane opens a PILL BOTTLE, empties TWO TABLETS into her hand, then pours a GLASS OF WATER.

JANE (CONT'D)

Normally I wouldn't care, but since we're all in this together, and no one wants to watch you lose your shit for three weeks, I'm helping you out. Take these.

He swallows the pills.

She pours another glass of water and empties the TWO PACKETS OF POWDER in it. The water turns WHITE.

JANE (CONT'D)

Drink this.

He takes a sip.

JANE (CONT'D)

All of it. One gulp.

He downs it, then SPUTTERS and GAGS.

ROBERT

That stuff's awful!

She opens the cardboard box and removes a PLASTIC SYRINGE.

JANE

In a hospital, we'd have the equipment to deal with the hard-hard way, so most people don't die from it, but we're not in a hospital, and your case is pretty severe. How long have you been on that stuff?

ROBERT

Sixteen years.

Jane says nothing. She inserts the syringe nozzle into another BOTTLE and extracts TEN MILLILITERS of liquid.

JANE

Take off your shirt.

Robert starts undoing the buttons.

JANE (CONT'D)

I'm going to inject this in your arm. Those pills were to minimize the side effects.

Robert removes his left arm from the sleeve, presents it to Jane. She finds a VEIN near the shoulder.

JANE (CONT'D)
You might feel a prick.

She plunges the needle into his arm.

JANE (CONT'D)
Breathe fast.

Robert takes FAST, DEEP BREATHS. Jane finishes the injection, throws the syringe in the sink.

ROBERT
So, how long before I start to --

His legs give way. He collapses into Jane's arms.

JANE
I got you. Keep breathing. C'mon,
we're going to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Robert VOMITS VIOLENTLY into the toilet.

Jane kneels beside him, a tight fit in the tiny bathroom.

JANE
You okay?

He gives the THUMBS UP. Keeps vomiting.

There's a KNOCK on the door. It opens slightly. Jane stands.

FATHER GARDNER
Everything okay?

JANE
It's fine, Father Gardner. Just a
little space sickness.

FATHER GARDNER
Is there anything I can do to help?

Robert responds with another disgusting VOMIT.

ROBERT
(between wretches)
Pray?

JANE
Uh... we're good, thanks. Thank you
very much.

She closes the door on him. At last, Robert falls back from the toilet and rests against the wall. He's drenched in SWEAT. A dribble of SICK still clings to his chin.

Jane leans forward and wipes it clean with a TOWEL.

Robert hardly notices, staring vacantly at the wall... lost in thought...

ROBERT

When I came back from Triton, it was the only way I could sleep. Being normal didn't feel normal anymore. It was like everywhere I went, bombs were still going off. Then I take lucid and everything was just... clear. And calm. It felt like it did before the war.

Jane looks at him with sympathy.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

My work got better. I started winning more cases... My home life didn't. There's no way I could keep it all from Sarah.

JANE

Was she your wife?

ROBERT

(nods)

When I proposed I promised her I'd be clean in six months. I wasn't. She left in eighteen. After that there was the Sophie case. Easiest case in the world. But then the prosecution got up, turned the court against me in five minutes. And now those girls are dead...

There's a moment of silence between them.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

So what's your story?

JANE

Ha!

ROBERT

Everyone's got a story.

JANE

Yeah? Upper-middle class. Mother was a pianist. Father was in construction. Five siblings. I'm the oldest. I went to college. Worked hard. Got a job.

ROBERT

Marriage? Divorce? Any seedy love affairs?

JANE

(gives him a look)
I've had a string of amenable boyfriends... No kids.

Robert thinks for a moment, letting this brew.

ROBERT

Your story's pretty boring.

JANE

No shit.

ROBERT

What? Did you just skip the teenage years?

JANE

Pretty much.

ROBERT

No. Really.

JANE

Yeah. I mean, I wanted to stay up late, go to parties, do all that, but I had five younger siblings. Mom needed help so I had to step up. Sacrifice that part of my life so the rest could grow up right.
(then, defensive:)
And I wouldn't take any of it back, okay?

ROBERT

No, that's fine--! Good--! It's just... when was the last time anyone sacrificed anything for you?

Jane doesn't have an answer.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Look, don't listen to me. Forget I
ever asked, okay?

He turns away.

JANE
Robert?

Beat. He looks back.

JANE (CONT'D)
The next few hours are going to be
rough. Fever. Headache. Nausea.
After that you'll still have
episodes on and off for another few
days. Trembling and ringing. But it
won't kill you.

Jane removes another SYRINGE from her pocket.

JANE (CONT'D)
I'm going to give you a sedative,
okay? It'll knock you out for six
hours. That's the easiest way for
you to make it through the night.

Robert nods. She's about to inject the sedative, when he
touches her arm, making her stop.

ROBERT
Jane... Thank you.

She nods. Then administers the drug.

His head lolls to the side.

FADE OUT.

BLACK. Then...

We see a SWIRL of distorted IMAGES AND SOUNDS. Some from
Robert's past. Others from the present. And some from his
fever-induced delirium...

- A FOREST FIRE rages.

- BOMBS go off as SPACESHIPS duck and whiz around each other.

HUMPHREY (V.O.)
Doctor! Doctor, come quick!

SOLDIER (V.O.)
Medic! I need a medic!

- Robert (in MILITARY FATIGUES) cradles a dying soldier in his arms. Blood oozes onto his hands and uniform.

JANE (V.O.)
Fever. Headache. Nausea.

- Robert vomits into the escape pod toilet.

- A whiff of BLOND HAIR as a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN slams a door.

ROBERT (V.O.)	JANE (V.O.)
Just go then! What do I	(urgency)
care!?	What is it?!

- THUD-DUD. THUD-DUD. THUD-DUD.

JUDGE (V.O.)
How do you find the defendants?

JURY MEMBER (V.O.)
Guilty on all counts.

- Robert is led through a HORDE of YELLING REPORTERS. FLASH! FLASH! Camera bulbs go off.

AUDREY (V.O.)	GEN. ARMSTRONG (V.O.)
What happened?	Someone get the girl out of here. Don't let her see this.

- A glimpse of the TRITON OMEGA flag. Blowing in the wind.

- BAM! Robert fires a RIFLE. He's on an empty DESERT LANDSCAPE, blackened and ravaged by WAR.

JANE (V.O.)
Stand back. Nobody touch her.

HUMPHREY (V.O.)
The lawyer won't wake up.

- BAM!! Robert fires another shot.

- A glimpse of a BODY GOING LIMP. It is tied to a chair.

JUDGE (V.O.)
Eliza, Eleanore, and Erica Sophie.
This court finds you guilty of
murder and sentences all three of
you to death by lethal injection.

- A GAVEL falls with a BANG!!

- Jane injects the formula into Robert's arm.

