

STARSHIP Q STAR

Episode 101
"TWO GIRLS ONE CAPTAINCY"

An Audio Drama

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[An upbeat synth pop music track plays - it's as if a Star Trek theme has had a baby with Janelle Monáe.]

1 **INT. STARSHIP Q STAR (SSQS) - AURELIA'S QUARTERS - MORNING** 1

[We hear the HUM of a starship. A pulsing energy...]

[A bright short tone beeps. The femme, artificial voice of the ship's COMPUTER is heard]

COMPUTER

Destination approach protocol
triggered. Starship Q Star arrival
on Mars Research Station in T minus
one hour.

[Another tone sounds.]

COMPUTER (CONT'D)

Initiating pre-landing directive.
Stasis cycle complete: Co-Captain
Aurelia Banks.

[The pulsing sound quickens to a crescendo and PSSSSSSSSSH. Air decompresses. A stasis pod lid opens.]

COMPUTER (CONT'D)

Welcome back, Aurelia.

[Beat. Wet snoring.]

COMPUTER (CONT'D)

WELCOME BACK, AURELIA.

[AURELIA wakes, groggy and confused.]

AURELIA

Ugh, ugh, Oh I'm so wet... Why am I
so wet? Did I pee? Did I pee my
pod?!

COMPUTER

It is drool, Captain. You have been
in stasis for 177 days. Drooling.

[Aurelia stiffly sits up, GROANS.]

AURELIA

Computer, can I ask you for a
coffee, like -
(Aurelia puts on a Captain
Picard voice)
Computer, caramello matcha-mocha-
frappacino with extra cino
(she speaks in her normal
voice)

(MORE)

AURELIA (CONT'D)

- or does that make you feel like a Macca's drive thru?

COMPUTER

Aurelia, I am a state of the art, hyper intelligent super Computer.

AURELIA

So you only do lattes?
(realisation dawning)
Hang on. If I'm out of stasis...
that means I'm in... I'm in...

COMPUTER

Co-Captain Banks,

AURELIA

I'm in...

Please report to the Bridge for pre-Mars briefing.

AURELIA

I'M IN MOTHERFLIPPIN' SPACE!!!

2

INT. SSQS - SIM'S QUARTERS - MORNING

2

[The pulsing energy of another stasis pod quickens to a crescendo and PSSSSSSSSSH. Air decompresses, the lid opens.]

COMPUTER

Stasis cycle complete: Co-Captain Simone Jackson. Welcome back, Sim.

[HUP! SIM leaps out of her pod and begins working out.]

SIM

Computer, workout playlist Alpha.
(counting reps)
9, 10, 11...

[A high tempo MUSIC TRACK plays.]

COMPUTER

Captain, push ups are not recommended following stasis.

SIM

Understood!

[Sim leaps into a set of burpees]

COMPUTER

Burpees are less recommended.

SIM

(while burpee-ing)
International Space Agency protocol
12E - "To maintain peak readiness
for service - every day must begin
with physical training" - ISA
protocol overrules Computer
recommendations - Which means: it's
ab jacking hour. Understood?

COMPUTER

Logging that Co-Captain Jackson has
impressive abs.

SIM

That wasn't what I --

COMPUTER

Co-Captain Banks is nearing the
bridge for the pre-Mars briefing.

SIM

You woke Aurelia up first?

COMPUTER

Shall I advise her to take solo
command while you continue
abdominal sculpting?

[The door swishes open as Sim RUNS out of the room.]

COMPUTER (CONT'D)

Running is not recommended
following stasis, Captain!

3

INT. SSQS - LIFT - DAY

3

[Aurelia steps into the lift, humming to herself. She presses
a button.]

[Footsteps RUNNING approach.]

SIM

(calling)
Aurelia! Hold the lift! Aurelia!

Aurelia mashes the lift button.

AURELIA

(hissing)
Computer, close lift door. Close
lift door!

The door begins to close and WHOMP. Sim jams her body into
the closing door.

[The lift door attempts to close ONCE, TWICE, THREE TIMES before Sim PRIES it open.]

SIM

(attempted chill)

Hey! Co-Captain Banks. Mind if I join you?

AURELIA

Co-Captain Jackson, you survived stasis! Yay. Come on in.

[Sim enters the lift and the door closes.]

AURELIA (CONT'D)

Computer --

SIM

Computer --

Strained laughter.

SIM (CONT'D)

You go.

AURELIA

No, you go.

