

Escape Route

by
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Based On Peter Hamilton's
"Escape Route"

FADE IN:

INT. PORT MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Outside a bedroom window, a steady stream of space craft swarm over a sprawling metropolis.

In the middle of the room, a rugged man in his fifties slowly stands, naked as the day he was born. His breathing is calm, but his eyes flash with adrenaline. He is Marcus.

MAN (O.S.)
You Calvert?

MARCUS
Yeah.

MAN (O.S.)
Captain Marcus Calvert?

MARCUS
Yeah.

MAN (O.S.)
Word has it you're here for a shipment of anti-matter cells.

A cargo ship roars by the motel, shaking the room.

MAN (O.S.)
Those are hard to come by. In fact, I'd go so far as to say they're downright illegal.

MARCUS
So call the authorities.

MAN (O.S.)
Let's not make this messy, Calvert. Aida, get over here.

Previously hidden, a woman stands, clutching bedsheets to her chest. She kisses Marcus on the cheek.

WOMAN
That was fun in more ways than one, Marcus.

Marcus curses under his breath as she grabs her purse and moves next to the man--

A barbaric pirate with a grotesque gun in his hand. He is surrounded by six of his goons, each holding a gun on Marcus.

PIRATE

Good job, baby. So, how 'bout you hand over your ship and we'll think twice about wrapping your guts around your landing gear.

MARCUS

How 'bout you kiss my ass.

The Pirate slams a round into the gun.

PIRATE

Let's get moving.

MARCUS

You wanna let me put on my pants first?

PIRATE

Sure.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Marcus streaks down the middle of the street, butt-naked. The Pirates scramble after him.

INT. PORT BAR - NIGHT

Roman Zucker, several days removed from a clean shave, slaps a payment card on the bar. Outside, he hears commotion and turns to see Marcus run by.

ROMAN

Bollocks. Here we go again--

EXT. LOADING DOCKS - NIGHT

An army of ground personnel attends to a massive collection of starships.

Katherine, a sharp, industrial woman, stands with a Dock Agent, reviewing a cargo list.

ROMAN (V.O.)

Katherine!

She clicks on an internal ear piece.

KATHERINE

Go ahead, Roman.

EXT. PORT BAR - NIGHT

Roman steps outside in time to see Marcus disappear around a corner with the Pirates hot on his tail.

ROMAN
Marcus just ran by.

KATHERINE (V.O.)
So?

ROMAN
He's not wearing any trousers.

EXT. LOADING DOCKS - NIGHT

Katherine shoves the cargo list back at the Docking Agent.

KATHERINE
Get Karl and get back to the ship.
Now.

INT. PORT BAR - NIGHT

A young man sits at a table with a disinterested female.

KARL
See, the government keeps our link numbers, residency records, and passes laws to negate our privacy. Why? So we can pay more taxes, that's why. Well I say hell with that.

The girl rolls her eyes.

KARL
I bet they're watching us right now.

ROMAN
Karl! Gotta go, mate.

Roman reaches the table.

KARL
Where's your beer?

Roman rips Karl out of his chair.

KARL
Hey! I was working it, man.

ROMAN
No, Karl. You weren't.

EXT. LOADING DOCKS - NIGHT

Marcus weaves his way through startled personnel to--

The starship Lady Macbeth. The vessel sits in a docking cradle, her circular hull dwarfing the workers below. Three fusion drive tubes protrude from the rear. Hyperspace jump nodes and cooling systems swell beneath the ship's belly.

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY - NIGHT

Marcus rushes up the open cargo ramp and Katherine tosses him a pair of pants. As he puts them on, she punches a control panel and the cargo ramp raises.

KATHERINE
Everyone's on board.

He zips his pants and presses the intercom button.

MARCUS
Wai, get us out of here.

Katherine stares at him.

MARCUS
What?

EXT. LOADING DOCKS - NIGHT

The Pirates reach the dock just as--

The Lady Macbeth's engines ignite. Ground crews scramble for safety as the ship tears into the sky.

EXT. SPACE

The Lady Macbeth drifts across an endless sea of stars.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Far from new, the bridge holds half-dozen chairs and several control panels situated around a curved glass shield.

The crew faces their captain in silence. Wai, an athletic beauty, sits arms folded, staring a hole into Marcus' skull.

Schutz, the oldest on board, stands behind her like a mechanical statue. Cybernetic implants run from one side of his face down most of his body.

MARCUS
It coulda been worse.

KATHERINE
How? We don't have any cargo.

ROMAN
Or fuel.

KATHERINE
Where are we supposed to go?

ROMAN
Not far, that's for sure.

KARL
Wait, what do you mean we're outta fuel?

MARCUS
Everyone, shut up. We're going to Sonora.

ROMAN
Sonora? The hell we are.

MARCUS
I have an old contact there. He'll have work spilling out his ears.

ROMAN
I bet.

MARCUS
It's the closest port and we're running on fumes. Right now, Sonora's the best option we got.

KARL
What's wrong with Sonora?

ROMAN
Nothing, if you like getting blown up by bloody terrorists.

WAI
The Sonorans aren't terrorists.

ROMAN

Says who? Oh, right, our own bloody Sonoran.

WAI

They just want their asteroid back.

ROMAN

Don't you mean 'we' want our asteroid back?

WAI

It's a response to corporations that lied about the trade agreements.

ROMAN

So, to respond to the big, bad corporations, the Sonorans kill civilians.

WAI

It's not that simple.

ROMAN

It sure is, Trust Fund. You murder innocent people, you're a terrorist.

MARCUS

Roman, Wai. Drop it.

KARL

Trust Fund?

ROMAN

Daddy has money.

Wai glares at Roman as Marcus looks over his crew.

MARCUS

Go with me on this one. I owe you a lot. And I'm gonna make good on it. But we go to Sonora.

INT. LADY MACBETH - MARCUS' QUARTERS

Marcus drinks a shot of cognac as a screen on his desk flashes to life. In between fits of static, Marcus sees a slick executive in a monstrous office. He is Rolo.

ROLO

Well, I'll be damned.

MARCUS
Rolo, it's been a while.

ROLO
Last I heard, you were on Ayacucho.

MARCUS
I was, but I had to leave ahead of
schedule.

Rolo grins as an assistant serves him a cup of tea.

ROLO
I'm sure. So, was she blonde?
Brunette?

MARCUS
I need a charter.

The grin fades.

MARCUS
Something small. Enough to refuel
the Lady Mac and pay my crew.

ROLO
With the Trade Commission on my
back? Can't do it, Calvert.

MARCUS
Rolo. For old-time's sake.

ROLO
Old-times are gone, my friend. This
galaxy can't support free-runners
like you. Especially with this damn
insurgency going on.

MARCUS
I owe my crew ten-weeks' back pay.
If you don't help me, they'll walk.

The executive sips his tea.

ROLO
Alright. There is one thing, but
you won't like it.

MARCUS
Try me.

ROLO
Sell me the Lady Mac.

MARCUS
That's outta the question.

ROLO
Listen. Pay your crew and retire.

MARCUS
I'm not selling my ship.

ROLO
You can still do good for yourself.
Settle down, buy a farm. Farms are
good for a man. They turn you
honest.

MARCUS
Dammit, I'm not selling my ship.

Rolo drops his cup on the saucer.

ROLO
Then listen up asshole, because I'm
telling you this as a friend. For
old time's sake. You keep going
this way, you'll lose everything.
Your ship, your crew, your life.

MARCUS
Lady Mac's all I know, Rolo.

ROLO (V.O.)
True, but I don't see a hotshot
fighter anymore. All I see is a
desperate man with a death wish.
See you around, Calvert.

The connection cuts out.

WAI (O.S.)
Spilling out his ears, huh?

Marcus jumps.

MARCUS
Shit, Wai. Don't do that.

Wai settles against the frame of his open quarter-hatch.

MARCUS
How long have you been there?

WAI
Long enough. So, what now?

MARCUS
Between you and me?

WAI
Always.

MARCUS
We're up shit creek.

He pounds the rest of the drink and keys in a code to padlock on his locker.

WAI
Want some advice?

MARCUS
Nope.

WAI
Next time we're on a job, keep your pants on.

He opens the locker and grabs a jacket.

MARCUS
Thanks. That's helpful. Next time you give me advice, you're fired.

WAI
Fired from what? That charter you didn't get?

MARCUS
What's the problem, Wai? Roman? Don't tell me it's about us, 'cause it's been months since--

WAI
It's about all of us. We need work, and I know where we can find it.

MARCUS
You.

WAI
You're not the only one with contacts on Sonora.

Marcus removes a keycard on a chain and places it around his neck.

WAI
Do you want a name or not?

Marcus buttons his jacket and shuts the locker.

MARCUS
Okay. I'm listening.

EXT. SPACE - ASTEROID FIELD

A gigantic asteroid drifts through space amid a cloud of smaller particles. A cylindrical cavern, miles long, punches a hole through the center of the rock. The walls of the cavern are covered in water.

Floating on the grey surface are innumerable rafts, occupied by residential and commercial structures.

TITLE: Sonora Asteroid

INT. WATER TAXI

Marcus, Katherine and Roman sit inside a run-down taxi as it shuttles them across the Sonoran sea.

ROMAN
So who the hell is this guy?

MARCUS
Antonio Ribeiro. Some private contractor.

ROMAN
He's from here?

KATHERINE
Born and bred.

ROMAN
Oh, brilliant.

MARCUS
We checked him out, Roman. He's just another hot-shot with money from daddy's mining business.

ROMAN
Sorry if Wai's contacts don't fill me with loads of confidence. What if he wants us for combat?

MARCUS
We walk.

ROMAN

No, we run. I'm not fighting
anyone's bloody war.

EXT. SONORA BAR

The taxi stops and the three climb out.

Seated at a table on the patio is Antonio, sporting a loud
designer suit. Next to him is a woman, her stare as cold as a
blade. The two stick out like a pair of sore thumbs.

ROMAN

Tell me that's not our man.

MARCUS

Yup. That's him.

Upon seeing the trio, Antonio stands with a broad smile.

ANTONIO

Captain Calvert? The pleasure is
mine.

MARCUS

Call me Marcus.

ANTONIO

My name is Antonio Ribeiro. This is
my associate, Victoria Keef.

She nods to Marcus.

ANTONIO

Until recently, she was lead
astrophysicist at Mitchell-
Courtney.

MARCUS

Katherine Maddox, my second. Roman
Zucker, our fusion engineer.

ROMAN

Mitchell-Courtney? As in mining
mega-giant, Mitchell-Courtney?

Antonio motions to the table and everyone sits.

ANTONIO

As you can see, I only surround
myself with the most qualified of
individuals.

ROMAN

No shit.

Antonio signals a waitress.

ANTONIO

A bottle of Norfolk tears, my dear.

Over the bar, a screen cuts to a news broadcast covering a factory in flames.

REPORTER (V.O.)

...another explosion an hour ago.
The Sonoran Development Corporation
is already placing blame on the
increasingly violent Separatists...

Antonio notices Marcus observing the screen.

ANTONIO

I am sorry your visit has come at
such turbulent times. Normally,
this is a very peaceful colony.

The waitress sets a shimmering blue bottle on the table.

ANTONIO

But on to the brighter side.

He arranges the drinking glasses.

ANTONIO

A small celebration to the success
of our new business venture, yes?

MARCUS

Hold it. We're here for a job. If
you want to talk business ventures,
find someone else.

Antonio grins and removes the bottle's glass stopper.

ANTONIO

Forgive me, Captain, but I noticed
you arrived without any cargo.
Quite a luxury. Fuel, maintenance,
crew. All very costly.

Antonio pours the liqueur into each glass.

MARCUS

I own my own ship, Mr. Ribeiro. If
I was desperate, I wouldn't be
here.

ANTONIO

Ah yes. Once you sell the Lady
Macbeth, I am sure money will be
the least of your worries.

He replaces the bottle's stopper.

ANTONIO

But our mutual friend leads me to
believe you are not ready to let
her go, yes?

Marcus stares back while Roman salivates over the drinks.

ROMAN

You know, we could at least hear
what he has to say.

MARCUS

Alright. Five minutes.

ANTONIO

You are most kind, Captain.

He slides a glass to Marcus.

ANTONIO

You have no doubt heard of the
Dorados Belt.

Marcus nods as Antonio distributes the other glasses.

ANTONIO

An asteroid field with enough iron
to last the human race a thousand
years. However, since its
discovery, no one has been able to
find another system like it.

KATHERINE

But you can.

ANTONIO

(to Victoria)
My dear, care to explain?

VICTORIA

No one has found another Dorados
because no one knew how to look.

She presses a button on a tablet next to her and a
holographic image of a section of the galaxy materializes
over the table. A band of light passes through the image like
a radar display.

VICTORIA
Mitchell-Courtney's sensor arrays
only run broad sweeps of the
galaxy, requiring massive deposits
to even register a signal.

She presses the button again and the image zooms in to an
asteroid field. A string of lights pulses over the field.