- We finally see what Robert is shooting at: THREE TEENAGE GIRLS, all tied to chairs. They WEEP through their gags.

- Robert FIRES again. The third one goes limp. There's a ROAR as everything is engulfed in FLAMES, and then we --

Snap to **BLACK**.

TITLE CARD:

DAY 3

THE FINAL DAY

A CONVERSATION between the passengers emerges on the SOUNDTRACK, growing more and more clear...

FATHER GARDNER (O.S.)
So where does that leave us?

HUMPHREY (O.S.)
The radio's out. That's for sure.

JANE (O.S.)
No, it's not. She fixed the unit last night.

AUDREY (O.S.)
How do we know she even finished?
That could be a useless slab of metal right there.

FATHER GARDNER (O.S.)
Audrey's right, I don't think we can rely on the transceiver.

FADE IN:

Robert is lying in a corner of the escape pod. His hair and sheets are DRENCHED with sweat.

Jackie is sitting beside him, staring at his face. The others converse behind his back...

JANE (O.S.)
First we need to take care of the body. We can't just leave it there.

GEN. ARMSTRONG (O.S.)
Eject it into space. Make sure it doesn't contaminate the air supply.

AUDREY (O.S.)
Can we just stop talking about it,
please?!

Robert doesn't move. He looks up at Jackie.

ROBERT
(whisper)
What happened?

JACKIE
Doris didn't wake up.

Robert's EYES WIDEN. He throws off the blanket and tries to stand but collapses immediately.

The passengers wheel around.

FATHER GARDNER
Robert!

HUMPHREY
Look who decided to join us.

AUDREY
You look like shit.

ROBERT
I feel like shit.

Jane goes to his side and helps him up.

JANE
(whisper)
You were supposed to wake up an
hour ago. For a while I thought you
wouldn't.

ROBERT
Sounds like I wasn't the only one.

We catch a glimpse of Doris's CORPSE. Her face is BRIGHT RED.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Now hold up! What were you doing
rolling around like that. We
thought you were having a seizure!

ROBERT
Uh... Bad dream.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Bad dream my ass.

JANE
That's enough!
(to Robert)
Now, c'mon. I gotta take a look at
you.

ROBERT
But what about the --

JANE
I'll tell you in there.

She shoves Robert into the airlock, then pulls the lever. The
inner hash WHOOSHES shut.

JANE (CONT'D)
How do you feel?

ROBERT
Horrible. What happened to Doris?

JANE
First take this.

She holds up TWO PILLS. Robert swallows them.

JANE (CONT'D)
As for Doris, all the signs point
to myocardial infarction due to
chronic coronary artery disease.

ROBERT
She had a heart attack?

JANE
It fits. Heart disease is the most
common cause of death for women her
age, and she was a heavy smoker.
It's also supported by the flushed-
out color of her face, the swollen
jugular and carotid arteries, and
the blueish-gray tinge around her
eyes and finger tips. So, yeah. She
died of a heart attack.

ROBERT
Oh.

JANE
At least, that's what I told them.

Robert pauses...

ROBERT
What else could it be?

Jane takes a deep breath, weighing the gravity of what she's about to say...

JANE
There's an Alpha Centaurian herb called Corneum Lotus. It can be made into a poison that replicates the symptoms of heart failure almost perfectly.

ROBERT
But how can you--?

JANE
The only difference is a slight coloration on the veins in the victim's right arm. From the elbow to the chest they might be yellow.

ROBERT
And are they? On Doris?

She gives him a PIERCING LOOK... then NODS.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Fuck. Shit. That means --

JANE
Yes.

ROBERT
-- One of the people out there killed her.

JANE
I know.

ROBERT
Why are you telling me?!

JANE
Because whoever killed her did it last night, while you were passed out on the floor. That makes you the only person I can trust.

Robert takes a deep breath, trying to take this in.

ROBERT
Right. Right. Whoever did it must've had a reason.

JANE

You think they didn't want the
radio repaired?

ROBERT

But why? We're all stuck on this
ship together. How could that
possibly --

He FREEZES, struck by a thought.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

It can't be a coincidence. A fire
destroys the *Aurora*, then three
days later someone *happens* to get
murdered on one of the escape pods.

JANE

You're saying they're connected?
That the fire was started
deliberately?

(beat)

There's gotta be a way to know for
sure.

ROBERT

Computer archives. In the event of
an emergency all computers log data
from the start of the incident for
insurance purposes. We can access
the ship's history by logging into
the escape pod computer.

He looks back into the escape pod.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I'll do it. After the burial.

INT. ESCAPE POD - LATER

The seven remaining passengers stand around the inner hatch.
Dora's body is wrapped in BLACK PLASTIC, propped up in the
cramped airlock.

As Father Gardner recites a EULOGY, the other passengers pass
around a FLASK. Robert and Jane quietly eye each of their
companions, wondering which could be the killer... and why.

FATHER GARDNER

She is before the throne of God,
and serves him day and night in his
temple; and he will shelter her
with his presence.

Jane holds Jackie close to her. Audrey fights back tears. Armstrong passes the flask to Robert.

FATHER GARDNER (CONT'D)
She shall hunger no more, neither
thirst anymore; the sun shall not
strike her, nor any scorching heat.
For the Lamb is in the midst of her
shepherd, and he will guide her to
springs of living water, and wipe
away every tear from her eyes...

There's quiet as he ends.

JACKIE
Goodbye, Doris.

Everyone nods.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
No point standing on ceremony.

He crosses to the computer console and hits a button. The outer hatch BLASTS open and the corpse is thrown into space.

The passengers watch until the black wrappings fade into the darkness around it, and the body disappears...

INT. ESCAPE POD - LATER

Audrey has her bass out again, and is trying to pluck out a TUNE of appropriate somberness.

Everyone else has found some activity to occupy their time. Robert gives them each a look, then sits by the computer. He types in a command.

COMPUTER
(TEXT, typed out)
Access data archives.

A list of DATES appears. Robert looks them over, selects one and waits. The computer presents the data from that day...

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
LAUNCHING EMERGENCY PROTOCOL.
Booting up ESCAPE POD SYSTEM.

It's a replay of the display from the first scene. Robert sifts through the information.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
 (TEXT)
 Connecting with PRIMARY NETWORK.

The diagram of the Aurora fills the screen: six levels and a row of escape pods. No fires yet...

Robert hits an ARROW KEY, progressing the display minute by minute.

Room 1043 starts flashing.

Robert pauses. Checks the marked time.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
 (TEXT)
 6:21 PM.

He continues his search... *Click.... Click...* He stops. The fire has spread to rooms 1041 and 1045.

CLOSE ON: time of input. 6:25...

Robert thinks. Then types in a query:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
 (TEXT, typed out)
 Anti-fire system. 6:25?

He hits enter. A few seconds later, a response appears:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
 (TEXT)
 6:25. Anti-fire system inactive. No
 fire detected.

