

M A R O O N E D

by  
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Ruined by  
Blue Neumann

FADE IN:

SPACE

Vast.

Less a great unknown, more of a workaday wasteland.

TITLES

As we pass barren moons, dour gas giants, and schmutzy asteroids, the pedestrian natural shapes of the cosmos.

And a very artificial one.

An oily, dirty, old and lumbering space freighter.  
Officially "Hercules 3031." HERC to us.

The HERC sloughs through the emptiness.

Approaches a half-terraformed moon.

And the SPACE PORT in high orbit around it.

The silence of space is interrupted by rough, static communications.

HERC PILOT (V.O.)

Breaker breaker Gamma Orbit, this  
is Herc Thirty Thirty-One,  
requesting permission to land.

GROUND CONTROL (V.O.)

Good to see you, Herc Thirty  
Thirty-One, wondering if you were  
ever gonna limp in.

HERC PILOT (V.O.)

Yeah, yeah, we got a clock, this  
is gonna have to be a "dump and  
jump." Let's not let the engines  
go cold if we can help it.

GROUND CONTROL (V.O.)

Understood Herc Thirty Thirty-One,  
set her down on Loader Five, we've  
got a crew on standby, we should  
have you out of here by morning.

INT. SPACE PORT - LOADER FIVE

The Herc squats on a landing platform. Crane arms load  
container boxes into the hull.

RIAN (O.S.)

I really don't think we should be here.

INT. SPACE PORT/EXT. HERC - ACCESS RAMP

Three kids hide behind crates near one of the HERC'S access ramps.

RIAN keeps a nervous eye on the large space doors.

RIAN

I mean, outer space is RIGHT there, we could get sucked out into the great beyond and our blood will boil and we'll pop like balloons.

COLIN pulls Rian back down, not bothering to look up from his tablet computer.

COLIN

Blown out into space. Not sucked out.

Their sister ESSENCE runs her hand over the stained, dirty surface of the HERC.

ESSENCE

I can't believe our grandparents actually served on this ship when they were our age.

COLIN

Smells like it.

RIAN

More reason we shouldn't do this, this thing's older than the colony, it could crack apart any second.

COLIN

No one asked you to come.

ESSENCE

He came because he's bored. I said yes because I'm trying to keep him out of trouble.

The three creep out from behind the crates and hustle up the access ramp.

ESSENCE (CONT'D)

Just tell me it's not going to  
take off while we're on board.

INT. HERC - ENTRY CORRIDOR

The kids explore the entry hall.

COLIN

The schedule has them down for  
three days, we'll be in and out in  
ten minutes.

RIAN

But why didn't any of the crew  
disembark yet?

COLIN

What am I, a mind-reader?

ESSENCE

Ha! Our dog has a higher PSI  
ranking than you.

SLAM. BUZZ.

The kids jerk around.

The entry hatch seals itself shut.

ESSENCE (CONT'D)

Gee, I wonder what's about to  
happen.

Beat.

Centripetal force pushes the kids against the wall.

EXT. SPACE PORT/EXT. HERC

The HERC takes off, slipping through the Space Port doors  
and into the black.

Once it's clear, the HERC's boosters fire.

INT. MAIN HOLD

Stacked to the brim and dimly lit.

The motion of the ship causes some of the smaller crates  
to slide about lazily.

The kids try to keep their bearings.

ESSENCE

Oh, I am going to kill you.

RIAN

We. WE are going to kill you.

COLIN

No no no, hold on, hold on, we can handle this...

Colin fishes out his tablet and frantically starts poking through screens of data.

COLIN (CONT'D)

All we gotta do is figure out where we're going and, and, we'll be able to book passage back... or find another ship to sneak on. Easy.

He continues hunting through data.

Essence plops down onto the floor.

ESSENCE

Whose idea was it to hide out in the hold?

RIAN

Yeah, where's all the cool stuff?

COLIN

Oh, I just found cool stuff.