VICTORIA
But use a network of satellites
localized to one area--

MARCUS
And you've got a microscope.

VICTORIA
Very good. But like a microscope,
you have to travel to the system in
question for it to work. Mitchell-
Courtney rejected my idea because
they didn't like the idea of
extensive space exploration.

ANTONIO
Unfortunate for them. Not for us.

He refills Roman's empty glass.

ANTONIO
Dear Victoria came to me with her
array, and a simple observation.

VICTORIA
While other arrays could only
search for larger deposits, mine
can detect deposits one-millionth
the size of the Dorados strike.

KATHERINE
But that makes them one-millionth
the value.

MARCUS
Depends on the type of deposit.

ANTONIO
Bravo, Captain.

Victoria looks at Marcus, concealing a smile.

ANTONIO

Find a young system, say 10 million years old, and you have the entire periodic table at your disposal. Gold, Platinum, as much as your ship can carry.

ROMAN

As much as our ship can carry?

Antonio nods.

ROMAN

I'll drink to that.

KATHERINE

Even if all this is true, you still have to know where to look.

Antonio motions to the display.

ANTONIO

This is the Cova System. For a small fortune, I acquired a short-term mining lease from the Omutan Mercenary Fleet. But we must move fast. Development is expected to commence within the month. After that, we may never have an opportunity like this again.

The trio exchange glances.

ANTONIO

Imagine. Immeasurable wealth. Just floating out there. All we have to do is snatch it up.

He raises his glass.

ANTONIO

So Captain, do we have a deal?

INT. SONORA DOCKING BAY

Marcus lugs his personal gear to the Lady Macbeth, where giant fuel tubes curl out from under its belly. Katherine is at his heels.

KATHERINE

I can't believe you agreed to do this.

MARCUS

Victoria's theory is sound. Their lease checks out. What else do you want?

KATHERINE

How about some references for starters? We barely know who this guy is.

MARCUS

Then I guess we'll have to go with my gut on this one.

KATHERINE

We're going halfway across the galaxy because of your gut.

MARCUS

Yup. Well, free fuel and hardware doesn't hurt either.

They reach the cargo ramp, where they see Karl punching code on his datapad next to a large crate.

MARCUS

Yo Karl, how we doin'?

KARL

Well, the satellites arrived, but their deployment software wouldn't integrate with our systems. So, I gave 'em the Karl special and now they're good to launch. Basically, I'm a friggin' genius.

MARCUS

Good. When you're done, stow my gear.

He drops the luggage.

KARL

Why me?

MARCUS

Because you're a friggin' genius.

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY

Marcus and Katherine enter the hold as Schutz and Roman secure a crate against the wall.

MARCUS
How we looking?

SCHUTZ
Cargo secured, Captain. Ready to
fly.

Karl hefts the luggage up the ramp as Katherine turns to
Marcus. She keeps her voice low.

KATHERINE
Did you clear this with them?

MARCUS
'Course not.

KATHERINE
Gut feeling, or no, if anything
goes wrong, we won't be coming
back.

MARCUS
Kat--

KATHERINE
At least give them a choice.

Marcus takes a breath and faces his crew.

MARCUS
Alright, listen up.

The others gather around.

MARCUS
Truth is, we don't know what to
expect on this one. Lots of risk
and no guarantee on return. So if
you want out, now's your chance.

ROMAN
How much gold can the Lady Mac
hold?

KARL
Two hundred thousand kilos.

ROMAN
So basically, I could buy a planet.
Good enough for me.

KARL
I was born to do this.

SCHUTZ

I go where you go, Captain. You know that.

Marcus turns to Katherine.

KARL

Hey, I think they're here.

The Captain waits. Katherine exhales, shaking her head.

KATHERINE

I'll prep for take-off.

MARCUS

Atta girl.

INT. SONORA DOCKING BAY

Marcus and his crew emerge from the ship to find Wai with Antonio and Victoria. Behind them is a massive man with a pile of gear.

ANTONIO

Honestly, Captain. With such a lovely pilot, how do you accomplish anything?

WAI

He usually doesn't.

ANTONIO

You remember Victoria.

She nods to the crew, trying to avoid Marcus' stare. Antonio motions to the stranger.

ANTONIO

And meet our satellite technician, Jorge.

The big man nods.

MARCUS

This is Karl, our systems specialist.

KARL

And luggage monkey.

MARCUS

And that's Schutz. He fixes--well, he fixes everything.

ANTONIO

Splendid. Well, Captain. If our supplies have met your expectations, then I suggest a speedy departure. I would hate to keep all that gold waiting.

MARCUS

We're ready when you are. Karl--

KARL

Yeah, I know.

He joins Jorge while the others head into the Lady Macbeth.

KARL

So, sat-tech, huh? Nice.

Jorge ignores him and hefts a massive bag over his shoulder.

KARL

Sure gonna be refreshing having someone I can finally talk to cuz this stuff just goes right over everyone's head. Usually it's "Hey Karl, shut the hell up," or "Bugger off, I'm sleeping."

He reaches for a case.

KARL

Anyway, you'll notice I re-coded your guidance software for our onboard interface--Geez. This thing's gotta be 900 pounds.

Jorge lifts the case and another like it with ease.

JORGE

Karl.

KARL

Yeah?

JORGE

Shut the hell up.

EXT. SPACE - ASTEROID FIELD

The Lady Macbeth blasts away from the Sonora asteroid.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Roman and Schutz secure the guests into their seats as the asteroid disappears from view.

SONORA CONTROL (V.O.)
Lady Macbeth, this is Sonora
Control. You are cleared to jump.

MARCUS
Roger, Sonora Control.

Roman keys a sequence on Antonio's boots and the footwear tightens around his feet.

ANTONIO
Are these really necessary?

SCHUTZ
It's the closest thing we have to
artificial gravity. They bond with
the deck.

ANTONIO
Surely you must have a more
comfortable pair on board.

ROMAN
Sorry, mate. We're about five stars
short of a classy cruise. You'll
get used to it.

As Schutz secures Victoria, she notices his mechanical features.

VICTORIA
You're a cosmonik.

MARCUS
He's lost a lot of calcium and
muscle tissue working in zero-g
over the years, but he's still
human where it counts. Right,
Schutz?

Schutz cracks a smile.

KATHERINE
Retracting sensors.

EXT. LADY MACBETH

External panels retract into the hull, forming a smooth sphere.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

KATHERINE
Symmetry's optimal. Charging nodes.

ANTONIO
Symmetry?

ROMAN
That's why the ship's round. We
need harmonic balance to jump.

ANTONIO
Or what?

ROMAN
Boom.

Antonio forces a laugh.

ANTONIO
You cannot be serious.

ROMAN
'Fraid I am, mate. Without
symmetry, we'd be pushing our ship
through a meat grinder.

Roman moves to his chair and straps himself in.

ROMAN
Cap had us running salvage gigs for
years, and it was my job to wipe
remains off the scrap.

ANTONIO
Remains?

ROMAN
Couldn't very well sell metal with
bits of people all over it, now
could we?

WAI
Enough, Roman.

ROMAN
Just don't shift around too much.

Antonio digs his fingers into the armrests.

KATHERINE
Nodes fully charged.

Marcus punches a command on his controls and a jagged parabola appears over his screen.

MARCUS
Wai, cut the thrusters.

WAI
Thrusters down.

The ship goes quiet.

MARCUS
Here we go.

ANTONIO
God...

Marcus presses the jump trigger.

EXT. LADY MACBETH

Searing blue arcs of electricity leap from the jump nodes and the ship streaks into a burst of light.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The blackness of space purges the Lady Macbeth in a blaze of superheated gasses.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

The Captain turns to his passengers.

MARCUS
Everyone good?

Antonio shivers with sweat pouring down his face.

ANTONIO
Are we dead? Am I dead?

ROMAN
Buck up, mate. Only three more to go.

KATHERINE
Nodes charged.

MARCUS
Hold onto your lunch.

With a deafening crack--

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

A cloud of asteroids orbits an orange star. The Lady Macbeth drifts into view and a wave of tiny particles cascades off the hull.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Only Marcus, Katherine and Wai are there. As the sound of the particles dissipates, an alert sounds. Marcus hits a button on his console.

MARCUS
Yes, Antonio.

ANTONIO
Captain, that sounded dangerous.
Perhaps we should go somewhere
safer, yes?

MARCUS
I told you, we're fine. Just be
ready for the launch.

He clicks off the intercom.

KATHERINE
I could shoot him for you.

MARCUS
Don't tempt me.

WAI
I'll be on my break.

Katherine watches her leave.

KATHERINE
So. You gonna talk to her?

MARCUS
'Bout what?

KATHERINE

Come on, Marcus. Ayacucho? You don't think she's a little upset?

MARCUS

We moved on a long time ago, Kat.

KATHERINE

You don't know a thing about women, do you?

MARCUS

I know enough.

He stands.

MARCUS

Let me know when we're ready. I'm gonna grab a bite.

INT. LADY MACBETH - HALLWAY

Marcus reaches the door to the mess hall and sees Victoria through the window. She tugs at a packet of food and the wrapping tears, releasing colorless sludge into zero-g.

Marcus pockets his ear piece and pushes through the door.

INT. LADY MACBETH - MESS HALL

MARCUS

Need a hand?

Victoria turns.

VICTORIA

Captain. Sorry, the bag--

MARCUS

I'll get Karl on it.

He catches a globule and tastes it.

MARCUS

Ugh. Chicken Parmesan. I got here just in time.

He keys a code into a cabinet and opens a freezer full of unprocessed food.

MARCUS

How about...

He pulls out a sealed tray.

MARCUS
Rib-eye.

He places it into a small oven.

MARCUS
Trust me, it's good. Medium?

VICTORIA
Thank you, Captain.

Marcus hits a button and the oven fires up.

MARCUS
It's Marcus, by the way.

VICTORIA
Sorry?

MARCUS
Only my crew calls me Captain. And Antonio.

Victoria returns a slight smile.

The oven chirps. Marcus removes the package and peels away the seal.

MARCUS
Odd match, you two. How'd that happen?

VICTORIA
Long story.

Marcus jabs a utensil into the steak and hands the meal to Victoria.

MARCUS
I've got time.

Katherine pushes into the mess hall.

KATHERINE
Satellites ready, Marcus.

MARCUS
Or not.

VICTORIA
Thanks for the dinner.

She nods to Katherine on her way out.

KATHERINE
How come I couldn't reach you?

MARCUS
Oh--

He winks as he replaces the ear piece.

MARCUS
Oops.

KATHERINE
Honestly, you'll chase anything
that moves.

MARCUS
I could chase you.

KATHERINE
Grow up.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Marcus falls into his seat. The rest of his crew is there.

KARL
Just need your authorization,
Captain.

Marcus keys a sequence on his console.

KARL
Woulda been nice to have Jorge help
on this one. I could have been done
hours ago.

MARCUS
Is there a problem?

KARL
No. But anyone seen him since
Sonora? Kinda strange, don't you
think? The sat-tech, just gone?

Karl glances to the bridge's open hatch.

KARL
You know what I think?

ROMAN
 (to Schutz)
 Jorge's not a sat-tech.

KARL
 Jorge's not a sat-tech at all.

Schutz smiles.

KATHERINE
 Then what is he?

KARL
 Hired assassin. Probably here to
 knock us off when we strike it
 rich.

MARCUS
 Karl.

KARL
 Yeah?

MARCUS
 Launch the damn satellites.

KARL
 Yes, sir.

Karl hits the intercom.

KARL
 Guidance systems locked, Miss Keef.

INT. LADY MACBETH - GUEST QUARTERS

Victoria and Antonio sit in front of a bank of monitors.

VICTORIA
 Copy.

She hits a command and the screens fill with code.

VICTORIA
 Array's online, Karl.

KARL (V.O.)
 Satellites away.

Muffled reports shake the ship and--

EXT. LADY MACBETH

Satellites burst from their launch tubes.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Marcus' heavy eyes follow the satellites into the asteroid cloud, drenched in amber light from the nearby star.

His eyes shut.

INT. LADY MACBETH - GUEST QUARTERS

The bank of monitors spews a flood of data. Victoria inspects the code while Antonio paces the room.

VICTORIA
Got something.

ANTONIO
What?

VICTORIA
I'm picking up traces of cassiterite ore. The system definitely has tin.

ANTONIO
Tin? Need I remind you what we came here for?

VICTORIA
The presence of tin proves my theory. It's good news.

ANTONIO
This is not some astrological experiment you are running, understand? We cannot go back empty handed.

VICTORIA
Astrophysical.

ANTONIO
What?

VICTORIA
You said astrological. That's fortune telling. I'm an astrophysicist.

ANTONIO

Really? Because I am not so sure.

VICTORIA

Antonio, take a break.

ANTONIO

Fine.

INT. LADY MACBETH - HALLWAY

Antonio rounds a corner and heads in the opposite direction of Karl, who busies himself with a control panel on the wall. Once Antonio is out of sight, Karl closes the panel and heads to the guest quarters.

