

1 **THE OUTPOST**

2 Cast:

3 Announcer

4 Cabbie

5 Olivia

6 Grant Hickey, calm and lonely. Stoic, eager.

7 Vanessa 98949, sharp and commanding, modern

8 Recorder

9 Lassiter, on Janice (another nearby outpost)

10 Yasmin, another survivor of the Xanadu

11 ANNOUNCER 19 Nocturne Boulevard.

12 CABBIE Nocturne Boulevard? Not far. When you hit
13 Howard, hang a right. Howard meets Phillip
14 at a weird kind of angle, then you cross
15 James and Poe. You can't miss Nocturne -
16 it's just past the automat.

17 ANNOUNCER 19 Nocturne Boulevard, your address for
18 suspenseful stories of the speculative,
19 strange, and supernatural. Tonight's story
20 is called The Outpost

21 SOUND KNOCK ON DOOR. DOOR OPENS.

22 OLIVIA [sultry voice] Yes. This is 19 Nocturne
23 Boulevard, won't you step inside?

24 SOUND FOOTSTEPS

25 OLIVIA Did you have any trouble finding it? What
26 do you mean, what kind of a place is it?
27 Why, it's an outpost in an asteroid cloud,
28 can't you tell?

29 MUSIC

30 AMBIANCE INSIDE OUTPOST MU LAMBDA EPSILON [Millie]

1 SOUND MACHINE AND ELECTRONIC NOISES, SLOSHING OF
2 LIQUID

3 VANESSA [waking up noises, then with a start,
4 coughing]

5 GRANT Easy now. Just breathe.

6 VANESSA [breathing, coughing a bit]

7 GRANT Tell me. Do you know your name?

8 VANESSA My what? Of course.

9 GRANT Tell me your name.

10 VANESSA Vanessa 9 [breaks into coughing]

11 GRANT [incredulous] Your name is Vanessa 9?

12 VANESSA Don't be stupid. It's Vanessa 98949. How
13 old do I look?

14 GRANT [not a clue] Um...

15 VANESSA Where am I?

16 GRANT I'll tell you whatever you wanna know.
17 Later. You're all wrung out.

18 VANESSA Nonsense. I am ordering you to tell me--

19 GRANT Now there ain't no call to get huffy, miss.

20 VANESSA [offended] Where is your Vox? I plan to
21 let her know precisely--

22 GRANT My what?

23 VANESSA [altering slightly] Your Vox? The one who
24 gives you orders?

25 GRANT Ain't got none.

1 VANESSA There must be a female around here
2 somewhere!

3 GRANT Nope. Just me. And you.

4 VANESSA What the hell kind of place is this? [pain]
5 ooh....

6 GRANT There, now. You lie back down and get
7 yourself some rest. [fogging out] Waking
8 from deepsub is no cakewalk...

9 MUSIC

10 VANESSA [waking sharply again] What? Where?
11 [remembering] Ohh.

12 SOUND SWOOSH OF POD HATCH OPENING, HESITANT
13 FOOTSTEPS, A STUMBLE

14 VANESSA Where is that throwback? Hmm?

15 SOUND SHE PICKS UP A NOTE AND A RADIO

16 VANESSA [reading] Frequency 12. great. [louder,
17 commanding] Frequency 12.

18 SOUND NOTHING

19 VANESSA [more strident] Frequency 12.

20 SOUND RADIO UNIT BEING SHAKEN, CRACKLES TO LIFE

21 VANESSA [hesitant] Frequency 12? Is there anyone
22 here?

23 GRANT [on filter] No need to holler.

24 VANESSA Your comm unit isn't set to recognize my
25 voice!

26 GRANT [baffled] Oh. I'll... see what I can do.
27 You need anything?

1 VANESSA [snap] No.

2 SOUND HER STOMACH GROWLS

3 VANESSA Well, I could use something to eat.

4 GRANT All righty. I have to finish up something,
5 and I'll be down as soon as I can.

6 SOUND CLICK RADIO OFF

7 VANESSA What? You get down here immediately!

8 SOUND SHAKES RADIO UNIT - SOMETHING SHAKES LOOSE
9 AND RATTLES

10 MUSIC

11 SOUND DOOR SWOOSHES OPEN, FOOTSTEPS ENTER, DOOR
12 SHUTS

13 GRANT [sigh] All righty. Brought you some chow.

14 VANESSA [seething] It's been almost an entire hour!

15 GRANT [matter of fact] You caught me outside.
16 Was quicker to finish what I was doing than
17 to come in and get back out again later.

