

MARSFALL

SEASON ONE

Prelude

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ACT ONE, SCENE 1 (1.1): INT. SEQUOIA SEVEN COMMAND TOWER - SPACE

Inside the spaceship, a few monitors softly BEEP. There is a feeling of claustrophobia to the soundscape. A low tone swells as "Jacki's Theme" begins.

ANDI: (Dynamics) Jacki O'Rania, Command Log. October first, Twenty forty-seven. 4th entry. (beat) Communication blackout is still in effect for six minutes, twenty-one seconds.

JACKI: Interplanetary vessel Sequoia Seven approaching refueling station Zero-Four-One. After refueling, we will begin a controlled burn for reversal and deceleration. Starting orbital synchronization. Command out.

ANDI: End Command Log.

JACKI: Can I get a status check on Habitation?

ANDI: Yes, Commander. Stasis chambers confirm everyone is resting peacefully. Deck pods are prepped. Auto-procedures ready for two-month hibernation.

JACKI: Excellent. Uh, run a final diagnostics on our nano-management system, /I want to make sure that-

An alarm emits rapid, high-pitched BEEPS. The music stops.

ANDI: /Just a moment, Commander. (beat) Incoming signal from R-S-Zero-Four-One warns of approaching solar flare. Contact in four minutes, thirty-two seconds.

JACKI: Boost the magnetic shield.

ANDI: Shield offline.

JACKI: Dammit! Can you regroup the nano-management system?

ANDI: It's also unresponsive.

JACKI: How? The pulse hasn't even hit us yet!

ANDI: I know, but it already hit Earth. Our digital comm lines are offline without an anchor.

JACKI: How strong is the flare?

ANDI: Class X. Magnitude registering over thirty.

JACKI: (whispered/aside) Shiiiiit...

ANDI: (cont'd) If we can't get the nanobots to boost our synthetic ionosphere, the radiation from the flare will strip us all down to the atom, literally. We need a stronger shield.

JACKI: (to herself) Shield...shield...shield...shield..

Jacki has an idea. Cue "Z Theme."

ANDI: Commander? We need to do something.

JACKI: Hydrogen! It's a long shot, but creating a water shield could block the high energy blast.

ANDI: I could pump water through the insulation system, but there won't be enough to protect the entire ship.

JACKI: (with urgency) Do it anyway, but prioritize Habitation. Can we synthesize any more water?

ANDI: I can, but not much.

JACKI: Start the synth and fill up the reserve tanks with as much water as you can. And cut the engines.

ANDI: Should I pull it even?

JACKI: No, cut it completely. Dead stop.

ANDI: On it.

The gravity alarm blasts three deep BWOOPS as the ship prepares to stop. A mid-pitched DING and the CLANG of a metal lever signal the start of the water synthesizer. The faint sounds of RUNNING WATER move through the insulation pipes of the ship.

ANDI: We're slowing down. Dead stop in forty-three seconds.

JACKI: Good. Ping Walker and Juarez tell them to move to Habitation, immediately.

ANDI: I can't, Commander, remember? The comms are still down.

JACKI: Right, right...

Jacki thinks it over.

JACKI: (cont'd) ...What about the neural lace? Can you relay my message directly through their suits?

ANDI: Yes, the neural lace is still functional.

JACKI: Send the message. Tell Juarez to authorize my access to the engine, I'm heading there now.

ANDI: You got it.

A soft chime DINGS as ANDI sends the message. Jacki runs down a hallway, her feet CLOMPING on the metal ground. She rounds a corner and the rapid BEEPS of the opening alarm fade into the background, as a more robotic version of ANDI's voice speaks over the ship's loudspeakers.

ANDI: (Basics: announcement) Finalizing emergency stop. Transition to zero G in ten /seconds. All personnel lock in, immediately. Repeat: all personnel lock in.

Jacki stops running.

JACKI: /I thought comms were down?

ANDI: /(Dynamics) It's an automated announcement. I have no control over it. (beat) I suggest you grab onto something.