He passes a window, where he sees Victoria engrossed in her search.

Karl continues to the next door and peaks through the window. Inside, he catches a glimpse of Jorge just before he moves out of view.

Karl looks up to a row of vents along the top perimeter of the hallway and removes his boots.

Weightless, Karl pushes himself toward the ceiling and looks through the vents.

He sees Jorge in the corner, head hidden from view. Jorge takes a syringe and injects a clear liquid into his forearm.

KARL

Oh, shit.

INT. LADY MACBETH - MESS HALL

Marcus, Katherine and Roman sit at the table finishing the remains of a colorless dinner. Schutz stands at the counter, adjusting the mechanical implants on his leg.

KATHERINE

40 hours. You'd expect them to find something by now.

MARCUS

Lotta ground to cover, Kat.

ROMAN

Lotta ground to cover in our cargo bay, too.

MARCUS
We'll find something. I know it.

Karl bursts in, out of breath.

KARL
We are seriously screwed.

ROMAN
I doubt it, actually.

KATHERINE
What's wrong, Karl?

KARL
Jorge's got implants. A shitload of
'em.

The others look at each other.

KARL
What are you waiting for? Get the
guns!

MARCUS
What kind of implants?

KARL
Well, I don't know. But he injected
himself with some sort of stimulant
or lubricant or whatever.

Marcus glances to Roman.

KARL
Come on. If you have implants, you
have to juice up. Ask Schutz.

ROMAN
Doesn't matter, head case. He won't
do anything.

KARL
Have you seen how big that guy is?

MARCUS
Big or no, he's no match for our
carbines.

He holds up a keycard.

MARCUS
And last I checked, they haven't
gone anywhere.

KARL
But, they could have carbines.

ROMAN
We scanned 'em for firearms before
we left, mate. They're clean.

KARL
I'm telling you, Jorge's not who--

The door opens and Wai leads Antonio into the room.

ANTONIO
...encouraging everyone's support
of the Sonoran government.

He looks around.

ANTONIO
Oh, dear. I hope we're not
interrupting.

The Captain shakes his head.

MARCUS
Karl?

KARL
No, uh, I better get back to work.

He exits.

MARCUS
Talkin' a little politics?

ANTONIO
Just expressing my desire of
leveling the corporate, communal
playing field, so to speak.

ROMAN
Like Communism?

ANTONIO
Like this ship. Equal shares for
all means no one man is too
powerful.

Wai moves to a cabinet.

WAI
Better for all concerned.

ROMAN

You mean better for your spoiled little arse, pixie sticks. Some of us work for a living, y'know.

WAI

Yeah, looks like it.

MARCUS

How's the search coming along?

ANTONIO

Victoria has found numerous traces. It won't be long before we find a deposit large enough to suit our needs.

Wai hands him a drink packet.

ANTONIO

And our sincerest gratitude for your patience. Salute.

(to Wai)

Again, brilliant tour.

Antonio heads out of the mess hall.

MARCUS

Careful, Wai.

WAI

What?

MARCUS

You know what. He's a client, not a pet.

WAI

All this coming from you.

As she leaves, the others share a smile.

MARCUS

Shut up. All of you.

INT. LADY MACBETH - GUEST QUARTERS

Antonio lies on the bed, spinning a floating drink packet in the air. A rhythmic beep sounds at Victoria's station.

VICTORIA

That's odd.

Antonio sits up. On one of the screens is an asteroid, flashing red.

ANTONIO
What is it?

VICTORIA
Not sure, but it has its own
magnetic field.

ANTONIO
A ship?

VICTORIA
No. Too big for a ship. Could be a
station.

ANTONIO
Impossible.

He crosses the room.

ANTONIO
How far?

VICTORIA
Thirty million kilometers.

ANTONIO
Then forget it.

VICTORIA
You're kidding, right?

ANTONIO
They are too far away to be any
concern of ours.

VICTORIA
Look, if we can pick them up, then
it's safe to assume they already
know about us.

Antonio shakes his head, glaring at the screen.

VICTORIA
Antonio, We can't continue until we
know who they are.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

The crew faces Antonio and Victoria. The same flashing
asteroid is on the displays.

MARCUS

A station?

VICTORIA

I believe so.

ANTONIO

I assure you, Captain, they should not be here.

ROMAN

Who gives a shite? If they try anything, then we'll let 'em suck on a nice pair of maser cannons.

KARL

Yeah, screw 'em. We have a right to be here.

Victoria and Antonio exchange glances.

VICTORIA

Actually, that's not entirely accurate.

KATHERINE

What?

Victoria takes a breath.

VICTORIA

The lease you saw was false. This entire system has been closed.

KATHERINE

Son of a bitch--

Roman shoots from his seat.

ROMAN

What the hell did you get us into?

MARCUS

Roman, sit down. What do you mean, closed?

VICTORIA

Sanctioned.

ROMAN

Bloody hell--

MARCUS

Sanctioned. By the Confederation.

VICTORIA

Yes.

MARCUS

That means we've just stepped in some very hot water.

ROMAN

Got that right.

MARCUS

So I'm urging you to be very careful with how you answer this next question.

Marcus levels his eyes with Antonio.

MARCUS

Was this whole deal bullshit?

ANTONIO

Only the lease. Everything else-- the ocean of gold, the impending development--is all very real.

The Captain looks to Victoria.

ANTONIO

Please, Captain, just hear us out. That is all I ask.

VICTORIA

The station, it's not Confederation.

KATHERINE

Then was is it?

VICTORIA

The signatures don't match any Confederate vessels, and they haven't tried to contact us, which is against all standard protocol.

MARCUS

Smugglers?

VICTORIA

Possibly, but unlikely. In any case, they don't seem to care that we're even here.

MARCUS

So, what are you suggesting?

VICTORIA

We find out for sure, then resume our search.

ANTONIO

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, Captain. For all of us.

KATHERINE

Marcus--

He meets her stare.

KATHERINE

A word.

MARCUS

Alright. Karl, see if you can establish radio contact.

Marcus follows Katherine out, but stops at the door.

MARCUS

Oh, and if any of this goes further south, I'm chaining you to my ship and dragging you to the first port authority I find.

INT. LADY MACBETH - MARCUS' QUARTERS

Marcus moves to his mini-bar and grabs a bottle of whiskey.

KATHERINE

You can't seriously be considering staying.

MARCUS

We don't even know what we're dealing with, yet.

KATHERINE

Doesn't matter. They lied.

MARCUS

I'm just not ready to scrap this entire thing before we get paid.

KATHERINE

Dammit, there are other people on this ship, and they're all at risk.

MARCUS
Risk puts money in our pockets,
Kat.

KATHERINE
You're unbelievable.

MARCUS
If we go back now, with nothing,
then the Lady Mac is through. We're
all through.

KATHERINE
Maybe that's a good thing.

MARCUS
A good thing?

KATHERINE
You make stupid choices, Marcus.
Sooner or later, we're all gonna
pay for them.

MARCUS
And you think you can do a better
job.

KATHERINE
Absolutely.

He opens the bottle and takes a drink.

MARCUS
Well, I'd believe you, Kat. Except
for one thing.

KATHERINE
What?

MARCUS
I'm never wrong.

KATHERINE
One of these days, you will be.

MARCUS
We'll see.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Marcus and Katherine return.

KARL

Hey, Captain. Tried every frequency
but got nuthin'. Either no one's
home--

SCHUTZ

Or they don't want us to know who
they are.

ROMAN

Anyone else not like the sound of
that?

MARCUS

Wai, take us in.

WAI

We're in a retrograde orbit, thirty-
two million kilometers away and
receding. That's gonna burn a lot
of fuel.

ANTONIO

A small price to pay if it helps us
achieve our objective.

WAI

Hold on.

She punches in the coordinates and the whine of the fusion
drives fills the bridge.

MARCUS

Kat, charge the jump nodes.

The others look at him.

MARCUS

Just in case.

EXT. SPACE - ASTEROID FIELD

The Lady Macbeth dives toward the ring of asteroids.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Everyone focuses on the advancing asteroid field.

KARL

Still no response.

ROMAN

I'm getting a pretty big heat sig.
Someone's home.

KATHERINE

Why don't they acknowledge us?

WAI

We have visual.

Ahead lies a giant asteroid. As the rock rotates, all eyes widen.

ANTONIO

Dios mio. What is it?

MARCUS

Whatever it is, it's not one of
ours. That's alien.

EXT. SPACE - ASTEROID FIELD

The Lady Macbeth holds its position over a wedge-shaped object fifty times the size of the ship. One end is anchored to the asteroid. The object shows no decay, except for a wide, decimated base, suggesting it was once part of a larger whole.

Buried in the rock's face rests a perfect bowl-shaped crater, its surface scarred by thousands of meteor hits. A thin tower juts into space ending in a cluster of jagged spikes.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

No one moves.

KARL

Look at all those meteor hits. It's
gotta be hundreds of years old.

SCHUTZ

Or thousands.

KARL

What's with the radio dish?

KATHERINE

Maybe they came here to build it.
Some kind of research station.

ROMAN

That's not a station.

WAI
Then what is it?

ROMAN
A shipwreck.

SCHUTZ
I think Roman's right. One end is broken off. The original craft must have been massive.

KATHERINE
Can't be. There's no impact crater. No crash damage.

ROMAN
So what?

KATHERINE
When you build a dish that big, you're looking for something.

MARCUS
Or, hoping someone's looking for you.

The others turn to the Captain.

MARCUS
Sorry, Kat. That's not a radio telescope. It's a distress beacon.

Victoria eyes Marcus.

MARCUS
See, they used what was available. Probably rigged the tower out of parts from the ship.

He grins.

MARCUS
That's what I'd do.

KATHERINE
Doesn't prove it's a distress beacon.

MARCUS
Guess we'll see.

Marcus notices something on the wreck.

MARCUS
Karl, get a closer look on those
discolorations.

KARL
Comin' right up.

Using a joystick, Karl magnifies the wreck on his screen to a faint rectangle.

ROMAN
Airlock?

MARCUS
Could be our way in.

ANTONIO
Way in? Excuse me, but our business
is with the array.

MARCUS
This is alien technology. It could
be worth a million times more than
any amount of gold.

ANTONIO
Come now, will you fill your hull
with scrap metal. I have indulged
this sight-seeing long enough.

MARCUS
Far as I see it, the instant you
brought us into sanctioned
territory, I'm the one doin' the
indulging.
(eyes on Antonio)
Victoria, how's the array?

VICTORIA
The feed's still coming through.

MARCUS
Then I don't see why we can't do
both.

ANTONIO
Very well, Captain.

INT. LADY MACBETH - EQUIPMENT ROOM

Marcus, Roman, Schutz and Karl enter and dive into their lockers.

Marcus removes three sets of utility belts while Roman and Schutz unpack pairs of shoulder pads, each replete with a thick collar.

KARL
Maybe I should go, too.

MARCUS
Hell no.

KARL
Why not?

ROMAN
'Cuz you're young and stupid. And that's a liability, mate.

KARL
What?

MARCUS
Karl, he's right.

SCHUTZ
Captain.

Marcus turns to find Antonio and Jorge in the doorway.

ANTONIO
Captain, we would like to join you on the expedition.

MARCUS
I thought you weren't interested in any of this.

ANTONIO
Perhaps I was too hasty in my assessment. This wreck, as you call it, could prove quite valuable.

ROMAN
Not with your newbie-green arse around.

The others laugh as Roman places the collar unit onto Marcus' shoulders.

MARCUS
Sorry, gentlemen. Just me and my crew for this one.

ANTONIO

And who paid for you and your crew,
Captain?

Marcus meets Jorge's stare, then looks to Schutz.

MARCUS

Alright. Suit 'em up.

CUT TO:

INT. LADY MACBETH - EQUIPMENT ROOM - LATER

Schutz keys a sequence on Antonio's collar. Black silicon flows out from the shoulder harness and forms a shell around his body.

ANTONIO

Oh. That's a bit chilly.

Schutz moves to Jorge and keys the sequence.

SCHUTZ

Your SII suits will protect you
from the pressure, temperature and
radiation of space, however--

A clear faceplate flows up from the collar around Antonio's head.

SCHUTZ

They do little in regards to
physical protection.

Schutz punches a pad on the wall of the room. Pneumatic pistons hiss as a rack of metallic exoskeletons extends.

SCHUTZ

Which is why we have these.

ANTONIO

It must be 800 pounds.

ROMAN

Yeah, but it's a ton of fun.
Literally.

Jorge looks to a secured, red locker in the back.

JORGE

What about weapons?

MARCUS

What for?

JORGE

It's a warship. We should be prepared.

KARL

Why do think it's a warship?

JORGE

Only a battle could have caused that kind of damage.

MARCUS

Look, if there are any aliens over there, which I seriously doubt, the last thing I wanna do is flash guns in their faces.

WAI (V.O.)

Captain, the MSV's set to go.

MARCUS

Copy. Let's get this armor on.