18 VANESSA Give me that.

19 SOUND TRAY RATTLES

20 GRANT [grunt of effort] No.

21 VANESSA What? How dare you?

22 GRANT You're in my home, and if you can't be
23 civil, then ... well, I can be downright
24 rude too.

25 VANESSA There must be someone else here - I will
26 report your behavior--!

27 GRANT Nope. Just me. Like I told you.

1 VANESSA Take me to your comm unit--

2 GRANT No.

3 VANESSA [faltering] But I--

4 GRANT You can ask nicely.

5 VANESSA [indignant] What? How can you even look me
6 in the face and say such a thing, male?

7 GRANT [beat, then sigh] Call me again when you're
8 in a better mood.

9 SOUND FOOTSTEPS, DOOR SWOOSHES OPEN

10 VANESSA [up] The-- [deep breath, forces herself to
11 a nicer tone] The radio is broken.

12 GRANT Broken? Hold up.

13 SOUND SETS TRAY DOWN. PICKS UP RADIO

14 VANESSA I... shook it. It wouldn't listen to me!

15 SOUND RADIO SHAKES, RATTLES

16 GRANT Hmm. Looks like I'm gonna have to get in
17 there.

18 SOUND VANESSA TRIES TO BE SNEAKY, GRABBING
19 SOMETHING TO EAT

20 GRANT But I still don't understand what you're
21 saying about-- [sees her eating, makes an
22 impatient noise]

23 VANESSA [around a mouthful] You expect me to
24 starve? I just woke from deepsub. I
25 require caloric intake.

26 GRANT [sigh, tsks]

27 SOUND FOOTSTEPS, DOOR SWOOSHES SHUT

1 MUSIC

2 SOUND TINKERING WITH MACHINERY - LITTLE ZAP

3 NOISES, ETC.

4 VANESSA Just ...about ...there!

5 SOUND BLIP AS SOMETHING TURNS ON

6 RECORDER [crackly] Life pod B-L-T-L-1-4-5, ship

7 Xanadu, designated X-14-Z-3-J--2-0-5--

8 VANESSA [real relief] Finally - a civilized voice!

9 Recorder. Play back the Xanadu's final

10 entry.

11 RECORDER Final log entry of star cruiser Xanadu. G-

12 vector, Delta quadrant, encountered space

13 debris. Explosion. Unknown cause. Xanadu

14 evac mandated. Pods loosed at ship day 172,

15 T-vector, speed normal.

16 VANESSA Calculate time in transit.

17 RECORDER Calculating. One thousand, three hundred

18 and eighty two days since Xanadu Evac.

19 VANESSA Four years--?

20 GRANT [off] You were on a star cruiser?

21 VANESSA [gasp]

22 SOUND BONKS HEAD AS SHE REACTS

23 GRANT That musta been interesting.

24 VANESSA Yes, I am part of the crew of the Star

25 Cruiser Xanadu, bound for Ganymede 800 in

26 the Gargon nebula. There will be people

27 looking for me.

1 GRANT [rueful] Not here they won't.

2 VANESSA What do you mean?

3 GRANT I don't know what all your specs there are,
4 but first, no one much comes this far out,
5 and second, well, I do know the Gargon
6 Nebula is hellagone from here.

7 VANESSA You have to let me contact someone.

8 GRANT Nope. I don't have to do anything.

9 VANESSA I order you! As third under-lieutenant
10 subchief, engineering bay 5 of the star
11 cruiser Xanadu, I command you to take me to
12 your comm room.

13 GRANT Pff.

14 SOUND DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS LEAVE

15 VANESSA [very last second] Please.

16 GRANT [off, leaning in] Wish I could. Left you
17 some food there.

18 SOUND DOOR SHUTS

19 VANESSA Argh!

20 MUSIC

21 SOUND ELECTRONIC MENDING NOISES

22 GRANT Whatcha doing?

23 VANESSA Keeping busy. What do you want?

24 GRANT You about ready to come out?

25 VANESSA Out of what?

26 GRANT The room here?

1 VANESSA The room? [working up] You kept me locked up
2 in here, and now you ask--

3 GRANT Door don't even lock. I was wondering why
4 you never--

5 SOUND STOMPING FOOTSTEPS

6 VANESSA Door open! See? Nothing happens!

7 GRANT Well o'course not. Doors don't have ears.

8 VANESSA Normal doors take orders. Radios too.

9 GRANT You're an underengineer sub chief thingee
10 and you don't know how to work a door?

11 VANESSA Normal doors take orders!

12 GRANT Well, I guess we're all a bit old fashioned
13 here. This is how you open the door. Wave
14 your hand right here--

15 SOUND Whoooooosh. DOOR OPENS

16 VANESSA [sullen] Oh. I see. Wait - who's we?

17 GRANT What?

18 SOUND SLAMS HIM UP AGAINST THE WALL

19 VANESSA You said we're all a bit old fashioned - who
20 is "we"?

21 GRANT [controlling some strong emotion, at being
22 slammed against a wall] Well - um - I was
23 including the doors and all. [deep breath]
24 Since you like t'talk to them.