SIM

No, you --

AURELIA

Computer, Bridge.

[The lift engages and whirs]

SIM

So... How do you like our ship? Ready to Co-Captain it through space? Isn't it just so... pink?

AURELIA

Extremely pink. Everywhere. The walls, the floor, even the space bidet in my quarters. It's like we're traveling in the belly of an intergalactic flamingo.

SIM

I find it calming. Liberating even.

AURELIA

Gah! I'm going to experiment the shit out of this universe. I'm so friggen excited!

SIM

Yes, it's *such* an exciting mission!
(brochure style)
The ISA's first all women crew --

AURELIA

Well, first non-men crew.

SIM

-- empowering their way through the stars to Mars Research Station, where they'll requisition rare regolith --

AURELIA

Dirt. It's Martian dirt.

SIM

-- and guide it safely home, to Earth.

AURELIA

Exactly as seven mostly-male crews have done so before us.

SIM

No one has done exactly *this* mission, Co-Captain Banks. Why else would the ISA assign two Captains to ensure it's success? Especially when they already had me - a highly decorated, career military and ISA officer...

AURELIA

Sim, they were scared that one lady Captain would get on the rag and crash into the moon.

SIM

Yep, a short, historic mission. All we need to do is strictly follow procedure, stasis back home, and the whole crew gets celebrated and a nice career bump. Easy. Right?

AURELIA

Co-Captain Jackson. I get it. You think I'm going to embarrass you in front of that douche bag, General Swan. But Sim, he's a douche bag. And the ISA rules? Also douchey. So how about this. You be Co-Captain of lame rules and boring procedures, and I'll be the Co-Captain of cool, actual important things like exploration and experiments and having hard boners for space!

[Three BEEPS as the lift approaches the Bridge]

[The lift stops. A tone sounds.]

COMPUTER

Bridge.

AURELIA

Longest lift ride ever, amirite!

SIM

Aurelia --

AURELIA

You do your thing and I'll do my thing. Deal?

SIM

... Fine. Deal.

AURELIA

Great, let's go!

The doors slide open and they enter...

4

INT. SSQS - BRIDGE - DAY

4

COMPUTER

Captains, welcome to the Bridge of the Starship Q Star.

[FOOTSTEPS as Aurelia and Sim walk onto the Bridge. Ooohs and Ahs as they look at the Bridge for the first time]

COMPUTER (CONT'D)

Featuring state of the art navigations, stations for scientific observation and mechanical engineering. And -- to accommodate the first dual Captains in ISA history... in place of a Captain's chair - a Captain's love seat.

SIM

A what?!

AURELIA

A historic Captain's love seat.

[Aurelia jumps into it - ooff!]

AURELIA (CONT'D)

I call the left side! Mm, a pink loveseat, Sim. On a pink bridge. Ooooo I feel so empowered! Just like Astronaut Barbie on her dream rocket.

[Aurelia giggles in a patronising manner]

SIM

The ISA would have a good reason for all of this.

[Aurelia opens a compartment in her chair arm.]

AURELIA

Is it the same reason my Captain's console is full of lipsticks?

SIM

Computer, initiate Comms link with ISA ground control for Pre-Mars briefing.

[A tone rings. And rings. The call rings out.]

COMPUTER

Your Comms link cannot be connected. Please check the number and try again.

SIM

Try again. Strange... General Swan isn't the type to miss a call.

AURELIA

Seriously? The guy's Zoom filter is stuck on 'potato'.

[A tone continues to ring out.]

COMPUTER

Link with ground control cannot be established. However, high priority video messages from General Swan were received three months ago.

SIM

Very strange. Computer, play messages.

[The crackly video message of GENERAL SWAN is heard]

GENERAL SWAN

(Pompous masculine American voice)

Lady Astronauts, this is General Swan. After months of beauty sleep it's time to gussy up and say 'hello dolly' to Mars.

AURELIA

Uh, are we caught in a time paradox or is he living in the 50s? Computer, next message.

SIM

Aurelia! We can't miss any critical directives.

COMPUTER

Playing message two.

GENERAL SWAN

Space Maidens, a critical directive.

SIM

See?

GENERAL SWAN

We have discovered that none of the Spacesuits will fit your womanly physiques. Do not attempt a spacewalk in those suits as I can only assume that your Intergalactic fun bags would crush you to death. Unfortunate, but what a way to go!

AURELIA

Next message!

COMPUTER

Playing final message.

