

Finding George PILOT

By

Rebecca Boyd

© 2009 Rebecca Boyd

Rebecca Boyd
(803) 617-8355
rebecca@wisemare.com

EXT. ALIEN JUNGLE PLANET - DAY

On the beach of a beautiful alien lagoon, GEORGE OGULU (31, black, clean-shaven, well dressed), is crawling out from underneath a crumbling building. His right arm is covered in a thick crust of blood and sand. He hears a cold voice from inside the building behind him.

ENEMY AGENT (O.S)
Is she dead?

GEORGE OGULU
(anguished)
Molly...

ENEMY AGENT (O.S)
Okay. Blow it.

George's tearful eyes widen, and he begins frantically sprinting into the rainforest. SPIKY PLANTS tear at his skin; ALIEN CREATURES scatter.

He risks a glance over his shoulder just as an EXPLOSION obliterates the building. He is knocked down by the force of the blast, collapses onto his face, and blacks out.

FLASH FORWARD 53 YEARS - INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A thin, balding, white bearded George Ogulu is sitting on an examination table, wearing a hospital gown. He is absorbed in his thoughts, paying no attention to his surroundings. He rubs his right arm, which is covered in old scars.

Enter TINY ALIEN DOCTOR, carrying an electronic clipboard. He is between two and three feet tall, with shiny silver skin, and is riding an elevated, Segway-like scooter.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
George! I thought it might be
you. Good to see you again!

The Tiny Alien Doctor extends one of his seven, seven-fingered hands. George smiles as he accepts the handshake.

GEORGE OGULU
Good to see you too, Doc.

The doctor looks down at his clipboard.

(CONTINUED)

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
So, *Johnson* is it these days?

With several of his free hands, the doctor mimes air quotes around the word *Johnson*.

GEORGE OGULU
That's what it says, isn't it?

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
Yeah. That's what it says
today. I'm just trying to recall
what it said *before*.

George smiles and whispers, conspiratorially:

GEORGE OGULU
Ugnesoslovola.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
(laughing)
Ah! Right! But there was another
one...

George rolls his eyes and smiles genuinely, at last truly present in the moment.

GEORGE OGULU
Oh come on. Are you still stuck on
Orcelzeitenvox? That was three
names ago n...

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
That's it! Orcelzeitenvox! Now
THAT was a respectable name! You
should go back to Orcelzeitenvox.

George rolls his eyes.

GEORGE OGULU
I'll keep it in mind if I ever take
up a respectable profession.

The doctor laughs as he pulls out a tiny stethoscope from a box on his scooter. He drapes it around his neck and folds a few of his arms.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
Been a long time since you've been
in for a checkup, hasn't it?

GEORGE OGULU

Mmm. Going on eight years, I think.

The doctor shakes his head and places a few hands on his tiny hips.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

Really? Eight years? Come on now, George. How am I ever going to make any money off you if you only see me every eight years?

GEORGE OGULU

I'll try my best to be seven years worth of sick today.

The doctor chuckles half-heartedly as he reaches up to check George's lymph nodes. His eyes betray a sense of concern for his old friend.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

I don't doubt it - tromping around on all those strange planets looking for Ogulu...

A second set of arms, wielding two triangular red rubber mallets, reaches down to knock on George's kneecaps.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR (cont'd)

How's that going, by the way? Found him yet?

George responds with a noncommittal grunt.

The doctor smiles as he begins to take notes on the electronic clipboard. A stray, un-paired hand guides a cup of coffee to his lips, while another set of hands stows the rubber mallets back in the box and brings the stethoscope his tiny ears.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR (cont'd)

Just a little stick, now.

Continuing to write, listen to George's heart, and palpate his various lymph nodes, the doctor pricks George's finger and samples the blood with a machine similar to a blood glucose meter. Without turning around, he places the blood machine down on the counter behind him.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR (cont'd)

You know, I've been looking at the symptoms you described to the nurse...

He pauses, the sudden arrest of his seven working arms marking the gravity of his concern.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR (cont'd)
I wish you had come to me sooner.

GEORGE OGULU
I'm sure it's nothing you can't
take care of.

The doctor seems about to say something, but the beep of the blood machine interrupts him. He turns around, a look of dread crossing his face. He picks it up.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
Damn it.

The doctor turns back to George.

GEORGE OGULU
Well?

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
There's no easy way to say this,
George. You have Antiquarian
Granulymphanosis.

George raises an eyebrow.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR (cont'd)
And it's incurable.

They stare at one another for a moment before George breaks the gaze, looking at his knees.

GEORGE OGULU
How long?

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
In Earth time?

George is caught off guard by the word 'Earth.'

GEORGE OGULU
Earth time...

FLASHBACK EXT. PARISIAN CAFE - DAY

George (age 28) and a beautiful Latina woman, MOLLY ESPINOZA (age 30), are sitting under an umbrella at a futuristic, outdoor cafe. The EIFFEL TOWER is visible in the distance, and a HOVERCRAFT TAXI offloads ALIEN TOURISTS at the base. She leans in and kisses him.

RETURN TO THE PRESENT - INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE DAY

The doctor clears his throat.

GEORGE OGULU
Yeah. In Earth time.

The doctor punches some numbers into his clipboard.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
If we medicate you, you're looking at about five years, assuming that you take good care of yourself from now on. That means regular checkups, plenty of exercise, and at least five servings of lima beans every day.

GEORGE OGULU
(surprised)
Lima beans? Really?

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
Oh, yes. The lima beans are crucial. The drug - Denzenol - was developed by the Wronslish people of Gamma Ophiucus. For the Wronslish, Denzenol is an incredibly elegant cure. One injection, no side effects, 100% effective.

GEORGE OGULU
But not for humans.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
No. In humans it only works to delay the terminal phase of the disease. And the side effects are significant: Nausea, rapid abnormal hair growth, abscessing lymph nodes, short term memory loss, and *profound* insomnia.

The doctor sighs.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
And, unfortunately, it's not a question of *whether* you'll get the side effects, but rather in what combination.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE OGULU

But the lima beans, they help?

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

Yes. Right. The lima beans are crucial: Something to do with molybdenum and manganese absorption, I think, though the exact mechanism is not well understood.

(beat)

Anyway, if you eat enough lima beans, you might be able to avoid the lymph nodes, but - unfortunately - everyone gets the insomnia.

GEORGE OGULU

I sleep too much anyway.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

No. Listen, George. The insomnia is a big deal. You can expect to go without sleep for weeks at a time. And when you do sleep, you can expect it to be riddled with life-like nightmares, and punctuated by the occasional seizure. Ninety eight percent of humans treated with Denzenol go insane in the first year.

The smile melts from George's face.

GEORGE OGULU

So, five miserable years.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

Yes.

GEORGE OGULU

And what if we skip the meds?

The doctor punches some more numbers into his clipboard.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

About a week.

GEORGE OGULU

A week?!

(CONTINUED)

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

I know. I... I just wish you had come in sooner. We probably could have caught this three years ago. You would have at least had time to get your affairs in order.

FLASH BACK - INT. LABORATORY - DAY

George (age 31) cowers behind a desk as a hail storm of GREEN BLASTER BOLTS scream through the air. Across the room, a bolt catches Molly in the stomach, throwing her backwards like a rag doll. She crashes into a console of lab equipment.

She stares across the room at George as she slides slowly down the console and onto the floor. George is frozen in terror.

MOLLY

(gasping)

Go! You can't let them have it!

As George rushes to Molly's side, another EXPLOSION sends shards of glass and metal into his right arm. Barely registering the pain, he reaches for Molly's hand, but she is unresponsive.

RETURN TO THE PRESENT - INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

George brushes his right arm and swallows hard.

GEORGE OGULU

A week isn't enough time. Give me the drugs.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

Don't you want to take some time to think about it? Maybe talk it over with some loved ones?

GEORGE OGULU

No. I couldn't even re-home my dog in a week, let alone...

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

(sternly)

George, someone else can find Ogulu and the FTU.

George looks away. He is avoiding the doctor's gaze, his voice shaking slightly.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE OGULU

No. They can't.