25 SOUND SHE LETS GO

26 GRANT [slight moan, another deep breath]

27 SOUND FOOTSTEPS STOMP PAST

1 MUSIC

2 GRANT [off] To the left there.

3 SOUND DOOR SWOOSHES OPEN. A COUPLE OF FOOTSTEPS,

4 THEY SLOW

5 VANESSA This is it?

6 GRANT [pride] Yup. Millie's brain center. There
7 are 42 more just like her spread throughout
8 the cloud - um, here.

9 SOUND BUTTONS PUSH. SCREEN HUMS TO LIFE

10 GRANT Pretty, huh?

11 VANESSA It's crap.

12 GRANT [hurt, but covering] Millie has 12 chambers
13 - each a self-sealing unit, in case of
14 breaches - and a backup--

15 VANESSA How do you call out?

16 GRANT Hmm?

17 VANESSA Out! How do you call out! I need to make
18 arrangements to get the hell out of here!

19 GRANT It don't quite work that--

20 VANESSA Nothing here works! Nothing works at all!
21 [almost hysterical]

22 SOUND SLAP

23 VANESSA [stunned gasp]

24 GRANT Now I'm real sorry about that, but you need
25 to breathe. And let me finish my sentences.

26 VANESSA I could have you up on charges so fast!

1 GRANT Well, not here, you couldn't. [sigh] Now,
2 as I was about to say, you can call the
3 other outposts, or the quarterly supply ship
4 - if he's in range. Just might be - he come
5 through only last week.

6 VANESSA Another male? What is this, throwback
7 central?

8 GRANT What you got against fellows?

9 VANESSA [disgusted noise] Males have been proven
10 inferior and in the civilized galaxy have
11 been effectively relegated to a purely
12 functional capacity. We keep enough genetic
13 material around to promote healthy offspring
14 and breed a few males each generation for
15 variety.

16 GRANT You mean where you come from is all ladies?
17 Don't it get boring?

18 VANESSA What? What are you implying--?

19 GRANT Just - well, how do you have kids?

20 VANESSA [shrugs, indifferent] Everyone donates
21 genetic material, and it's automatically
22 matched up with compatible fertilizing
23 agents.

24 GRANT So everyone has to have kids?

25 VANESSA No one "has" children - you make it sound
26 like they're dogs, [snide] or men. Children
27 belong to the community, and are raised in a
28 proper safe environment, under supervision.

29 GRANT But - those poor little boys and girls--

1 VANESSA Girls.

2 GRANT [sigh] them poor little kids, never knowing
3 who their - mommas are.

4 VANESSA They're cared for by properly trained
5 personnel. Much better for their long-term
6 physical and mental health. How would
7 someone like me, with a career on a star
8 cruiser, ever find that sort of time?

9 GRANT That's real sad.

10 VANESSA Not to mention, I haven't spent my life
11 immersed in study of childhood ailments and
12 development.

13 GRANT Well, neither did my mama.

14 VANESSA Yes. I'm sure.

15 GRANT [hurt, slightly annoyed] Look, you can mock
16 me, and turn your nose up at Millie, but
17 don't you never speak ill of my mama.

18 SOUND CRACKLE OF STATIC

19 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] Hey Grant? You there?

20 SOUND SQUEAK OF CHAIR, CLICK

21 GRANT Yup. Whatcha need?

22 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] That capsule thing you
23 sold me - you got yours to work OK?

24 GRANT [hurried] Ah, hell. Let me call you back,
25 Lassiter.

26 SOUND CLICK

27 VANESSA [absolute fury] Sold?

1 GRANT I got work to do.

2 SOUND SLIGHT SCUFFLE, SHE BLOCKS HIM FROM LEAVING

3 VANESSA [not quite screaming] Was he talking about a
4 deepsub pod like mine?

5 GRANT [muttered] I find all sorts of things.

6 VANESSA You sold a - a - a PERSON to that - that
7 male?

8 GRANT What makes you think the pod weren't empty?

9 VANESSA That's slavery! And you know what that
10 means?

11 GRANT Don't matter. Sides, what would I do with
12 two of y'all out here?

13 VANESSA The same as you're doing with one - nothing
14 at all!

15 GRANT [standing up to her a bit] Yup. long as
16 I'm talking to you, I'm doing nothing at
17 all. Like I said, I got work to do.

18 MUSIC

19 VANESSA It was one of these switches--

20 SOUND RADIO STATIC

21 VANESSA Yes! [lower, into the mike] Lassiter? Come
22 in Lassiter?

23 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] Huh? Who's this?

