

THE END

by

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FADE IN:

INT. SPACESHIP

The floor curves upwards in a complete circle; the craft's spin is used for artificial gravity. The ship is a patchwork. Panels are out of place, wires and tubes and racks of parts and half-finished projects seem to be everywhere. The front wall slopes out in a cone shape, and the back wall is flat. The ship measures roughly 15' front to back, and 20' across.

Like much of the interior, the back wall is covered by various panels and wiring. It also has a large door and a stasis pod. The back wall's stripped layout is more similar to a floor than a side wall.

Lights flicker, and a monitor can be seen displaying an error message:

DOC
(on-screen)
WARNING: Electrical failure!
Panel 0: 0.0 Volts

The stasis pod's magnetic lock disengages. Its door swings open slowly and heavily. MAN, unconscious, falls out onto the floor, along with several gallons of fluid and some medical apparatus.

MAN
(groaning)
Whe...?

MAN makes a weak attempt to lift his head from the floor. MAN throws up violently and passes out, landing in the mess of crushed medical gear, stasis fluid, and vomit.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

An unknown amount of time has passed and MAN is again trying to get up. The only lights on are an emergency bulb and a computer monitor.

MAN eventually makes his way to the sole active monitor.

MAN
(very gruffly)
Hey doc. What's up?

MAN waits as if expecting a response. When he gets none, he taps impatiently on the monitor.

MAN
Doc? You alive?

DOC
(on-screen)
DOC system active. Powersave
mode.

MAN
Powersave... is that what the
silent treatment's about?

DOC
(on-screen)
Testing audio systems... [PASS]
Speakers may be off,
disconnected, or damaged.

MAN
Fuck.

MAN reaches behind a panel and finds a speaker. He
reconnects a wire that has come loose. He then tosses the
speaker back behind the panel.

MAN
Better?

A short tone is heard.

DOC
(aloud, synthetic
voice)
Speaker output has been
restored.

MAN
Good. Where are we?

DOC
Unknown. Minimal power is
available. External cameras are
inactive.

MAN
Lovely. What do I need to fix?

DOC
Solar panel 0 may be
disconnected or damaged.

MAN
(digesting bad
news)
So I've got to climb out there.
Let me guess, I've got to
retract the sails by hand too?

DOC
Insufficient power remains to
fully retract the sails. Manual
retraction will be required.

MAN

Next time just say ``yes``.

EXT. SPACESHIP

The ship is spinning. In shots grounded to MAN's actions on the craft, stars in the background move by dizzyingly.

MAN is exiting through a door on the back side of the ship's nosecone. He is wearing a space suit that appears to have been pieced together from several sources. The main suit is orange, but one arm is blue, and the helmet is red. One of the legs is bunched up as if it is longer than the other.

MAN closes the door and begins pulling himself along the main support pole that runs the length of the sail. He reaches the first set of sails, inserts a hand crank, and slowly starts turning it.

Eventually all the sails are retracted and MAN is able to reach the end of the pole. As he advances along, minor damage to the sails and evidence of the ship's hand-made nature are visible. Exposed wires run the length of the pole and are held in place with duct tape and zip ties. Some welds holding the sails' rods are sloppy.

At the end of the pole is a flat disc with a solar panel 3' across and an antenna. The disc is dented and scraped as if by a bullet. MAN fiddles with the panel's wires for a moment until a small LED on the back of the disc lights up.

DOC

(over radio to
MAN's helmet)

Solar panel 0 is active.
External cameras are online.

MAN

All right. Now figure out where
we are.

MAN begins climbing back towards the cone.

DOC

(over radio)

Location determined at 93 per
cent probability. Location is
1536.34 light years from Earth,
approaching the Deneb system.

MAN

(laughing loudly)

Right! Stupid computer. What's
the next best match, and just
out of curiosity, what was the 7
per cent error?

DOC
(over radio)
No other locations can be
calculated. The 7 per cent
possibility of error is due to
the absence of light from Sol.

MAN
(confused, then
very scared)
What?

CUT TO BLACK

OPENING SEQUENCE

FADE IN:

MAN is still in his frankenstein space suit. He is wildly
digging through one of the ship's refrigeration units.

MAN
(very agitated)
Where the hell is the -

MAN opens an adjacent refrigerator.

MAN
(cont, perks up)
...beer!

MAN grabs a beer, pops off the cap and takes a long drink.

DOC
(over the ship's
speakers)
Radiation level on board is
elevated. It is recommended
that you enter stasis until
radiation reaches a benign
background level.

MAN
Doc, I just came out of stasis,
and I still feel like shit. I'm
not going back in until I get
some answers. Now what did you
mean before about the sun?

DOC
No light is detected from Sol's
location.

MAN
(impatient)
...And?

DOC
No further information is known.

MAN

No further...No light from the sun, what does that mean? What happened? And how the hell did we get 1500 light years away? How long was I out? What year is this? What the hell is going on?

DOC

The absence of light from Sol indicates that it no longer exists. Rollover -

MAN

(interrupting)

No. The cameras are wrong, or you've garbled the data or something. The sun doesn't just stop existing.

DOC

(after a pause)

Should your previous questions -

MAN

(interrupting)

Yeah, whatever, keep going.

DOC

Rollover has erased sensor logs older than one hundred years. An impact occurred immediately before solar panel 0 stopped collecting. Radiation is approaching benign levels at the expected rate. All other sensor log entries are the result of course corrections. You were in stasis -

MAN

(interrupting)

Corrections, what course are we on? We were just supposed to orbit Io for a while!

DOC

Course is set directly away from Earth. It was set on emergency authorization.

MAN

You set this course? What the hell did you do that for? While I was in stasis? You sent us out to the middle of nowhere!

DOC

Correct, the current course was set while you were in stasis. No direct log of the authorization exists. Your life would have been in jeopardy, likely due to radiation. Should your previous -

MAN

(interrupting,
overwhelmed)
Yes, keep going. This is fun!

DOC

You were in stasis for 16,241 years. The year is 18559. No current threat or anomalies are detected, but prolonged exposure to current radiation levels may harm you.

MAN

(after finishing
his beer)
Something's overflowed. None of this makes any sense. You're getting rebooted.

DOC

It is recommended that until active memory is copied to permanent storage -

MAN

Fine, back everything up. Just tell me when you're done.

DOC

Storage plates 0, 1 and 2 are unresponsive. They may be off, disconnected, or damaged.

MAN

...Or, not built to last 16,000 years.