

OBLIVITY

A scripted comedy series for audio

by Rob Stringer

Tagline:

Commander Falconer is missing the war.

Logline:

After fifteen years in Martian front line combat, Commander Falconer is posted to the remote ice plains of Pluto on her toughest mission yet: to oversee a small, civilian research team.

EPISODE 1: INCOMING

A spring clean is in order when Commander Falconer arrives at Research Station Persephone. But then a breach in the screen of the observation room threatens everybody's safety. And just what *did* happen at Mariner Valley?

COMMANDER FALCONER (FEMALE)

Battle-hardened and bewildered.

FIRST LIEUTENANT CHRISTY (FEMALE)

A peppy thrill-seeker and over-achiever.

OFFICER BURNEY (MALE)

Prodigious and introverted.

OFFICER LOWELL (MALE)

An impulsive wrecking-ball.

ORPHEUS: (MALE/FEMALE)

A bug-riddled computer.

VOICE OF THE SINISTER CORPORATION: (MALE/FEMALE)

Reassuringly sinister.

COLD OPEN: SCENE 1: INT. PERSEPHONE CONTROL ROOM, PLUTO

**FX: THE GENTLE RUMBLE OF AN AIRCRAFT.
 A TRANSCEIVER BEEPS.**

CHRISTY: This is Wing Commander Christy to Ground Control. We're cruising at a comfortable twenty thousand feet above the majestic Hellas Impact basin, and soaking in the rosy heavens of Mars. It's a crisp ten degrees and shaping up to be a beautiful-

FX: RADAR SIGNAL: A RAPID BURST OF BEEPS

We've company. And they're locking on. Officer Burney; what are we looking at?

BURNEY: Defectors. A class eight battleship.

CHRISTY: Damn. That means TN4 lasers and a sky-full of trouble. Officer Lowell, raise the thermoshields.

BEAT

CHRISTY: Officer Lowell?

BEAT

CHRISTY: Officer Lowell! The thermo-

BURNEY: He's not at his station.

CHRISTY: Where's he gone?

**FX: A TOILET FLUSHES FROM BEHIND A DOOR. THE DOOR
 SWISHES OPEN.**

LOWELL: Ribena creeps me out. Where does all the purple go?

CHRISTY: We need thermoshields!

LOWELL: Okey cokey. Lemme just log back on. (READING)
 "Your password will expire in nine days. Would
 you like to change it now?"

CHRISTY: Lowell!

LOWELL: Yeah?

CHRISTY: Shields! Honestly, it's like talking to a...

BURNEY: Teletubby.

CHRISTY: Exactly! (BEAT) What?

BURNEY: A seminal television series from before the earth was decommissioned. The four protagonists were pathologically addicted to repetition. It was actually a dark parody of humankind's vain pursuit of happiness.

CHRISTY: I know the programme! (BEAT) I took a module on it at college.

They're gaining on us. We should-

LOWELL: I'd be Dipsy: The *renegade*.

CHRISTY: *Dipsy?* Dipsy was stylish, and *cerebral*. The only time you're ever not wearing a dressing gown is when you're *not even wearing a dressing gown*, and you think the closest planet to the sun is called 'the melty one', and also, *why are we even talking about this?!* It's...

BURNEY: Irrelevant.

CHRISTY: Completely!

BURNEY: Because he'd be Po.

LOWELL: *Po-?!*

CHRISTY: Lowell! Shields! And that's... That's a command!

BURNEY: And Christy would be Laa Laa.

CHRISTY: *Laa Laa?!*

FX: A LASER BEAM STRIKES; A DEEP, EXPLOSIVE BOOMMM!!!! IT FADES INTO SILENCE.

BEAT

CHRISTY: Simulation *off*.

FX: A COMPUTER PROGRAMME WHIRS OFF

CHRISTY: How do I keep failing this? I'll never get my pilot's licence.

LOWELL: (WITH SLIGHTLY MELODRAMATIC OVERACTING) If *only* you could pinpoint the *problem!*

BURNEY: If it's any consolation, the data suggests our latest performance was 'commendable', for the five-to-seven age range.

CHRISTY: Maybe just one more try?