Essence pops up and hovers over Colin's shoulder.

ESSENCE

Where we're going?

COLIN

No no, I pulled up the plans for the ship, I mean, this thing has probably been overhauled a jillion times since, but I think I found a way to get to the auxiliary control room... and to one of the main corridors.

Rian springs to his feet.

RIAN

Great! Let's get out of this--

ALARM. FLASHING LIGHTS.

ALARM  
 (flat, mechanical)  
 Warning. Proximity alert.  
 Warning. Proximity alert.

RIAN  
 "Proximity alert?"

Essence demonstrates: she clenches one hand into a fist, then hits her open palm with it.

Beat.

The floor shoves them into the far wall.

EXT. HERC

Debris and hull remnants fly off the side of the ship, float into space like a metal waterfall.

The engines sputter and die.

The HERC drifts into the unknown, toppling over itself over and over in slow motion.

INT. MAIN HOLD

Emergency lights. We can barely see anything.

Rian's hand finds Colin's tablet. He turns it around, using the screen as a flashlight.

RIAN  
 Ess? Colin? ...Essence!

The light catches Essence. She uses it as a guide and pulls herself to Rian.

ESSENCE  
 Where's Colin?

RIAN  
 I dunno, I found his stupid  
 tablet...

Rian scopes the chamber with the tablet light.

The light hits Colin, trapped under a crate.

ESSENCE  
 Colin!

Essence rushes to his side.

RIAN  
Careful, don't trip!

Rian scrambles to Colin's side.

ESSENCE  
Okay, help me get this thing off  
him.

COLIN  
Get it off...

Essence and Rian pry the crate up.

ESSENCE  
Okay, crawl out!

Colin scoots out from under the crate just before Essence  
and Rian lose their grip.

The crate hits the floor with a loud CLANG.

It reverbs through the ship.

EXT. HERC

Falling through space.

Beat.

COLIN (O.S.)  
Owww!

INT. MAIN HOLD

Essence finishes putting a makeshift control cast onto  
Colin's leg.

ESSENCE  
Quit your bellyachin', space  
cadet. How are you feeling?

COLIN  
Like you're never gonna be ship's  
doctor.

ESSENCE  
Can you feel your toes?

COLIN  
Yeah. Wish I couldn't, they  
really hurt.

RIAN

Can you get us out of here now?

He hands Colin the tablet.

COLIN

No problem.

EXT. HERC

Like a slow-motion skipping stone.

INT. AUX CONTROL ROOM

Ship's bulkhead.

The grate near the floor pops off.

Collides loudly with the floor.

RIAN

This must be the place.

Rian and Essence climb out of the duct.

COLIN (O.S.)

Someone wanna give me a hand?

Essence reaches into the hold in the wall and pulls Colin out.

COLIN (CONT'D)

I'm getting butt burn.

ESSENCE

Geez, what happened to this place?

COLIN

Get me over to that control panel.  
I'll see if I can find out.

Rian and Essence groan and drag Colin over to the controls.

Colin starts tapping buttons. None of the lights go on.

COLIN (CONT'D)

This terminal isn't getting any  
power. Tablet.

Snaps his fingers. Essence and Rian do nothing.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Tablet.

ESSENCE  
Ever heard of the word "please?"

COLIN  
Tablet please?

ESSENCE  
Better. Rian?

Rian hands Colin the tablet.

ESSENCE (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

Colin starts working his tablet magic.

COLIN  
Lessee... wow.

RIAN  
"Wow?"

COLIN  
That is a whole lot of zeroes.  
Systems are down all over the  
ship. Something big must have hit  
us. Like Europa big. I don't see  
any signs of the crew, they must  
have hit the escape pods. And I  
don't think the distress signal is  
transmitting either.

ESSENCE  
Okay, well, you two geniuses  
figure this out, I'm going to see  
if I can find some supplies,  
there's got to be a mess or a  
vending machine or something for  
food.