The doctor is taken aback by George's display of emotion. An uncomfortable moment passes, and when George turns back to the doctor, he notices the pity in his old friend's eyes.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

I've got things to take care of.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

George, it's one injection. No tinkering with the dosage. No stopping it after a few bad weeks. You really need to be sure.

Molly's voice echoes in George's ears once more.

GEORGE OGULU

I am sure.

They look at each other for a long moment, the anger in George's face slowly fading to sadness; the surprise in the doctor's fading to disappointment.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

Give me the drugs.

The doctor sighs and nods gravely. He pulls out a syringe and inserts the needle into a rubber circle embedded in the counter.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

Pharmaceutical compound 2941735, 7 millileters.

The syringe fills with a shimmering pink liquid. The doctor pulls the needle out of the rubber circle, re-caps it, and lays it down on the counter.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR (cont'd)

Put your clothes back on. The nurse will be in to administer this in a minute.

GEORGE OGULU

You aren't going to do it?

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR

My personal moral code prevents me from administering treatments that prolong suffering.

(CONTINUED)

They look at one another for another long moment.

GEORGE OGULU
I... I'm just not finished.

TINY ALIEN DOCTOR
I will remember you young and
brilliant, George.

He extends a hand, which George shakes somberly. The doctor turns and exits the room, the door closing loudly behind him.

FLASH BACK - INT. SPACESHIP MOLLY - 53 YEARS AGO

George (age 31) is hunched over a viewscreen in his shiny new spaceship, watching insect-like alien newscaster KEN DOOPEDD read the evening news. George's right arm is bandaged from shoulder to elbow. Oozing red blisters crawl across his forearm.

KEN DOOPEDD
*Galactic Police are still pursuing
fugitive George Ogulu, who is
believed to have stolen the crown
jewels of Macklebesh in a brazen
robbery two days ago. Citizens
should consider him armed and
dangerous and report any sightings
to...*

A green bolt of energy whizzes past the window, igniting an external fuel cell. George topples to his knees with the force of the explosion.

Ken Doopedd disappears from the viewscreen and is replaced by VONTRIQ, a terrifyingly beautiful humanoid female alien with IRIDESCENT PURPLE SKIN, piercing GREEN EYES, and liquid WHITE HAIR.

VONTRIQ
Give it up, George. It's over.

DISSOLVE TO:

RETURN TO PRESENT - INT. SPACESHIP MOLLY

Fifty-three years later, George is aboard the same spaceship, now christened *The Molly*. He is deep in thought, flying back to his hideout on the obscure, inhospitable planet of Kru. A small square of gauze is stuck with medical tape in the bend of his right elbow.

(CONTINUED)

The ship now has the air of an old RV, lived in by an old hermit. There is a tiny kitchen, full of dirty dishes. A tiny couch, stacked high with junk.

A large, wire bird cage sits atop the dining table, with a tiny, delicate-looking bird named BRIAN talking in his sleep on the perch.

BRIAN
 My name is Brian.
 (snore)
 My name is Brian.
 (snore)
 SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!
 (snore)
 My name is Brian.

To the left, a bed is barely visible under the detritus of George's long life. To the right, an old dog named CHUCKLES snores in the co-pilot's chair.

George mutters to himself with a wry smile.

GEORGE OGULU
 The crown jewels of Macklebesh. If
 only...

He lets out a pained laugh - the laugh of a man attempting not to cry - and the dog in the co-pilot's chair looks up. The laugh evaporates as George meets the dog's eyes.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
 Oh, Chuckles.

George sighs as he strokes the dog's head.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
 We'll be home soon.

Chuckles slowly drops his head and drifts back to sleep.

EXT. ROCKY, DESOLATE PLANET - NIGHT

Text (types on): The planet Kru, Galactic Sector Zeta Theta Chi, marginally habitable.

The Molly is landing on the planet Kru. There are lights at the edge of the horizon, but the landing site is far from any other hint of civilization. The atmosphere of the planet is a pale, sickly green color.

INT. SPACESHIP *MOLLY* - NIGHT

George fits Chuckles with a GAS MASK and opens the door of the ship. Chuckles bounds out the door and begins SNIFFING, through the gas mask, around the area.

George closes the door of the ship and lets Brian out of his cage. Brian FLUTTERS around, noiselessly.

George makes his way to the kitchen and begins looking for something to eat.

GEORGE OGULU

You know, Moll, this really changes things.

The ship's computer responds, in the voice of Molly Espinoza.

SPACESHIP *MOLLY*

You were always going to die, George.

GEORGE OGULU

I suppose. I suppose I've put it off for too long, anyway.

SPACESHIP *MOLLY*

Dying?

GEORGE OGULU

That, too.

He takes a beer out of the fridge, considering it with more care than it deserves.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

I've spent so much time covering it all up...

He cracks open the beer, but puts it back down on the counter.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

I don't have that luxury anymore.

He leans on the counter, eyes closed, looking overwhelmed.

His left eyebrow suddenly grows two inches longer. He reaches up and feels it, with a sigh.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Rapid, unusual hair growth. So it
begins...

He steps into the tiny bathroom and snips his left eyebrow back to the approximate length of the right one. He spends a few moments trying unsuccessfully to sculpt the hairs into a natural looking shape before returning to the kitchen.

He picks up the beer again and leans against the counter, the weight of his situation closing in around him.

SPACESHIP MOLLY
Maybe it's time to tell them,
George.

GEORGE OGULU
(softly)
Tell them?
(angry)
Tell them *what*, exactly,
Molly? Surprise, Folks! You've
been conspiring with the most
sought after fugitive in the
galaxy?
(beat)
Or maybe I should just tell them
that poor old George Johnson the
bounty hunter is dying, and that
they might as well quit sharing
their intel?

SPACESHIP MOLLY
You don't give them enough credit,
George. Sophie could...

GEORGE OGULU
You know, Molly, I really can't
deal with this right now. God, why
did I ever give you her voice? You
are so like her sometimes. It's
exactly that willingness to share
information...

George chokes on the words and collapses onto the sofa, head in his hands. After a moment, he looks up and exhales. His emotion dissolves; his face grows stony.

Abruptly, he picks up a remote control and clicks on the hologram generator in the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE OGULU

Talk to me.

Four hologram people appear, standing in front of George.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

(with feigned brightness)

Wow, everyone made it
tonight. What's the occasion?

HARPER (early 30's, male, human) replies.

HARPER

Who could miss a meeting with
George Johnson?

GEORGE OGULU

No need to blow smoke up my ass,
Harper.

George turns to face SOPHIE, a green-skinned humanoid female alien, with very long legs and a silver, horse-like tail.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

Sophia, what's the Galactic
Intelligence Agency got on our man
today?

Harper looks annoyed to have been skipped over.

SOPHIE

Our best intelligence is that Ogulu
is in the Gamma Alpha Omicron
sector. An agent spotted this man -

A fifth, blue skinned hologram appears, much smaller than the others, revolving in Sophie's outstretched hand.

SOPHIE

- purchasing meal worms on Beta
Omicron 6 in the Velof System.

HARPER

He's blue...

SOPHIE

Intelligence from last month
suggested that Ogulu was using
colloidal silver to alter his skin
color. And, anyway, this man has
demonstrated an unusually high
degree of familiarity with the
Soproghashli project. So we're

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE (cont'd)
tracking him closely. He never stays on the same planet long, but has yet to leave the sector. We've also discovered he has a weakness for Maldorian women, so we've sent him a very charming one. With any luck, he'll get lovesick and lead her to the FTU.

MARLA (reptilian, with dark red scales and eight eyes arrayed around the circumference of her head like a crown) scoffs.

MARLA
Ridiculous.

With an irritated switch of the tail, Sophie looks at her.

SOPHIE
I suppose, as usual, you've got something better, Marla?

MARLA
Earlier today, a man on Delta Luna 4 of the Tarbeek system confessed to Cardinal Bevelonius that he was George Ogulu. We have him in custody.

Harper rolls his eyes and sighs audibly.