BURNEY: I have labwork. And Lowell, the fault we detected in the screen of the Observation Room has weakened further. I estimate it will be of critical concern within two days.

LOWELL: Dunno why you want a thinking job anyway, Christy.

BURNEY: Earlier if the base experiences a shock event, such as impact from extra-terrestrial debris.

LOWELL: You might end up like *him*. (IN A ROBOT VOICE) I AM BURNEY. I AM BORING. I KNOW WHAT THE MELTY ONE IS CALLED.

BURNEY: If the fault weakens, it will -

CHRISTY: We know... Compromise the whole base and suck us out and we'd freeze in a nanosecond.

BURNEY: Exactly. Which would be-

CHRISTY: -ace! The *recognition* we'd get! The crew of Pluto's only research station: ice sculptures, fixed for eternity in the very moment of our own horrifying deaths!

BURNEY: Just *two* of us would freeze on exposure. Cyborgs can survive for hours longer than unmodified humans in hostile environments: vacuums, sub-zero temperatures, an airport Travelodge-

F/X: AN ALERT SOUNDS OUT

ORPHEUS: *In der Rutsche dockt eine Schote an.*

BURNEY: Orpheus says a pod is docking.

CHRISTY: Who'd be coming all the way out here?

BURNEY: The readout indicates: Commander Falconer of the Fifth Martian Corps.

CHRISTY: Let me see that! Commander *Falconer*? From the front line? Falconer the Fearless? Valiant hero? Scourge of Defectors? Cover-star of last month's edition of *Who's Who on your Pedestal*? And she's coming *here*? Why didn't we know?

LOWELL: Spooky coincidence: our new supervisor - who HQ said was gonna arrive today - is also called Commander Falconer. *Ooooh...*

CHRISTY: And you didn't tell me? When did they tell you?

LOWELL: Remember that massive solar flare last week?

CHRISTY: Yes...

LOWELL: Yeah, me too! It was *awesome*.

CHRISTY: We're not in uniform! The base is a pigsty! Look at the control panel, it's... Ohh, whose chewing gum is that?! It's all hairy! *And there's a toenail in it!*

BURNEY: It's yours.

CHRISTY: *I know!* (STORMS OFF, WAILING)

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED

LOWELL: What's her problem?

BURNEY: I attempted to retrieve a diagnosis from her therapist when he visited last month.

LOWELL: (EXCITED) Was it *classified*?

BURNEY: No: he was running away too fast to hear me ask. But the real question is: why is *Commander Falconer* being stationed in a remote research outpost currently eight billion kilometres from home?

A BEAT - AS IF SCENE HAS ENDED

LOWELL: (COUGHS) Think I just swallowed a toenail.

GRAMS: 'OBLIVITY' THEME MUSIC

SCENE TWO: INT. DOCKING BAY

FX: **A PNEUMATIC HISS**

BURNEY: Pod depressurising.

CHRISTY: Quarantine mask on. (SLIGHTLY MUFFLED) I'm going in.

BURNEY: We'll be watching through the screen.

CHRISTY: Remember the training. If it turns out to be a threat and my life is in danger, what difficult decision might you have to make?

LOWELL: Popcorn: sweet or salty.

CHRISTY: No. You may have to incinerate the quarantine module, and sacrifice me to preserve the rest of the base.

LOWELL: Fingers crossed!

CHRISTY: Thanks. (REALISING) Fingers crossed for wha-

FX: **THE DOORS SWISH CLOSED**

BURNEY: Quarantine door closed. Communications via transceivers only.

CHRISTY: (VOICE DISTORTED BY THE TRANCEIVER) Where's the protocol manual?

LOWELL: What does it look like?

BURNEY: It's a manual. With 'protocol' written on it.

LOWELL: Alright, keep yer grav-pack on. Right. Where would a lost protocol manual be? (AGAIN, WITH SLIGHT MELODRAMA) Oh, if *only* there were some sort of *protocol* for this.

CHRISTY: (MAKES NOISE OF IRRITATION)

BURNEY: If it's any assistance, I have the manual committed to memory.

CHRISTY: (D) Yes! Tell me the procedure for welcoming Commander Falconer to Research Base Persephone.

BURNEY: Say: "Commander Falconer, welcome to Research Base Persephone."