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY

Marcus, Roman and Schutz navigate their weightless exoskeletons to the MSV. As they clip safety lines to the craft--

Antonio flails through the air and clunks off the side of a stationary tool rack.

ROMAN

This is just a bad idea.

The reaction jets on the back of Jorge's exoskeleton fire. He restrains Antonio and hauls him to the MSV.

MARCUS

Yeah. It'd be a shame to see him sucked out the airlock.

ROMAN

Yeah. Shame.

Jorge clips himself into place.

SCHUTZ

Done this before?

Jorge nods and secures his grip.

MARCUS
Wai. Take us out.

WAI (V.O.)
Copy that.

The docking cradle releases and the propulsion jets on the MSV spin the craft toward the bay doors.

WAI (V.O.)
Depressurizing.

A yellow alert light above the door flashes and the lock hisses open. As the bay doors retract, atmosphere rushes out of the widening aperture.

WAI (V.O.)
Gentlemen, hang tight.

EXT. SPACE - ASTEROID FIELD

The MSV slips out of the ship. The crater dish yawns below the Lady Mac, dwarfing the craft in the shadow of its mouth. As the asteroid turns, dawn breaks over its surface.

EXT. MSV - SPACE

Antonio loosens his grip on the handrail.

ANTONIO
Santa madre...

ROMAN
Katherine, you gettin' this?

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

A weak image of the sunrise fizzles over the monitors; however, Katherine and Karl don't notice as their eyes are riveted on the view out of the cockpit window.

KATHERINE
Yeah...I'm getting it.

KARL
I'd give both nuts to be out there right now. Both of 'em.

EXT. MSV - SPACE

The MSV pitches toward the wreck and accelerates.

ANTONIO

I'm sick.

ROMAN

Don't toss in that thing. Makes breathing quite hard, actually.

MARCUS

Wai, get us closer to the tower.

WAI (V.O.)

Copy.

The craft pivots and sinks toward the structure.

The top of the spire floats past. The tower's supports flow into each other in graceful arcs.

MARCUS

I don't see any joints. How'd they build this thing?

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

An alarm sounds from Katherine's station. She looks to a screen.

KATHERINE

Oh no.

EXT. MSV - SPACE

KATHERINE (V.O.)

Marcus, I'm picking up something.

MARCUS

What is it?

KATHERINE (V.O.)

Debris cloud. Coming in hot.

WAI (V.O.)

Captain! We've got incoming, bearing 2-6-5, mark 7.

Marcus looks to his right just as a hot streak whips past his helmet. Another glances off the MSV's hull, spraying Roman with debris.

ROMAN
Bleedin' hell--

MARCUS
Wai, move us down. We've got to get
to that wreck, use it as a shield.

WAI (V.O.)
On my way.

Small pebbles rattle off their armor as the tower's supports
whip by.

ANTONIO
Vamos a morir--

WAI (V.O.)
Hang on!

The MSV pitches to the left and a super-accelerated rock
slams into the tail. Shards of twisted metal spiral into
space.

INT. MSV - COCKPIT

Wai wrestles with the flight controls as alarm klaxons flood
the cabin. Ahead, the tower nears.

MARCUS (V.O.)
Wai--

WAI
I see it. Lost a thruster.
Switching to auxiliary.

She throws a lever above her head and yanks hard on the
controls.

EXT. MSV - SPACE

The craft begins to turn, but the tower is too close.

MARCUS
Hold on!

The MSV glances off the spire, rattling its passengers.

INT. MSV COCKPIT

Wai steadies the controls and steers toward the wreck.

ROMAN (V.O.)
Dammit, Wai. You trying to hit
everything in sight?

WAI
Piss off, Roman.

EXT. MSV - SPACE

Another wave of particles pelts the craft.

MARCUS
Wai, keep your bearing. We're
almost there.

ANTONIO
Turn back, Captain. For God's sake.

The MSV passes from the sunlight into the shadow of the
wreck.

WAI (V.O.)
We should be safe here.

MARCUS
Nicely done, Wai.

ROMAN
Nicely done my arse. Next time, I
drive.

MARCUS
Katherine, how you holding up?

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

She reads her instrument panel.

KATHERINE
I think we're through the worst of
it, but I wouldn't push our luck.

MARCUS (V.O.)
Copy, we won't be long.

EXT. MSV - SPACE

The MSV slows to a crawl as it passes the sheared side of the
wreck, its edge gray and twisted.

WAI (V.O.)

This was one hell of an accident.

Below the torn hull, interior bulkhead walls lie exposed with the geometric outline of decking receding into the ship.

MARCUS

Look at the color difference.

SCHUTZ

Vacuum ablation.

ROMAN

What?

SCHUTZ

Decay. That's how I know when to replace my parts.

The MSV passes over the hull, its glassy skin stretching out like an endless sand dune.

MARCUS

There.

In the mid-section of the ship, a rectangular, hairline seam catches the light.

MARCUS

Wai, get us closer to those seams.

WAI (V.O.)

You got it.

The MSV glides to the middle of the ship and steadies twenty meters from the hull.

MARCUS

This is where I get off.

He disconnects his safety line.

MARCUS

I don't want anyone on that thing until I say.

He takes a breath and pushes off the MSV.

EXT. SHIPWRECK

The skin of the wreck moves within arm's reach. Marcus holds out his hands, but as he comes in contact with the hull, he slips off it as if it were ice.

MARCUS

Damn, this thing is slick.

He fires his reaction jets and propels himself back in front of the rectangle.

MARCUS

Karl, you got any readings inside?
Life-support, latent power supply,
anything?

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Karl's fingers move over his data interface.

KARL

Stand by.

EXT. SHIPWRECK

Marcus runs his hand over the smooth skin of the wreck.

MARCUS

There's no decay on the hull. It's
like it's brand new.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Karl swivels to another monitor.

KARL

You think they've got some
automated system to regenerate the
ship?

MARCUS (V.O.)

Why not? It's light-years ahead of
us.

Karl's screen blips.

KARL

Sorry, Captain. Everything's
bouncing right back. Can't get
through the shell.

EXT. SHIPWRECK

Marcus drifts to the left side of the rectangle, where he sees an elliptical seam the size of his fist. As he runs his fingers over the oval--

It glows with a blue light.

MARCUS

Karl--

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Karl's screen floods with data streams.

KATHERINE

What happened?

KARL

Captain, I'm picking up massive power surges. What'd you do?

EXT. SHIPWRECK

MARCUS

I think I rang the doorbell.

The rectangle dilates, its material flowing back to the edges like liquid. The interior is dark.

EXT. MSV - SPACE

ANTONIO

Captain? Are you sure we should be doing this?

ROMAN

He doesn't think that way, mate.

MARCUS

I'm gonna see if I can control the airlock from inside.

Marcus looks up.

MARCUS

You know what to do if I can't get out.

ROMAN

Run away screaming like little girls. Got it.

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

Marcus descends into the wreck. Headlights from the exoskeleton cut through the dark, revealing the outlines of a vacant room.

Once inside, he locates another oval touch-plate next to the open hatch.

MARCUS

Found the switch.

He passes a hand over it and the hatch flows shut.

Marcus falls from the air, landing on his back.

MARCUS

Ow.

The room washes with soft light, revealing a plain room with pale-jade walls and no hard corners.

He tries to rise but remains glued to the floor.

MARCUS

Holy shit. You guys aren't gonna believe this.

He waits.

MARCUS

Anyone copy?

EXT. MSV - SPACE

Everyone's eyes are on the airlock.

ROMAN

Captain, you okay? Captain?

Nothing.

ROMAN

Karl, talk to me.

KARL (V.O.)

It's a frequency barrier. I can't get through.

ROMAN

Then shut the hell up, Karl. Lemme think--

He turns to Schutz.

ROMAN

Schutz, maybe you should go in.

The airlock flows open. Marcus hovers just inside the hatch without his armor.

MARCUS

You guys comin', or what?

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

Jorge helps Antonio out of his exoskeleton while the others float by theirs.

MARCUS

Once the airlock pressurizes, we won't need our suits. The atmosphere's a bit CO2 heavy, but it's nothing we can't handle.

He looks at the MSV.

MARCUS

Wai, see if you can grab any samples from the wreck. We'll meet here in an hour.

WAI (V.O.)

Copy.

He presses the switch and the airlock closes. The exoskeletons crash on the floor, and everyone but Marcus lands on their backs.

MARCUS

Oh yeah. Forgot to tell you. They've got gravity.

ROMAN

You're shittin' me.

Roman and the others rise.

SCHUTZ

Real gravity. Extraordinary...

ROMAN

This is my favorite type of gravity, too. The we're-gonna-be-billionaires-type.

MARCUS

Ready for more?

INT. SHIPWRECK

A door dilates and Marcus peers through.

A hallway the width of a four-lane highway curves off in the distance. The walls are the same pale-jade color and arch into the ceiling. At evenly spaced intervals are curved doorways.

Marcus looks down at a datapad in his hand.

MARCUS

Looks clear.

He steps through the door, followed by the others.

They reach an open doorway. Inside is a clean room, containing a fixed table and several stools.

The group continues on, passing similar rooms along the way.

ANTONIO

Where is everyone?

MARCUS

Looks like they left.

ANTONIO

Appearances can be deceiving, Captain.

Roman grips his side, his breathing heavy.

ROMAN

Hey, Schutz. What say you carry your best friend Roman, yeah? Just for a bit.

SCHUTZ

The gravity's definitely stronger than ours.

They reach a sealed doorway at the end of hallway. Marcus opens it with the touch-plate, exposing a spiral staircase leading down.

ROMAN
Oh, brilliant.

MARCUS
You guys up for a hike?

CUT TO:

INT. SHIPWRECK

Marcus leads the team down another sterile hallway lined with small, circular doorways, all of which are sealed.

Marcus moves to one of the doors.

ANTONIO
Captain, I am not so sure that is a good idea...

CUT TO:

POV: ANOMOLY

Barely skimming the ship-deck like a thin film of water, it watches the crew as Marcus searches for the door's touch-plate.

With each footstep, sight and sound correlate, sending reverberations pulsing through its vision.

BACK TO:

Marcus opens one of the doors, revealing a room with a low table attached to the far wall.

MARCUS
Bedroom?

CUT TO:

POV: ANOMOLY

It slides over the ceiling, moving slowly and silently towards Schutz.

It watches as Schutz opens another door, sending sonic pulses through its vision.

BACK TO:

SCHUTZ

Same here.

ROMAN

Quite a lot of them.

MARCUS

Let's keep moving.

The team rounds a bend where they find a mismatched partition sealing off the hallway.

ROMAN

Dead end.

MARCUS

Looks like it was added after the accident.

Schutz takes a step forward, holding out his datapad.

MARCUS

What is it?

SCHUTZ

There's an incredible amount of energy on the other side.

JORGE

How much energy?

SCHUTZ

It's...very hard to calculate.

MARCUS

Ballpark it.

SCHUTZ

Enough for a small star.

ROMAN

Can't be.

Roman grabs the datapad.

ROMAN

A sun in the middle of a ship? How could you even begin--no. It's impossible.

SCHUTZ

Quite.

ANTONIO

Mierda!

The others turn to Antonio as a hemispherical bump in the floor glides toward them.

ROMAN

What in the hell is that?

The bump glides toward them and stops several paces away.

ANTONIO

Jorge--

JORGE

There's more.

They look up and see three other hemispheres approaching them along the wall.

ANTONIO

Captain, something is awake in the ship and they are coming for us.

MARCUS

They look autonomous.

ROMAN

So do my legs. They're gonna run me right off this bloody ship.

Everyone takes a step back away as a dozen more join them.

ROMAN

Right. Back to the Lady Mac, anyone?

ANTONIO

Brilliant suggestion.

Antonio turns and huffs toward the exit. Roman follows. As more hemispheres continue their approach, Schutz and Jorge step back.

MARCUS

Okay, plan B. Run.

Marcus follows on the heels of his crew. The bumps follow.

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

The crew rushes up the stairs.

MARCUS
Wai, we're heading back.

SCHUTZ
She can't hear you through the hull.

MARCUS
Dammit.

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

With his suit engaged, Marcus enters, followed by the others.
The room is empty.

ROMAN
Where's the armor?

ANTONIO
The aliens, they took them.

SCHUTZ
How could they move 5,000 pounds of armor?

ROMAN
No one cares, Schutz. Captain--

Marcus closes the door, sealing everyone inside the room.

ANTONIO
They're here. The aliens are still here--

JORGE
Antonio, calm down.

Marcus opens the hatch. The MSV hovers just outside.

WAI (V.O.)
Marcus, thank God.

MARCUS
What's wrong?

WAI (V.O.)
There was another particle shower.

Behind the MSV is the Lady Macbeth, its belly gushing vapor and sparks from a gaping puncture wound.

WAI (V.O.)
She took a pretty big hit, Marcus.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Everyone gathers around a screen, where they watch a wave of particles collide into the ship's shell.

KATHERINE
There was no damage done to the nodes or drives, but...

The image changes to a blueprint-like layout of the hull. Impact areas flash red.