HARPER
Oh, how nice. You've found another Melphinium addict to torture. Gorked out of his mind even *before* you found him, no doubt.

MARLA
I don't recall the teacher calling on you, Harper.

HARPER
Tell me, Marla, how many confessions does this make for you? That last one you told us about was a *woman*, wasn't it?

MARLA
Learn your history,
Astro-piss. Sex change operations have been successfully performed in
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARLA (cont'd)
your species for over a thousand
years. And, anyway, you're one to
talk about useful intel! Just what
has the great intelligence arm of
StarMart contributed lately?

FRECKLES (a shapeshifter, presently in vaguely humanoid
form) interjects. As he speaks, he casually twirls his
slender hologram remote, his fingers changing color as he
passes the remote from one to the next.

FRECKLES
Our intelligence continues to
suggest that he died two years
ago. And, anyway, Ogulu is really
immaterial. I've said all along
that we should be looking for his
files. Or someone that he confided
in. It's the FTU we need. The man
doesn't matter.

GEORGE OGULU
Oh Freckles, enough already! The
Fratublicrat Party is *still* the
only remotely credible group
espousing that view. And we aren't
going to just walk away from the
universe's most lucrative ransom
opportunity because you and your
penny loafer- wearing buddies are
ready to call it quits.

Freckles says nothing. His ears momentarily FLASH purple.

Exasperated, George turns to Harper.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Harper, do you have anything?

HARPER
We've got a lead on the planet Kru,
but it doesn't look like
much. I'll know more tomorrow.

GEORGE OGULU
Really? You talk down to Marla
about a confession, and all you've
got is '*not much* on the planet
Kru'?

HARPER

Unlike Marla, I don't fabricate my leads in order to score points with the boss.

MARLA

I know where you live.

HARPER

Oooh, I'm so scared of the scaly reptile woman!

GEORGE OGULU

You know, it's really wonderful to work with such an elite group of professionals. I just can't imagine how I could ever possibly replace any of you.

Harper and Marla glare at each other, but hold their tongues.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

Anybody have anything else?

George looks from one hologram to another.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

Well, I do. I've decided that we need to expand the team. We're never going to find Ogulu at our current level of deployment, so I'm going to start recruiting again. If you have any suggestions, please contact me privately.

(beat)

That's all.

The four hologram people look at each other pointedly, then nod and disappear.

George clicks off the generator and, in a flash of speed belying his age, bounds to the door.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

CHUCK! CHUCK! COME ON! We've got to go!

The gas mask clad dog comes running back into the ship and makes a bee-line for the co-pilot's chair.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
BRIAN! CAGE!

The bird hurtles into his cage, shutting the door behind himself.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
MOLLY! Launch sequence engage!

The ship begins to vibrate as it works through the autopilot launch sequence.

George straps himself into the cockpit and pulls up the surveillance system on his viewscreen.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Who could have told him we were on
Kru??

He scans through the different surveillance views, stopping on the one pointing south.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Magnify 10!

Over the south horizon, George can just barely make out moving lights.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Magnify 100!

They are closing in on the landing site.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
MOLLY! GET US OUT OF HERE!

CUT TO BLACK

INT. HARPER'S TANK - JUST BEFORE DAWN

FADE IN:

Harper has just climbed into a one man tank. He straps himself in, then pulls up his own long distance surveillance system. After studying it for a brief moment, he speaks through a headset to his men in the surrounding tanks.

HARPER
Hmm. Looks like someone's out there after all. Let's not waste any time.

(CONTINUED)

Harper and his team of StarMart-outfitted spies (dressed in blue jumpsuits festooned with shiny advertisement buttons) speed across the desolate landscape in pursuit of Ogulu.

On Harper's viewscreen, *The Molly* hums to life, puffs of dust rising as the launch sequence begins.

HARPER (cont'd)
He's onto us. Disable the ship. But don't destroy it. He's no good to us dead.

A soldier wearing a gas mask mans a gun on the roof of the vehicle to Harper's left and begins firing at *The Molly*.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. SPACESHIP *MOLLY* - JUST BEFORE DAWN

The ship is vibrating, still working through the launch sequence. George is still watching the surveillance system.

A FLASH of green light streaks out from the approaching convoy.

GEORGE OGULU
Molly! Now! NOW! They're firing! NOW!!

The Molly begins to lift off from the planet but is immediately struck by the blast. The ship spins around from the force of the impact, just a few feet off the ground.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Guns!

A new console of controls rotates up from the dashboard of the ship. George grabs the controls, and time slows to a crawl. He lines up the first tank in the convoy, closes his eyes, and fires.

The tank is vaporized. The BLINDING FLASH sends all the other tanks spinning out of control as a fine MIST OF BLOOD AND METAL rains down upon them. Time returns to normal speed.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Damage report!

SPACESHIP *MOLLY*
Indirect hit to aft thruster. Estimated 30% damage. I can still get off the planet.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE OGULU

Then let's go! Clear the
atmosphere, then jump to Sector
Epsilon Alpha Rho Tau
Eta! Coordinates 90432 mark 23421
mark 03947.

The Molly rises clumsily into the green air, obviously suffering from the aft thruster hit. Another BLAST of green whizzes past the starboard hull.

George spins the lower guns around and FIRES a warning shot. A large boulder in the midst of the tanks is VAPORIZED. The FLASH of light again sends the tanks scattering.

Now, however, the StarMart team begins firing at will, lacking any semblance of discipline. GREEN BLASTS ricochet around the landscape, missing *The Molly* by wide margins. Several shots make contact with other tanks.

In the midst of the chaos, *The Molly* clears Kru's atmosphere and disappears.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. HARPER'S TANK - SUNRISE

FOUR TINY SUNS, each a different color, are peeking over the horizon at varying altitudes.

Harper has stopped his vehicle and erected a FORCE FIELD around it to guard against FRIENDLY FIRE. In the background, other tanks are CAREENING around like angry ants, SHOOTING at random and barely avoiding crashing into one another.

There is a tiny hologram man in front of Harper. It's his boss from StarMart, JUDE S. CARIOT. Cariot is an older man, mid 60's, with disheveled white hair. He is wearing a loose BLUE SATIN VEST, covered in advertisement buttons.

CARIOT

Do you have any idea what time it
is here, Harper?

HARPER

Sir, it was Ogulu.

Cariot's eyes widen, then narrow to slits.

(CONTINUED)

CARIOT

What do you mean, 'it was_Ogulu'?

HARPER

He, uh, vaporized one of my tanks. We've, uh, yet to discover an imposter with this, uh, type of firepower.

CARIOT

Do you have him?

Harper clears his throat self consciously.

HARPER

No, sir.

Cariot is silent for a moment, his holographic eyes burning.

CARIOT

Continue.

HARPER

It's not the type of ship we thought. Small. Beat up. The serial numbers had been removed, but I'm pretty confident that it was a Theta class Winnestar. At least 50 years old. I'm transmitting footage now.

CARIOT

(incredulous)

Wait. You had Ogulu. In a recreational vehicle. And you lost him?! HOW COULD YOU HAVE LOST HIM?!

HARPER

In fairness, Sir...

CARIOT

(undeterred)

Fifty three years we've been looking for this guy, and you just let him get away!? In a Theta class Winnestar?! I might as well have had a teenager carry out this mission!

HARPER

It wo...

(CONTINUED)

CARIOT

We've got them, you know! Pimpily faced kids from all manner of species, all across the galaxy. Each one of them just dying to get off their cash register assignment and into your job!

HARPER

It won't happen again, Sir. The informant seemed unreliable. I didn't think the lead would pan out.

CARIOT

You're right! It probably WON'T ever happen again. You may have just blown our only chance to EVER get the FTU! Just wait until the GIA and the Fratublicrats hear about this! As if I wasn't the laughing stock of the intelligence community already!

HARPER

I believe I can find him again, Sir.

CARIOT

Tell me, Harper, do you have any more bad news to share tonight? Are you also sleeping with my wife, perhaps? In addition to ruining my career?

HARPER

No, Sir.