CHRISTY: (D) Is that it?

BURNEY: Small-talk isn't really covered in the manual. You could reassure her that it's natural to display signs of nausea after photonic travel.

CHRISTY: (D) Got it. Over and out.

BURNEY: Pod hatch opening. Visual confirmation made of Commander Falconer. She's saying something. (BEAT) Oh.

LOWELL: What's happening?

BURNEY: She's displaying signs of nausea. Mostly over Christy's trousers.

LOWELL: Is that in the protocol manual?

SCENE THREE: INT. CONTROL ROOM

CHRISTY: Line up! The Commander will be out of the Infirmary any minute! Officer Burney, you've had all morning to analyse Petri dishes of silt; why choose now? Officer Lowell, where's your uniform? Oh it's too late! Remember: *best behaviour*.

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN

FALCONER: Good morning, ev-

CHRISTY: Good morning how was your shower none of us saw you naked.

FALCONER: Right. Look, about earlier - when I was... I hope your trousers are salvageable.

CHRISTY: It was an honour, Commander!

FALCONER: An honour?

LOWELL: She recorded it in the base journal.

BURNEY: With two thumbs up and a smiley face.

CHRISTY: Apologies, Commander, it's just - I've studied loads about the Phobian wars, and, I hope you don't mind me saying... It sounds ace! And I've never met anyone with an eyepatch before, and you're really good-looking, and how can I get an eyepatch? And would I need to completely remove an eye? Or just damage one? I suppose it doesn't matter, cos no one would see it under the eyepatch -

FALCONER: (INTERRUPTING) The Phobian wars weren't ace. They were extremely perilous.

CHRISTY: I s'pose. It's just that when you spend all day putting labels on seedlings, you find yourself thinking that a bit of peril might actually be quite fun.

FALCONER: You're the exobotanist.

CHRISTY: You've heard of me?

FALCONER: I listened to the briefing on the journey here. It said that First Officer Christy was female, and an exobotanist. I pieced things together from there.

CHRISTY: (EXCITED WHIMPER) Ace!

FALCONER: Well Officer, you've no doubt run a tight ship in the interim since my predecessor retired. I look forward to seeing your horticultural work in the organisphere.

LOWELL: (SNORTS)

FALCONER: Is something funny?

LOWELL: 'Organ'.

FALCONER: I see. I expect more decorum from someone who apparently believes themselves above wearing their uniform.

LOWELL: It's in the wash. That's a lie. I made it into a tent.

FALCONER: Well I'm sure you're comfortable in your *dressing gown*. Cosy when it's minus 300 degrees outside

BURNEY: Currently minus 323, expected to reach minus 332 tonight.

FALCONER: Ah, now I've been particularly looking forward to meeting you.

LOWE/CHRI: Him?

FALCONER: Yes, him. And you'd do well to show him some respect.

LOWE/CHRI: *Him?*

FALCONER: Officer, I first wish to say that I was sorry to hear about the accident that led to your condition.

BURNEY: My condition?

FALCONER: There's no need to feel ashamed. Too many subjects come out of the procedure a mere shell of who they once were. Whatever anyone says, you're still you. And you still have your dignity. And I wasn't going to mention it, but I regularly donate to support the rehabilitative work of the Cyborg Alliance.

BEAT

LOWELL: You think he's a cyborg?

FALCONER: The briefing said...

BURNEY: Lowell's the cyborg-

LOWELL: -*I'm* the cyborg! Oh man, that's really embarrassing for you!

FALCONER: So you're-

BURNEY: Burney-

FALCONER: - The astrochemist. Officer Lowell, please accept my apologies.

LOWELL: No need! Best thing that ever happened to me! They built me up again wicked. Got me a new exoskin, synthetic cells, completely atmosphere proof lungs, and look, I can make my eyes flash red. (MAKING A LIGHT-SABRE NOISE) *Wo..wo...* And check this out - half a titanium skull. I can

smash a wrench on my head and not feel a thing
- look!

FX: **A THUNK, FOLLOWED BY THE THUDDING OF LOWELL
COLLAPSING ON THE FLOOR.**

FALCONER: Bloody hell-

CHRISTY: Oh, he'll be fine. He always forgets which side
the metal is on.