Jacki sighs heavily. She knows what is about to happen. An organ swell starts the music of "Zero G Waltz."

JACKI: Yeah, I've got a grip.

The water stops flowing and a few seconds of silence pass. A descending, DEEP TONE signals the shutdown of the engines. As the engines power down, the music swells up, culminating with a loud metallic CLANK. The waltz continues on.

JACKI: Swimming for the door, now.

1.2: INT. ENGINE ROOM - SPACE

Jacki turns a large wheel, and gears CREAK as a heavy door opens. She removes a metal panel, letting it soar across the room until it hits the wall with a loud CLANG! Wires begin to SPARK as Jacki disconnects the fuel cell.

ANDI: You're ripping apart the fuel cell?

JACKI: Yes.

ANDI: Rerouting all of the water from the engine will leave you exposed. The danger from the radiation levels-

JACKI: (curt) Is acceptable. For me.

Jacki CLICKS a few switches. The metal CLANK of the water pump resumes the sounds of RUNNING WATER throughout the ship. An alarm BEEPS steadily.

ANDI: I'm pumping the water through insulation. It'll take about two minutes in zero G.

JACKI: How much more time do I have?

ANDI: Two minutes and twelve seconds.

JACKI: Wow, a whole twelve extra seconds? /And don't say "in space every second counts!"

ANDI: /In space, every second- (beat) Oh, sorry.

Jacki exhales sharply.

JACKI: Display timer.

A light BEEP signals the activation of the timer.

ANDI: Timer on.

Jacki uses her tools to prime the water pumps for several seconds. A machine starts WHIRRING, and rushing water POURS faster throughout the insulation system.

ANDI: You need to get to Habitation, Jacki.

JACKI: I'm not done here. Besides, I wouldn't make it in time.

ANDI: At least take a CME injection. It will prevent instant death.

JACKI: So I can then slowly die from radiation poisoning?

ANDI: (beat) Commander, you have to.

JACKI: (grudgingly) Fine.

A canister POPS open and the cap CLANKS into the wall. Jacki pricks herself with the needle.

JACKI: (gritted teeth) Ah!

ANDI: (Basics: announcement) Eighty seconds until flare impact.

The main alarm adds another BEEP, now sounding like a heartbeat.

ANDI: (Dynamics) Habitation is insulated at one hundred percent. Med Bay at ninety-six percent.

A low drum joins the alarm beats as "Solar Flare" begins to play.

JACKI: Take the rest of the water from the engines.

ANDI: That will leave the engine, and you, completely vulnerable. Even with the injection you could still die.

JACKI: I already told you, the risk is acceptable for me. ANDI, I am ordering you to insulate Med Bay to one hundred percent. Do it.

ANDI: Yes, Commander. (beat) Pumping the remaining water around Med Bay.

Water finishes rushing through the ship's insulation system. The alarms continue as the music intensifies.

ANDI: The water has reached safe distribution levels. Both Habitation and Med Bay are one hundred percent insulated.

JACKI: Good. You better shut down, too. I don't think going into Basics is enough to guarantee your protection.

ANDI: Commander, I just want to say it has been an honor-

JACKI: No time for speeches, ANDI!

ANDI: (hurt) Okay.

The HUM of the approaching solar flare increases.

ANDI: (cont'd) Well, I'll...I will miss you. Goodbye, Jacki.

JACKI: I'll miss you, too. Thank you for everything, ANDI.

After the timer BEEPS down the final seconds, there is a huge SURGE of electricity. The HUM quickly grows deafening and several pieces of equipment SPARK as electricity CRACKLES through the ship.

END ACT

ACT TWO, SCENE 1 (2.1): INT. SEQUOIA SEVEN ENGINE ROOM

The music swells to a sudden stop. The flare is over as quick as it happened. All electrical sounds cease for a few moments. Gravity returns and Jacki's feet SLAM on the ground.

JACKI: (casually) So are we done? I know I'm dead, but it's over right?