24 VANESSA I'm at Millie.

25 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] Excellent - it did
26 work! You tell Grant to let me know what he
27 did, y'hear?

1 VANESSA To wake up the woman in the pod?

2 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] Yeah. [eager] I can't
3 wait.

4 VANESSA [warning] Lassiter. You do know it's vastly
5 illegal to rescue someone and then force
6 them into slavery, don't you?

7 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] What?

8 VANESSA If you press her into service, you are
9 committing high seas slavery, according to
10 Rule 4715 D of the unitary code.

11 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] Is Grant there? Can
12 you put him on?

13 VANESSA Shut up!

14 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] Jeez.

15 VANESSA Lassiter. I will make a bargain with you.

16 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] I dunno--

17 VANESSA I will help you revive the survivor, if you
18 will -- let me talk to her as soon as she
19 wakes up.

20 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] Sure.

21 VANESSA And if you understand that I will find a way
22 to come over there and kill you if you hurt
23 her in any way.

24 LASSITER [scratchy, on filter] Hurt her? Hey! I
25 paid good money for--

26 VANESSA Agh!

27 MUSIC

1 YASMIN [scratchy, on filter] What do I do?

2 VANESSA Be placating - we have to try and get
3 together, make our way home.

4 YASMIN Aye-aye, Vox. Data mode for now. I await
5 your word.

6 VANESSA Remind him I will kill him if he hurts you.

7 YASMIN He doesn't seem very threatening. I could
8 put him down if I have to.

9 VANESSA Good. Engineer Vanessa 98949 Out.

10 YASMIN Yasmin 222338 Out.

11 GRANT [sad] Whatcha doing?

12 SOUND CHAIR WHIPS AROUND

13 VANESSA Huh?

14 GRANT I see you found your friend.

15 VANESSA We were part of the same crew. I have rank,
16 so I told her I would protect her. It's my
17 duty.

18 GRANT Protect her? From Lassiter? He ain't some
19 kinda -- of -- I ain't even sure what
20 you're thinking he is.

21 VANESSA A man.

22 SOUND GETS UP FROM CHAIR

23 GRANT [realizing] Are you afraid of me?

24 VANESSA [thinks, then] You hold all the cards. All
25 you have to do is refuse me food, and I'm
26 helpless.

27 GRANT I wouldn't do that!

1 VANESSA You already did.

2 GRANT I was trying to get you to-- Look, if I
3 wanted to actually hurt you, I gotta blaster
4 for that. I just wanted you to think twice
5 and act civil.

6 VANESSA How many more were there?

7 GRANT More?

8 VANESSA Of the deepsub pods. Did you just find the
9 two?

10 GRANT [grudging] Four. Total. Lassiter's was
11 the last to revive, so all of y'all are all
12 right.

13 VANESSA All right? Let me talk to them!

14 GRANT You gotta learn to stop giving me orders.
15 You're not my momma.

16 VANESSA Your mother is--?

17 GRANT She died. Since then... [shrug] I got work
18 to do.

19 VANESSA [belligerent] What is this work that seems
20 to constantly demand your attention?

21 GRANT You ask nice, you'll get a lot more answers.

22 VANESSA [beat, then making an effort] What is it
23 that you do all day?

24 GRANT Salvage. Used to be mining, but the cloud
25 here grabs every lump of crap out of the
26 nearest 10-20 sectors, so salvage pays a
27 helluva lot better.

28 VANESSA Salvage?

1 GRANT And maintenance. Millie here's old. I keep
2 her limping along, but it's truly full time.

3 SOUND FOOTSTEPS RECEDE

4 GRANT Come on. I'll show you where the food units
5 are. Then you ain't gotta wait on me if you
6 get hungry.

7 MUSIC

8 GRANT So this switch here changes the band - you
9 gotta jiggle it a bit, sometimes. And this
10 list here shows all the other habitats -
11 the ones up top are closest - most reliable
12 for contact. Next down, these three - well
13 - I ain't heard from them in a while. Not
14 even sure they're still... functional.

15 VANESSA Vacated?

16 GRANT No one vacates. Not unless-- But [trying
17 to convince himself] comm equipment goes
18 down sometimes - a lot - and it's a bitch to
19 get the right parts.

20 VANESSA All the habitats are as old as ...this one?

21 GRANT Yeah, they were built for miners - never
22 really meant to be permanent, but you know
23 how things go.

24 VANESSA Why don't you leave?

25 GRANT Leave?

26 VANESSA If you sell your salvage, it must go
27 somewhere. Someone must be buying it. Why
28 don't you just go, too?

1 GRANT Why?

2 VANESSA You say it's a full time job just keeping
3 this place from falling down around your
4 ears. So find another place.