FALCONER: But what would make you forget a thing like -
oh I see. In that case, my apologies to you
Officer Burney, for the mix-up. Only you seemed
a bit...

BURNEY (GENUINELY UNOFFENDED) A bit what?

PAUSE

FALCONER: Perhaps a tour of the base?

BURNEY: Do you have any interest in silt?

SCENE FOUR: INT. ORGANISPHERE

FX: **THE GENTLE SOUND OF FOUNTAIN WATER RUNNING**

CHRISTY: ...and I've read all about the Mars campaigns a
hundred times - the stand-off at Mariner
Valley: you and a *ragtag bunch of misfits*
against a whole army of Defectors camped out in
the Eos Chasmata. The boys'd love to hear you
tell that story, wouldn't you Burney?

BURNEY: I would like to hear someone who isn't Christy
tell that story, yes.

FALCONER: (SWIFTLY CHANGING SUBJECT) So this is where the
food is grown.

CHRISTY: Yeppo. Artificial light and heat. Orpheus:
Temperature report.

ORPHEUS: *Treinte-dos grados. ¡Hace Calor!*

FALCONER: What was that?

CHRISTY: Sorry Commander. That must be confusing. I guess you don't see much tech like this out in the field. Orpheus is a *computer*.

BURNEY: Somebody spilt milkshake into the mainframe.

CHRISTY: Orpheus, meet Commander Falconer.

ORPHEUS: (HARSHLY) *AANGENAAM KENNIS TE MAKEN!*

CHRISTY: I *think* that was 'Nice to meet you'. Though as you're new, there's a *small* chance it said 'preparing to execute intruder'.

FALCONER: How can we know which it was?

BURNEY: Are you experiencing an agonising ray of intense heat penetrating your temples?

FALCONER: No...

BURNEY: Hmm. The Nice-to-meet-you laser must be broken.

FALCONER: Thank you, Orpheus.

ORPHEUS: (BRIGHTLY) *¡De Nada!*

FALCONER: These look mouth-watering. I've not eaten a tomato in months.

CHRISTY: Ah, that's not a *tomarto* - it's a *tomayto*. It's a tomato-potato hybrid. Crossbred for optimised nutritional value.

FALCONER: So...

BURNEY: It looks like a tomato. But it tastes like a potato.

FALCONER: Oh. You say *tomarto*...

BURNEY: Yes.

FALCONER: No, I mean 'I say *potayto*, you say'-

BURNEY: Also *potayto*.

CHRISTY: The long pink ones are aubergranites, the big yellow ones are pine-abbages, and the curvy green ones there are spinanas. (BEAT) Spinachy bananas.

FALCONER: The view through the skylight is something special. Never thought I'd see the Sys' from this end.

CHRISTY: Sys'?

FALCONER: Solar system. Soldier speak.

CHRISTY: Ace! Do you say things like '*affirmative*'?

FALCONER: *Affirmative.*

CHRISTY: Yeah. Do you say it?

FALCONER: *Affirmative.*

CHRISTY: Yeah. Do you say it?

FALCONER: Yes.

CHRISTY: Ace.

BURNEY: We're actually looking outwards. That's the Kuiper belt. A vast region of hundreds of thousands of small, icy bodies and more than a trillion comets, and beyond them, the uncharted universe, expanding out forever into immeasurable, lifeless, frozen oblivion.

FALCONER: Put like that, it could make a person feel -

BURNEY Despondent? Trivial? Completely insignificant?

FALCONER: That's the one, thank you Officer.

BURNEY: You're welcome.

FALCONER: Oh look! A shooting star.

CHRISTY: Oh we get loads of those, don't we, Burney?

BURNEY: If you mean *meteors*, then yes.

FALCONER: And do *meteors* ever hit the base?

BURNEY: Never.

FALCONER: Excellent.

BURNEY: A meteor *couldn't* hit the base because it's actually just the light you see from physical objects such as *meteoroids*, which hit the base *all* the time.

FALCONER: We're safe though?

CHRISTY: Safe? Yeah! Can't live below the belt without the universe punting a ball into our garden every now and again. We're *totally* safe.

BURNEY: Except for the fault.