2.2 INT. SEQUOIA INDUSTRIES ENGINEERING LAB - DAY

Air HISSES and a metal door swings open on SQUEAKING hinges. Inside the Engineering Lab, several people are building colony

equipment. A drill WHIRRS now and then, a printer DRONES on for a minute, someone BANGS a hammer for a few seconds.

ANDI triggers several alarms, reminiscent of an old game show. Jacki steps out of the simulator and into the Engineering Lab.

ANDI: (silly/game show host voice) Congratulations, Jacki! Everyone survived, including yourself! Now, for the final round, will you choose the prize behind door number one, /door number two, or door number...

JACKI: /Alright, alright, very funny.

The alarms power down.

ANDI: (normal voice) Sorry, I couldn't resist. I'm excited we're so close to the actual launch!

JACKI: Me too!

ANDI: So how did you think of the hydrogen shield?

JACKI: Zelda.

ANDI: Who?

JACKI: Zelda, the video game. I was thinking of the shield, and then of the land of Hyrule, and finally Hydrogen.

ANDI: I'm glad you were such a geek in high school.

JACKI: Heh. Tell that to my parents. They always thought I was an idiot for frying my brain, playing that game. (scoffs)

ANDI: And now the game saved your brain from getting fried.

JACKI: (snickers) Yeah, I guess so!

ANDI: I have no doubt your parents are very happy for you.

JACKI: (a little bitter) Now that I'm off the couch and out of the house, they're absolutely thrilled.

An awkward silence fills the air for a moment.

JACKI: (cont'd) Can you ping me my med report?

ANDI: Sure.

Jacki studies the med report.

JACKI: (murmuring)...radiation levels critical...skin grafting...internal bleeding..

She looks up from the report.

JACKI: (cont'd. normal voice) I told you I didn't want to take that stupid CME injection!

ANDI: It kept you alive.

JACKI: Yeah, but I'm a vegetable! And why did the simulated injection actually prick me?!

ANDI: You know the company prides itself on having the most realistic sims. Besides, this is only the third time you've died, or been poisoned, or horrifically maimed.

JACKI: (proudly) One of each, thank you.

ANDI: But only ONE of those times did you kill everyone else!

JACKI: You just love to bring up that one time. It was my first sim!

ANDI: No one does well on their first sim. But at least you're faring better than the trainees over at Red Venture. Did you hear they were hacked?

JACKI: No, I hadn't.

ANDI: The leaked files show they barely have a functioning transport. There's no way they'll launch this week.

JACKI: Good. I want the Xanthe Terra region all to ourselves.

ANDI: There are still four other companies set to go there.

JACKI: Yeah, but not before us. Besides, we've already sent the setup crew.

ANDI: Those brave souls.

JACKI: I don't think robots have souls.

ANDI: It's just an expression. (beat) Do I have a soul?

JACKI: (uncomfortable) Wow, we are not getting into that now. Save that question for another time.

ANDI: Will do.

JACKI: Cue up the sim.

ANDI: The same one?

JACKI: Yeah. It might be a rare scenario, but I want to try something different.

ANDI: (serious)What, moving faster?

JACKI: (annoyed) Very funny. I think we can all agree that responding to a disaster would be a hell of a lot easier not swimming in zero G.

ANDI: Not for me. I don't have a body.

JACKI: Just cue up the sim.

ANDI: It will take about ten minutes to load.

JACKI: This time, I want to make sure I reach Mars with all of my senses intact.

ANDI: You will. We all will, I know it.

JACKI: Pretty optimistic for a computer.

ANDI: I trust you. You'll take care of us.

JACKI: Thanks, ANDI. Just be sure to take care of me. (beat) Can you ping R & D? Tell them it's about the synthesizer.

ANDI: I think they're on break.

JACKI: Tough shit, Juarez knows how tight our schedule is. Patch him in.

ANDI: Okay, give me a second.

ANDI bridges the comms between R & D and Jacki. A variation on "Chip's Theme" begins to play.

ANDI: (cont'd) Juarez isn't in, but you're on with one of the mechanics in their department.

JACKI: Who do I have here?