KATHERINE
A section of our stern is badly fractured.

ROMAN
Holy balls.

KATHERINE
I'm sorry...there were too many.

ANTONIO
Would someone please tell me what is going on?

KARL
Remember the deal about symmetry?

The news sinks in.

ANTONIO
You mean--God, you mean we are stuck here?

MARCUS
For now.

ROMAN
Like I said, mate. Holy balls.

MARCUS
Schutz, talk to me.

EXT. LADY MACBETH - SPACE

The eternity of space stretches out behind Schutz as he stands over the ship's wounds.

SCHUTZ
I can weld the hull in a matter of
hours--

He inspects an emerged sensor panel.

SCHUTZ
But we might have a harder time
with the sensor clusters. This
one's jammed.

MARCUS (V.O.)
Can we retract it manually?

SCHUTZ
I'd rather rebuild the strut
actuator. Not take any chances.

MARCUS (V.O.)
How long?

SCHUTZ
A day. Maybe less.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

MARCUS
Alright, get on it.

The Captain turns to the grim faces of his crew.

MARCUS
Hey, we've been through worse, so
let's pull it together.

ROMAN
I dunno, Cap. This is pretty bad.

KARL
Yeah, if Schutz can't fix that
strut we're not gettin' home.

MARCUS
As long as Schutz is on it, we're
fine. Trust me. But we finish what
we came here to do, agreed?

The others nod.

MARCUS
Wai, any samples?

WAI

No, but--

VICTORIA

I was able to pull some off the MSV.

KATHERINE

The MSV?

ROMAN

Wai traded paint with the tower.
Damn near got us killed.

WAI

Wouldn't have been a total loss.

ROMAN

Tart.

VICTORIA

The composite was simple enough.
Some titanium, nickel and silver. I
also did some carbon-dating.

MARCUS

And?

VICTORIA

I was certain I made a mistake, so
I checked it again. And again. Same
result every time.

MARCUS

How old?

She takes a breath.

VICTORIA

Thirteen thousand years.

KARL

But, that's impossible!

ROMAN

Lotta that goin' around, boy-o.

Marcus' gaze drifts to the wreck.

MARCUS

Thirteen thousand years and no
corrosion. Gravity, lighting, all
at full power. Well...

His attention returns to the bridge.

MARCUS
We're going back.

ANTONIO
What? No! We find the gold first.

MARCUS
Gold is worthless compared to that wreck.

ANTONIO
I hired your ship. You do as I say.

MARCUS
No, I only get paid if we strike lucky. And we have.

ANTONIO
Are you mad? What about the aliens?

MARCUS
I don't know what took our armor, but there's not a single living thing in the galaxy that could survive on a ship that old.

ANTONIO
This is absurd.

MARCUS
Wai, can we secure the Lady Mac to the wreck?

WAI
We'll have to tether it.

MARCUS
Make it happen.

ANTONIO
And be vulnerable to other particle showers? Captain, please--

JORGE
Antonio, let the Captain do his job.

MARCUS
We'll be safe. The asteroid is a shield and I'll be damned if anything larger than a peanut hits us.

He turns to Karl.

MARCUS

Karl, I want to make contact with whatever control network is still operational.

KARL

Um, if it's okay with you, Captain, I'd prefer to do it from here.

ROMAN

He's scared of aliens.

KARL

So are you.

MARCUS

I don't care where you do it, just get us up and running so we can search the wreck properly. Alright everyone, let's move.

INT. LADY MACBETH - GUEST QUARTERS

Jorge loads a mechanical lance with a synthetic steroid. Antonio paces by the window as the MSV tows a cable around the wreck.

ANTONIO

I cannot believe you agreed to this. Marcus will back down if we press him.

Jorge punches the flechette into a receptive socket on his inner forearm.

JORGE

Calvert's right. Our search doesn't matter anymore.

ANTONIO

But our plan--

JORGE

The plan is shit.

ANTONIO

What are you talking about? We are here for one reason, understand? If the Council hears of this--

JORGE

The Council will get what they want, because I'm right about the wreck.

Jorge replaces the gun and stands, bracing himself against the wall.

JORGE

It's a warship. And somewhere on board are weapons more advanced than the Council could ever imagine.

A seizure racks Jorge's body and Antonio retreats several steps. The metal walls groan with Jorge's exertion as his exoskeleton flares.

The seizure passes, leaving Jorge heaving.

JORGE

I will find those weapons, even if I have to tear that ship to hell.

EXT. LADY MACBETH - SPACE

The Lady Macbeth holds station over the asteroid, secured by a network of cables wrapped around the wreck's monstrous bulk. A umbilical extends from the Lady Mac's cargo bay to the alien airlock.

Schutz, stuck to the Lady Mac's hide, welds the hull together.

KATHERINE (V.O.)

Specs have it at a 2 percent grade coming towards you...

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Groggy from sleep, Marcus enters to find Katherine staring at a data feed.

KATHERINE

Alignment's looking good, Schutz.

SCHUTZ (V.O.)

Thank you, Katherine. Shouldn't be but a moment.

MARCUS

Hey, where is everyone?

She turns from her screen.

KATHERINE
They're all on the wreck.

MARCUS
The wreck? What about all the scary
aliens?

KATHERINE
Ask the boy genius.

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

A cable runs from the tunnel into a transmitter on the floor.

Marcus floats in and finds Karl hovering over a cluster of
hemispheres.

KARL
Hey, Cap.

MARCUS
You set up a transmitter.

KARL
No more going in blind, right?

Karl hits the touch-plate and the hatch closes, forming an
airtight seal around the cable. The two men land on the
floor.

KARL
Hey, Kat. Come in Katherine.

KATHERINE (V.O.)
Dammit, Karl. I can hear you for
the tenth time. You're like a
little child.

KARL
See? Loud and clear.

MARCUS
Kat said you found out what
happened to our armor.

KARL
Oh yeah. Check it out.

He takes a battery off his belt and tosses it across the
room.

One of the bumps glides over to it. Its composite becomes soft and the battery sinks into its side.

MARCUS

What on Earth?

KARL

See, Captain? Aliens didn't steal our suits, they just got eaten.

MARCUS

They're certainly hungry little shits.

KARL

That's not all. Let me see your fission blade.

Marcus hands him a black handle from his belt. Karl flips a switch, emitting a blue blade of light from one end. He jams it into the floor, creating a cut.

Another bump moves over the scar. After a second, it moves away, the floor restored. Karl tosses Marcus the blade.

KARL (CONT'D)

That's why the ship looks brand new. These cybermice use some sort of molecular synthesizer to keep everything in tact.

MARCUS

Cyber-what?

KARL

Oh. I call 'em cybermice.

Marcus looks at him.

KARL

Cuz they scurry around cleaning up the ship--

MARCUS

No, I got it. What about us? Will they try to clean us up?

KARL

I think we're okay. But I wouldn't want to spend the night over here.

MARCUS

But we're alone? No latent security systems?

KARL

Negative.

MARCUS

And no monsters waiting to eat us?

KARL

I ran a scan from inside the ship for every type of bio-form combination, just in case. There's nothing. Not even mice. Well, except for these.

MARCUS

What keeps them from eating the transmitter?

KARL

I told them not to.

MARCUS

Hold on, you can control them?

KARL

Well, simple commands only. On, off, go, stay.

Karl enters a command on his datapad and a cybermouse moves to his feet. The ball of composite around the unit translates back into the floor, leaving a naked, metal ball the size of a man's fist.

Karl picks it up.

KARL (CONT'D)

See? I ran a decryption program on one of them. Pretty basic stuff, really. But the cool thing is the programming language is universal, so it works all over the ship.

He points the datapad towards the door to the hallway and presses another command. The door opens.

MARCUS

Not bad.

KARL

It's a start. Here.

He tosses the datapad to Marcus.

KARL

Keys to the castle.

MARCUS

Thanks. Where's everyone else?

KARL

A few decks down. Once I discovered what happened to the exoskeletons, everyone felt safe to go exploring.

INT. SHIPWRECK - HALLWAY

Roman and Wai continue down a hallway.

ROMAN

So, Antonio, eh?

WAI

What?

ROMAN

You practically lick his face every time he comes within range.

WAI

You're starting to sound like Marcus.

ROMAN

Well, hello. Did we just find a bitter spot, love?

WAI

You can be a real ass, you know that?

ROMAN

Well, I'm surrounded by rich people and no one will give me any money. How would you feel?

They reach a door and open it, revealing a spiral staircase.

ROMAN

Damn. Another one?

WAI

Good. You can stay here.

Wai charges down the stairs as Roman smears sweat from his brow.

ROMAN

Is it cold in here? No, sorry. It's just you.

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

They make their way down.

ROMAN

So, what is it, love? You smell money?

Wai continues on.

ROMAN

Wai, don't be like that, I'm just curious.

WAI

The man has vision, alright?

ROMAN

Vision?

WAI

Yeah. It means he sees something bigger than himself.

ROMAN

So what's that got to do with me?

WAI

You sound just like...

ROMAN

Like who? Hold the boat, you were going to say Marcus, weren't you love?

She shoots him a glance.

ROMAN

Oh, knife to the heart with that look.

Their data pads erupt in a flurry of twitters and pings. Roman slows. Readings spill over the face of his data pad.

WAI

God, Schutz was right about the power magnitude.

ROMAN

It's like we're right in the middle of a whole arse-load of nuclear reactors.

INT. SHIPWRECK - THIN HALLWAY

The two emerge into a thinner hallway and stop before another mismatched partition. A door stands at its center.

WAI
What is this?

ROMAN
We found another one of these in
the upper decks too, but it didn't
have a door. Uh, you open it.

She does. As they peer in, their jaws hit the floor.

INT. LADY MACBETH - MESS HALL

Karl bursts into the mess hall. Katherine rummages through the cupboards as Antonio and Victoria stand at the table, nibbling on dried food.

KARL
Kat, Roman and Wai found something.

INT. SHIPWRECK - THIN HALLWAY

Marcus, Katherine, Roman and Wai head down the thin hallway. Antonio, Jorge and Victoria follow.

They reach the door.

WAI
We're here.

ROMAN
Get ready, Cap. You're not going to
believe this.

INT. SHIPWRECK - CHAMBER

The group enters and looks up as if they were seeing a ghost.

MARCUS
God. What is this?

A cavernous, dome-shaped room cuts through eight decks of the wreck, the skeletal remains of the floors still visible along the inner walls.

In the center, supported by five black buttresses, lays a ring of shimmering metal, eight meters across.

Marcus walks toward one of the buttresses.

KATHERINE

Marcus--

As he steps beneath the ring, his foot slips out from under him. He tries to stabilize himself, but falls back.

ANTONIO

What? What is it?

MARCUS

There's no gravity underneath it.

KATHERINE

God.

MARCUS

What? You know what it is?

She approaches the ring.

KATHERINE

Give me a hand.

Marcus helps her up one of the buttresses.

Katherine holds out her datapad and tries to press it against the ring. The datapad reaches an invisible barrier and slides away like two identical magnetic poles trying to touch.

KATHERINE

There's no atomic structure.

She climbs down and backs away.

MARCUS

You mean it's a ring of energy?

KATHERINE

Not just energy. Exotic matter.

ANTONIO

What do you mean, exotic?

KATHERINE

Exotic matter has one purpose. To keep a wormhole open.

ROMAN

That's a wormhole portal?

Victoria steps forward with her datapad.

VICTORIA

The quantum field is undefined.
which means the tachyons are
violating causality.

ROMAN

Alright, ladies. A lot of people
here don't speak your language.

VICTORIA

It means basic scientific logic is
being broken.

KATHERINE

It means I'm right.

WAI

Where does it go?

KATHERINE

Not sure, but I have a good idea.

She turns to Marcus.

KATHERINE

The aliens never called for help,
Marcus. That tunnel leads back to
their home world.

All eyes turn to the ring.

ROMAN

Bloody shit. They can't come back,
can they?

MARCUS

Let's not assume anything.

KATHERINE

Where else would it go?

MARCUS

We'll find out. Karl--

KARL (V.O.)

Yes, Captain.

MARCUS

Get on this. I want answers in two
hours.

KARL (V.O.)

Right away, Captain! I'll start hard-wiring the relay to upload images straight into our onboard computer--

MARCUS

Hey, Karl?

KARL

Yeah, Captain?

MARCUS

Shut the hell up.

KARL

Sorry, sir. Just got excited. I've been waiting to get out there and mix it up with you guys. Y'know, get into the adventure--

ROMAN

Hey, Karl?

KARL

Yeah, Roman--

EXT. LADY MACBETH - SPACE

Schutz finishes welding a patch on the hull.

SCHUTZ

Alright. You can run the diagnostics.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Roman looks over Katherine's shoulder as her fingers flash over the system controls.

KATHERINE

Hull integrity looks optimal.

ROMAN

Piece of work, that Schutz.

EXT. LADY MACBETH - SPACE

Schutz locks his fission blade onto his belt and moves down the ship's hull.

SCHUTZ
I'm heading in to rebuild the
strut.