FALCONER: What fault?-

CHRISTY: Nobody's fault!

FALCONER: The base is sound, is it not?

BURNEY: Not compl-

CHRISTY: Yes Burney, it is, isn't it. Because if it wasn't, we would all be at risk. And if we were at risk, something terrible might happen to us and your silt analyser might *accidentally get all smashed up*.

BEAT

BURNEY: Everything is absolutely fine.

CHRISTY: Exactly. I'm just going to see if Lowell's woken up yet.

FALCONER: I'll come with you -.

CHRISTY: No! Stay here for a bit. Try a satsummer!

FX: THE DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED

FALCONER: (AWKWARD THROAT CLEAR) Are you going to make a wish, on the - uh...

BURNEY: No.

FALCONER: What *do* you do with meteoroids then?

BURNEY: What do I do with plummeting composites of rock and metal?

FALCONER: Yes.

BURNEY: I try not to stand beneath them.

FALCONER: Shake things up. Make a wish.

BURNEY: I wish to not be crushed by a meteoroid.

FALCONER: You've never done this before have you?

BURNEY: I can't accept that there's sufficient evidence that a desire can be fulfilled simply by articulating it in the general direction of falling rubble.

FALCONER: Right.

BURNEY: Are you wishing something?

FALCONER: Yes. I rather suppose I am.

SCENE FIVE: INT. CONTROL ROOM

CHRISTY: *Lowell! Wake up!*

LOWELL: (GROGGY) Not the spinana!

CHRISTY: You need to fix the fault in the Observation Room!

LOWELL: What happened to human ice cubes and being famous and stuff?

CHRISTY: That was before there was a chance we'd get told off for it.

LOWELL: Oh. Well I can't do it anyway.

CHRISTY: But you're the engineer! You fix things!

LOWELL: Yeah... So y'know the manual on base maintenance?

CHRISTY: You've lost that too?

LOWELL: Lost it? Nah nothing like that! No. I ate it.

CHRISTY: You what?

LOWELL: It was Burney's fault! We had this bet about whether I could eat a book.

CHRISTY: Great. Well I hope it was worth endangering us all to win a stupid bet.

LOWELL: Win? No, I *lost*. He bet that I could eat it, I bet that I couldn't. I was gutted. Next time I'll pick something that I *definitely* can't eat. That'll show him.

CHRISTY: Falconer's gonna flip!

LOWELL: Chill! I can probably figure this breach thing out. In fact I'm sure that as long as I can fix it from the *inside*, everything is groovy.

CHRISTY: Good.

LOWELL: Yep, as long as nothing happens meaning we have to fix it from the outside - which is *incredibly* unlikely - then I'm confident I can do it.

CHRISTY: They're coming. Keep this under wraps 'til you get a chance to sneak into the Observation room without the Commander noticing. Until then, keep her out of there, and act normal.

LOWELL: Normal. Got it.

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED

FALCONER: Officer Lowell, glad to see you're up and-

LOWELL: I CAN BALANCE A TABLE ON MY HEAD.

BEAT

FALCONER: As we're all together, I feel I should address any misinterpretations about my tenure of leadership here. I do not intend to remain long in this position. My understanding is that this is a temporary situation until I'm posted back to Mars and into the field. I'm just... waiting for the call. Are we clear?

BEAT

BURNEY: Is it the toenails?

FALCONER: The toenails are irrelevant. As are the smears of toothpaste on the light-switches, the used

verruca plasters on my pillow, and - I didn't even know mould could *grow* in mid-air.

CHRISTY: Floating fungus? I'm documenting it.

FALCONER: Exactly when did anyone last clean around here?

LOWELL: Remember last week when there was that massive solar flare?

CHRISTY: Not now, Lowell.

FALCONER: What did my predecessor actually *do*?

BURNEY: He just sort of let us do what we wanted.

CHRISTY: Not that we're comparing you to him.

LOWELL: No, that'd be unfair.

FALCONER: Thank you.

LOWELL: Cos he was *way* cooler.

FALCONER: Well, as I'm here, I may as well instigate some improvements. I propose a decontamination of the base.

BEAT

FALCONER: A spring clean.

OTHERS: Ohh/Nooo/Booring!