Harper is at a loss for words. Perhaps he is trying to remember what Cariot's wife looks like. It is an extremely awkward pause.

CARIOT

(steadying himself)

Get back to Kru City and find your *unreliable informant* again.

HARPER

Yes, Sir. Harper out.

The other tanks have stopped moving now. Most are smoking. Some have crashed into cliffs or other tanks. Harper puts his headset back on.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER
Alright. That's it. We're goin'
home.

The crippled tanks begin to turn around and move back towards the city lights on the horizon.

INT. CARIOT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cariot runs his hand through his thinning white hair. He is sitting in a brown leather armchair in a wood paneled room. The walls are dotted with electronic indicator lights, but there is no furniture other than the chair. There is a knock at the door.

CARIOT
Come in.

His young wife, YTA, enters the room. She is wearing a gauzy white dressing gown, and her waist-length red hair bounces as she walks. Cariot stands to greet her, and she kisses him on the cheek.

YTA
What's going on?

CARIOT
Vontrig is going to kill me.

INT. BASE CAMP - HARPER'S PERSONAL QUARTERS - DAWN

FADE IN:

Harper unceremoniously flops down on his cot. The room is spartan and uncomfortable-looking, obviously having been thrown together in a hurry. He flicks on the HOLOGRAM GENERATOR in the ceiling. Three figures appear in front of him, suspended oddly in sitting positions in midair.

MARLA
What kept you?

HARPER
It was Ogulu. I almost had him.

Marla, Freckles, and Sophie jump up simultaneously.

MARLA, FRECKLES, AND SOPHIE
WHAT?

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

I mean, I'm pretty sure...

Marla, Freckles, and Sophie exchange knowing looks.

HARPER (cont'd)

No, seriously. Whoever it was vaporized one of my tanks from an old Theta class Winnestar.

MARLA

The universe is full of nutty old hermits...

HARPER

With Galaxy class weapons systems on their recreational vehicles?

MARLA

I'm just saying...

HARPER

... that you're feeling a bit threatened by 'the great intelligence arm of StarMart'? Or maybe jealous?

The row of SCALES running down Marla's spine stand up as she balls her THREE FINGERED FISTS.

MARLA

(angrily)

Look -

SOPHIE

(interrupting)

It doesn't matter. Whether it was Ogulu or not, you didn't get him. And this isn't what we're here to talk about.

FRECKLES

She's right. Down to business. What's this 'expand the organization' crap about?

Harper pries his eyes off of Marla to look at Freckles.

HARPER

I can't believe he would even *consider* diluting the pool at this point. It's insane. We're closer than ever.

(CONTINUED)

(eyes drifting, distracted)
It could have all been over
TONIGHT...

Sophie, Marla, and Freckles exchange doubtful glances.

FRECKLES

There's something weird going on
with him. Is he looking thinner to
you?

MARLA

(with three contemptuous eyes
still on Harper)
Absolutely. And grayer.

SOPHIE

He's an old man. How do you expect
him to look?

HARPER

Yeah... but I think they're
right. He has been looking weaker
lately. And this sudden move to
start recruiting again... It seems
like desperation.

SOPHIE

He's probably eager to get this
thing finished before he's too old
to spend his ransom.

MARLA

I think we should cut him out. We
don't need him. He doesn't do
anything. We only need each other.

HARPER

Whoa, whoa! Hang on! We have over
50 years of intelligence on Ogulu
because of George. We can't just
cut him out!

Marla rolls her many eyes.

MARLA

He's dead weight. And that's the
only Fundamental Truth we've come
close to in a long time.

SOPHIE

Marla, you are such a snake!

(CONTINUED)

MARLA

And you, Sophie, are a tasty, tasty mouse.

SOPHIE

Try it, Octo-clops.

Harper lets out a burst of laughter.

MARLA

Think it's funny? What do they call this on your world? A cat figh...

FRECKLES

I don't have time for this.

Harper, Sophie, and Marla glare at Freckles.

SOPHIE

(eyes softening)

Fine.

FRECKLES

It'd be messy to cut him out. We'd never get away with it. And the drama would be a huge distraction. The FTU has to be our first priority.

There is a silence, and Freckles' long hair begins to shrink upward into a short, orange buzz cut.

FRECKLES (cont'd)

Maybe if we're lucky, he'll just go ahead and die before we find it.

Sophie lets out an exasperated sigh.

SOPHIE

I have a GIA briefing in 10 minutes.

HARPER

And I have to find my informant again.

MARLA

Fine. See you all at George's tomorrow. Maybe he'll have added some more useless cretins to the organization by then.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACESHIP MOLLY

The ship has fallen out of hyperspace in the middle of an asteroid belt.

GEORGE OGULU

Molly, what's wrong? This isn't where we belong.

George grabs the controls and jerks them hard in order to barely miss a large asteroid. In the background, Brian's cage teeters on the edge of the dining room table.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

Molly, where are we?

Molly?

Molly??

Oh God.

FLASH BACK - INT. LABORATORY - DAY

George (age 31) and a group of several colleagues, most of them aliens, are sitting around a table in an informal-looking laboratory. There is a wall of windows behind the table. A beautiful lagoon is visible outside, with a tropical forest stretching away in the distance, under a lavender sky.

A small TV is embedded in the table. Molly and George sit across from one another, the TV between them. The room is abuzz with pleasant small talk as they absently watch the news.

KEN DOOPEDD, TV NEWS REPORTER

Galactic Press are converging on the smallest moon of the planet Plorn for today's news conference from the esteemed Soproghashli Metaphysics Group. The Group's recently elected leader and spokesperson, Molly Espinoza -

George reaches across the table and squeezes Molly's hand as a small picture of her appears over Ken Doopedd's shoulder.

KEN DOOPEDD, TV NEWS REPORTER (cont'd)

- has been resistant to advance questioning, but promises to give a thorough accounting of the Group's findings today.

(CONTINUED)

(shuffles his papers)
 The Soproghashli Group is a clandestine group of many generations of scientists, philosophers, and theologians, who have been working together to discern the Fundamental Truth of the Universe, or FTU, for the last four thousand Galactic Standard Years. The members' identities are a tightly held secret, and - at present - Spokesperson Espinoza is the only one whose membership has been publicly confirmed. It is widely believed that she will reveal the FTU today.

(beat)

We go now to our correspondent YULP BLIZNAT on the smallest moon of the planet Plorn. Yulp, can you hear me?

YULP BLIZNAT

Yes, Ken, I'm here. As you can see behind me, security is very tight. Spokesperson Espinoza has made it quite clear that she wants the FTU released to all news outlets simultaneously. She is very concerned that certain groups, which she has refused to name, might try to...

George hastily turns off the TV, and Molly looks anxiously at her wrist chronometer.

MOLLY

Hell of a day for the shuttle to be late.

GEORGE OGULU

It's been 13.6 billion years. A few more minutes won't hurt 'em.

Molly squeezes George's hand and smiles at him fondly.

A tiny, hairy female alien sitting on the table, QUIXELDOT NUMENZOLLOP, clears her throat.

QUIXELDOT NUMENZOLLOP

(smiling)

Save the googly eyes for after the press conference, please. We

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

QUIXELDOT NUMENZOLLOP (cont'd)
should at least pretend to practice
some professional decorum today.

A fishlike alien in a large, ROLLING PLASTIC BUBBLE full of PINK GAS, SMAZHOLT DUPLIXIA, speaks through a metallic sounding electronic translator while bouncing up and down slightly.

SMAZHOLT DUPLIXIA
I can't believe this day has
come. It's been an honor working
with all of you.

Everyone around the table smiles and, for a moment, a happy silence descends on the group.

MOLLY
I still can't believe we've finally
finished. The Fundamental Truth of
the Universe... I mean... How do
you follow that?

The door of the laboratory immediately bursts open and GREEN BLASTER BOLTS fly helter skelter through the space. Agents dressed in heavy gray robes pour into the room, FIRING indiscriminately at people, machines, and furniture. Their sole aim is destruction.

George, positioned farthest from the door, hides behind a desk, frozen in terror.