Robert looks from the response to the diagram, trying to comprehend the CONTRADICTION.

He moves on... *Click... Click... Click...* Again the fire spreads from room to room on Deck A.

A WINDOW appears.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
 (TEXT)
 SHIP-WIDE ALERT. Deck A evacuated
 to lower decks.

Robert types another query:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
 (TEXT, typed out)
 Access message origin?

The computer responds:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Message entered manually.

Robert continues... At 6:28, the first FLASHING BOX appears on DECK B, in room 2043. Another window appears.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Anti-fire system enabled. Rerouting
water supply.

Robert pauses. Types:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT, typed in)
Anti-fire system. 6:28?

Enter. The response:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
6:28. Anti-fire system enabled.
Fire detected on DECK B.

Robert watches as the fire is steadily put out on Decks A and B... He moves the time forward. 6:28... 6:29... 6:30.

At precisely 6:30, TEN ROOMS on Deck B *all catch fire* simultaneously. By 6:32, those fires have spread to Deck C as well... Robert stares at the screen, aghast. He moves on.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
SHIP-WIDE ALERT: Fire cannot be
contained. SHIP-WIDE EVACUATION
mandated.

The fire continues to spread. Robert watches, his brow furrowed. Jane sidles over.

JANE
Found anything?

ROBERT
I think so.

JANE
Should we tell the others?

ROBERT

Let's keep it to ourselves for now.
As long as they don't --

AUDREY

What the *fuck* are you doing?!

They spin around. The passengers all react.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

That's a map of the Aurora!
Why would you want to look at
that?

JANE

We just -- we wanted a better
idea what caused the
accident.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

What does it matter anymore?

ROBERT

(with force)

*Because the Aurora fire wasn't an
accident... It was sabotage.*

Everyone freezes.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

Don't be ridiculous. It was a solar
flare, we all know that.

ROBERT

The nearest star was half a light
year away, and it's a red dwarf.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

Okay. So it was something else
then, that doesn't mean that --

ROBERT

Eighteen-twenty-one hours, the fire
starts, Deck A, Room 1043. Why
didn't the anti-fire system
activate?

HUMPHREY

It *did* activate. We all remember
those sprinklers going off.

ROBERT

Yes, *seven minutes later*. After the
fire reached Deck B. But Deck A!
Why didn't it start when the fire
was on Deck A?

The passengers pause to work this out.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Hold on. You're saying someone --

ROBERT
Someone had to have disabled the fire detector on Deck A. They wanted it to get out of control. Eventually the sensors on Deck B pick it up, and reroute water to Deck A. It's almost enough to stop the fire, but then --

He shows them a slide on the computer.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Another fire starts on Deck B, precisely ten minutes later, probably as a redundancy, in case the first one got put out. The AFP system can't handle both and a ship wide evac is sent out.

AUDREY
But why would anyone want to start a fire in the first place?

ROBERT
I don't know. As a distraction? To kill someone? Could be anything. Then they use the evacuation to cover their escape, and make off on board an escape pod.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
To what end? They'd just wind up on Piraeus Outpost with everyone else.

JANE
Maybe the other pods are regrouping at a different planet.

An idea hits Robert.

ROBERT
Or maybe we're going to a different planet.

He sits back down at the computer, starts typing...

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Time to destination?

The computer responds.

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Arrival time..... 516 Hours.

The passengers GASP and MOAN.

HUMPHREY AUDREY
How is that possible? We're going backwards!

Robert enters another query.

ROBERT
What is... destination?

```

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Destination.....

```

It stops, working the answer through its circuits.

Everyone holds their breath as they wait for the reply...
Then two words appear:

```

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Destination..... TRITON OMEGA.

```

The passengers stare at the screen in shocked silence. Jackie is ghost white. Finally Humphrey GIGGLES.

HUMPHREY
It can't be serious. I mean, we're
not *really* going to Triton Omega.

JANE
How is that possible? We set the
destination.

ROBERT
Someone must've changed it.

AUDREY
But -- but what are we gonna do?

Armstrong forces Robert out of the chair.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Change it, that's what.

He furiously enters a command. An ERROR MESSAGE pops up:

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Destination LOCKED.

OVERRIDE CODE required.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Override code!? What override code!

ROBERT
Whoever reset the coordinates
must've added security measures.
We're locked out.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Not if I can help it.
(typing)
Let's try... Triton Omega.

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Code INVALID.

ROBERT
What about the moons? Stheno?
Euryale?

Armstrong tries three more pass codes... ZIP.

Jackie tugs on Jane's arm.

JACKIE
Jane?

JANE
Now's not a good time, baby.

ROBERT
Try major battles. Victories of the
Triton army.

Armstrong tries again. Audrey is full-blown sobbing.

AUDREY
But *why*...? Why would anyone want
to go there?

HUMPHREY
They must be after me.

JANE
Don't flatter yourself.

General Armstrong jumps to his feet.

GEN. ARMSTRONG	AUDREY
Dammit, you useless machine.	We're fucked! Face it. We
Get us off this course!	lost.

GEN. ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)
I won't accept that! You'll see me
in hell before you catch me in the
Triton system again.

Jane!

JACKIE

JANE
(turning on Jackie)
What! What is it? What do you want?

JACKIE
Ellen and Sam aren't really my aunt
and uncle.

JANE
Honey, please. I can't--! We can't
deal with that stuff right now.

JACKIE
(quietly)
They're my *security*.

Jane FREEZES. Looks Jackie in the eyes.

JANE
Okay. What security?

WITH ROBERT:

The others continue to BICKER.

AUDREY
There's, like, a million
possible codewords, okay!

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Then let's reboot the
computer, restart the system.

ROBERT
You do that, you'd shut down all
the life support programs.

JANE
Everyone, QUIET!!!

The passengers stop, look at Jane.

JANE (CONT'D)
They're after Jackie. Whoever did
this is trying to kidnap this girl.

ROBERT

Why?

JANE

Because... her father's the Prime
Consul of the Galactic Union.

The escape pod is dead silent. Jackie speaks in a whisper.

JACKIE

My full name's not Jackie
Schuchmacher. It's Jacqueline
Madeleine Wilton.

ROBERT

Of course! From his first marriage:
to the late Princess of Teleran.

HUMPHREY

But that's absurd! We'd have
recognized her!

ROBERT

Maybe not. They've kept her pretty
private since her mother died.

JANE

If Triton gets their hands on her,
they'd force him to do whatever
they want.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

But--! They could make him rewrite
the entire war. They'd tear the
Galaxy apart!

HUMPHREY

No. I'm sorry, but no! You're
telling me Triton would do all that
-- blow up the *Aurora* -- just to
get this girl? There are too many
variables! What if--? What if she
died in the fire! What if the fire
was put out? How could they even
know she'd make it onto the escape
pod?