KATHERINE (V.O.)
Copy that.

INT. SHIPWRECK - HALLWAY

Fast-approaching footsteps echo down the empty hallway.

Karl rounds a corner, carrying more equipment than he can manage. A rolled-up cable falls to the ground.

KARL
Dammit.

As he gathers the cable, Marcus hurries around the opposite corner.

KARL
Captain? I thought you were on the
Lady Mac.

Marcus glances behind him.

MARCUS
Yeah. Forgot my datapad.

He holds it up.

KARL
So, the image relay is up and
running outside the wormhole.

Marcus continues on.

MARCUS
Good. See you upstairs.

KARL
So, don't worry, nothing will come
out without us seeing...

Karl watches the captain charge up the stairs. He takes a breath and situates his floundering gear.

KARL
Gee, thanks Karl. Aw, don't mention
it, Captain. Don't worry, I won't.

INT. LADY MACBETH - MARCUS' QUARTERS

Marcus stands in his shower stall, finishing a shave. Soap lather covers his hair. A beep sounds.

MARCUS
I'm in the shower.

The door opens and someone enters.

MARCUS
I said, I'm in the damn shower!

WAI (O.S.)
I know.

Marcus punches off the water and emerges from the stall, where he finds Wai at his mini-bar, opening a drink packet. She watches him grab a towel.

WAI
This brings back memories.

MARCUS
What is it?

WAI
Karl's heading back.

MARCUS
What'd he find?

WAI
Don't know, but he's pretty excited about something.

He nods and zips up a fresh jumpsuit.

WAI
You really hate being wrong, don't you?

MARCUS
I'm not wrong.

WAI
Oh, yeah. I forgot.

MARCUS
Listen, if you can build wormholes to wherever you want, why build the dish? Why use a starship at all?

WAI

Dunno. I'm just a pilot, remember?

She moves to the door.

MARCUS

Hey.

Wai turns.

MARCUS

I never got to say something.

She waits.

MARCUS

I never got to say sorry for what happened on Ayacucho.

WAI

No problem, we handled it.

MARCUS

No. I mean, I'm sorry if I hurt you.

WAI

Marcus, I'm over it. I have been for a long time.

MARCUS

Just wanted to make sure that you're--that we're good.

WAI

Sure.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Everyone watches Karl's screen, on which is a computer-generated display of the beginning of the wormhole tunnel.

KARL

Prelim scans from the outside suggested it was a straight tunnel. Then, I sent the relay through. Watch this--

His fingers flash over the keyboard. The virtual camera moves inside the wormhole and the tunnel begins a gradual bend.

KARL

As I started plotting points in the tunnel plane, I saw this pattern.

KATHERINE

It's bending.

KARL

And the curvature is constant, which eventually gives you...

The bend in the tunnel completes itself back at the wormhole opening.

KARL

Bam! A loop.

He faces the rest of the crew.

KARL

Does that blow your mind, or what?

ROMAN

Bloody hell. So, they're idiots.

KARL

Uh, idiots don't go around building wormholes.

MARCUS

If they built it for their home world, why a loop?

VICTORIA

The wormhole's path could reflect the curvature of the universe.

KARL

Exactly. Get a long enough tunnel, and you'll end up right back where you started.

ROMAN

Where do you two get this stuff?

KARL / VICTORIA

Particle physics.

KATHERINE

So, their home world could be at the end of a very long tunnel. Maybe even another galaxy.

KARL
Yeah, could be.

ROMAN
So, how long would it take them to
pass through this very long tunnel?
In case they wanted to come back?

KARL
Instantaneous.

ROMAN
Brilliant.

Marcus shakes his head.

KATHERINE
What doesn't add up, Marcus? They
got stranded, so they built a
tunnel home. Case closed.

MARCUS
I don't think so, Kat.

KATHERINE
What else do you need?

MARCUS
Time, tools and personnel. All of
which we don't have.

KATHERINE
God, you're stubborn.

ROMAN
Buggers are probably waiting inside
with ray guns and ass probes.

KATHERINE
Roman, would you shut up for five
minutes?

MARCUS
Hey!

Everyone turns to the Captain.

MARCUS
As it stands, we are way out of our
league, so here's what we do. The
instant Schutz is done, we're
jumping the hell out of here and
coming back with a full science
team.

KARL

What? But I was making progress--

MARCUS

Let it go, Karl. This is priority one.

Marcus turns to Victoria, Antonio and Jorge.

MARCUS

We need to shut down those satellites. If the Confederation intercepts the software, it traces right back to us.

ANTONIO

Captain, wait. We must--

MARCUS

Just make it happen. Karl, work on that cybermouse and see if you can get it to interface with the Lady Mac. So far, it's our best shot to show the banks what we've got.

KARL

The Lady Mac isn't exactly inundated with research equipment.

ROMAN

Sorry, mate. Thought I just heard the Captain give you a direct order.

KARL

I'll get on it.

MARCUS

Roman, Wai and I will continue cataloguing in case there are any more surprises.

ROMAN

Brilliant. You again.

Wai rolls her eyes as Marcus clicks the comm-link.

MARCUS

Schutz--

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY

Schutz guides a fine laser over a steel rod.

MARCUS (V.O.)
What's your ETA?

SCHUTZ
Hard to say. A few hours.

MARCUS (V.O.)
You and Katherine keep at it.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

MARCUS
We've got no time before the
Confederation stumbles onto this,
so we have to play fast. No more
pioneering, we delegate and watch
the money roll in.
(to Antonio and Jorge)
Any objections?

Antonio looks from Jorge to Marcus.

ANTONIO
No, Captain.

MARCUS
Good. Schutz, we're waiting on you.

INT. LADY MACBETH - JORGE'S QUARTERS

As Jorge pulls a pack from his gear, Antonio storms into the room.

ANTONIO
What are we going to tell the
Council?

Jorge empties the pack.

ANTONIO
Jorge! We are about to leave here
with nothing and you just stood
there and let him--

JORGE
Control yourself. We don't have
much time.

He turns his monstrous frame toward Antonio.

JORGE
Give it to me.

ANTONIO
What are you going to do?

JORGE
You know exactly what.

ANTONIO
You've gone insane--

JORGE
Now, Antonio.

Antonio pulls a keycard from his pocket and hands it to him.

JORGE
We're going over.

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY

Schutz enters with the twisted strut and pulls down a collapsible table from the wall. After securing the strut to the table, he heads to the equipment room.

INT. LADY MACBETH - EQUIPMENT ROOM

Schutz opens his locker. As he pulls out several tools, he notices the red locker in the back. A green light is illuminated above the handle.

Schutz moves to the locker and opens it. The inside is filled with empty racks.

SCHUTZ
What the hell?

As he touches his earpiece--

A blinding shot splits the air and punches through his back. Atomized beads of blood flood the room and Schutz goes limp.

Jorge holds a smoking carbine by the door. Antonio runs in, followed by Victoria.

ANTONIO
Jorge! What--

Two more shots tear through Schutz' torso, blasting flesh and twisted mechanics into the air.

ANTONIO
You've gone mad!

JORGE

The cosmonik was going to warn
Calvert.

ANTONIO

You fool! He was our only way home.
Who is going to fix the ship now?

JORGE

Any imbecile can fix that strut.

Jorge removes Schutz's earpiece.

JORGE

But we find the weapons first.
Nothing else matters.

He clicks the earpiece and fits it in his ear.

JORGE

Captain, this is Jorge.

MARCUS (V.O.)

Jorge? Where's Schutz?

JORGE

Working on the actuator. He said to
let you know it will be done in two
hours.

MARCUS (V.O.)

Copy. Thanks for the update.

JORGE

Anytime. Oh, and Captain?

MARCUS (V.O.)

What?

JORGE

Victoria was looking for something
to do. Need a hand?

MARCUS (V.O.)

Sure. Tell her to head to the
bottom.

JORGE

Thank you, Captain.

He grabs Schutz--

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY

And hauls the body to the table.

ANTONIO

You have gone too far this time,
Jorge.

Jorge drops Schutz on top of the strut and slams the table into its recess.

ANTONIO

Do you ear me? Someone will find
him. And then what?

JORGE

As long as Victoria is with
Calvert, we can take as long as we
want. Isn't that right, my dear?

VICTORIA

The Captain won't be a problem.

JORGE

Good. And Antonio--

His eyes level on him.

JORGE

Question me again, and I'll rip
your throat out.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Karl leans back, mindlessly entering data on an empty schematic of a cybermouse on his screen. The metal heart of the cybermouse sits next to his workstation.

Katherine types a command on her console and a scan of the Lady Mac appears on her screen, its hull outlined in green.

KATHERINE

It ain't pretty, but we might make
it home after all.

Karl sniffs.

KATHERINE

What's your problem?

KARL

The wormhole. We should at least find out what it does before we kiss it goodbye.

KATHERINE

Karl, we'll be back.

KARL

Yeah, well not soon enough. When the Confederation finds this--poof. Gone.

KATHERINE

Really. After thirteen thousand years, they're gonna find it now?

KARL

I bet they already know. Hello? Sanctioned space? Happens to have a wormhole in it? Hmmm...

She stands, shaking her head.

KATHERINE

Do me a favor. Run a check on those jump systems, I'm gonna grab a sandwich.

KARL

You realize they're building a black market superhighway--

KATHERINE

God, Karl.

She leaves.

Karl spins to the nav-display. An icon flashes in the corner: Signal Active. Query Loading.

KARL

What?

He clicks his earpiece.

KARL

Hey, Katherine--

KATHERINE (V.O.)

What, Karl?

KARL

Were you uploading a jump course?

KATHERINE (V.O.)
 No, Karl. The nav is shut down,
 remember?

His fingers attack the keys. An icon flashes over the screen:
 Deposit Found.

KARL
 Yeah. That's what I thought.

KATHERINE (V.O.)
 Why? What is it?

Karl stares at the screen.

KARL
 Nothing. Nevermind.

He snorts at a log-in prompt.

KARL
 I got your log-in right here.

Karl hacks away at the keyboard.

INT. SHIPWRECK - NARROW CORRIDOR

Marcus emerges from a stairwell and a score of cybermice move
 to greet him. He clicks on his earpiece.

MARCUS
 How's it goin', Roman?

ROMAN (V.O.)
 Aside from Wai's knack for terrible
 conversation, not bad.

WAI (V.O.)
 You're such a pig.

ROMAN (V.O.)
 Ow, no hitting--

Marcus smiles.

MARCUS
 Hey, you two can kill each other
 after we're done.

He opens a door halfway down. Inside is a large, empty room.

VICTORIA
 Find anything?

Marcus whips around as Victoria approaches him.

MARCUS
Victoria. Scared me.

VICTORIA
Sorry.

She joins him at the doorway.

VICTORIA
Empty.

MARCUS
They all are. At least the ones
I've seen.

He glances down the hall, lined with a dozen more doors.

MARCUS
Guess I'm looking for another
miracle.

VICTORIA
Then we might as well check the
rest.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Karl finishes a fury of keystrokes while a blistering stream of data pours over a display of the asteroid field.

Upon closer inspection, his eyes widen.

KARL
Oh, shit.

INT. LADY MACBETH - MESS HALL

Karl bursts in, chest heaving.

KARL
Who's here? Who's here right now?

KATHERINE
I'm not sure. Why?

KARL
Shit.

KATHERINE
What is it?

KARL

Victoria's array. It found a deposit.

KATHERINE

But it was supposed to be--

KARL

I know, but it wasn't. They went through a lot of trouble so we wouldn't find it. I mean, it was embedded in our nav systems with some dead-end, double encryption shit that would blow your mind--

KATHERINE

Karl, what did you find?

KARL

You're not gonna believe this.

INT. SHIPWRECK - NARROW CORRIDOR

Marcus opens another empty room, when--

KATHERINE (V.O.)

Captain, are you alone?

He checks down the hall as Victoria enters a room.

MARCUS

Yeah, go ahead.

KATHERINE (V.O.)

You need to get back.

MARCUS

We're almost done. Can it wait?

KATHERINE (V.O.)

Now. And make sure Victoria doesn't come with you.

MARCUS

What are you talking about?

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Katherine and Karl sit in front of the nav-display.

KARL
Captain, we found what Antonio's
been looking for.

On the screen is a flashing asteroid. Below reads, "Uranium-235."

KARL
They're here for uranium.

MARCUS (V.O.)
What?

KATHERINE
Uranium-235. They're terrorists,
Marcus. And we're helping them
build a bomb.

MARCUS (V.O.)
Are you certain?

KATHERINE
Very. Karl hacked in and found a
list of directives from the Sonoran
Crusade council. They've been
looking for it the whole time.

INT. SHIPWRECK - NARROW CORRIDOR

Marcus heads to the stairwell.

MARCUS
Dammit. Where are the others?

KATHERINE (V.O.)
Roman and Wai are on their way.
Looks like Jorge and Antonio are on
the wreck--

KARL (V.O.)
And Captain, we can't find Schutz
anywhere.