[The message plays as a scramble of interference.]

SIM

Computer, clean up transmission.

COMPUTER

Unable to comply. High level interference has compromised the data chain. Manual repair required.

AURELIA

My first space conundrum! Do I repair Swan's message with my sweet, sweet science? Or let it stay scrambled like sexist, sexist eggs? What a Sophie's Choice!

[A watch alarm sounds.]

SIM

Oh! Pre-Mars briefing will have to wait for Mars. Crew to arrive on deck in 4, 3, 2 --

[WOOSH - the door to the bridge opens and Medical Officer "MO", Engineer SOLARIS, and Pilot DUSTY McCOY bustle in.]

DUSTY

Wow, look at this place. More pink!

SOLARIS

Did you know pink isn't actually part of the light spectrum so technically doesn't exist?

MO

Pft, tell that to my pink bits.

SIM

Crew on deck! Atten-shun!

[The crew stiffly take attention.]

SIM (CONT'D)

At ease. I'm Captain Jackson, your C.O. And I know this mission is a big deal, so I want to say a special welcome.

(awkward pause)

Welcome. Now, crew assignments --

AURELIA

Oh come on Sim, we can do better than that.

(makes trumpet noise)

Welcome Mo, welcome Dusty, welcome Solaris, welcome Sim, welcome, welcome, welcome to the galaxy, and beyond! Woo! Come on, woo!

[Solaris, Dusty, and Mo give awkwardly 'woo'.]

AURELIA (CONT'D)

I'm Captain Banks, your other, equally ranked commanding officer. But please, we're a family, call us Aurelia and--

SIM

Captain Jackson. Moving on--

AURELIA

To icebreakers! Ok. So now, our Engineering wunderkind Solaris here missed our initial crew briefing, so to welcome them into the fold, let's all share our name, our roles on the ship, and what in space we're most excited about!

SOLARIS

Uh, yeah, hi everyone, I'm Solaris. 19. Engineering Specialist. Sorry I'm late - I had to finish the high luminosity upgrade of the large hadron collider.

(MORE)

SOLARIS (CONT'D)

Also, General Swan thought that 'non-binary' meant I was a robot and assumed I could download the training. What a ding dong, lol.

AURELIA

And you're most excited to...?

SOLARIS

Oh! Work with you of course.

AURELIA

Me?

SIM

Her?

AURELIA

Me!

[TING TING. Something tiny hits the ship.]

SIM

What was that?

AURELIA

A fan, Sim. You wouldn't know.

SOLARIS

Professor Banks, I've followed your astrophysics work forever. I even had your paper on de Broglie-Bohm theory on my wall at Uni.

AURELIA

Ah, de Broglie-Bohm.

SOLARIS

Is that weird?

DUSTY

That's kind of weird, kid.

AURELIA

No, it's cool. It's very cool! My mission adjacent experiments could use that big brain of yours.

SOLARIS

That would be da Brogli-BOMB!
Yeah...

[Awkward beat, Aurelia laughs loudly]

[CRASH! Something big hits the ship! An ALARM SOUNDS.]

SIM

Everyone to their stations!

MO

Captains? I don't have a station on the bridge.

AURELIA

Icebreakers, Mo!

[CRASH! CRASH! The crew are jolted by the impacts.]

MO

Oh, I'm Mo. Medical Officer. Any cuts, burns, or brain controlling parasites you might be about to acquire, bring 'em to me!

AURELIA

And you're most excited about the new frontier of space medicine?

SIM

Not the time, Aurelia!

MO

Nah, Captain! That'd be an alien encounter of a sexual kind. So where do I...?

SIM

Just strap in where you can!

MO

Aye aye, Captain. I do love a strap!

SIM

Solaris, report!

SOLARIS

Uh, Captain, it appears my controls are just three big buttons. One says "Science go"?

[CRASH!]

SIM

Solaris, report what's hitting us!

SOLARIS

Looking out the nav window, I'd say we're encountering space junk. Maybe sub-30 seconds until we hit that shiny, red piece?

MO

Is that Elon Musk's Tesla?

SOLARIS

On course for a head on collision!

SIM

Computer, run protocol 6E,
calculate the car's trajectory--

AURELIA

There's no time! Dusty, get us out
of here and give us an intro while
you do it!

[Dusty hits out commands on her console as she speaks.]

DUSTY

Aye Cap'n! McCoy, Dusty. In the
flesh! Happy to sign any chests,
breasts, or autograph books.