AUDREY

Somebody would have to physically
carry her in.

ROBERT

Somebody did.

He looks around. There are only six people.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Where's Father Gardner?

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

In CLOSE UPS: Trembling hands remove a ROMAN COLLAR from a shirt. They undo the buttons, revealing...

A HANDGUN -- taped to Father Gardner's chest.

Directly to the right of the collar bone is... a TATTOO of the TRITON OMEGA FLAG: a black circle orbited by three dots.

FATHER GARDNER
God of power and mercy, maker of
love and peace. Through the
intercession of Saint Michael, the
archangel, be my protection in
battle against evil.

Gardner pulls the gun free, peels off the tape.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Everyone talks in whispers.

JANE
Senator, keep an eye on the
bathroom. Don't let him leave.

Humphrey moves to the airlock.

AUDREY
Now we know whose fault it is, but
we still don't have the password.

ROBERT
I've got it! Father Gardner
mentioned a brother -- he said he
died in the war. I just assumed he
was on our side.

JANE
Do you remember the brother's name?

ROBERT
It was. Ah, shit. It was something
with a J. No, H.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gardner removes a CASE OF AMMO from his jacket pocket, opens it up: inside is a RACK fitted with EIGHT BULLET-SIZED DARTS.

FATHER GARDNER

Help me to overcome war and
violence and to establish your law
of love and justice. Grant this
through Christ our Lord.

Gardner loads the rack into the handle of his firearm, CLICKS it into place.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

JANE

Harrison?

GEN. ARMSTRONG

Hector?

ROBERT

No, no, it was --

SUDDENLY -- He GASPS and falls to his knees. He presses his hand to his head... His HEARTBEAT returns with a vengeance... Jane rushes to his side.

JANE

Robert!

AUDREY

What's wrong with him?

Humphrey moves to help too.

JANE

No, stay where you are!

(to Audrey)

He's going through withdrawals. We
pumped sixteen years worth of lucid
out of him last night.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

I knew it! I told you it was a
mistake letting him run this ship.

AUDREY

Will you zip it, Captain Crunch!
We've got bigger problems now.

JACKIE
Is he gonna die?

JANE
It's headaches and nausea, it'll
pass.
(to Robert)
C'mon, Robert! Stay with me. Look
at me, that's it.

Robert tries to focus on Jane. *THUD-DUD. THUD-DUD. THUD-DUD.*

JANE (CONT'D)
Robert, you've gotta tell us that
password, okay?

ROBERT
(whisper)
Han -- *Hannibal*.

JANE
Hannibal!

Jackie jumps into the computer seat and types it in.

There's a frozen beat... Then --

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Access code VALID.

JACKIE
We're in!

JANE
Reset the destination. It doesn't
matter where we're going as long as
it's not --

THWIIIT! Everyone wheels around: Humphrey stands dumbly at the entrance to the airlock... then FALLS onto the floor. A POISON DART sticks out of his neck.

Behind him, Father Gardner levels his weapon on the rest of the passengers, his Roman collar back in place.

FATHER GARDNER
I'm sorry. I can't let you do that.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
That's a stun gun.

JANE
MOVE!!!

Audrey BELLOWS and charges at Father Gardner. *THWIT!* She hits the ground. *THWIT!* Armstrong's next.

Jackie flicks a switch on the console.

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
MANUAL STEERING engaged.

Gardner aims at Jane... Jackie grabs the YOKE and swerves it hard over.

The passengers are THROWN OFF THEIR FEET! Jane and Gardner tumble into the wall. Gardner drops the gun.

Robert weakly tries to sit up.

ROBERT
Jane..!

Jackie levels out. In the OVERHEAD STORAGE, Humphrey's 50-POUND SUITCASE slides dangerously close to the edge.

Jane and Gardner dive for the fallen gun. Gardner gets it first. Jane grabs Gardner's hand, struggles to push it away --

THWIT!! THWIT!! Two darts smash into the window.

The MAGAZINE drops out of the weapon, leaving only the dart in the chamber. Gardner kicks Jane in the stomach, pushing her back. He levels the gun and --

THWIT!! Jane's out. Gardner reaches for the fallen magazine.

Robert tries to stand, when -- *JACKIE SWERVES THE YOKE AGAIN.*

The magazine slides out of Gardner's reach.

Robert falls onto Humphrey's massive girth. He looks up: Humphrey's SUITCASE is about to tip over.

Robert rolls aside, as the case topples over the edge. It SMASHES Humphrey's head like a WATERMELON.

Jackie SCREAMS.

Gardner has snaked his arm around her chest and is pulling her out of the pilot seat.

He forces her to the floor, extracts some plastic FLEX CUFFS from his pocket and tightens them around Jackie's wrists.

CRASH!! Gardner looks up:

Robert is stumbling toward the airlock.

Gardner checks the stun gun: ZERO SHOTS. He leaps to his feet, charges at Robert.

Robert falls into the airlock.

Gardner's five feet from the door...

Robert grabs the yellow DOOR LEVER. He yanks it down.

The inner hatch *WOOSHES* shut, just as Gardner reaches the door. Gardner tries the handle, but it's shut tight.

FATHER GARDNER
Delmar, get out of there!

ROBERT
No can do, Padre.

Robert collapses to the floor. He clutches his head in pain.

Gardner looks down at his empty gun... He turns away, scanning every corner of the cabin.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Looking for this?

He turns back: Robert is holding the DROPPED DART RACK, a faint smile on his face. Jackie GRINS from the floor.

Father Gardner glares at Robert through the window... fuming, thinking... Then he turns around, crosses to the console.

He grabs a KNOB on the dashboard and turns it.

The OXYGEN DISPLAY in the airlock starts FLASHING. Robert pulls himself up to examine it:

Pressure is at 90% and dropping...

ROBERT (CONT'D)
No...! No, no, no, no!

FATHER GARDNER
It's no good, Delmar. It can only
be controlled from in here.

Robert slams his fist on the wall.

ROBERT
Fuck!

The oxygen level drops below 80%...

Robert turns to -- the SPACESUIT... *What else can he do?* He climbs up, lifting his legs into the trousers.

Gardner's smile fades. He glances at the Oxygen display: **65%**.

Robert finishes fitting his feet in. He pulls the torso section down the track, squeezing his arms into the sleeves one at a time...

50%... 49%...

He drops the upper section onto the lower part, pushing his head through the hole. *It doesn't click.*

Robert looks down: the hem of his shirt is caught between the top and bottom. Robert pulls it in. The suit SNAPS together.

35%... 34%...

Now the GLOVES. He pulls them off the shelf, DROPS one on the floor --

30%...

He picks it up, attaches it to the arm, CLICKS it in place.

25%...

He connects the other one with a CLICK, then reaches for the HELMET...