5 GRANT But this is my home. I was born right here
6 in Millie.

7 VANESSA It is falling apart. I hope you don't think
8 I plan to stay here with you.

9 GRANT [beat, then neutral] Course not. But you do
10 owe me.

11 VANESSA [indignant again] Owe you?

12 GRANT I rescued you. I pulled your damn pod in
13 here and I woke you up.

14 VANESSA That's --

15 GRANT And I've been feeding you and letting you
16 breathe my air - which ain't cheap, I should
17 point out.

18 VANESSA Then let me get out of your air.

19 GRANT First you gotta ... you know...pay me back.

20 VANESSA [suspicious] How, exactly?

21 MUSIC

22 SOUND ELECTRONIC REPAIR NOISES

23 VANESSA Damn! Bloody stone-age tools!

24 SOUND CLICK RADIO TURNS ON, VERY CLEAR AND NO
25 STATIC

26 VANESSA Ha!

27 GRANT [on radio] What?

1 VANESSA [a little winded] I patched your antenna
2 into the router from the pod's emergency
3 signal - some serious interface issues, let
4 me tell you - but you should get much
5 clearer signals now.

6 GRANT [on radio] [congratulatory] Damn.

7 MUSIC

8 VANESSA Damn.

9 SOUND SPARKS

10 GRANT Everything all right?

11 VANESSA Half my damn solar cells were damaged in the
12 landing.

13 GRANT So?

14 VANESSA I was thinking I'd jury rig them into
15 something, get you a little extra free
16 power. Crap.

17 MUSIC

18 SOUND SOLDERING IRON SPARKS, STOPS, FACEPLATE UP

19 GRANT That's a nice bead right there.

20 VANESSA Yeah, I think I'm getting the hang of it.
21 Now watch this. [command] Chicken!

22 SOUND VENDING MACHINE RUMBLES, THEN CLUNKS

23 GRANT Holy cow!

1 VANESSA Well, chicken, but yes - you get the idea.
2 I still have to code the machine's other
3 foodstuff options in for voice. I'll need
4 to get your voice into the system sometime,
5 too.

6 GRANT [mood dropping] Right. O'course. So I can
7 do it myself.

8 VANESSA [not noticing] Absolutely.

9 MUSIC

10 VANESSA You didn't have any trouble making contact?
11 I appear to be at the very butt end of the
12 cloud, so they're out of my range from here.
13 Damn these archaic --

14 YASMIN I... got them. You may be disappointed,
15 though.

16 VANESSA Why?

17 YASMIN Helen 74589, and Griselda 80281 ... um... do
18 not ... wish to participate.

19 VANESSA What are you saying?

20 YASMIN They have become attached to this place.

21 VANESSA How the blazes--?

22 YASMIN Griselda declined any details, but Helen
23 seems to find some - companionship in the
24 man Conrad and his children.

25 VANESSA [disparaging] Children. At least we've
26 only got men to deal with.

27 YASMIN [iffy note] Yes.

28 MUSIC

1 VANESSA Sit down.

2 GRANT Sit? Why? I always eat standing.

3 VANESSA You practically sleep standing. I have
4 never seen you relax.

5 GRANT Last time I just sat and waited was...

6 VANESSA Yes?

7 GRANT [evasive] Don't know. doesn't matter.

8 VANESSA Why not sit?

9 GRANT Too much to do.

10 VANESSA Please.

11 SOUND BEAT, THEN SQUEAK OF A CHAIR

12 VANESSA Haven't I helped at all?

13 GRANT Oh, yeah - many hands make light work, like
14 momma used to say, but there's always more
15 to do. [beat] But the repairs are real
16 good. If this keeps up, I can maybe
17 repressurize capsule 14. [trails off]

18 VANESSA Do you need the space?

19 GRANT [hurt but covering] Never hurts - could put
20 some more hydroponics in there, maybe put in
21 some greens and generate oxy of my own. Why
22 not? It's like minting money.

23 VANESSA You'd be better off with algae tanks. They
24 take more processing to make them palatable
25 for eating - much more - but they've been
26 genetically manipulated to give a much
27 higher O2 to cubic foot ratio, and they
28 require less nutrient.

1 GRANT I'd have to get it from somewhere--

2 VANESSA Shouldn't be difficult - most cruisers have
3 algae tanks, and all you need is a dip to
4 start with and some growth media. The tank
5 - well you could pretty much put anything
6 together, if you're not too concerned about
7 sterile edible conditions - but for oxy
8 production, anything that will contain the
9 growth medium and keep the temp stable will
10 do. You'll need U-V simulators, too--

11 GRANT Yeah. [sigh] Maybe you can send me some
12 when you get home.

13 VANESSA --you could re-make one room for food plant
14 growth and have the algae - What?

15 GRANT Nothing.

16 VANESSA There's even better technology out there,
17 you know. I'm surprised you're not more
18 curious.

19 GRANT Well, I figure it's like this - of all
20 you've talked about so far, doors that
21 listen and whatever, this algae thing is the
22 only one that seems like it'd fit into my
23 life. Everything else is like - so far
24 beyond me, I don't see it mattering much.