FALCONER: It might not be exciting, or scientific, or *cool*, but it is necessary.

CHRISTY: If we do it, will you tell us about the stand-off at Mariner Valley?

FALCONER: First Officer Christy, are you attempting to *bargain* when I've just given an order? Because I can assure you I will not stand for such -

LOWELL: Marinervalleymarinervalleymarinervalley
(CONT - AS FALCONER ATTEMPTS TO KEEP ADMONISHING)

FALCONER: ...contempt...for...will...you...just...

BURNEY: He literally won't stop until you agree.

LOWELL: -valleymarinervalley-

FALCONER: Fine!

(LOWELL STOPS.)

Well negotiated. Let's divvy up. Sleeping quarters A and Control Room: Burney.

BURNEY: Ohh.

LOWELL: Haha!

FALCONER: Shower room and lavatory: Lowell.

BURNEY: Ha.

LOWELL: Ohhhh...

FALCONER: Sleeping quarters B and Infirmary: Christy. And I'll start with the Observation Room-

CHRISTY: No! You only just arrived - you should be relaxing!

FALCONER: I'd like to see the view.

CHRISTY: But the view is far better from... the... Infirmary!

FALCONER: The *windowless* Infirmary. As opposed to the *Observation* Room?

CHRISTY: Oh you mean a view of *outside*.

FALCONER: Precisely. And in any case I've already spent time in the Infirmary.

CHRISTY: But there's so much more to discover! The... shiny metal walls... the emergency defibrillator that sort of fizzles every two minutes *exactly*, and... Oh! The poster on the ceiling with a kitten in a watering can!

LOWELL/BURNEY: Its little face!/It's certainly engaging.

CHRISTY: In fact maybe *Lowell* should do the Observation Room instead.

LOWELL: Why me?

CHRISTY: I really think it would fit your skill set.

FALCONER: I really don't care who does it as long as it's done.

LOWELL: OK, whatever, I'll do it.

CHRISTY: Thank you.

LOWELL: If bumface does the lav.

BURNEY: What?

CHRISTY: Just do it, Burney.

ALL BUT FALC: (IMMEDIATELY ESCALATES INTO BICKERING THAT STOPS WHEN CHRISTY SAYS-)

CHRISTY: Wait! Where did the Commander go?

BURNEY: She went to the Infirmary with her head in her hands.

CHRISTY: Perfect! In that case, Burney, let's go do our work, and Lowell - (CALLING BACK) you know what you need to do!

FX: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES

LOWELL: Yeah yeah, on it. Ain't nothing gonna distract m- ooh! A radio! Wonder what's on?

FX: HE TUNES THROUGH A FEW STATIONS STATIONS, AND SETTLES ON STATIC.

LOWELL: Static! Awesome!

FX: STATIC FADES TO END SCENE

GRAMS: OBLIVITY MOTIF THEME TO SIGNAL TIME PASSING

SCENE SIX: INT. RECREATION ROOM

GRAMS: THE ROUSING MUSIC OF A RADIO 'PARTY POLITICAL'-STYLE BROADCAST

VOICE OF SIN.: (D) And finally, a reminder to report all suspicious behaviour and signs of Defector activity. Victory tomorrow depends on vigilance today. This has been a transmission from the

Syndicated Intelligence Network for
Interplanetary Science, Technology and
Exploratory Research.

GRAMS: **A BLAND JINGLE OVER WHICH VOICE OF SIN SINGS
'WE'RE LISTENING'**

FX: **RADIO CLICKS OFF**

LOWELL: (STRETCHING) Right, best get cracking.
(SINGING - BADLY - WHILE WALKING)

*Here I go in the Observation Roooom.
To fix some thingy that will bring us to our
dooooom.
The base will implode and everyone will go
boooooom!
Except for me cos I'm a cyborg.*

(SPEAKING AGAIN) Ah man, my ear's itching like
crazy... eurg... Hey guys! Look what I found in
my- Guys?! Ah whatever. I'll just leave it...
here. Right. What was I doing? Ah yeah, I was
gonna draw a wicked cool squid wearing a jet
pack! Blub-blub-blub-Pkewwwwww...!