Essence drops to her knees and crawls back into the duct.

Rian watches her.

RIAN  
So why are we really here?

COLIN  
I swear I didn't know the ship was  
gonna take off. I'm really sorry.

RIAN  
That's not what I asked. I want  
to know what we're doing on this  
rusty bucket.

He applies pressure to Colin's leg. Gentle to Rian but enough to make Colin wince in pain.

COLIN

Okay, okay, dad put together this big care package for our relatives back on Earth, I think they put Liam's teddy bear in there, we can't find it anywhere in the house. He's been crying for days.

RIAN

Why didn't you jsut tell us that?

COLIN

You wouldn't have snuck on board a ship for a teddy bear.

RIAN

No, but we would have for Liam.

SFX: COMM WHISTLE

ESSENCE (O.S.)

Hello? Can anyone hear me?

Colin hits the "call" button on his tablet.

COLIN

Ess? Where are you? Did you find any food?

INT. CORRIDOR

Essence takes a big bite from a packaged sandwich.

Bleh.

Spits it out.

ESSENCE

(mouth still full)

Food? No. We got a plan yet?

INT. AUX CONTROL ROOM

Colin and Rian look over the stat screen.

COLIN

Well, if we switch to back-up power we should be able to turn the distress beacon on. You'll have to turn it on from a control panel in the center of the ship.

INT. CORRIDOR

Essence wipes the remnants of the sandwich off her tongue.

ESSENCE

Okay, let's get moving, the ship's superstructure sounds like it's in rough shape. Colin, I think you're safe in the Aux Room, so stay there and guide Rian and I to the control panel.

EXT. HERC

Close on the ship. We can hear the SLOW CRUMBLING as it coasts pass our field of vision.

INT. CAUSEWAY

Essence pulls the constantly distracted Rian through the rumbling ship.

COLIN (V.O.)

At the next junction, turn left.

The ship lurches as they round the corner.

A LOUD CREAK

The Bulkhead behind them starts to quiver.

Essence's eyes go wide.

ESSENCE

RUN!

The two turn on their heels and bolt down the corridor.

They don't get two steps before the wall rips like tissue paper.

The two kids clutch on to anything they can find to anchor themselves as they're drawn towards the large gaping hole.

Essence frantically reaches for a distended cable.

Catches it.

Braces herself on the bulkhead.

Reaches for Rian.

RIAN

Close the door! Hit the button!

ESSENCE

I can't! You'll be sucked out!

RIAN

Let go! I can't reach my door  
button from here! Let go and I  
can try!

ESSENCE

You'll miss!

RIAN

It's our only chance! On three,  
okay?

ESSENCE

Rian...

RIAN

One...

Rian gets himself into position.

RIAN (CONT'D)

Two...

Essence braces her teeth.

RIAN (CONT'D)

THREE!

Essence releases.

Rian falls.

Misses his mark.

Grasps at the walls for piping and cables.

Catches hold of a coolant pipe.

Winces. Far too cold.

Pulls himself up with it.

Hits the emergency door button.

The segmented heavy metal door loudly slams shut.

Essence and Rian fall to the floor like a pair of bowling  
balls.

RIAN (CONT'D)

This is a bounce house of pain!

They slowly pull themselves off the floor.

ESSENCE

You okay?

RIAN

No, I grabbed a coolant pipe! My hand feels like it's frozen.

ESSENCE

Your heart was gonna be frozen in a few more seconds.

RIAN

Let's get out of here.

COLIN (O.S.)

What happened down there?  
Everyone okay?

Essence and Rian glance at each other.

They share a nervous chuckle.

ESSENCE

We're good. Just popped a window to get some fresh air.

RIAN

Where are we going again?

COLIN (O.S.)

Left.

RIAN

And you're going to have to find us another way back.

INT. AUX CONTROL ROOM

Colin falls back to the floor, exhausted.

COLIN

You gotta stop scaring me like this.