[A huge CRASH strikes the ship, the crew exclaim.]

DUSTY (CONT'D)

Hoo, that was a big one! I'm
excited to yank the days-in-space
record from my loser brother Chip,
finally declaring Dusty McCoy the
undisputed, 100% best astronaut
pilot in history!

AURELIA

Great intro, Dusty!

SOLARIS

Chip McCoy? Isn't the flight
training wing named after him?
Oh - Sub-20 seconds to impact!

DUSTY

The Guinness Book of Records will
soon prove that choice ridiculous.
This McCoy is the real McCoy!

SIM

Flight Lieutenant McCoy, evasive
action NOW. That's a real order!

[Buttons mash. Junk pummels the ship.]

DUSTY

I'm trying! I've only got two
buttons - "Fly" and "Stop" and
they're not doing either.

AURELIA

Computer, activate pilot controls!

COMPUTER

Unable to comply. Wo-manual systems
are engaged.

SIM

Wo-manual?! What's Wo-manual?

SOLARIS

Sub-15 seconds to impact!

COMPUTER

Wo-manual is a computer assisted streamlined operating control system designed not to overwhelm feminine minds.

MO

You've gotta be kidding.

[The rest of the crew GROAN.]

AURELIA

Computer, you know this is really harshing my space buzz! So, disengage Wo-manual!

COMPUTER

Unable to comply.

SIM

Why?

COMPUTER

You do not have authorisation.

AURELIA

But we're the Captains!

SOLARIS

Uh, Sub-10 seconds to impact!

MO

OK, Dusty, mate, now would be a great time for some of that 100% best astronaut pilot bullshit!

DUSTY

I'm uh - hang on... this is just a sticker! The whole panel is fake!

SOLARIS

Oh my god, mine too!

[Dusty rips off the panelling.]

MO

Woah. Oh my God, did you just... rip off that hunk of metal? Damn, She Hulk!

DUSTY

The helm is under here, Cap'ns!

AURELIA FLY! **SIM** FLY!

DUSTY
THE REAL REAL MCCOOOOOY!!!!!!

[Beeping of actual buttons.]

[The ship ROARS]

SIM
Brace for impact!

[People screech. Engines engage. WHOOSH. Then - heavy breathing.]

MO
Lesbian Jesus, that. was. close.

SIM
Anything else out there, Solaris?

SOLARIS
Just Mars, Captain.

AURELIA
Just. *Mars?! Eeeeeee!*

[A short musical sting plays]

5 **INT. MARS RESEARCH STATION - CARGO BAY - SOME TIME LATER** 5

[Metal clanging as the FOOTSTEPS of the Starship Q Star crew clang down the ship's metal gangway into the echo-y Mars Starion Cargo Bay.]

[There are no human sounds in the station - it's "too" quiet.]

SIM
Alright, everyone. Exit Protocol
Foxtrot: single file, orderly,
lined up by rank. Let's show Mars
Crew how professional we are.

SOLARIS
Uh... are they hiding?

[Aurelia clangs down the gangway, exaggerating her footsteps.]

AURELIA
(loud and jokingly)
HELLO???? ANYONE THERE????
ALRIGHT TEAM - NO MARS CREW. HMPH.
I GUESS WE'D BETTER GO...!

SIM

Aurelia, get in line!

AURELIA

Huh. I really thought they'd jump out and yell 'surprise'...

[Mo, Solaris, and Dusty walk down the gangway into the base.]

SIM

Dusty! Mo! Solaris! Ugh, fine - all crew to the Cargo Bay!

[Sim sighs and joins the others.]

DUSTY

Hoo-wee, it's as empty as the Jenny Schecter fan club in here.

SOLARIS

Gosh, what's happened to the station?

MO

Oh, it looks like my apartment after lockdown - a trashed fart palace with too many houseplants.

DUSTY

That's what that smell is.

SOLARIS

Botanic overgrowth aside... it's *empty*. Even the shuttles are gone?

AURELIA

Oo, I smell a mystery!

DUSTY

Ah, no, Cap'n A - that's the farts.

SIM

They're probably out on a mission. Speaking of, here's the regolith. Mission objective C complete!

AURELIA

Think, team, think! What *really* happened to Mars crew? Where did these strange plants come from? Could the Mars crew and the plants be one in the same?!

DUSTY

(gasps)
My god!

SIM

I have a fun mystery! How do we achieve Mission Objective D: transporting the regolith into the hold? Oo, let's figure it out now.