25 VANESSA But you would know. You would have
26 something to - to work toward.

1 GRANT Something to chase? Something to... miss.
2 Something to worry about not having? Nah.
3 I figure, easier just to assume you're gonna
4 tell me you can shit blueberry cobbler -
5 it's all well and good, but I don't wanna do
6 it. And goodness knows I don't wanna eat
7 it.

8 VANESSA [laughing] Cobbler?

9 GRANT I-I got things to do.

10 VANESSA Let me help.

11 GRANT [breath] Nah. It's all outside - I gotta
12 hawk in some stuff.

13 VANESSA [brightening a bit] Outside? In a suit?

14 GRANT [very unhappy] Yes.

15 VANESSA Let me help!

16 GRANT No.

17 SOUND FOOTSTEPS, SHE FOLLOWS

18 VANESSA Why? Are you afraid I'll run away?

19 GRANT [muttered] No, just ...float away.

20 VANESSA What?

21 GRANT It's my job. I have to do it.

22 SOUND SHE STOPS HIM AND PULLS HIM ROUND TO FACE
23 HER

24 VANESSA Do you have two suits?

25 GRANT Yes.

26 VANESSA Many hands make light work.

27 GRANT [thinks, then] No.

1 VANESSA Look, I've put in my 100 hours on
2 simulators, plus over 300 hours working on
3 the hull in stagnant space. Shoot - you've
4 even got gravity here--

5 GRANT Minimal gravity.

6 VANESSA Point is, I know my way around a suit!

7 GRANT [finally snappish] Look! If things didn't
8 have to be done, I'd never get into one of
9 those damn things myself! There's no way
10 I'd put you in that kind of danger.

11 SOUND STORMS OFF, SHE FOLLOWS

12 VANESSA You don't - you don't like being out there?

13 GRANT [dismissive noise]

14 SOUND DOOR WHOOSHES OPEN

15 VANESSA But - but I enjoy--

16 SOUND FOOTSTEPS STOP

17 GRANT You don't want to be here and that's fine.
18 I'd rather see you leave on the cargo ship
19 than [barely controlled] floating off into
20 blackness...

21 VANESSA I--

22 SOUND DOOR SHUTS

23 MUSIC

24 VANESSA Can you ask your Lassiter something?

25 YASMIN [on filter] You can talk to him yourself.

26 VANESSA I just want to know about suit drifts in
27 this area.

1 YASMIN Why?

2 VANESSA [overly casual] Just something Grant said.

3 YASMIN Ah, here he is - You can help Vanessa, can't
4 you? [teasing, fond noise] Hmm?

5 LASSITER [on filter] Sure. What you need? [snickers,
6 then aside] Stop that!

7 MUSIC

8 GRANT Chicken.

9 SOUND DISPENSER DISPENSES FOOD

10 VANESSA How old were you?

11 GRANT [completely startled] what?

12 SOUND SOMETHING CLATTERS TO THE FLOOR

13 VANESSA When your father drifted?

14 GRANT [tightly controlled] Why do you care? You
15 don't even have a father. [beat] I should
16 get back to--

17 VANESSA No. Unless you actually physically move me,
18 you're not leaving this room. Talk to me.

19 GRANT [mumbled] I don't want to talk to you.

20 VANESSA Hmm?

21 GRANT [swallows, then sighs, speaks very quietly]
22 The more I talk to you, the more I'll miss
23 having someone to talk to - later. [sniff]
24 Get out of my way.

25 VANESSA No. I've lost people in space too - I did
26 my time in the corps, shipboard accidents...
27 I understand.

1 GRANT It's different with family.

2 VANESSA Show me.

3 GRANT I was 12 when my father's line got tangled,
4 and he had to cut it - then something in the
5 piece he was salvaging blew, and - it took
6 forever for him to be completely out of
7 sight - he kept talking right up to the edge
8 of radio range....

9 VANESSA [pause, then sincere, if dry] I feel for
10 you.

11 GRANT Thank you.

12 VANESSA I wish I knew what to say.

13 GRANT That's all right. [deep breath] I've got
14 work to do.

15 SOUND FOOTSTEPS

16 VANESSA Your food?

17 SOUND HE DOESN'T SLOW - DOOR SHUTS

18 MUSIC

19 VANESSA How do you talk to them?

20 YASMIN [arch] It's not always in the talking.
21 What's wrong?

22 VANESSA I want to - offer him sympathy, but he just
23 walks out of the room. He says he... just
24 wants to ignore me until I leave.