MARCUS
Don't worry about Schutz, he can
handle himself. Now, you two get to
the cargo bay and make sure these
assholes don't get on board.

KARL (V.O.)
Yes, sir.

MARCUS
Now go. I'll be back in thirty.

VICTORIA
Marcus.

He spins to find Victoria in the hall, holding a gun on him.

MARCUS
Victoria, what the hell?

JORGE (V.O.)
There's no hurry, Calvert. We'll
take it from here.

VICTORIA
I'm sorry.

INT. SHIPWRECK - HALLWAY

Carbine in hand, Jorge pounds down the hallway with Antonio
in tow.

JORGE
You need to update your encryption
codes, Captain. They're at least
three years out of date.

INT. SHIPWRECK - NARROW CORRIDOR

Marcus stares at Victoria.

MARCUS
Kat, talk to me.

KATHERINE (V.O.)
We're almost there.

He eyes Victoria's gun.

MARCUS
Nice guns, Jorge. What'd you do?
Bust my entire locker in?

JORGE (V.O.)
Actually, your keycard worked just
fine.

MARCUS
How the hell did you get my
keycard?

JORGE (V.O.)
Very long showers, Captain.

MARCUS
Oh, shit. Kat--

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY

Katherine and Karl move to the bay doors as Wai and Roman enter.

MARCUS (V.O.)
Don't let Wai on board!

KATHERINE
What?

Wai pulls a gun on the others.

ROMAN
Wai! What the bloody hell are you doing?

WAI
Lockers. Now, move it.

KATHERINE
Marcus, Wai has a gun.

INT. SHIPWRECK - NARROW CORRIDOR

MARCUS
Son of a bitch. Schutz! Where are you, dammit?

JORGE (V.O.)
I'm afraid your cosmonik won't be joining us for the ride home.

MARCUS
You bastard, you were going to kill us all along, weren't you?

JORGE (V.O.)
Relax, Calvert. We're very much in control.

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY

Wai watches as Katherine, Roman and Karl turn to face her from inside the equipment room.

KATHERINE
Wai, don't do this.

WAI
I'm sorry.

She closes the door.

ROMAN
Wai!

Ka-chunk.

INT. SHIPWRECK - HALLWAY

Jorge and Antonio reach a stairwell.

JORGE
Meet me on the ship. As soon as I
have Calvert, we're getting that
uranium and leaving.

ANTONIO
What if the Captain doesn't give
you the command codes?

JORGE
Then he'll watch every one of his
crew die.

INT. SHIPWRECK - NARROW CORRIDOR

Victoria stands by the stairwell,

JORGE (V.O.)
Victoria, restrain Calvert. I'm on
the way down.

Marcus glares at Victoria.

MARCUS
This won't work, Victoria.

VICTORIA
Just do what Jorge says, Marcus.

MARCUS
You think we're just gonng sit back
and watch you build a bomb?

He takes a step forward.

MARCUS

You'll have to kill me before I let
that happen.

Another step.

VICTORIA

Don't. This is hard enough.

MARCUS

I know you don't want to do this.

VICTORIA

Please.

She tightens her grip as he comes within arm's reach.

MARCUS

Just hand me the gun.

The moment his fingers touch the weapon--

VICTORIA

No!

She fires a round past his head, punching a hole in the wall.

Marcus lunges, throwing his weight into her body. She lurches
back, smashing into the stairwell door-frame--

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

And tumbles down the stairs, where she crashes on the ground
with a sickening snap. The gun clatters next to her fractured
legs.

Marcus reaches the stairwell and looks down as several
cybermice envelope the gun.

MARCUS

Dammit.

He climbs down to Victoria, writhing in pain.

VICTORIA

Marcus, Jorge can't find me like
this.

Marcus reaches to her ear.

VICTORIA

I'll help you. Please...

MARCUS
No, you won't.

He removes her earpiece and crushes it with his heel.

MARCUS
Goodbye, Victoria.

He races up the stairs.

VICTORIA
Marcus!

INT. LADY MACBETH - EQUIPMENT ROOM

Roman pounds on the door.

ROMAN
Wai, open the bloody door! You
don't know what you're doing!

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY

Wai stares at the door.

MARCUS (V.O.)
Listen to him, Wai. Antonio's not
you think he is. He's been lying to
you.

She glances to the airlock.

MARCUS (V.O.)
I know you're angry. And it's my
fault. But don't make them pay for
something I did.

She reaches to her ear, silencing the transmission.

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

Marcus scrambles pass another level.

MARCUS
Wai, listen to me.

After no response--

MARCUS
Shit.

INT. SHIPWRECK - NARROW CORRIDOR

Jorge emerges from the opposite end.

JORGE
Victoria. Where are you?

He notices a cluster of cybermice moving over a hole in the wall.

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

Jorge climbs down and kneels next to Victoria, her face drained of life.

JORGE
Where is he?

VICTORIA
Jorge...

He looks to her lower half, where cybermice devour her body.

JORGE
You're delaying the inevitable,
Calvert. Come out so we can talk.

MARCUS (V.O.)
Sorry, Jorge. You're gonna have to
try and catch me.

JORGE
Have it your way.

He rises and internal mechanisms inside his body shift into battle positions, enlarging his massive frame.

VICTORIA
Please, kill me...

JORGE
I would, but they're saving me the
trouble.

INT. LADY MACBETH - EQUIPMENT ROOM

Roman rips off a panel next to the door.

ROMAN
We're countin' on you, genius.

Karl clips his datapad into a tangle of loose wires.

KARL
Give me a five seconds...

He taps his way through pages of code.

KARL
Got it!

Karl enters a fury of keystrokes and--

The panel explodes, plunging the room into darkness.

KARL
Shit!

KATHERINE
What happened?

KARL
She shorted the relay. There's no way out.

KATHERINE
If they make it back before the Captain--

ROMAN
We're dead.

Roman beats the door with his fists.

ROMAN
Wai, I'm gonna bloody kill you if you don't open this door!

Outside, the lock is released. Roman takes a step back.

ROMAN
What the--

KATHERINE
Roman...

The door opens to reveal--

Schutz, holding his bleeding chest.

ROMAN
Schutz!

Behind him, Wai lies in a crumpled heap. Roman assists Schutz to the wall.

KATHERINE
We thought you were dead.

SCHUTZ
So did I.

He smiles.

SCHUTZ
Good thing I'm not human where it counts.

Roman packs a wad of rags onto Schutz' wound.

ROMAN
Schutz, I never thought I could fall in love with a robot-man, but I could kiss you right now.

SCHUTZ
Where's the Captain?

KATHERINE
Still on the wreck.

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

Marcus reaches another landing.

KATHERINE (V.O.)
Marcus, we've restrained Wai.

MARCUS
Katherine! Schutz--

KATHERINE (V.O.)
He's here. He's okay.

MARCUS
Thank God.

KATHERINE (V.O.)
What now?

MARCUS
Retract the airlock. We can't let these bastards back on.

KATHERINE (V.O.)
But how will you get back?

JORGE (V.O.)
Yes, Calvert. Do tell.

MARCUS

Let me worry about that.

KARL (V.O.)

We'll lose the comm-link.

MARCUS

I said do it, Karl.

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

Jorge pounds up the stairs.

JORGE

Antonio, where are you?

INT. SHIPWRECK - HALLWAY

Antonio stumbles out of the stairwell and leans against the wall, gasping for breath.

ANTONIO

Almost there.

JORGE (V.O.)

Hurry! They're pulling away!

Antonio engages his suit and forces himself on.

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

Antonio enters and opens the hatch to find--

The Lady Macbeth a hundred yards from the wreck and receding.

ANTONIO

Shit. It's too late.

He turns to the transmitter as the wire link snaps.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

An icon disappears from Karl's display.

KARL

That's it. The Captain's on his own.

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

Antonio hovers in place and looks to the Lady Macbeth, now two hundred yards away.

ANTONIO

Jorge, maybe I should come find you.

JORGE (V.O.)

Stay where you are. We can't let Calvert off this wreck. His codes are our only way back.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

ROMAN

Now what?

Katherine stares ahead.

ROMAN

Katherine!

KATHERINE

Shut up, Roman! I'm trying to think.

ROMAN

We don't have time for you to think.

KATHERINE

Karl, is there another airlock?

KARL

No. There's only one way out.

ROMAN

That's it, we're goin' over.

Roman heads for the door.

KATHERINE

Roman, stay where you are.

ROMAN

I'll prep the MSV. Who's with me?

KATHERINE

Dammit, Roman--

She punches a command on her console and a heavy lock secures the door.

ROMAN
Katherine, open the door!

KATHERINE
The captain wanted us off the wreck. We stay put.

ROMAN
He needs our help!

KATHERINE
Then help by following orders.

ROMAN
That's bullshit. Open it.

Katherine stands her ground.

ROMAN
You're not giving me much of a choice here, love. Karl--

Karl slowly rises.

ROMAN
Open the damn door.

Karl looks from Roman to Katherine.

ROMAN
Karl!

KARL
Roman, please. Don't make me do this.

ROMAN
Karl, I swear--

Roman takes a step toward him, and Karl shrieks. He jumps to Katherine's console.

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

His face twisted from exertion, Marcus forces himself up the stairs.

JORGE (O.S.)
Calvert!

Marcus looks two flights down to see Jorge rapidly ascending.

Marcus reaches the next landing--

INT. SHIPWRECK - HALLWAY

And sprints down a wide hallway. As he nears a sealed door at the other end, Jorge emerges from the stairwell.

JORGE
Give it up, Calvert! There's
nowhere to run.

Jorge barrels after him.

Marcus pulls out Karl's datapad and presses a command. Ahead, the door flows open.

He comes within arms-reach of the stairwell, when--

Jorge grabs him from behind and throws Marcus into the wall. The datapad clatters on the ground as Jorge's other hand closes around Marcus' throat like a steel vice.

JORGE
It's over. Give me the command
codes.

As color drains from his face, Marcus' hand goes to his belt.

JORGE
Give me the codes, or I'll snap
your neck right now.

MARCUS
You won't--you'll be stuck here.

JORGE
And so will your crew.

He smiles, tightening his grip.

JORGE
Is that something you're ready to
accept?

Marcus' fingers reach the fission blade.

JORGE
Think, Calvert. No one else has to
die.

In a flash, Marcus ignites the blade and jams it into the brute's face.

Jorge howls, momentarily releasing Marcus.

Marcus grabs the datapad and--

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

Dives onto the landing. As Jorge turns to follow, Marcus slams his fist against the touch-plate, sealing the door.

On the datapad, he presses an "off" command.

INT. SHIPWRECK - HALLWAY

Jorge punches the touch-plate, but nothing happens. He hits it again.

JORGE
Calvert! Open the door!

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

Marcus rises to his feet, gasping for air.

INT. SHIPWRECK - HALLWAY

Jorge assails the door with his fists, his muscles swelling to inhuman proportions.

JORGE
Antonio! Calvert's on his way!

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

Antonio twists toward the door, fumbling with his weapon.

ANTONIO
Yes? Well, what do I do?

JORGE (V.O.)
The moment he gets there, shoot the bastard!

INT. SHIPWRECK - STAIRWELL

Jorge's barrage continues and Marcus looks up. Before he takes a step, an idea hits him.

Marcus rushes down the stairs.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Karl pounds Katherine's console with his fingers.

KARL

Damn. My encryption's a bitch to hack through.

KATHERINE

What are you going to do, Roman?

ROMAN

Save the Captain.

KATHERINE

How? They have our guns, remember?

ROMAN

I'll be damned if I sit here and do nothing. He needs us, Kat.

Karl hits a command and the lock over the door releases.

ROMAN

I'll be ready in five, with or without you sorry bastards.

He heads to the door and opens it.

On the other side is Marcus.

ROMAN

Holy shit!

KARL

Captain!

Marcus steps inside the bridge.

MARCUS

Not so easy, is it, Kat?

KATHERINE

Marcus. How did you get on board?

MARCUS

By being right, actually. The wormhole doesn't go back to their home world.

Karl leaps out of his seat.

KARL

You figured out how to use it! You opened the other end on the Lady Mac!

MARCUS

There is no other end.

KARL

Then where does it go?

MARCUS

You were dead on, Karl. It was a circle, only it doesn't go somewhere, it goes somewhen.

INT. SHIPWRECK - CHAMBER

Marcus disables the door to the chamber with his datapad and faces the wormhole.

MARCUS (V.O.)

I was ready for the aliens' home world over Jorge, except that I knew the wormhole didn't go there.

He approaches the device, his face aglow from the shimmering metal.

MARCUS (V.O.)

But I couldn't figure out why they kept it running for thirteen thousand years.

An idea hits him and he stops. He climbs one of the buttresses and steadies himself above the ring.

MARCUS (V.O.)

Unless the aliens needed it functional so they could return home one day.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

The crew fixes their eyes on Marcus.

ROMAN

Hold it right there, mate. Are you telling us the wormhole goes to the future?

MARCUS

Almost. It doesn't go anywhere but back on itself, so the length inside is time, not space.