[A strange, disturbing SCREECHING SOUND echoes from deep within the station. Everyone freezes.]

SOLARIS

W-What was that?

AURELIA

That sounded like our new mission objective!

DUSTY

Sounded like aliens to me!

[Aurelia gasps.]

AURELIA

Objective: Alien. *That* sounds cool.

MO

(thrilled)

Oh no, I hope insectoid alien babes didn't land and praying mantis the Mars crew! That'd be a *disaster*.

SOLARIS

Uh, interesting hypothesis, Mo. However I have read that mantis sexual cannibalism is far less common when the species are left undisturbed by scientists.

MO

But this is a research station, Solaris. It's full of disturbing scientists!

AURELIA

Relax everyone! Co-Captain Jackson and I know exactly what to do.

SIM

That's right, Co-Captain Banks. It's time to --

AURELIA

Explore the station and uncover the alien mystery.

SIM (CONT'D)

Get the regolith on the ship and get out of here.

MO

Oh boy.

SIM

Co-Captain Banks, a word?

[Sim pulls Aurelia aside.]

AURELIA

Uh, uh, uh, careful, hey!

(beat)

Sim, what are you doing?

SIM

Completing our mission.

AURELIA

OK, I hear you... but mmmm let's workshop and build on that.

SIM

No.

AURELIA

(whispering)

Mmmm, I'm sensing a little resistance - but I think it's important we take into account the anxieties of our team, and the unanswered question of what the eff is going on!

SIM

(whispering)

You know what will make the crew anxious? Putting them at very unnecessary risk by diverting from our very clear objectives.

AURELIA

(louder whispers)

You know what else is clear? Our ship is bonkers, this station is overrun by evil vegetation, and Mars crew are missing. Probably--

[The SCREECHING SOUND is heard again.]

AURELIA (CONT'D)

Pleased to death by aliens.

SIM

(louder whispers)

Aurelia, aliens don't exist.

AURELIA

(louder still)

Not with that attitude!

(MORE)

AURELIA (CONT'D)

We won't know what happened here if we don't leave the cargo bay, venture into the main Mars station, and make the discovery of a lifetime...

[WEIRD SCREECHING.]

SIM

That noise is likely an equipment fault, which may have triggered a Mars wide evacuation. So unless you can guarantee the safety of the crew - there will be no reckless, last minute mission changes!

AURELIA

(raising her voice)

Oh ho ho ho, ok! Says the Queen of last minute changes. Who thought it was a great idea to break up with me - out of nowhere - right before I was knocked out and stowed onto the ship like a cat going on a long haul flight!

[The crew gasp, scandalised.]

MO

Oh shit!

SIM

(raising her voice)

We can discuss our personal history back on Earth where we left it. We are here to do a job, to complete a mission, and make history.

AURELIA

(louder still)

Wake up and smell the PR stunt, Sim! The ISA doesn't care about us. The dildo pink Starship, the high heeled space suits, the service tubes called FALLOPIANS - it's all an elaborate distraction to make the world forget that the ISA director was caught trolling the all-women cast of Ghostbusters. STILL!

[Aurelia's voice echoes through the cargo bay.]

[Mo awkwardly coughs.]

MO

Sorry to overhear on account of you literally standing right next to us - but as a trained counsellor and nosy queer detecting truly juicy gossip, I think it's best we unpack this emotional baggage...

AURELIA

Thanks Mo, but it's time for action! I'm consciously uncoupling from this Co-Captaincy and leading a solo mission of discovery. Who's with me?

DUSTY

I volunteer as the alien hunting security detail.

AURELIA

Approved, Dusty! Welcome aboard Team Alien Discovery.

MO

I volunteer as alien babe tribute!

SIM

Denied, Mo. I am *ordering* you AND Solaris to stay with REAL mission -

MO

No...

SIM

Fixing the ship, loading the regolith, and returning to Earth.

AURELIA

Fine! Come on, Dusty!

DUSTY

Yeah!

[Aurelia storms off with Dusty.]

SIM

Fine! Solaris, Mo - with me!

MO

(calling)
Bring me back a treat, Aurelia.
Preferably alien an babe!

[Short musical sting plays.]

6

INT. MARS RESEARCH STATION - CORRIDOR/LAB - LATER

6

[Dusty KICKS a door in and hustles inside.]

DUSTY

CLEAR!

AURELIA

The doors are automatic, Dusty. You don't need to kick them in.