Smazholt is the first to be hit. A grazing hit from a BLASTER BOLT melts a small hole in the plastic bubble, and the PINK GAS goes hissing out through the room, creating small EXPLOSIONS as more blaster bolts pass through it.

An enemy agent grabs Quixeldot around the waist and drags her out of sight. She screams for a moment and then is suddenly silent.

Time slows to a crawl as Molly is hit with a green blaster bolt on the opposite side of the room.

MOLLY
George! Get out of here!

The force of the blast SLAMS Molly against a console of laboratory equipment.

GEORGE OGULU
Molly! No!!

Molly slides slowly down the console and onto the floor.

(CONTINUED)

MOLLY

(gasping)

Go! You can't let them have it!

As George rushes to Molly's side, an EXPLOSION sends shards of glass and metal into his right arm. Barely registering the pain, he reaches for Molly's hand, but she is unresponsive.

Tears streaming from his face, George slips through the hole in the floor, created by the explosion. He pulls Molly's body along with him, but the space is small, and he must crawl on his belly.

ENEMY AGENT (O.S)

Get her! The bitch that just went down the hole!

In a panic, George lets go of Molly and crawls as fast as he can through the darkness. He hears the sickening sound of her body being DRAGGED back out of the hole, foot first.

As George emerges at the edge of the crawl space, his right arm covered in a crust of blood and sand, he hears the enemy agent's gravelly voice.

ENEMY AGENT (O.S)

Is she dead?

GEORGE OGULU

(anguished)

Molly...

ENEMY AGENT (O.S)

Okay, blow it.

George's tearful eyes widen, and he begins frantically sprinting into the rainforest. Spiky plants tear at his skin; alien creatures scatter.

He risks a glance over his shoulder just as a devastating EXPLOSION obliterates the building. He is knocked down by the force of the blast, collapses onto his face, and blacks out.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. SPACESHIP *MOLLY*

A small ASTEROID ricochets off the hull, knocking George to his knees and shaking him out of the memory. He clambers into the pilot's chair and sloppily grabs the controls. They are unresponsive. The cabin lights are FLICKERING, plunging *The Molly* in and out of a deep, soul draining blackness.

Brian is wide awake in his cage, eyes bulging, not saying a word. Chuckles unstraps himself from the co-pilot's chair and runs to hide under the bed.

George scrambles to his feet and begins flicking switches and pushing buttons wildly. The navigation system hums back to life as the cabin lights fizz out. George's face is lit only by the light from the small viewscreen. The rest of the ship is bathed in the crushing blackness of space.

GEORGE OGULU

Oh, thank God. Molly, can you hear me?

There is a long moment of silence.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

Molly??

The ship makes a TRILLING SOUND, and an unfamiliar metallic voice replies.

SPACESHIP *MOLLY*

Emergency life support and navigation systems activated.

GEORGE OGULU

Ah. You're the backup computer, then?

SPACESHIP *MOLLY*

How may I be of assistance?

George rolls his eyes.

GEORGE OGULU

Standby.

George looks at the viewscreen, pulling out to increasingly wider views. At last he spots it.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)

Jupiter! Okay! We're not far off at all. Good job, Molly!

(CONTINUED)

The ship is dishearteningly silent.

Another small ASTEROID ricochets off the hull, sending George crashing backwards into the living room. He scrambles forward to the control panel and straps himself back in.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Molly, are you still with me?

The ship does not respond.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Molly? Oh. Right. Computer?

The emergency backup computer trills a wordless acknowledgment.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Computer, we're in the right sector, but at the wrong coordinates. Re-route for coordinates 90432 mark 23421 mark 03947. And try to miss the asteroids, please.

SPACESHIP MOLLY
Re-routing for coordinates 90432 mark 23421 mark 03947...

Several moments pass, the ship remaining stationary.

GEORGE OGULU
Oh, you have got to be kidding... ENGAGE!

The Molly immediately reverses course and speeds off towards the distant yellow sun.

FADE OUT

INT. STARMART HEADQUARTERS - DAY

FADE IN:

Cariot is pacing around in a pentagonal ante room. It is only a few strides in width but massively tall, creating the sense of being at the bottom of a well.

There is one door in each of the five walls. One stands open, revealing the receptionist's desk and empty outer waiting room. The others are tightly closed, each bearing a

(CONTINUED)

small, brass plaque. Cariot glances nervously at the one that reads: "VONTRIQ, VP for Intelligence."

The phone rings at the receptionist's desk. The ten foot tall male receptionist, TROGLODY TRELINOTT, answers.

TROGLODY

Yes, m'am?

(beat)

Yes, he's just arrived. It's...

(looking at his appointment book)

Jude S. Cariot, from the FTU team.

(beat)

Okay, I'll show him right in.

Troglody enters the ante room.

TROGLODY (cont'd)

She'll see you now.

Troglody opens Vontriq's door, to reveal an immense, hot, FOG-FILLED, fetid-smelling room. He bends down and hands Cariot a MASK with a Thermos-sized metal tank attached.

TROGLODY (cont'd)

Oxygen?

CARIOT

Yes, please.

Troglody shakes the tank slightly.

TROGLODY

(quietly)

Try not to gulp it. She hates it when people come in stoned.

VONTRIQ (O.S.)

(unkindly)

You're letting the bought air out.

Cariot takes the mask and quickly steps into the room. The door shuts loudly behind him.

INT. VONTRIQ'S OFFICE - DAY

Cariot places the mask to his face and inhales deeply as he steps toward the center of the room.

Vontriq is sitting in a very large, luxurious BATHTUB, full of a lightly BOILING and aggressively STEAMING liquid. A

(CONTINUED)

vaguely humanoid amphibian, her long, slimy white hair falls fluidly over her shoulders and fans out in the water on either side of her. Her iridescent purple skin glistens, though there is almost no light in the room. She wears a bright BLUE SWIMSUIT, with advertisement buttons arranged in an arrow-straight line down the front. Her green eyes reveal no trace of welcome.

VONTRIQ

You continue to believe that your agent is not aiding Ogulu?

Cariot, frightened and mildly intoxicated from his panicked breathing of compressed oxygen, removes the mask from his face.

CARIOT

Yes, m'am. This last event notwithstanding, Harper is one of my blest... best... men.

VONTRIQ

Then it might intrigue you to know that three days ago we intercepted this communication between him and someone going by the name "George Johnson."

Vontriq passes a thin LED INFOSCREEN to Cariot. It SPARKS in her wet, webbed hand. Cariot slowly places the mask back to his face as he reads.

VONTRIQ (cont'd)

As you see, your 'best man' is sharing intelligence. And now he has missed Ogulu by a hair's breadth. Convenient.

Cariot stammers through the mask, unsure of what to say.

VONTRIQ (cont'd)

I'm putting a tail on Harper.

CARIOT

Yes, m'am... Of course...

VONTRIQ

You have no knowledge of this operation.

CARIOT

(coughing, shaking the oxygen tank)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CARIOT (cont'd)
Of course not, M'am.

VONTRIQ
That's all, then.

Cariot turns to leave.

VONTRIQ (cont'd)
Oh, and Cariot?

Cariot stops and turns quickly back to Vontrig.

CARIOT
M'am?

VONTRIQ
If I find that you had anything to
do with this...

CARIOT
You won't, m'am.

Vontrig cocks her head to the side menacingly.

CARIOT (cont'd)
(frightened)
Because I didn't, m'am.

Vontrig stands up and steps out of the tub. She pulls off her wig and drops it over her shoulder back into the simmering liquid. Her wrinkled scalp seems to crawl across her skull, making her even more alien and intimidating.

She walks slowly towards Cariot, without drying off. The steaming liquid trails behind her on the floor. She is at least a head taller than him, beautiful and terrifying.

VONTRIQ
That's good. Because if you had...

With one hand, she reaches slowly towards his face, taking hold of his cheek and ear. Her skin is boiling hot. The beads of sweat rolling down Cariot's brow evaporate with a HISS as they collide with her hand. He dares not move, though, and stares - like a deer in headlights - into her green eyes.