ROMAN

Mother...

MARCUS

The aliens went in after they sent the distress call and came out when help arrived.

KATHERINE

But how does that help you get here?

MARCUS

Thankfully, you're not restricted which way you travel through it.

INT. SHIPWRECK - CHAMBER

Marcus takes a step forward, maintaining his balance.

MARCUS (V.O.)

I figured the gravity was turned off underneath the ring so they could rise up into it. If going up led to the future--

He jumps and disappears into the ring.

INT. WORMHOLE

Blackness.

Then, five yellow lines materialize around a weightless Marcus. He looks up and sees part of the chamber's ceiling through the ring.

Marcus floats to one of the lines and reaches a curved wall. His hand sticks to the barrier as if it were made of glue.

He climbs the wall and--

INT. SHIPWRECK - CHAMBER

Peeks his head out of the ring. Everything appears the same. He refers to the time on his datapad.

1830 hours.

INT. WORMHOLE

Marcus ducks back inside and glides down the tunnel. A thought hits him and he presses the "on" command on his datapad.

The lines shift sideways and turn blue.

He presses "off" and the lines disappear. Below, the floor of the chamber becomes visible through the wormhole.

INT. SHIPWRECK - CHAMBER

Marcus drops out the bottom side of the ring. After he gains his footing, he scans the room.

The survey equipment is gone.

On his datapad, the time reads 823 hours.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

MARCUS

That was ten hours ago. I walked back to the ship and passed Karl along the way.

KARL

I knew that was weird.

SCHUTZ

A time machine. Unbelievable.

KATHERINE

If you were on this ship the whole time, why didn't you warn us about Jorge?

MARCUS

Scared, I guess. I didn't know enough about paradoxes to chance running into myself.

KATHERINE

God, what would I do with two of you?

SCHUTZ

What now, Captain?

KARL

What now? We call that science team and rake in the cash.

MARCUS

There's not going to be a science team.

KARL

What?

ROMAN

What?

MARCUS

We're not coming back.

KARL

But, Captain! The wormhole--

MARCUS

Is in the middle of sanctioned space by the Confederation Navy. One sensor sweep in the wrong direction, and we'd stick out like a giant sore ass.

KARL

But, we could raise funding for a cloaking system--

MARCUS

No, I will not put you all in danger. Not again.

Marcus takes a breath and looks over his crew.

MARCUS

You know why I failed you as captain so many times? I never knew when to walk away. Now I do.

SCHUTZ

That, Captain, is why I go where you go.

ROMAN

Me too, mate.

KATHERINE

You sure the real Marcus isn't on the wreck?

MARCUS

If he is, good riddance. Where's Wai?

KATHERINE

In stasis.

Marcus nods.

MARCUS

Schutz, can you finish those repairs?

SCHUTZ

Give me an hour.

MARCUS

Good. Everyone else, get ready to leave. Karl--

Karl stares at the floor.

MARCUS

You did good.

He looks up.

MARCUS

If you hadn't discovered the uranium, we wouldn't be walking away with our lives. You saved this crew.

Karl is stunned.

KARL

Thanks, Captain.

ROMAN

Well, don't let it go to your head, boy-o.

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

Jorge enters.

ANTONIO

Jorge!

JORGE
Where's Calvert?

Antonio shakes his head.

Outside, the cables shoot from the Lady Macbeth's hull and float away like broken strands of a spiderweb.

JORGE
Katherine, what do you think you're doing?

MARCUS
She's just following my orders.
That a problem, Jorge?

JORGE
Calvert? How--

MARCUS
Wreck's all yours, you piece of
shit. We're leaving.

Jorge's face twists into a snarl.

ANTONIO
Captain! Come back!

He throws his gun out the hatch.

ANTONIO
We'll do whatever you want!

JORGE
What the hell is wrong with you?

Jorge raises his carbine and fires.

EXT. LADY MACBETH - SPACE

The rounds slam into the fusion drive.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

A schematic of the ship appears on screen. One of the fusion tubes flashes red.

KATHERINE
He's firing at us!

ROMAN
Dammit, we've lost a thruster.

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

Antonio grabs Jorge's weapon.

ANTONIO
What are you doing!

Jorge wraps his hand around Antonio's throat.

ANTONIO
Jorge--

Jorge snaps Antonio's suit collar. As his suit loses shape--
Jorge hurls Antonio out of the airlock.

EXT. SHIPWRECK - SPACE

Antonio spins away. His faceplate becomes opaque, then disintegrates to nothing.

Convulsing, Antonio silently screams as water vapor boils from his mouth. His swollen skin turns deep blue as he floats away into the vacuum of space.

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

Jorge fires again.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

Another warning flashes on the schematic.

KATHERINE
He's aiming for the jump nodes.

ROMAN
Pull the maser cannons online!
Blast the son of bitch to pieces!

MARCUS
There's not enough time.

He wraps his hand around the flight stick.

MARCUS
Everyone hang on!

Marcus jams the throttle--

INT. SHIPWRECK - AIRLOCK

And the Lady Macbeth's thrusters glow white-hot.

JORGE

No.

The fusion drives ignite, punching two spears of burning plasma into the wreck, incinerating Jorge.

The explosion rips into--

INT. SHIPWRECK

The hallway, tearing through the floors and walls as if they were paper.

INT. SHIPWRECK - CHAMBER

The wall shudders, then splits open.

Streams of white-hot energy cut through the room, wrapping around the invisible gravity field surrounding the ring.

The buttresses break from the floor as electricity arcs away from the ring's center.

Sections of the wall fall away and rush into the ring, vanishing in bursts of light.

EXT. SPACE - ASTEROID FIELD

The Lady Macbeth gains distance from the asteroid as--

Fissures appear over the wreck's hull. Soon, the shell buckles and chunks of the wreck fold in on itself.

The Lady Macbeth slows.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

All eyes are on the monitors.

KATHERINE

The wormhole's collapsing!

ROMAN

We're caught in the pull!

EXT. LADY MACBETH - SPACE

The ship slows to a crawl, its thrusters vomiting pillars of blinding fire into the black void.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

ROMAN

The drives can't take much more of this!

MARCUS

We need to jump--

KATHERINE

We don't have symmetry. We can't.

SCHUTZ

I can retract the sensors manually. Just give me a couple of minutes.

MARCUS

No chance.

SCHUTZ

I can do it, Captain.

MARCUS

You won't make it back in time--

Schutz unbuckles his harness and stands.

MARCUS

Schutz, sit down. We're going home. All of us.

ROMAN

Here we go...

KATHERINE

Dammit, Marcus--

Schutz sits. Katherine's fingers fly over her console.

KATHERINE

Charging nodes.

Alarm klaxons flood the bridge.

ROMAN

Shit! Drive failure in thirty seconds!

KATHERINE
20 per cent.

MARCUS
Come on...

EXT. LADY MACBETH - SPACE

The ship starts to drift backward.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

The cabin begins to quake.

ROMAN
Fifteen seconds!

Katherine holds her gaze on her display.

KATHERINE
70 per cent.

KARL
It's pulling us apart--

EXT. LADY MACBETH - SPACE

In a burst of sparks, the fusion drive's housing splinters into space.

INT. LADY MACBETH - BRIDGE

An alert sounds from Katherine's station as the quaking grows more violent.

ROMAN
Drives are gonna go any second!

KATHERINE
Nodes charged--

Katherine looks to Marcus, terror in her eyes.

KATHERINE
Marcus...

MARCUS
C'mon, Kat. Have some faith in the ol' girl.

He punches the jump trigger and--

EXT. SPACE - ASTEROID FIELD

The Lady Macbeth tears into a flash of light as the entire asteroid swallows itself.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

A soft blue nebula yawns over the starry sky. Suddenly--

An event horizon splits the darkness and a seething fireball of plasma and superheated metal splay through the void.

The shredded carcass of the Lady Macbeth tumbles from the churning fireball, trails of plasma and gas streaming from her open belly.

INT. LADY MACBETH

The ship is deathly silent. Outside, a bright star passes by the window.

Marcus opens his eyes as the sun's light pulses through the cabin like a gentle strobe.

He turns to Katherine and lays a hand on her arm.

She stirs.

Opening her eyes, she smiles at Marcus. He turns to the rest of the crew. Groggy, they awake and strip their harnesses.

Marcus' eyes drift back outside.

KATHERINE

You okay?

MARCUS

Get me a damage assessment.

Marcus unstraps and limps off the bridge.

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY - BRIG

Marcus stares at a large, standing tube. Through the glass, Wai floats inside, immersed in stasis fluid.

The steady pulse of her heart rate fills the small room as Katherine appears in the doorway.

KATHERINE

We've got enough juice to keep auxiliary life support systems online, but that's about it. Hull integrity is dangerous, but holding.

Marcus stares at the stasis tube.

MARCUS

There was another me that died on that wreck.

He shakes his head.

MARCUS

A lot to take in.

KATHERINE

I know.

Marcus meets her eyes.

KATHERINE

You're a hell of a captain, Marcus. When it mattered, you put us first, even though it meant you'd lose everything.

Marcus gives a faint smile.

KATHERINE

Not many men would do what you did.

MARCUS

Not many men get a second life to live.

He winks and pushes past Katherine in the door.

MARCUS

C'mon. I'm gonna do this one right.

INT. LADY MACBETH - CARGO BAY

Schutz sits on a table, holding a pack of rags against his wounds while referring to his datapad. Roman and Karl finish welding a patch over a broken valve.

SCHUTZ

Good. That should stop the coolant leak.

They turn as Marcus and Katherine appear at the entrance.

MARCUS

Karl, if you had unlimited resources, could you get this working?

Marcus holds up the dormant cybermouse's metal sphere.

KARL

The cybermouse? Easy.

MARCUS

Can't believe I'm saying this, but explain how.

ROMAN

Oh, God no.

Karl glances around, then shrugs.

KARL

Well, once I tap the databus traffic and translate the management routines, it would just be a question of accessing the next level of the program architecture. It's all standardized conversions, so basically, I'd be able to duplicate their entire internal system.

MARCUS

And all that means...

KARL

We'd have ourselves a fully functional molecular synthesizer.

Marcus turns to his datapad.

MARCUS

You hear that, Rolo?

ROLO (V.O.)

I sure as hell did.

The datapad displays Rolo sitting with a science team.

MARCUS

Think you could give us a week to solve humankind's economic problems?

ROLO (V.O.)

Calvert, if this thing actually works, I will personally see to it that your check has so many zeroes on the end of it, you'll have to hire a team to count them all.

MARCUS

Good. Cuz I been thinking about settling down, buying a farm. An old friend said they can make you honest.

Rolo smiles.

ROLO (V.O.)

I'll have a crew pick you up in 5 hours.

MARCUS

Thanks, Rolo.

ROLO (V.O.)

Just like old times. See you in Tranquility.

Marcus clicks off the datapad and looks to his stunned crew.

Suddenly, Karl and Roman scream. Katherine hugs Marcus.

KARL

It's a miracle. We're rich!

ROMAN

Bloody right, we're rich!

MARCUS

No, it's a start. And if you screw this up, Karl, I'll kill you.

KARL

Don't worry. I'll make you proud.

SCHUTZ

We'll need to stabilize the Lady Mac for the rescue crews.

ROMAN

Schutz is right. We're in a dead spin. Anything gets near us, and we'd chop through them like a blade.

SCHUTZ

Captain, I'll need your permission to repair the aft control thruster.

MARCUS

Well, I could give you permission, but I'm retired.

ROMAN

Sorry?

KARL

What? Then who--

They follow Marcus' eyes to Katherine. Her jaw drops.

MARCUS

Congratulations, Captain. The Lady Mac is yours.

KATHERINE

Marcus...?!

MARCUS

I know she's in bad shape now, but we won't rest till she's good as new.

KATHERINE

Marcus. I can't--

MARCUS

You can. And that's an order.

Katherine fights back her tears and hugs Marcus.

MARCUS

I've put my entire life into this ol' girl, and I can't think of anyone better for her future.

KATHERINE

Thank you.

ROMAN

Look at you, love. You've moved up in the world!

KARL

Can you do that? Just give someone
a spaceship?

MARCUS

So, Captain. Schutz has requested
permission repair the control
thruster.

Katherine smiles and turns to Schutz.

KATHERINE

Permission denied. You, my dear,
are in no condition. Roman? Think
you and Karl can get us stabilized?

ROMAN

We're on it.

KATHERINE

Gentlemen, we have five hours. I
want us ready to walk out of here
when that rescue ship arrives.

She goes to Schutz.

KATHERINE

Marcus, we need to dress these
wounds.

MARCUS

Yes ma'am. Schutz, you heard the
order. On the table.

SCHUTZ

(to Katherine)

Thank you, Captain.

Katherine opens a tool drawer next to the table and grabs a
pair of forceps and a knife. Marcus picks up a drill.

MARCUS

Now don't worry. This won't hurt a
bit.

EXT. SPACE

The Lady Macbeth drifts into the infinite expanse of stars.

FADE OUT.