DUSTY

Never underestimate the element of surprise, Captain. Plus -it's kinda fun!

Aurelia walks into the room, wading through debris.

AURELIA

Alright, what are we discovering... Discoveries, discoveries... Burst hydro pipes, broken lights, a lot of pop tart wrappers... this place is a wreck.

(disappointed)

But not a scientist - or their beheaded corpse - in sight!

DUSTY

Look. They were in a hurry, they left their beers half empty.

AURELIA

I'd say half full...

DUSTY

(glugs, burps)

Warm. The British contingent could still be close...

(beat)

Oooh! Laser guns! Chip would be jealous, pilots never get these.

AURELIA

Great discovery, Dusty! As solo Captain of this mission, I am commandeering these weapons.

[The ALIEN SCREECHES close by. Aurelia and Dusty hush.]

DUSTY

If I know aliens, and I've watched a LOT of 90s sci fi, that was totally a Martian Mantis.

[Aurelia powers up her weapon, cool guy style.]

AURELIA

Those aliens are about to discover... uh... argh, I didn't prepare a cool line. So unprepared!

[Dusty powers up her weapon.]

DUSTY

You come into our Space? You're gonna get Jammed.

AURELIA

Oh like Space Jam! Good one, Dusty!

DUSTY

Thanks Cap!

7

INT. SSQS - CORRIDOR/HOLD - LATER

7

SIM

Listen up, Team Real Mission!

MO

Because you're about to spill about the you and Aurelia dating bombshell...? No?

SIM

Up next, Mission Objective D: load regolith into the hold. First step is to get the ship's hold prepared, so let's go in and --

[HOLD DOORS OPEN. Sim, Mo and Solaris gasp.]

SOLARIS

The hold is chock-a-block with crates, Captain.

MO

It's Tetris-ed her to the brim.

SIM

Okay... Mission Objective D-1: make room for regolith. Now, all of these crates will be mission critical, so let's hope there's something we can jettison.

MO

Crowbars up!

[A TING as Mo and Solaris clang their crowbars together.]

SIM

Careful! This is all ISA property.

[CRACK! A crate lid opens.]

MO

Mine's got tampons.

SIM

Oh. Well, that's considerate --

[CRACK, another lid opens.]

SOLARIS

Mine's got tampons too, Captain!

SIM

Great, we can --

[CRACK.]

MO

More tampons over here!

[CRACK.]

SOLARIS

Here too!

[CRACK.]

SOLARIS (CONT'D)

I got super AND slim!

MO

Variety *is* the spice of life.

SIM

How many bloody...

MO

Not bloody yet, Captain... Huh. For some reason they tied the strings together like some kind of sanitary rat king.

[Mo jiggles the tampons.]

SOLARIS

Captain Jackson? This one says 'Emergency Supplies'.

SIM

Finally, something useful.

CRACK!

SOLARIS

It's... pads!

SIM

Okay! Mission Objective D-1 point
2: remove ALL crates from the hold.

[Short musical sting.]

8

INT. MARS RESEARCH STATION - CORRIDOR - LATER

8

[Dusty and Aurelia run through the corridor, hot on the heels of the screeching aliens.]

AURELIA

The aliens are close, Dusty. We're hot on the heels of the universe's biggest discovery!
(struggling)
Dang, this laser gun is heavy!

DUSTY

I'm channelling Sigourney in Alien 3, Cap... oh god I wish I could pull off a permed mullet.

AURELIA

(out of breath)
Oh I uh... I always liked Sigourney in... um... Gorillas in the Mist?

DUSTY

Yeah. Yeah!!!

AURELIA

For the Gorillas!!!

[SMASH! Dusty and Aurelia SLAM into something. Screams.]

AURELIA (CONT'D)

Oh oh, ow! Straight in the tits.

DUSTY

AN ALIEN!

BOB

Where!

BOB (CONT'D)

Where did tits come from? I mean you? Who are you!

DUSTY

WHO ARE YOU? AND WHAT DO YOU WANT?
AND WHY ARE YOU JUST IN JOCKS AND A ROBE? IT'S GROSS! ANSWER ME!

BOB

I'm also wearing headphones!

DUSTY

COME HERE.

[Bob tries to run.]

DUSTY (CONT'D)

Gotcha! Where do you think you're going, Cinderella?

BOB

I'm not Cinderella.

(Dusty grabs Bob)

WHO ARE YOU THEN!