VONTRIQ (cont'd)
... there would be unfortunate
consequences.

(CONTINUED)

She holds his face for another moment, then withdraws her hand and turns back towards her tub. Cariot exhales audibly and fans the WEBBED PALM PRINT emblazoned on his face, tears of pain now mixing with the beads of sweat pouring down his cheeks.

VONTRIQ (cont'd)

You are no longer needed.

CARIOT

M'am?

VONTRIQ

You're no longer needed in my office. I'm still considering whether or not you're needed... in a general sense. It's likely in your best interests to leave before I decide.

Cariot turns and hastily exits the room.

Vontriq climbs back into her tub and pauses to think for a brief moment before picking up the phone to dial the receptionist. We hear the phone RING at his desk outside.

TROGLODY (O.S.)

Yes, m'am?

VONTRIQ

Take care of him.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - DAY

The tall, exterior glass door swings shut as Cariot nervously rushes across the parking lot to his ship.

TROGLODY

Right away, m'am.

Troglody pulls a tiny syringe of pale blue liquid out of his desk drawer, strides to the door, opens it just a crack, and lazily throws the syringe like a dart. The needle embeds deeply in the back of Cariot's thigh.

CUT TO BLACK

EXT. ANTARCTICA - DAY

FADE IN:

Text (types on): Earth, Galactic Sector Epsilon Alpha Rho
Tau Eta, habitable for oxygen tolerant life forms only.

The Molly is landing in Antarctica. An ICEBERG calves off
the glacial shelf as the ship lands.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACESHIP MOLLY

George is rummaging under his bed, the mattress propped on
his head as he throws random debris over his shoulders.

 GEORGE OGULU
 Damn it, where is it?
 (beat)
 Chuckles? Chuckles, come help me
 find my suit!

Chuckles jumps down from the couch, lollops over the rolling
can of lima beans that George just tossed over his shoulder,
climbs over the bed frame, and tunnels through the debris
under the bed. He makes a WUFFLING noise as he moves,
scenting out his quarry. After a few moments he emerges,
dragging an absurdly thick snowsuit behind him.

George pats the dog affectionately.

 GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
 What would I do without you, huh?

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACESHIP MOLLY - DAY

George, looking lumpy and awkward in his extremely thick red
snowsuit, opens the exterior door of *The Molly*. A gust of
icy wind slams past him, buffeting Brian against the
opposite wall of the cabin.

George quickly jumps out the door and shuts it behind
him. Pulling down his goggles, he looks around. He presses
a large red button on the strap of his goggles, just above
his right ear.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE OGULU
Computer?

The Molly trills a wordless response from the goggle earpiece.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
Monitor my position. If I stop moving for more than two minutes, come pick me up. And keep a medical droid on standby.

SPACESHIP MOLLY
Acknowledged.

George looks across the frozen landscape. Behind him is the frigid and turbulent Antarctic Ocean. In front of him, a vast white wasteland. He begins walking.

INT. SPACESHIP MOLLY - DAY

The hologram generator in the ceiling is BEEPING softly and FLASHING the holographic words "Incoming Transmission" across the living room. Brian naps on the back of the sofa, oblivious.

BRIAN
All you need is love - almost.
(snore)
Energy equals mass times the speed of light squared.

Chuckles jumps up on the sofa and knocks the hologram control on the floor. Harper, Sophie, Marla, and Freckles appear in mid air, each hurriedly wiping impatient looks off their faces as they turn towards the couch.

CUT TO:

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS OF THE OMNIGALACTIC CHURCH OF UBER OMNISCIENCE - DAY

In a dark, concrete walled room with narrow, prison-like slits for windows, Marla collapses into a swiveling gold chair behind a stone altar.

MARLA
Oh, good. He's sent the dog and the bird to talk to us today.

Harper, in tiny hologram form suspended above the altar, is indignant.

(CONTINUED)

HARPER

Shit. The one night I have big news, he doesn't show up!

Sophie casts him a sharp look.

SOPHIE

Quiet! That's a Nekrolaran Truth Bird.

MARLA

I never took you for a naturalist, Sophie. But I've hardly got time for bird wat...

SOPHIE

You NEVER wake up an Nekrolaran Truth Bird! They only speak in their sleep, and they are incapable of saying anything untrue.

FRECKLES

Reeeeeally?

SOPHIE

YES! Really!

The spies all look toward the bird intently. Brian is silent for another long moment.

BRIAN

Chuckles is a dog.

(snore)

Damnit!

SOPHIE

(surpressing a quiet giggle)

Also, they can swear.

BRIAN

Wegtricax!

SOPHIE

In a variety of languages.

MARLA

Oh yes, this is a very productive use of my time.

(beat)

If George shows up, tell him I've gone to interrogate Bevelonius' confessor.

(CONTINUED)

Marla snaps off her hologram generator and the dog, bird, and other spies disappear.

CUT TO:

INT. FRATUBLICRAT HEADQUARTERS - LATE AFTERNOON

Freckles sits in a glass walled cubicle, surrounded by other glass walled cubicles, all of which seem to be empty. Sophie, Harper, Chuckles, and Brian float in front of him on the desk.

FRECKLES

(quietly)

Are these birds prone to ever saying anything useful?

BRIAN

George eats lima beans.

SOPHIE

(in a hushed whisper)

If you wait long enough.

Freckles rolls his eyes and leans back in his chair, his skin taking on the pattern of the upholstery.

MONTAGE - BRIAN'S PEARLS OF WISDOM

Sophie, Freckles, and Harper sit for an extended period, waiting for George to show up or for Brian to spill a juicy secret.

INT. HARPER'S PERSONAL QUARTERS - NIGHT:

BRIAN

You can't always get what you want.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GIA HEADQUARTERS, SOPHIE'S OFFICE - DAY:

BRIAN

Yellow and blue make green.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRECKLES' CUBICLE - EARLY EVENING

BRIAN
I am a bird.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SPACESHIP MOLLY - NIGHT

BRIAN
The circumference of a circle can
be found by multiplying 2 times pi
times the radius. Pi is defined as
3.14159...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRECKLES' CUBICLE - EARLY EVENING

BRIAN
...26535...

FRECKLES
Okay, that's it.

Freckles snaps off his hologram generator. Harper, Sophie,
Chuckles, and Brian disappear.

CUT TO:

INT. HARPER'S PERSONAL QUARTERS - NIGHT

Harper is lying on his cot. Only Sophie, Chuckles, and
Brian's holograms remain.

BRIAN
...35940...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARPER'S PERSONAL QUARTERS - NIGHT

Harper is still lying on his cot. He is now scanning
through documents on a small, handheld LED Infoscreen.

BRIAN
...69234...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HARPER'S PERSONAL QUARTERS - NIGHT

Harper wakes himself with his own snore and sits up suddenly, coughing.

BRIAN
...38414...

HARPER
(quietly)
Shall we take it in turns, then?

SOPHIE
(whispering)
Yeah. I'll go first. It's daylight here.

HARPER
Buzz me if George shows up. Or if the bird gives up anything good.

SOPHIE
(nodding)
Night.

Harper clicks off his hologram generator, and Sophie, Chuckles, and Brian disappear. He closes his eyes.

INT. GIA HEADQUARTERS, SOPHIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sophie thumbs through some classified documents on her desk. An electronic BEEP sounds, signaling that someone is at her door. She reflexively clicks off the hologram generator.

SOPHIE
Come in.

A translucent pterodactyl-like alien with a heavy five o'clock shadow, JORN "BARNEY" TRCZALIS, flies through the door and lands on one of the chairs in front of Sophie's desk. Sophie stands and bows to greet him.

SOPHIE
(cordially)
Barney! I didn't know you were back!

BARNEY
Just got in a moment ago. Please, sit down. I've received pressing news from Vontriq.

(CONTINUED)

Sophie sits back down.

SOPHIE
(raising an eyebrow)
Oh?

BARNEY
Yes. She believes that one of her own agents may be conspiring with Ogulu.

SOPHIE
Really? Which one?