Gardner watches impatiently from the control chair, keeping one eye on the display: **20%... 19%...**

Robert turns the helmet front ways, slips it on. It CLICKS in as well.

15%...

He feels around for the OXYGEN TUBES. He grasps the first one, connects it to the helmet, screws it in.

12%... 11%...

He screws in the second one.

The panel on his arm is STILL RED. It reads: IMPERFECT SEAL.

9%... 8%...

Robert holds his breath: the HISS of ESCAPING AIR comes in.

He searches the suit and finds: A SMALL RIP IN THE RIGHT GLOVE from when the hatch punctured Doris's suit.

6%... 5%...

He unscrews the glove, pulls another one off the wall...

4%... 3%...

He connects it to his right sleeve, starts screwing --

2%... 1%...

-- *He tightens it in.* The panel on his arm BINGS GREEN, just as the meter hits **ZERO**.

Gardner slams his hand on a button.

There's a *SWOOSH!!* as the outer hatch is BLASTED open.

Robert barely has time to grab the TETHER before he is vacuumed out into space.

EXT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

The tether unwinds at a DIZZYING rate, extending thirty feet... *forty feet...* and then --

CRACK! It snaps tight.

Robert hangs on for dear life. The tether bounces him back a few feet then he stops. He wraps it around his arm, breathing heavily.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Gardner sits back down at the console. The unconscious bodies of Jane, Audrey, and Armstrong lie about the cabin.

Jackie trembles in a corner, her hands still tied behind her back. Gardner enters a computer query.

COMPUTER
(TEXT, typed out)
Time to destination?

He waits. A response appears.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
No destination selected.

Gardner reads the message. He types:

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
 (TEXT, typed in)
 Input destination.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
 (TEXT)
 OVERRIDE CODE required.

Gardner types in: **H-A-N-N-I-B-A-L**. The computer answers.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
 (TEXT)
 Code INVALID.

Gardner stares in disbelief, rereading it again and again. He turns to Jackie.

FATHER GARDNER
 What'd you change it to?

She says nothing.

FATHER GARDNER (CONT'D)
 You think you can outsmart me? In the last two days, I hijacked this pod, destroyed your security, and blew up an entire transport.

Jackie gives him an angry smirk.

JACKIE
 Guess it was all a waste.

Father Gardner glares at her. He looks back at the BLINKING CURSOR. Looks down at the keyboard, with its TWENTY-SIX LETTERS. His face begins to BOIL, and then...

FATHER GARDNER
FUCK!!!

EXT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Robert pulls himself along the tether, back to the pod. He collides into the wall with a soft THUD and clings to a handle bar.

Robert navigates down the side of the ship, toward the pod's underside. He edges along the metal shell, until he finds a TINY HATCHWAY, eighteen inches wide.

Stamped across the front are the words: **SERVICE COMPARTMENT**.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Father Gardner is typing in a new set of directions.

JACKIE
What are you doing?

FATHER GARDNER
I'm rebooting the system.

JACKIE
No! You can't! It'd shut off the
oxygen systems and everything! We'd
all die!

FATHER GARDNER
Not all of us.

He removes TWO OXYGEN MASKS from a drawer, places them on the desk.

FATHER GARDNER (CONT'D)
Just them.

INT. SERVICE COMPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Robert pulls the entry hatch open and peers inside. He flicks his HELMET LIGHT on:

It illuminates a NARROW DUCT, just long enough to fit a person. At the far end there's a SECOND HATCH with an electronic door lock.

Robert unwraps the tether from his arm, lets it float away. He squeezes himself into the shaft.

The hatch SHUTS AUTOMATICALLY behind him, sealing him in.

Robert adjusts his position, trying to access the second door. The walls BANG LOUDLY as he rotates himself.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Gardner perks up, listening...

INT. SERVICE COMPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Robert freezes... The voices of Gardner and Jackie are faintly audible through the walls:

JACKIE (O.S.)
What is it?

FATHER GARDNER (O.S.)
Shhhh!
(beat)
I thought I heard something.

JACKIE (O.S.)
Maybe it was God telling you to go
screw yourself.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Gardner brushes it aside, continues his work.

A WARNING MESSAGE appears on the computer.

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Are you sure you want to shut down
Escape Pod A-68? All systems will
turn off temporarily.

--- Cancel. --- Shut down.

Gardner selects **SHUT DOWN** and hits enter.

The window is replaced by a PROGRESS BAR.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Shutting off SYSTEM COMPUTER in...
2 MINUTES.

Beneath this is an option labeled: **CANCEL SHUTDOWN.**

INT. SERVICE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Robert turns a switch. The second hatch SLIDES OPEN. Beyond it the duct extends ANOTHER 15 FEET, down the length of the escape pod.

The walls are lined with PIPES and WIRES. At the opposite end LIGHT from the main cabin shines through a vent grill.

Robert unfastens his helmet and quietly slides it off.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

The progress bar is now A QUARTER complete.

COMPUTER

(TEXT)

Shutting off SYSTEM COMPUTER in...

90 Seconds.

Below the console desk, Robert's face appears beneath the vent grill, unseen by Father Gardner.

ROBERT

(whisper)

Jackie! ... Jackie!

Jackie looks at the vent. Robert puts his finger to his lips. She tries to hide her excitement.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

(whisper)

I need the gun.

Jackie nods. She eyes the stun gun, resting by the console keyboard...

Slowly, quietly, Jackie lowers her cuffed hands, easing them around her feet. **60** seconds to go...

Robert reaches into his suit pocket, removes the DART RACK. His elbow BUMPS the narrow walls.

Gardner hears it. He and Robert freeze...

There's a split second as Gardner realizes what's going on... And then--!

He grabs the yoke --

Jackie lunges for the gun, right as Gardner flings the ship over, throwing her against the wall.

Robert CRASHES into the side of the tunnel. A dozen pipes BURST open on impact, spewing HISSING GAS into the passage.

40 seconds to shutdown. **39... 38...**

Robert punches the VENT GRILL out. It flies across the cabin.

Gardner swerves again. Robert flies into the wall.

30 seconds left... **29...**

Robert heaves himself through the vent and grabs Gardner's leg, pulling him out of the chair.

Gardner crashes to the floor. He kicks at Robert, still emerging from the vent.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Jackie, take it!

He throws her the DART RACK. It slides across the floor, stopping at Jackie's feet.

Gardner scrambles after it.

22 seconds to shutdown... 21... 20...

Jackie scoops up the magazine, fumbles with the gun.

18... 17... 16...

She SCREAMS as Gardner attacks her, trying to seize the weapon. Robert grabs Gardner by the neck and pulls him off.

The two of them tumble to the floor. Gardner retaliates with manic fury, the adrenaline of unbridled fanaticism coursing through his veins.

He forces Robert to the floor, wraps his ROSARY around his throat. Robert fights it, but Gardner's too strong...

14... 13... 12...

