

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. Inside and out, 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 docking port 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.

WARNING: Electrical failure  
Panel 0: 0.0 Volts

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

MAN  
(groaning,  
mumbling)  
Whe-? No mor-

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 again tries to get up. The only lights on are an emergency bulb and a computer monitor.

MAN grabs some towels from near the stasis pod. Still in a haze, he starts to clean himself off. The towel catches an IV which tears out of his arm and bleeds. MAN removes the remaining needles from his arms, and notices a power cable running through the puddle of fluid and vomit. He picks it up to move it away. MAN wipes off the cable, and does some cursory cleaning up. MAN keeps one towel wrapped around himself and drags the power cable away from the mess.

MAN, still disoriented, makes his way to a seat by 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  
 What's with the silent treatment, Doc?

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

MAN  
 Ssspeakers. 'Kay...

MAN looks around, still drying off, trying to remember what is where. He fumbles around behind a panel and finds a speaker. He reconnects a wire that has come loose, 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

(sobering up)

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, and gives the impression of moving through space like a screw. From MAN's perspective grounded to the ship, stars in the background spin by dizzyingly fast.

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 supporting 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 on-line.

MAN

All right. Now figure out where  
we are.

MAN begins climbing back towards the cone.

DOC  
 (over radio)  
 Position has been determined  
 with 7 per cent error. Location  
 is 1536.34 light years from  
 Earth, approaching the Deneb  
 system.

MAN  
 (laughing loudly)  
 Right! Of course, Deneb, how'd  
 I miss that? Come on Doc.  
 What's the next match, and just  
 out of curiosity, what was the 7  
 per cent error?

DOC  
 (over radio)  
 No other positions can be  
 calculated. 5 per cent error is  
 due to background noise. 2 per  
 cent error is due to the absence  
 of light from Sol.

MAN  
 (confused, then  
 very scared)  
 What?

CUT TO BLACK

OPENING SEQUENCE

FADE IN:

INT. SPACESHIP     BLA

MAN is climbing down a ladder from the airlock, and taking  
 off his helmet. As he leaves the ladder, MAN trips over the  
 power cable he'd moved earlier.

MAN  
 What do you mean no light from  
 Sol? As in the sun? Doc!  
 What's going on?

MAN  
 (after a pause)  
 Doc?

MAN notices he's unplugged the ship's main computer by  
 tripping over an extension cord which was connected to  
 another extension cord.

MAN  
 (under his  
 breath)  
 oh for Fry's sake...

MAN ties the cables in a knot then plugs them together again, moving them away from the ladder.

MAN

Doc?

DOC

Main systems on-line.  
Initialization and hardware  
checks in progress.

MAN

What were you saying about there  
being no light from the sun?

DOC

(after a pause)

Unknown. Permanent storage  
initialization in progress.  
Radiation level is elevated.  
Stasis is recommended until a  
benign radiation level is  
reached. (pause) Permanent  
storage is off-line. Stasis  
hardware -

MAN checks around behind the panel where he previously threw  
the speaker.

MAN

(interrupting)

Wait, what do you mean permanent  
storage is off-line? Is every  
cable getting unplugging today?

DOC

Store 0 is attached. All data  
requests fail. Warranty and  
expected longevity of the device  
have lapsed. (pause) Absence of  
Sol confirmed. Location is  
1536.34 light years from Earth,  
approaching the Deneb system.  
Stasis hardware check failed.  
Warranty and expected -

MAN

(slowly,  
overwhelmed)

Doc, what is today?

DOC

The current UTC time is 18559,  
September 19th, 3:34.

MAN

Tell me your clock is also out  
of warranty.

DOC

Clock value is consistent with  
astral positions, with 7 per  
cent -

MAN

(interrupting)

I'm going to die, aren't I?

DOC

No immediate threat is detected.  
Prolonged exposure to current  
radiation level may cause  
illness and death. Stasis is  
recommended until a benign  
radiation level is reached.  
Stasis hardware check -

MAN looks at the torn tubes and other broken stasis  
equipment.

MAN

(interrupting)

Next time just say ``yes``.

EXT. SPACESHIP

The ship's solar sails automatically extend. Each rolls out  
smoothly in turn, in contrast to MAN's laborious crank-driven  
retraction. From a distance, the ship seems to be a clean,  
if spartan, design, engineered with good precision.

INT. SPACESHIP

MAN talks to himself as he walks in complete circles around  
the ship's interior. As he walks, he picks up and fidgets  
with various objects. The ship's artificial gravity is seen  
in full, keeping objects he drops or sets down fixed to the  
ship's floor as it curves behind, up, around, and back to the  
front of MAN as he moves.

MAN

(to himself)

I'm 16,000 years away from Earth, which is probably gone, along with the sun. Waking up choking on my own puke, that I can handle. Waking up to the sun being gone, that makes me wonder whether my bad luck is a sort of super power I could use to fight crime. Sun's gone! Ha ha! Why? Who knows. Any records I might have of what happened are on a dead store, or might have been in active memory, until I unplugged it. Evil-doers beware, my bad luck will foil your plots faster than... (pause) For all I know, I'm the last human being in the universe. The only thing that kept me alive was a stasis pod, which I've broken. Radiation will start to kill me before too long. I can stave that off within the stasis pod's shielding, but even then, I'll never live long enough to get anywhere worth going to. If in fact there is anywhere worth going to. Maybe I'll get lucky and be rescued by a floating island inhabited by xenophilic alien babes. Or maybe I'll sneeze and my ship will pop, sending my corpse out to get chopped up into deli-thin slices by a planet's rings on its way down to create a lovely atmo-fire display sparking a holy war and killing off a thousand alien species.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SPACESHIP

MAN tinkers with things around the ship. MAN cleans up and disinfects the mess he made when leaving stasis. MAN tries to use stacks of memory tabs and data cards in the ship's computer, none of which read. MAN observes very closely some of the plankton plates that keep the ship's atmosphere balanced. MAN tapes down cables along corners. MAN organizes the stasis pod's equipment into broken and salvageable piles, parts laid out vaguely where he found them. MAN sits on a chair in something like a fetal position, staring, numb with worry.



## EXT. SPACESHIP

From afar, the ship looks reasonably sleek and professional. Up close, its homemade and cobbled nature is obvious. Everything attached to the nosecone (six plasma engines, the central sail spine, several magnetic utility compartments) looks particularly after-market. The central sail core and surrounding structure are structurally sound, but have developed cracks and scars from age and debris over thousands of years. The ship was never meant to operate over such great distance and time.

## INT. SPACESHIP

MAN is sitting back comfortably, examining one of the broken pieces from the stasis pod.

MAN

Doc, how much do your factory settings know about my stasis pod? Can I fix it?

DOC

No source schematics of any stasis hardware are on file. 4 of 4 bio-cycle devices are attached and on-line. 1 of 16 sensors are active. Remaining sensors may be disconnected or damaged. 2 of 12 actuators are active. Remaining actuators be disconnected or damaged.

MAN

How much of this stuff is vital? If I can't fix or replace some of these, would I still live?

DOC

Sensors 4, 5, 6 and 7 are redundant of sensors 0, 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Sensor 15 is reserved. Other sensors are unique. Medical necessity of all sensors should be assumed. Actuators 8, 9, 10 and 11 provide fail-over for the four throttles of actuator 6. Other actuators are unique. Medical necessity of all actuators should be assumed.

MAN

(after  
contemplation)

So... I'm gonna die, aren't I?

DOC

Yes.

CUT TO BLACK