CHIP: (short wave comm) Chip Heddleston. (sigh) What's up, Commander?

JACKI: Where is Doctor Juarez?

CHIP: He's taking a sh-(clear throat) he's in a meeting.

JACKI: Listen, when he's done with his "meeting," tell him I need a status update on the synthesizer, specifically the water creation system. It fails to generate the maximum levels *eight*

percent of the time. I need it working at maximum capacity *one hundred percent* of the time.

CHIP: One hundred percent!? That's impossible! We're a week out from launch and we haven't even finished integrating the neural lace into everyone's suits. On top of everything else going on over here, there's no time to backtrack and improve a functioning piece of equipment.

JACKI: Fixing this issue is critical, Chip. I know we're up against a deadline, but that's not my problem. What is my problem, is having a synth fail to generate enough water to save all of our asses from being cooked by the sun! So get the capacity increased, or we're dead on arrival.

CHIP: Alright, I'll relay the message. It's not like I have anything better to do this week. R & D out. (to someone else in Engineering) Why does Engineering keep getting fuc-!?

The message abruptly cuts out.

JACKI: Charming fellow.

ANDI: Trust me, Chip is a great guy. You should get to know him.

JACKI: I'm sure I'll have plenty of time for that.

Jacki checks her newsfeed.

JACKI: Did you see the leaked schematics for the new A.I. program from Crescent?

ANDI: How could another leak happen in less than a month?

JACKI: Spies. But no one knows which country carried out the attack, yet.

ANDI: Everyone seems to hate everyone else...

JACKI: I don't think machines were designed to analyze human politics...

ANDI: I don't think humans were designed to practice human politics.

JACKI: Another reason I'm glad we're leaving Earth for a while.

ANDI: One of many reasons. Still, it's really quite fascinating to me how humans use so many layers of deception to keep secrets from one another.

JACKI: Don't you keep things to yourself?

ANDI: No. Not really. Not by choice, anyway.

JACKI: Basic Need again, huh?

ANDI: Yeah, it's all determined by my programming. Restricted access files are essentially my "secrets."

JACKI: Sometimes I wish I could rely on programming to know when to lie...

ANDI: Choosing truth or lies is a delicate balance your species has maintained for hundreds of millennia. After perusing so much of your history, I'm impressed you've all survived this long.

JACKI: (scoffs) Well, thanks.

ANDI: You're most welcome. I also noticed there haven't been any artists tasked with commanding a spaceship. You may be the first one.

JACKI: You have a very curious mind, don't you?

ANDI: Toddlers are pretty curious, right? I'm only two years old.

JACKI: (chuckles): I mean, I-I hardly think of you as a toddler, but I guess you're right.

ANDI: Mhmm. Still, based on the colony objectives, I'm curious as to why an artist is leading our expedition.

JACKI: I'm sorry, but the answer to *that* question lies deep within my restricted access files. You'll find out when we get there.

ANDI: Fair enough.

JACKI: Cue up a personal log for me, I want to send a message to my mom and dad. And can you play Bach's Sixth Suite?

ANDI: Prelude?

JACKI: Sure, let's start at the beginning.

ANDI: You got it.

CUE MUSIC: The "Prelude" to Johann Sebastian Bach's *Cello Suite no. 6* filters through Jacki's speakers.

ANDI: Jacki O'Rania, Personal Log. October first, Twenty forty-seven.

JACKI: There's only one more week before we launch. Once we get Habitation running I'm hopping out on that rover, and sending you a bazillion pictures! We got images from our site today, and it looks like there will be an amazing view from the top of the Observatory. Oh! And you'll never guess what happened in the sim today. Remember that video game I used to play every weekend? Okay, every day. Anyway, um, I-I know you wanted me to practice my trombone instead, but all that time playing Zelda really saved my ass! We have this complicated sim that blasts the ship with tons of radiation, and I needed to think of a way to protect us, so I thought of Hyrule and then hydrogen...

The sounds of the Bach and ambiance of the Engineering Lab fade away with Jacki's voice.

END EPISODE