Robert's face turns from PINK to RED.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
(barely breathing)
Jackie...!

Jackie finally succeeds in loading the magazine. Gardner is oblivious, immersed in his murder of Robert...

FATHER GARDNER
If you do wrong, be afraid. For
rulers do not bear the sword for no
reason. They are God's servants.

Robert turns PURPLE. His eyes BULGE from his skull. *Jackie slides the gun across the floor.*

It lands in Robert's outstretched hand, and --

THWIIITTT!!!

The dart punctures the underside of Gardner's jaw. He relaxes his grip... and falls to the floor.

Robert SPUTTERS, removing the rosary from around his neck.

ROBERT
(hoarse)
Thank you.

JACKIE
The shutdown!

Robert remembers in a flash.

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Shutting off SYSTEM COMPUTER in...
5 Seconds.
(then:)
4 Seconds
(then:)
3...

He leaps forward and slams his hand down on the CANCELLATION
BUTTON:

The computer freezes at **2 SECONDS** TO SHUTDOWN...

Then the window disappears and the screen returns to normal.

Robert exhales. He turns back to Jackie, who runs at him, and
throws her cuffed hands over his head, hugging him with all
her might.

ROBERT
It's okay. You're safe. You're okay
now. He can't hurt you.

INT. ESCAPE POD - LATER

Jane opens her eyes. She's lying on the floor. Robert helps
her into a sitting position.

ROBERT
There you go. That's it.

JANE
What happened?

ROBERT
We got him. Humphrey's dead. The
others are okay.

Jackie watches from Robert's elbow. Armstrong hovers nearby.

In the corner, Gardner is handcuffed to a chair, UNCONSCIOUS.
Humphrey is covered in black wrappings, just like Doris was.

Jane GROANS, clutches her stomach.

JANE
What was in those darts?

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Hyper-barbiturate. I saw a lot of
'em back in the war.

ROBERT
Somehow he got them past security.

Armstrong helps Robert hoist Jane onto the bench.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
We found the counter-stimulant in
Gardner's jacket.

JANE
Where's Audrey?

GEN. ARMSTRONG
In the bathroom. Recovering from
the shock of it all.

We hear Audrey PUKING LOUDLY in the lavatory.

ROBERT
Probably a bad idea to wake her up
before we wrapped up Humphrey.

JANE
Are we en route to Piraeus?

ROBERT
Not yet.

Robert takes a seat at the computer and starts typing.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Jackie managed to reset the
password and abort our destination,
but we still need to enter new
coordinates.

JANE
Good girl.

ROBERT
Now that you're awake, it's time we
got back on course.

Robert hits ENTER on the keyboard.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
It's all set. Just need the code.

JACKIE
It's 'french toast.'

ROBERT
French -- ... Really?

Jackie nods. Jane smiles knowingly.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Okay.
(typing it in)
... T-O-A-S-T.

The PASSWORD WINDOW disappears, replaced with the message:

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Destination set.

Arrival time..... 465 hours.

Audrey staggers out of the bathroom and collapses on a bench next to Armstrong.

AUDREY
Holy Christ! I don't know how you
can be so calm about all this!

GEN. ARMSTRONG
This is nothing compared to the
shit I've seen. Thirty-four years
defending the G.U., for better or
worse. I've given my life to it.
(beat)
You weren't so bad yourself,
charging him like that. I mean, for
a pampered, bleeding-heart,
uninformed softie.

AUDREY
That's quite the compliment, coming
from an grouchy, war-mongering self-
important asshole.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
Guess we are getting to know each
other.

JANE
So what do we do with him?

The group comes together around Gardner.

GEN. ARMSTRONG
I say we kill him. Blast him into
space. It's what he deserves.

ROBERT
Can't. That violates the Rules for
Treatment of Galactic Rebels and
Felons. We're required to wake him
up.

JANE
Are you sure? He could still be
dangerous.

AUDREY
But he's tied up, right? So, what
could he do?

GEN. ARMSTRONG
It's your call.

Robert rolls up Gardner's sleeve and injects the drug.

Gardner JERKS awake. He looks around, sizing up his position.

ROBERT
We saw your tattoo. We know you're
a Triton extremist.

FATHER GARDNER
Good for you.

ROBERT
You started the fire on the *Aurora*,
didn't you?
(he doesn't answer)
You did it to kidnap Jackie?

Gardner smirks.

FATHER GARDNER
Do you have any idea what the war
did to Triton? Take a guess how
many people die of famine every
year. Or how many civilians were
killed by 'heroes' like General
Armstrong here.

ROBERT
We were all hurt by the war.

FATHER GARDNER

I prayed for years for God to make things right... And then, Triton gave me a mission. Providence chose me to act as its tool.

ROBERT

Well, it's over now. Providence will have to find a new tool.

Behind his back, Gardner worms his cuffed hand into a pocket.

FATHER GARDNER

I admit, it hasn't gone as planned.
But correct me if I'm wrong --
(he SNIFFS)
This isn't pure oxygen we're breathing, is it?

Suddenly, an ALARM goes off: **BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!**
Jane dives for the computer.

JANE

Methane.

ROBERT

Shit.

He drops into the seat, brings up a diagram of the ship: a
PIPE IN THE SERVICE TUNNEL IS FLASHING RED.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I must've ruptured the pipe when I was climbing back in.

AUDREY

Is methane toxic?

GEN. ARMSTRONG

No, it's combustible.

JANE

In a closed room it can cause asphyxia. We're gonna start passing out in about a minute.

ON CUE Jackie STUMBLES against a wall, clutching her head.

ROBERT

Get her to the airlock. I'll try and fix this.

Jane takes Jackie by the arm, half-carries her away.

Gardner strains against the flex cuffs, digging deeper into his pocket. Audrey watches him uneasily.

AUDREY

Guys, I think he's got something...

Gardner pulls from his pocket -- DORIS'S BABY BLUE LIGHTER!

AUDREY (CONT'D)

*He's got a lighter! He's gonna blow
up the ship!*

Armstrong reacts first: he *tackles Gardner to the floor*, knocking him over in his chair.

The lighter CLATTERS to the floor.

Armstrong lunges for it but Gardner squeezes his leg around Armstrong's throat, holding him back.

Robert types furiously into the computer, bringing up filter settings. He struggles to keep his breathing steady.

GEN. ARMSTRONG

Someone! Help!

Audrey grabs her BASS and SMASHES it over Gardner's head.

IN THE AIRLOCK: Jackie *faints*, collapsing into Jane's arms.

JANE

Robert!

Robert looks around. He runs to the airlock, takes Jackie in his arms. Jane pulls an oxygen mask off the wall, puts it over Jackie's face.

Gardner blinks, lifts his head. He watches Audrey pick the lighter off the floor.