25 YASMIN Are you still planning to leave?

26 VANESSA Aren't you?

27 YASMIN Well. No.

1 VANESSA Why? Is it the sex?

2 YASMIN That's part of it - you have to admit it's
3 kind of fun.

4 VANESSA I don't - haven't.

5 YASMIN Maybe that's why he's avoiding you.

6 VANESSA But don't you want to go back to your job?
7 Your home? Don't you want your life to have
8 some meaning?

9 YASMIN Meaning? What meaning?

10 VANESSA I was on the way to making full chief
11 engineer - and I would have been the
12 youngest to reach that grade. Ever,

13 YASMIN [dry] You would have impressed everyone.

14 VANESSA Don't talk like that about my goal. The
15 point of ... everything.

16 YASMIN And who benefited from this goal?

17 VANESSA I would. The ship would. Everyone on it.

18 YASMIN And someday someone would reach that rank
19 even younger, and when you retired, someone
20 else who could do the job just as well would
21 take over, and no one would even remember
22 you.

23 VANESSA I would--

24 YASMIN Unless you did something like discover an
25 alien race or die to save a bunch of people
26 - but how often does that really happen?

27 VANESSA I once prevented an explosion because I
28 spotted a faulty valve.

1 YASMIN And I'll bet every person you saved came and
2 thanked you.

3 VANESSA [somewhat dissatisfied] The point of
4 preventing a disaster is so that no one
5 knows they were ever in danger.

6 YASMIN [sigh]

7 MUSIC

8 AMBIANCE SPACESUIT. BUZZ, BREATHER, ECHO

9 SOUND BOTH - this scene - on filter throughout

10 VANESSA You needed help--? Oh!

11 GRANT It's jammed. I can't shift it alone.

12 VANESSA I see. Hold on.

13 SOUND SPACESUIT FOOTSTEPS

14 GRANT Is your line secure?

15 VANESSA Yes. I checked and double checked. Hmm.

16 GRANT Do you think the person inside is still all
17 right?

18 VANESSA Won't know if she is till we clear some of
19 this debris. [beat] Looks like it still
20 has some power.

21 GRANT Help me shift this plate - I think it'll
22 clear some of this.

23 VANESSA Hold on - No, not that. There's too much
24 leaning on it, and we don't know which way
25 it'll fall.

26 GRANT What then?

1 VANESSA This. I think this is the key piece, and I
2 don't see anything it can bring down with
3 it.

4 BOTH [Grunt with effort]

5 SOUND A BUNCH OF STUFF SHIFTS

6 GRANT Ah hell.

7 VANESSA What? [seeing the damage] Oh.

8 GRANT At least we should be able to get it clear,
9 now.

10 VANESSA Let's lighten the load - get the corpse out
11 of there.

12 GRANT No.

13 VANESSA Why?

14 GRANT You want to just dump her out, right here?

15 VANESSA Why not? She's dead.

16 GRANT She still deserves some respect. I'll do
17 it, if you don't want to be bothered.

18 VANESSA Do what?

19 GRANT Bury her.

20 MUSIC

21 SOUND HATCH SHUTS, HELMETS COME OFF. SOUND OF
22 REMOVING SPACE SUITS

23 SOUND SOMETHING DROPS

24 VANESSA [sharp gasp]

25 GRANT Hey? What's wrong?

26 VANESSA [in pain] Nothing.

1 GRANT Let me-- [sigh] You shoulda come back in
2 earlier - your fingers are nearly blue. I
3 told you the heat circulation in that suit
4 ain't up to snuff.