INT. POWER CENTER

Rian and Essence try to make heads or tails of the Power Center.

ESSENCE

Uh, Colin, where's this wonderful control panel you kept going on about?

COLIN (O.S.)  
Should be right in front of you.

Rian taps Essence's shoulder and points to the wall.

RIAN  
There's nothing here! Just some  
frayed cables.

ESSENCE  
I think it got ripped out of the  
wall.

COLIN (O.S.)  
Okay, um... Ess, look close but  
don't touch, are there three sets  
of KGR cables?

ESSENCE  
KGR?

COLIN (O.S.)  
Black-Green-Red.

ESSENCE  
Yeah, I see 'em. Two are  
connected, one is just capped off.

INT. AUX CONTROL ROOM

Colin visualizes the cable set-up in his mind.

COLIN  
Okay, um... ground yourself, then  
uncap that disconnected one, and  
carefully tap it to something  
metal. There should be a spark.

INT. POWER CENTER

Essence presses her finger against a blank spot to  
discharge any built-up static electricity.

She cautiously reaches forward, unscrews the cap, then  
touches the wire to the wall, releasing a bright burst of  
sparks.

She jumps back.

ESSENCE  
Geez! Are you trying to kill us!?

INT. AUX CONTROL ROOM

Colin marks off checkboxes on his tablet.

COLIN

No, I just needed to know if the  
Aux Power was still working.  
Okay, now, again be careful,  
switch out the cables, criss-  
cross.

ESSENCE (O.S.)

Stand by.

Beat.

All the lights switch on.

COLIN

Whoo! Now we're cooking!

INT. POWER CENTER

All the lights in the room happily hum.

Essence and Rian high-five.

COLIN (O.S.)

Okay, lemme pull up the map and  
find a safe route back.

EXT. HERC

The running lights scattered over the ship start to blink  
back into existence.

INT. AUX CONTROL ROOM

Colin continues hacking away at his tablet.

Essence approaches from behind and wraps her arms around  
him.

Rian does the same once she lets go.

RIAN

Nice work, man.

COLIN

Don't thank me just yet, we have  
power, we have our location, but I  
still can't get the signal to  
transmit.

ESSENCE

But you have power, right?

COLIN

Yeah, all the power I need, but I think the antenna is damaged.

RIAN

All of 'em?

COLIN

What am I thinking? We have our location! Of course we have a signal!

Essence and Rian don't get it.

COLIN (CONT'D)

CPS. Cosmic Positioning System!

Still not getting it.

COLIN (CONT'D)

The CPS has it's own transmitter, just a ping that bounces around so the ship can tell where it is, I can just send an SOS through that! Every antenna and transmitter in the system is programmed to catch that!

Colin starts tapping out code into the tablet.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Just gotta write a little code to reprogram the CPS pinger to tell it what to do, easy!

Rian sits down in front of him.

RIAN

Will you put the tablet down when you're done?

Colin doesn't look up.

COLIN

Gotta keep an eye on things.

RIAN

Yeah, but... you keep looking down you might miss something important.

A teddy bear peeks over the edge of the tablet.

Finally gets Colin's attention.

RIAN (CONT'D)

Make sure the rescue craft has  
four seats.

Colin grins.

Hits the final button without looking.

SFX: SOS BEEPS. LIGHT, ON LOOP.

Essence smiles, sitting against the far wall.

ESSENCE

(groans happily)

Oh, I can't wait to get off this  
ship.

COLIN

Yeah, well, settle in, it could be  
days or even weeks for another  
ship to get our signal, and even  
then--

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)

Hercules Thirty Thirty-One, signal  
received and acknowledged,  
location confirmed. Rescue Vessel  
launching, ETA 2 hours 15 minutes,  
stand by.

COLIN

Or... not.

Essence smiles.

Scoots over to the boys.

Looks over the tablet.

ESSENCE

So, you got any games on this  
thing

They huddle over the tablet.

FADE TO BLACK.