She SWAYS, dizzy... A WARNING flashes on the computer:

COMPUTER

(TEXT)

Methane levels catastrophic.

Audrey stumbles... and FAINTS as well. The lighter drops to the ground, right in front of Gardner.

He takes it, flips it open.

Robert spots him from the airlock -- there's a split second as he realizes what's about to happen...

Robert yanks the yellow lever as GARDNER CLICKS THE SWITCH:

The airlock inner hatch WOOSHES shut, right as --

BOOOOOOOOOOMMM!

A FIREBALL bursts from the lighter, igniting the methane.

Armstrong, Audrey, and Gardner are SCORCHED instantly as flames billow out, flaring up against the airlock window.

Robert, Jackie, and Jane huddle together in safety, eyes shut, breath held, gripping each other as tight as they can.

The whole pod seems to SHUDDER. Tears roll down Jackie's cheeks, and then --

As quickly as it came, the fire disappears, vanishing with a sudden *WHHHHHHIISSHH!!!* The cabin is left BLACKENED and BURNT.

The three of them remain where they are, afraid to let go... Then Robert opens his eyes.

He examines the cabin through the window:

A million different WARNINGS flash on the computer. Lights FLICKER on and off. The other passengers are now CHARRED corpses. A faint HISSING can still be heard.

ROBERT

I gotta go back in there.

JANE

What if it's still unsafe?

ROBERT

If it is, we're not gonna fix it from in here.

She nods. Robert pushes the lever back up. There's a pause, then the inner hatchway rattles open.

Robert steps out. The floor GROANS under his weight. He breathes in the atmosphere...

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Seems alright.

He sits at the computer, wipes the soot off the screen. Jane kneels by Jackie.

JANE

Baby? We're gonna go back into the cabin.

(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

I want you to just look at me,
okay? Don't look around, no matter
what. You got that?

Jackie nods.

JANE (CONT'D)

Okay.

She kisses Jackie on the cheek, then leads her slowly into
the burned cabin, holding her head to her chest.

Jackie steals a look at AUDREY'S SCORCHED REMAINS. She GASPS
and shuts her eyes. Jane approaches Robert.

JANE (CONT'D)

Did anything survive?

ROBERT

(reading the screen)

Uh... Navigation's still on.
Gravity's on. Water's off. Air
filtration's off. Radio is
definitely off. Hull is... 99.2
percent intact. We're losing
oxygen, but not very fast.

He runs more diagnostics.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Most the methane burnt up in the
explosion.

Jane sinks onto a bench, thinking...

JANE

I'm a doctor. I fix people, not
spaceships. I don't know how any of
this stuff works.

ROBERT

We're not in any immediate danger.

JANE

(gestures around)

Oh! Really?

ROBERT

We have a few hours at least.
That's enough time to give us a few
hours more. And then more after
that.

He pulls a TWO-INCH BINDER off a shelf.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
 We have the manual. We take this
 step by step. Diagnose each
 problem, look up how to fix it.

Jane stands, takes the binder from his hand.

JANE
 Robert, I don't know...

ROBERT
 It's this or we die.

Jane stares at him. She looks at Jackie, sitting by the
 window... Finally, Jane nods.

JANE
 Okay.

BEGIN MONTAGE: a bleak, doleful sequence of the two of them
 dutifully repairing the dying ship.

-- Jane sits at the computer, flipping through the escape pod
 manual: page after page of complex diagrams.

-- Jackie rocks quietly on the bench, her eyes glued to the
 remains of Audrey, Armstrong, and Gardner, wrapped in those
 same black coverings.

-- Robert works inside the SERVICE TUNNEL, an oxygen mask
 strapped over his mouth. He squeezes a FAST-HARDENING SEALANT
 from a tube, fastening two lengths of pipe.

-- Jane examines the WATER RECLAIMER: a mess of tanks and
 tubes. She looks between it and the diagram in the manual.

-- Robert clicks through diagrams of different support
 systems on the computer: green, green, red, green... He jots
 something down on a notepad.

-- Jackie has fallen asleep. Jane lays a blanket over her.

-- Robert navigates through the SERVICE TUNNEL until he finds
 a panel with AIR FILTRATION UNIT stamped across it.

He slides it open, revealing FIFTEEN NARROW COMPARTMENTS,
 stacked on top of each other...

Robert pulls one free. It contains a CLOTH-LIKE FABRIC with
GAPING HOLES scorched through it.

JANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (through headset)
 They're sorbent beds.
 (MORE)

JANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
They filter CO2 out of the
atmosphere. There should be fifteen
of them.

Robert flicks a switch. Fifteen lights come on: all RED,
except one, which is YELLOW.

JANE (CONT'D)
Are any of them fixable?

ROBERT
Maybe...

But his face fills with dread...

END MONTAGE.

INT. ESCAPE POD - "DAY"

Robert sits on the bench, deep in thought...

Jane is at the computer, going through the life support
systems with Jackie. Her spirits have improved.

JANE
Water Reclaimer back online,
Oxygenator online, Methane venting
properly... Almost everything's
back in working order.

Jackie offers an encouraging smile.

JANE (CONT'D)
Robert?

He looks up.

ROBERT
What? Yeah. We did well.

JANE
We're not *completely* done. The
hull's still shy of a hundred
percent intact.

ROBERT
It has to be fixed from outside.
One of us needs to do an EVA.

JANE
Might as well get it over with.

She crosses to the airlock. Robert stands.

ROBERT
 I'll do it.
 (Jane stops)
 You keep me posted on the
 transceiver.

INT. AIRLOCK - LATER

Jane holds Robert's helmet as Robert fastens his gloves. She studies him, sensing something off.

JANE
 What's wrong?

ROBERT
 Nothing.

He takes the helmet from her.

INT./EXT. ESCAPE POD - MOMENTS LATER

Robert floats outside the escape pod nose. He injects a SEALANT SOLUTION into cracks in the hull.

Jane and Jackie watch the computer from inside. A QUIET HISSING can still be heard in the background.

On the computer, the intact hull rises to **99.85%... 99.89...**

Then the HISSING STOPS. The escape pod is ABSOLUTELY SILENT.

COMPUTER
 (TEXT)
 Hull..... 100% Intact.

JACKIE	JANE
You did it!	100 percent intact. You're all finished! Come on in, let's get that thing off you.

Robert listens to their voices, a weak smile on his face.

INT. AIRLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

The outer door slides open. Robert enters and slowly sets the patch kit down.

JANE
 Okay, Rob. Close the outer hatch
 and I'll repressurize the
 airlock... Rob?

Robert stares at the floor. Thinking to himself...

ROBERT
Is the navigator still working?

JANE
Four-fifty-two hours till
destination, yeah. Now let's go.

ROBERT
I can't go back in.

JANE
What do you mean? Everything's
fine. The ship's stable.

ROBERT
This pod was designed to
accommodate thirty people with
fifteen scrubbers... With only one
working it can only accommodate
two.