BOB

Science Officer Bob Boyd! Botanist! Very delicate! Unable to touch the ground! Impressed by your strength. About to pee in fear.

AURELIA

Dusty, put him down.

[Dusty drops Bob with a FLOMP.]

AURELIA (CONT'D)

Bob Boyd, where is Mars crew? Were they mantis'd? Turned into house plants?

BOB

What? No, I grew these plants.

AURELIA

A less exciting but much more logical explanation strikes again.

BOB

It's to help with oxygen. Because, you know. The base is kind of falling apart.

AURELIA

We noticed. Where are the crew?

BOB

All I know is I was having a nap a few months back... and when I woke up, everyone was gone. Just like my sixth birthday all over again... Are you here to rescue me?

DUSTY

Definitely not. Now - Headphones back on, music loud.

[Bob puts back on his headphones and music blasts his ears. Dusty clicks her fingers and sings.]

DUSTY (CONT'D)

Can you hear me?

(to Aurelia)

I don't trust it, Cap. Everyone gone but him... they "left"? Sounds convenient. Are we sure he didn't space madness murder everyone?

AURELIA

He doesn't look like he'd be able to murder much of anyone...

DUSTY

If not him then someone. Or something... What about that noise?

AURELIA

You're right. Keep your laser gun within reach Lieutenant...

DUSTY

Aye, Captain.

[Bob SINGS along to his music. It is loud. Awful. Screeching. Just like the alien scream... it *is* the "alien" scream.]

AURELIA

Huh. It was... his singing.

DUSTY

Easy mistake to make.

AURELIA

Let's not tell Captain Jackson that part...

(then)

Congratulations, Bob. You've been rescued.

BOB

(over headphone music)

WHAT??

9

INT. MARS RESEARCH STATION - CARGO BAY - LATER

9

Sim, Solaris and Mo are back in the Cargo Bay.

SIM

Alright the hold is clear. Let's try this again. Mission Objective D: Let's load up that regolith!

MO

I got this, gang. I once had a thing with a Romanian Olympic Power Lifter. She taught me the secret to a strong snatch-lift.

SIM

Mo, no. That pallet is far too big.

MO

Nah, it's all about lifting deep within your arse, Cap. It's like -

[Mo strains, grunts, groans with effort. Stops.]

MO (CONT'D)

That reminds me... you and Aurelia were doing the dirty, huh?

[Sim is getting angry.]

SIM

Computer, extend the Q Star's loading winch into Mars Station Cargo bay.

COMPUTER

Unable to comply. Wo-manual systems-

SIM

Are engaged. Ugh!

SOLARIS

Uh, Captain, I have an idea.

MO

Just so we're all clear, you and Aurelia are both single now?

SIM

Everyone on this crew is single.

SOLARIS

Oh, really?

MO

Nice.

SIM

Everyone is single because no one will be hooking up.

MO

What!

SIM

It's against ISA protocol, Mo. It jeopardises our historic mission.

(MORE)

SIM (CONT'D)

It's why the ISA made an all non-men crew in the first place.

MO

Ha! This mission is historic, Captain. Even though it was clearly an ISA stuff up, we have the first all queer crew. On an intergalactic mission. In flight suits. In a hot pink rocket... I mean, look at these utility bum bags. Look at these haircuts! Subjecting *this* crew to a bonk ban is straight up homophobic.

SIM

Ugh! Hand me that crowbar! I'm going to disengage that Wo-manual for good!

COMPUTER

Female hysteria detected, protective measures engaged.

[BEEPING]

[The loading bay door begins to close.]

SIM

What! Computer, cease closing loading bay door!

SOLARIS

(loudly)

Computer, disengage wo-manual.

COMPUTER

Wo-manual disengaged. Winch extending.

[The mechanical winch unspools.]

SIM

Oh.

SOLARIS

I did think it might need a serious hack-a-thon, but as I'm a *not* woman enby... ta-dah!

SIM

Right. Ok. Great job. Objective D! For real this time.

[Solaris clips the winch to the regolith pallet.]

SOLARIS

Winch attached, Captain!

SIM

Computer?

COMPUTER

Transferring regolith to the Q
Star's hold.

[The winch engages.]

SOLARIS

It's working!

SIM

Thank...

[The winch groans, an alarm beeps]

MO

Is it supposed to be on that weird
angle?

SOLARIS

It's overbalancing somehow!

SIM

It's tipping! Take cover!

SOLARIS

The regolith!