BARNEY
No one you'd have met. His name is... Let's see here...
(looks down at his Infoscreen)
Harper... Thesselonius
Harper. Human.

Sophie conceals her surprise by pretending to take a large gulp from the empty coffee mug on her desk.

BARNEY (cont'd)
(still looking down at his Infoscreen)
Senior field agent. Was working under Jude S. Cariot, who has been placed on - uh - unpaid administrative leave.

Sophie gives a knowing look.

SOPHIE
She's put Cariot in the Bunker?

BARNEY
Yes. She was unsure of whether he was aware of Harper's duplicity.

SOPHIE
And what's she doing about Harper?

BARNEY
She's promoting him to Cariot's old job. He'll report directly to her from now on.

SOPHIE
She's allowing him to continue doubling?

(CONTINUED)

BARNEY

She believes he can be broken. And that when he turns, he will be an invaluable source of information.

SOPHIE

Maybe. But she doesn't have a great record with that kind of thing... Too impatient.

BARNEY

I agree. You, on the other hand, are quite patient.

Barney and Sophie lock eyes for a long moment.

SOPHIE

Yes. I am.

Barney hands her a small chip, which she inserts into her Infoscreen. Her eyes widen as she reads her new assignment.

BARNEY

Is something wrong, Sophie?

CUT TO:

INT. HARPER'S PERSONAL QUARTERS - SUNRISE

Harper yawns and stretches as the light of the blue sun streams onto his face through the window. He looks at his wrist chronometer and sits up. He clicks on the hologram generator. Chuckles and Brian are still asleep on the couch.

HARPER

(smiling to himself)

Now that's a great life.

He putters around his quarters, walking in and out of the hologram transmission beam. He gathers clean clothes, brushes his teeth, scrambles an egg. Suddenly, Brian speaks loudly and clearly.

BRIAN

George is dying.

Harper whirls around to look at the bird, mouth agape.

CUT TO BLACK

EXT. ANTARCTICA - TWILIGHT

George is drilling a deep hole in the ice using a huge, diamond tipped DRILL. He has been at it a long time. He throws back the hood of his snow suit, and the beads of sweat rolling off his brow quickly crystallize into ice.

GEORGE OGULU
(breathing hard)
Enough.

He reaches inside his snow suit and pulls out a data cube. He hesitates as he drops it in the hole. He pulls out a tiny, ornately carved wooden cylinder. He mutters something unintelligible as he drops it in the hole. He pulls out a small, brightly colored feather, sealed inside a plastic bag. He drops it in the hole.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
(looking down into the hole)
May you remain hidden, until they
are ready.

He pauses for a moment, looking down into the hole. It is very deep, and the bottom is not visible. He is momentarily entranced.

At last he steps back, turns to the drill, and flicks a switch on the side of it. The machine beeps several loud, successive BEEPS, and a mechanical VOICE emanates from the diamond tip.

DRILL VOICE
Please stand clear of the
drill. Por favor mantenganse
alejado de la taladro. Nglckt vorp
zlest nchk vloqtor.

A series of FLASHES and acrid PUFFS OF GAS emanate from the drill, as it gives its admonition in a variety of other forms of communication.

GEORGE OGULU
(covering his nose, disgusted)
Ugh! I don't speak any olfactory
languages!

The drill folds up into a tiny cube.

DRILL VOICE
To change your language settings,
please enter the Accessibility menu
and select "Languages." Para
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DRILL VOICE (cont'd)
 cambiar sus ajustes de la lengua,
 incorpore por favor el menu de La
 Accesibilidad y seleccione "Las
 Lenguas." Zlep frorn quazfulg
 Shoxui frowj Glovmert provlishzet.

The cube flashes and emits more puffs of gas as George picks it up and places it back in his pocket.

DRILL VOICE (cont'd)
 (muffled slightly from inside
 George's suit)
 To hear this message in binary,
 please press 1. Or 0.

Ignoring the drill cube, George presses the red button on his goggles.

GEORGE OGULU
 Molly? Er... Computer?

The Molly trills a wordless response.

GEORGE OGULU (cont'd)
 Come and get me. I'm finished.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Sophie's suitcase is open on top of her round bed. From off screen, she throws clothes into it haphazardly.

The hologram generator in the ceiling beeps, and the words "Incoming Transmission" flash holographically across the room.

Sophie steps into view, anxious. She picks up the hologram generator remote, and - arranging her face in a relaxed and professional expression - clicks it on.

Harper appears before her. She is surprised.

SOPHIE
 Harper? Oh. I was
 expecting... Since when do you
 call me at home?

She looks anxiously at her wrist chronometer.

HARPER
 Since you gave up on the bird
 before it announced that George is
 dying.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE
What? The bird? What?

HARPER
Yes... The bird. The Nekrolaran
Truth Bird.

SOPHIE
That bird? What? George is dying?

HARPER
Yes, I've just said that. What's
wrong with you?

SOPHIE
Nothing. So... wow. George is
dying?

HARPER
Yes, George is dying. But you've
clearly got even juicier news than
that. What's going on?

Sophie looks down, internally trying to gauge how much she
can safely tell him.

SOPHIE
(regaining composure)
I've been fired.

HARPER
Really? I've just been promoted.

SOPHIE
How nice for you. And how
incredibly Marla-like for you to
mention it right at this moment.

HARPER
No, come on. You know I didn't
mean it like that.

SOPHIE
How exactly did you mean it?

HARPER
My old job is vacant now.

Sophie stares at him blankly.

HARPER
I'm set to start interviewing
candidates tomorrow.

SOPHIE

I don't know if that's a good idea,
Harper.

HARPER

It's a great idea. And we don't
have to tell George. Or Marla or
Freckles.

Sophie looks unconvinced.

HARPER (cont'd)

Come on, you know I'd love to have
you under me.

He immediately regrets this choice of words. Sophie raises
her head defiantly.

HARPER (cont'd)

I didn't mean it that way. Well,
unless you're int...

Sophie reaches for the remote.

HARPER (cont'd)

No, no, no! I didn't mean it that
way! Come in and interview as soon
as you can. We'd make a great
team.

Sophie takes a moment to consider the offer.

SOPHIE

No one can know that we've met
before.

HARPER

Of course.

SOPHIE

And I won't be wearing any
advertisement buttons.

HARPER

Fine. Most new operatives say
that. They grow on you after a
while, though.

Sophie looks at him for a long moment.

SOPHIE

I'll be there in 12 hours. Don't
write it down. I'll make

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE (cont'd)
arrangements through official
channels.

HARPER
Fine by me.

Sophie reaches for the remote.

SOPHIE
Oh. One more thing.

HARPER
Yes?

SOPHIE
(cracking a mischievous
smile)
Be alone when I get there.

HARPER
(misinterpreting her smile
completely)
RAWR.

Before Sophie can respond, the hologram generator beeps again, and the words "Incoming Transmission" flash once more across the room.

SOPHIE
(with a sharp intake of
breath)
This'll be the call I was
expecting. Get out of here.

Harper disappears, and Sophie clicks over to the other channel.

Vontrig appears, reclining in mid air, just to the right of where Harper had been standing moments ago. She begins to speak without offering a greeting.

VONTRIQ
I've scheduled you to interview for
Harper's previous position at 0900
local time. It will be suspicious
if I have to appoint you over
someone else, so use any means
necessary to convince him. He's
human, so he should be readily
susceptible to your charms.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE
Understood.

Vontrig levels a malevolent gaze at Sophie.

VONTRIQ
If you are at all entertaining the idea of running away with Harper and Ogulu and keeping the FTU for yourself, disabuse yourself of the notion now. Those who cross me live just long enough to regret it.

SOPHIE
Yes, M'am. I understand.

Without saying goodbye, Vontrig disappears. Sophie clicks off the hologram generator, closes her suitcase, and heads for the door.

CUT TO:

INT. "THE BUNKER"

Troglody carries an unconscious Cariot slung casually over his shoulder. He ambles down a wide, dark, corridor, thoroughly apathetic about his task, his telephone headset dangling precariously from his ear.