5 VANESSA I'm fine.

6 GRANT Give me your hands.

7 VANESSA What?

8 GRANT Let me warm your hands fro you.

9 SOUND BEAT, THEN SKIN ON SKIN, AS HE SLOWLY CHAFES
10 HER HAND.

11 VANESSA [gasp] Your hands are... warm.

12 GRANT Yup.

13 VANESSA How do you do that?

14 GRANT They just come that way. Here, hold your
15 hand here while I--

16 VANESSA In your jacket?

17 GRANT Just do it. Give me the other one.

18 SOUND SLOW CHAFING AGAIN

19 VANESSA They're fine now. I'll go and--

20 GRANT I don't like that nail color there. Can you
21 feel this?

22 VANESSA Yes. I'm perfectly capable of--

23 GRANT This?

24 VANESSA [a bit more irritated] Yes. I know what
25 the--

26 GRANT This?

1 VANESSA --difficulties with cold can be, and--
2 what?
3 GRANT This?
4 VANESSA [startled] No.
5 GRANT Here. [puts her finger into his mouth]
6 VANESSA [long gasp, startled, amazed, and aroused]
7 GRANT [talking around her finger] Stop squirming.
8 VANESSA Let - let go. Let go!
9 GRANT Need to get the circulation back. Heat and
10 suction.
11 VANESSA Ahh!
12 SOUND SLIGHT STRUGGLE, SHE PULLS HER HAND FREE
13 GRANT [mouth noise] Look. Whatever it is you
14 don't like about this - is it worth losing a
15 finger over?
16 VANESSA [long beat, erratic breathing] No. [gasp
17 as he takes her finger again]
18 MUSIC
19 GRANT [talking on the radio] Thanks for the heads
20 up Lassiter, but it'll happen or it won't.
21 Glad you're doing well, and... and congrats.
22 LASSITER We're real happy.
23 GRANT Out.
24 SOUND CHAIR TURNS
25 GRANT [startled] Oh!
26 VANESSA Congrats?

1 GRANT Lassiter and Yasmin are pregnant.

2 VANESSA [bothered] Oh.

3 GRANT Well, they're pleased.

4 VANESSA I didn't mean to sound... I'm just confused.

5 GRANT Well, it won't be for much longer. The
6 quarterly cargo ship will be here in the
7 next couple of hours.

8 VANESSA Grant?

9 GRANT Don't worry - by my calculations - we're
10 pretty much square, in fact you're a bit
11 ahead, hooking up those solar panels and
12 all--

13 VANESSA Grant--

14 GRANT So I'll cover the cost of your trip, at
15 least as far as--

16 VANESSA Grant!

17 GRANT Damn, now you got me lost.

18 VANESSA Grant, I--

19 GRANT I appreciate your help here, uh, Vanessa.
20 Got me ahead of my schedule. [cracking a
21 little] Um, I should go and get the cargo
22 ready.

23 SOUND CHAIR SQUEAK, FOOTSTEPS, THEY STOP

24 VANESSA Grant. I need to know something.

25 GRANT Whatever I can help with.

26 VANESSA Would you-- Do you-- [a breath] What will
27 you do?

1 GRANT When?

2 VANESSA If - when - if I go.

3 GRANT Same as I done before. Nothing's gonna
4 change.

5 VANESSA You should have kept Yasmin or Helen - they
6 love it here.

7 GRANT Yasmin loves Lassiter. And Helen--

8 VANESSA [snapping him back] Grant. Why me?

9 GRANT [muttered] You're ...the prettiest.

10 VANESSA I ...am?

11 GRANT Yup. I looked at you and knew that if I was
12 ever gonna take a chance, it'd have to be on
13 that one. [sniff]

14 VANESSA Tell me you want me to stay.

15 GRANT No.

16 VANESSA You don't - want - ?

17 GRANT You go home. Have a good life. I got cargo
18 to move.

19 SOUND HE SHOVES PAST HER

20 MUSIC

21 SOUND SPACESHIP TAKES OFF IN THE DISTANCE

22 SOUND RADIO TURNS ON

23 LASSITER Grant? You there?

24 GRANT Um - yeah.

25 LASSITER How'd it go?

1 GRANT I'm doing all right. Even ordered an algae
2 starter culture.

3 LASSITER But your ...lady--?

4 GRANT Oh, I'm still ahead, even after her ticket--

5 LASSITER Ticket? Ticket? You let her leave?

6 GRANT Course. [breaking down] She - sh-she don't
7 belong to me.

8 LASSITER She woulda gotten used to it.

9 GRANT I had to get used to being all alone. How
10 could I do that to--?

11 VANESSA --to me?

12 SOUND CHAIR TURNS FAST AND FALLS OVER

13 GRANT What-- What happened? Did they-? Did you
14 miss it?

15 VANESSA I decided there was a better use for the
16 cost of my passage - negotiated for three
17 more solar panels, and a couple more oxygen
18 tanks for the suits.

19 GRANT I don't understand.

20 VANESSA It was what Yasmin said, about being
21 important to someone.

22 GRANT But I never said you were--

23 VANESSA You said it every time you couldn't look me
24 in the face.

25 GRANT But what do we do now?

26 VANESSA We build a tank for the algae. Many hands
27 make light work.

1 GRANT Many hands make light work.

2 VANESSA Oh, yes, and--

3 GRANT And?

4 VANESSA This--

5 SOUND NOISY KISS, RUSTLE OF AN EMBRACE

6 VANESSA Not bad. You could use a little practice.

7 GRANT [gasping a bit for breath, making a joke]

8 Well - I may have had my 100 - and then some

9 - hours of simulation, but I never actually

10 took one of these out for a spin.

11 VANESSA [laughs] Wait till you see the rest of the

12 equipment...!

13 CLOSER

14 OLIVIA Now that you know how to find us, you'll

15 have to come back. Maybe next week? Don't

16 be a stranger - we have enough of those

17 already...

18