[Mo, Solaris, Sim dive away. CRASH! Mars rocks spray across
the cargo bay. And spills. And spillllllllls.]

MO

Ah man. Anyone got a giant dustpan?

SIM

Hang on... what is this...
something is hidden in the
regolith... It's... some kind of
machine. Solaris, what is it?

SOLARIS

I don't know... I've never-- woah.
I mean, woah, but also like, what?
(hyperventilating)
This is... this is... Wait until I
tell Aurelia!

[A door opens. Aurelia, Dusty, and Bob enter.]

AURELIA

Tell me what?

MO

Aurelia! Dusty! Some dude!

AURELIA

HOLY HUBBLE, IS THAT A FASTER THAN LIGHT ENGINE?!

10

INT. SSQS - BRIDGE - SOME TIME LATER

10

Aurelia and Solaris geek out as they present the FTL drive to the crew (and Bob).

SIM

So... what does this faster than light engine mean for the ship, Specialist Solaris?

AURELIA

Does it mean that an entire universe of possibilities just opened up for us? That anything and anywhere is now within our reach? Tell us Solaris!

SIM

Or does it mean we can get back to Earth and complete the mission immediately?

SOLARIS

Uh... Yes, yes, and also yes!

MO

Hold on a tic - why was it hidden in a box of dirt?

DUSTY

Maybe we should ask Bobby...

AURELIA

I really don't think he knows anything, Dusty.

BOB

I really don't! Unless it's plant based. *Is* the engine plant-based?

MO

You know when I said I wanted something from the Mars gift shop, a man wasn't exactly what I had in mind Aurelia.

AURELIA

You can't always plan your discoveries, Mo! And lets be a little gentle, everyone! Three months alone has really... had an impact on poor Bob here.

BOB

Has it?

SIM

Three months? That's when we got the last message from General Swan. Surely not a coincidence. Solaris - access our last communication from Swan, see if you can clean it up.

SOLARIS

On it! Accessing the ship mainframe through my work pad... standby.

AURELIA

Wait a second, Sim.

[Aurelia pulls Sim aside, Solaris' efforts to repair the garbled message continuing in the background.]

AURELIA (CONT'D)

An FTL engine. No comms with the ISA. Sim, let's ditch the message and go do a few Faster Than Light laps of the galaxy before Papa Swan wants the car back!

SIM

What are you talking about? After the day we've had? We need to at least try to get in touch with ground control before we do *anything*.

AURELIA

Ugh sorry we can't all have the personality of a tax return like you, Sim.

SIM

You know what? Fine. If you want to steal a multimillion dollar ISA asset and go AWOL into sun, go for it. Just take me home to Earth first. I can't believe I thought I could Co-Captain with you.

AURELIA

Well I can't believe I thought I could date you!

SIM

Well you don't have to anymore! You don't have to see me again after today, either.

AURELIA

Totally fine. And great. And yeah.

[Solaris' work pad bleeps in celebration.]

SOLARIS

Got it!

AURELIA

Let's listen to that damn message then.

[BEEP. General Swan's message plays.]

[Swan can be heard under attack, surrounded by chaos.]

GENERAL SWAN

Ladies, the situation has deteriorated. I shudder to think of you all alone up there... no one to protect you but the binary robot.

AURELIA

Seriously, this guy -

EVERYONE ELSE

SHHHHH!

[A huge BOOM and CRASH are heard...]

GENERAL SWAN

Under no circumstances are you to leave Mars Base. Stay safe in the strong arms of our illustrious Mars crew. They'll know what to do. Do not attempt to return. Do not... Ah forget it, by the time you get this message Earth will have been -

[KA BOOM! The message cuts out.]

COMPUTER

No further communications have been received. No satellite activity detected. No cellular, no wifi -- No life signs, no radio -

SOLARIS

...no life signs?

SIM

Earth has been...?

MO

Later daysed?

DUSTY

Alderon-ed?

COMPUTER

Sensors indicate Earth's total destruction.

BOB

No... it can't be...

[Bob starts softly sobbing.]

SIM

We can't go home.

AURELIA

But we can't stay here...

DUSTY

So what the heck do we do now, Captains?

SIM

Uhhhh....

AURELIA

Well....

END OF EPISODE.

[Upbeat synth music plays - the extended Starship Q Theme by Jack Lewis.]

NARRATOR

Starship Q Star was written and created by Meegan May and Lauren Anderson. For credits, transcripts, and where to follow - head to starshipqstar.com.