There are large stone drawers on either side of the passage, each bearing a dingy metal plaque inscribed in an alien language. Pale green lights flicker from the high ceiling. The corridor shakes as a massive train rumbles overhead.

Troglody pauses as he nears the end of the corridor, scanning the plaques on the drawers. At last he finds a blank one, about 7 feet up on the left side.

TROGLODY
In you go, my friend.

Troglody opens the drawer and casually throws Cariot inside it. Cariot's leg dangles at a sickening angle over the edge. Troglody jams it inside the drawer and covers Cariot's face with an oxygen mask.

He throws the drawer shut and uses a laser pen to inscribe the exterior plaque with Cariot's name. With a sigh, he lumbers back down the corridor.

INT. CARIOT'S DRAWER - CONTINUOUS

Cariot's eyes pop open in the blackness. He blinks and attempts to stretch, but is blocked by the walls of the drawer. He pulls an InfoScreen from his pocket and uses it like a flashlight to explore his surroundings.

CARIOT

Shit.

(beat)

Senior Engineer Jude S. Cariot,
serial number
545-296-023-464-3PNEC.

The drawer pops open, and Cariot peers out just as Troglody exits from the door at the far end of the corridor.

INT. "THE BUNKER" - CONTINUOUS

CARIOT

That bitch has lost her mind.

He stands up in his drawer, reading the inscriptions on the plaques around him.

CARIOT (cont'd)

(incredulous)

Rosu? Frax?!

The gears are turning in Cariot's mind.

CARIOT (cont'd)

Not much time.

Cariot presses his hand to the drawer diagonally to his right.

CARIOT (cont'd)

Senior Engineer Jude S. Cariot,
serial number
545-296-023-464-3PNEC.

The drawer props open, and Cariot hurriedly pulls a vial of green liquid from his pocket. He squirts one drop in the nose of his unconscious neighbor, who wakes suddenly, sneezing.

CARIOT (cont'd)

Frax!

A translucent spherical alien with no distinguishing features other than one tiny eye and a very large nose, FRAX VOPERTINE, levitates up from the drawer.

(CONTINUED)

FRAX

Jude. What? Vontrig!

CARIOT

She told me you'd been transferred to Rigel 6.

FRAX

(bewildered)

Maybe I have. Where are we?

CARIOT

Just below headquarters. I helped design this facility back when I was on the engineering team.

Frax peers down at Cariot's drawer, reading the inscription of Cariot's name.

FRAX

Careless of her to forget that.

CARIOT

She wouldn't have known. We finished the place 10 years before she was hired.

FRAX

You're showing your age, Friend.

CARIOT

I'm in good company, Pal. But we can catch up later. She smells a betrayal. That secretary of hers will be back with more bodies.

FRAX

So what's the plan?

CARIOT

Well, Rosu's here, too, apparently.

FRAX

NO! Rosu? What could Rosu have done to get down here? Come to think of it: What did you do?

CARIOT

She thinks I've been conspiring with Ogulu. You?

(CONTINUED)

FRAX
Have you?

CARIOT
(indignant)
NO.
(pointedly)
What are you in for, Frax?

FRAX
Conspiring with Ogulu.

CARIOT
(laughing)
Did you do it?

Frax hesitates.

FRAX
Let's get Rosu.

The smile dissolves from Cariot's face.

CARIOT
You've been holding out on me? On
her?

FRAX
I promise I'll explain. When we're
on a ship, in hyperspace, getting
as far away from here as we can.

CARIOT
Frax, I can't be running around the
galaxy with someone who has crossed
Vontrig.

FRAX
As far as she's concerned, you are
someone who has crossed Vontrig.

Cariot seems unconvinced.

FRAX
Look, if you want to send me back
after you hear the story, then send
me back, but...

The door at the far end of the corridor opens. Frax and Cariot jump back down into their drawers. Cariot throws Frax's drawer shut, quickly followed by his own.

Troglody lumbers down the hall with another body slung over his shoulder. He is chatting animatedly into his headset.

(CONTINUED)

TROGLODY

...and I told her - I said -
"Bitch, please!" And she was all
like... Ugh, hang on.

Troglody has reached Cariot's drawer. He opens the empty drawer to Cariot's right and throws the body in, hastily scribbling a name on the plaque. He leans heavily against Cariot's drawer as he continues his conversation.

TROGLODY (cont'd)

...And she was all like
"Whatever!" And I was
like... Damn, I'm getting another
call. Let me call you back.

(beat)

Thank you for calling
StarMart. This is Troglody
Trelinott. How may I be of
assistance?

(beat)

Yes, m'am.

(beat)

No, no m'am. I would never use the
company phone for personal calls.

(beat)

Yes, m'am, I value my job very
much.

(beat)

No, m'am, I don't see any drawers
down here large enough for me.

(beat)

Yes, yes m'am, I'm sure Engineering
can retrofit one.

(beat)

That's very kind of you,
Madam. I'll be right there.

Troglody hurries down the corridor, slamming the door behind himself. After a moment Cariot's drawer pops open again. He reaches up to Frax's drawer, pressing his palm on the name plaque.

CARIOT

(hurriedly)

Senior Engineer Jude S. Cariot,
serial number
545-296-023-464-3PNEC.

Frax's drawer pops open, and Frax levitates out.

(CONTINUED)

CARIOT (cont'd)
I may send you back. But go look
at the other drawers. See who else
we need to wake up.

FRAX
Thanks, Boss.

Frax flies up to the top of the room and begins zooming
along the long rows, reading name plaques. Cariot presses
his palm to Rosu's drawer.

CARIOT
Senior Engineer Jude S. Cariot,
serial number
545-296-023-464-3PNEC.

Cariot gasps as the drawer pops open. Rosu is lying in a
pool of partially congealed green, gelatinous blood. Her
transparent body reveals sluggishly moving organs beneath
her skin.

CARIOT (cont'd)
Frax!! Frax! Get down here!

Frax zooms to Cariot's side and shrieks as he peers into the
drawer.

FRAX
Rosu!

CARIOT
I don't know if I should wake her
or not. She needs a doctor.

FRAX
Well, she's not going to get one in
that drawer. Can you carry her?

CARIOT
Let me see.

With trepidation, Cariot reaches into the drawer. As his
hand hits the surface of the blood, he screams. His
fingertips are badly burned. He falls to his knees in the
drawer, crying.

CARIOT (cont'd)
(gasping)
In my pocket. Get the vial in my
pocket.

Frax looks at Cariot's pocket for a moment. Nothing
happens.

(CONTINUED)

CARIOT (cont'd)
Other pocket, Frax! Damn it, hurry!

Frax looks at Cariot's other pocket, and a green vial levitates up from it. Cariot holds out his hands.

CARIOT (cont'd)
One drop per finger. Quickly.

Using telekinesis, Frax places one drop of green liquid on each of Cariot's fingers. The drops HISS as they hit Cariot's skin, which heals instantly. Cariot sighs with relief.

FRAX
(chuckling)
Hmmm. Handy.

Cariot glares at Frax, then smiles.

CARIOT
Yes, yes, you're very clever.

FRAX
What is this stuff, anyway?

Cariot takes the vial from midair and returns it to his pocket.

CARIOT
Ionian Healing Elixir.

FRAX
And why, pray tell, are you not using it on Rosu?

CARIOT
I was going to use it on Rosu. To wake her up. That's how I woke you up, too, In-grate. And I took a big swig of it myself before I went into Vontriq's office this morning. But I don't know how it will affect Rosu.

FRAX
What's good for the goose...

CARIOT
No, Frax. It causes increased blood pressure. I think she'll bleed to death.

(CONTINUED)

FRAX
Can you carry me?

CARIOT
Why?

FRAX
Because if you can carry me, I
think I can carry her.

CARIOT
(smiling)
Come here, you big lug.

FRAX
Wait. Before we deal with Rosu,
there's someone on the top level
we've got to get.

CARIOT
Oh? Who is it?

FRAX
Molly Espinoza.

CUT TO BLACK

ROLL END CREDITS