She turns to meet his eye through the airlock window.

JANE
What are you talking about?

ROBERT
The sorbent beds. I could fix one,
but the rest were beyond repair.
There's hardly enough air for you
and Jackie.

JANE
No... Robert, no!

ROBERT
If I go back in, all three of us
will die.

JANE
We'll figure something out. We'll
find a solution.

ROBERT
This is the solution, Jane. I'm
sorry.

Jackie looks between Robert and Jane in horror. Jane leaps
out of her seat and runs to the inner hatchway.

JANE

Robert, you can't. I can't do this
on my own!

ROBERT

(sad smile)

Jane, you're one of the smartest
people I know. If you can't do it,
no one can.

He unhooks the tether from his belt. Jackie has joined Jane
at the inner hatch. She fights back tears, trembling.

JANE

No... No...! I didn't fix your
sorry ass just so you could kill
yourself all over again.

JACKIE

Robert? Don't go, please.

ROBERT

Take care of each other, okay?

JANE

I wanted to save you, Robert. I
wanted you to live.

ROBERT

You did save me, Jane. Thank you.

He pushes himself back into space...

Robert floats further and further away. No tether. Nothing to
hold him back. Just an emptying oxygen tank and his own
thoughts and memories.

Through tears, Robert manages a smile... He turns away,
finally free.

JANE

(teary hiccup)

Robert?

But he's gone.

JANE (CONT'D)

Goodbye...

Among the infinite stars, he gets smaller and smaller. At
last, his tiny, lonely SPACESUIT disappears...

Jackie clings to Jane, sobbing. For all it matters, they're
the only two people left in the universe.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

-- The escape pod drifts silently through empty space...

-- Dinner time. Just the two of them. They eat in silence.

-- "NIGHT." Jackie and Jane are curled under a blanket. Jackie sleeps, but Jane is still awake, lost in thought...

-- "DAY." They play a GAME OF CHESS on the computer.

-- CLOSE ON: The HOURS TILL DESTINATION window. It fades from 453 to 220... and then to 001...

END MONTAGE.

INT. ESCAPE POD - "NIGHT."

The two of them are sound asleep. Outside, the ROCKY HORIZON of an ASTEROID slides into view.

The ship enters a HANGAR. It lowers to the ground, touching down with a soft BOOM.

Jane wakes with a start. She shakes Jackie awake.

JANE

Baby, we're here. We made it.

INT. ESCAPE POD AIRLOCK/HANGAR BAY - LATER

Jane pulls a switch: the airlock outer hatch slides open, revealing a moderately busy hangar. Workmen go about different VESSELS, attaching fuel lines, making repairs.

No one seems to notice Jane or Jackie.

INT. PIRAEUS CONFERENCE ROOM - "DAY"

The two of them sit at a table. The door opens, and a MAN IN A SUIT steps in. He's young, friendly. Untainted by the trauma of their recent journey.

SINCLAIR

Hey! I'm Sinclair. I represent the Starway Corporation.

They stand to shake his hand.

SINCLAIR (CONT'D)

The outpost manager told me everything. You must be Jackie, correct?

JACKIE

Yes, sir.

SINCLAIR

Excellent.

They sit.

SINCLAIR (CONT'D)

The rest of the escape pods were picked up by a freighter two weeks ago. We were all pretty nervous when you weren't there.

JANE

And her parents...?

SINCLAIR

Not to worry! Prime Consul Wilton has been notified and is on his way here. He'll be here in six days.

JANE

On the escape pod, Father Gardner...?

SINCLAIR

As for that, the G.I.C's sending a thorough investigation team to collect all the evidence needed to track down the rest of the extremists behind the attack, if there are any. I'm afraid you have a lot of paperwork ahead of you. Affidavits and signatures and so forth. But... once it's all over, you'll be awarded a Full Certificate of Galactic Merit. The highest honor the government bestows.

JANE

You're joking.

SINCLAIR

Prime Consul Wilton insisted.

Jane actually SMILES. But then her smile fades...

JANE
And also Robert Delmar.

SINCLAIR
What's that?

JANE
He should receive the Certificate
of Merit too. Posthumously.

Sinclair stares at her with incomprehension. Then he nods.

SINCLAIR
Uh... Yeah. Certainly. I'm sure
they can make that happen.

Jane nods and smiles again.

FADE OUT.

OVER BLACK:

ONE WEEK LATER

INT. HANGAR BAY - PIRAEUS OUTPOST

Jackie and Jane watch, surrounded by PIRAEUS PERSONNEL, as an
EXPENSIVE GOVERNMENT SPACESHIP lands in the hangar.

The door opens and a SECURITY ENTOURAGE steps out.

They're followed by an MIDDLE AGE MAN IN A SUIT. He seems
intelligent and dignified, but clearly hasn't slept in weeks.

He looks around and spots Jackie.

PRIME CONSUL WILTON
Jackie?

JACKIE
Daddy!

Jackie runs forward. Her father drops to his knees, scooping
her up in a hug. Jane holds back, a bittersweet smile on her
face.

The Prime Consul cradles his daughter. He catches Jane's eye
over Jackie's shoulder and mouths the words "Thank You."

She nods and turns away, leaving their reunion behind.

Jane navigates through the different SHIPS in the hangar, past PILOTS and ENGINEERS, until she arrives at...

The ESCAPE POD.

It's been cleaned up and is in pristine condition. TWO WORKMEN climb out of it, CHATTING TOGETHER.

One of them spots Jane and stops.

WORKMAN 1
You're the survivor, aren't you?
Doctor Falls?

JANE
Parker-Falls.
(re: the ship)
It looks brand new.

WORKMAN 1
Yeah, we fixed her up to standard --
the air filter, long-range radio,
all of it. I imagine they'll put
her back into circulation in a
month or two.

JANE
Really?

WORKMAN 1
Yep.

WORKMAN 2
We were just powering her down when
you got here. You're welcome to
take a look around if you like.

Jane nods.

WORKMAN 1
Anyway, have a good one.

The workers continue on their way.

INT. ESCAPE POD - CONTINUOUS

Jane steps inside. She glances at the computer screen. A WINDOW is open, displaying a nearly-finished PROGRESS BAR.

COMPUTER
(TEXT)
Shutting off SYSTEM COMPUTER in **17**
seconds...

Jane surveys the tiny ship one last time...

JANE

So long.

She steps out, letting the door slide shut behind her.

The countdown on the computer hits **ZERO**, and the window disappears.

In stages, the escape pod lights FLICKER OFF: first the MAIN LIGHTS...

Then the SECONDARY LIGHTS around the edge...

And finally the AIRLOCK and KITCHENETTE lights, leaving only the GLOW FROM THE COMPUTER, alone in the darkened ship.

Then that GOES OFF as well.

THE END