SCENE SEVEN: INT. CONTROL ROOM

F/X: **SHUMP-ING OF A KNIFE CHOPPING A VEGETABLE**

FALCONER: Finished the control room, Officer Burney?

BURNEY: Yes.

FALCONER: Sit with me while I prepare this- Actually I
don't know what it is but I'm sure it's
delicious. Or at least, nutritious. Or at
least, edible. Or at least..

So, tell me about your work.

BURNEY: OK.

BEAT

FALCONER: Exploring Pluto's habitability. Lots of
fascinating discoveries I'm sure!

BURNEY: Oh, yes.

FALCONER: Studying those *meteoroids*.

BURNEY: No.

FALCONER: Oh?

BURNEY: If they've landed, they're *meteorites*.

FALCONER: Oh, potayto potar - in fact, never mind. It's been a long day.

BURNEY: A Pluto day is approximately six times longer than a Mars day.

FALCONER: Yes. It really is.

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED

FALCONER: Officer Christy! So good to see you! Please join us! *Take a seat!* (BEAT) Not quite so close.

CHRISTY: Oh yum! Courgantalooue! Where's Lowell?

LOWELL: Here!

FALCONER: What the hell are you doing down there?

LOWELL: I've been balancing this table on my head for *ages* now and *nobody* noticed.

FALCONER: At least that explains the draft on my ankles. Your breath.

LOWELL: It wasn't breath.

FALCONER: I take it you're both finished.

CHRISTY: Affirmative.

LOWELL: Affirmawhat?

CHRISTY: It's a soldier thing.

FALCONER: What did you do with the rubbish?

BURNEY: We collected it up, compacted it into a small, dense mass, and fired it into space.

FALCONER: You can do that?

CHRISTY: Uh huh! Went right out into the Sys'.

LOWELL: Yeah it's totally *affirmative!*

FALCONER: You must have worked up an appetite. Snack?

LOWELL: Don't like courganteloupe.

FALCONER: Oh come on. It's probably good for you.

LOWELL: Nuh uh, don't want it.

BURNEY: I bet you can eat the whole lot.

LOWELL: What? I bet I can't... (EATS LOUDLY THEN STOPS ABRUPTLY, MOUTH FULL) Damn you Burney!

CHRISTY: So?

FALCONER: So what?

CHRISTY: The campaigns!

FALCONER: It's getting late-

CHRISTY: You *promised*.

FALCONER: I did. Well, there was one time in the volcanic plains of Tharsis-

BURNEY: You said you'd tell us about Mariner Valley.

FALCONER: But the Tharsis story is much more -

LOWELL: Marinervalleymarinervalleymarinervalleymariner-

FALCONER: OK! There's really not much to tell. I was with my unit -

CHRISTY: A ragtag bunch of misfits.

FALCONER: We'd been fighting for several days. There was a group of Defectors.

LOWELL: Boooo.

FALCONER: There was a battle, and we won. The end.

LOWELL: Yayyy!

BURNEY: Is that it?

CHRISTY: She's being modest. The team were tragically taken out, one by one, and there was only you left, and you thought your number was up, so you took one last run for glory, blaster blazing, right to the final pulsar. And just when you thought that that was it - the cavalry came swooping down! They were so impressed by your valour that they decorated you with the Martian Hexagon.

LOWELL: What's the Martian Hexagon?

BURNEY: It's like the Martian Triangle-

CHRISTY: - but *twice* as pointy.

ORPHEUS: *Einn að koma. Einn að koma..*

FALCONER: What was that?

BURNEY: An impact warning. A meteoroid's going to hit the base.

FALCONER: Really? I'm going to head to the Observation Room. See if I can spot it.

CHRISTY: Oh, we'll come too!

FALCONER: No! Your orders are to... stay here and be really, really quiet.

CHRISTY: Aye aye- (HUSHED) *Commander!*

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN

LOWELL: Do you ever get the naggin' feeling there's something you've forgotten to do?

CHRISTY: No. (SUSPICION DAWNING) Why... Do you?

LOWELL: Me? Nah.

CHRISTY: It's OK for the Commander to go to the Observation Room, isn't it?

LOWELL: Why wouldn't it be?

CHRISTY: You did the *thing*.

LOWELL: Jeez, you take me for a moron you guys. Of course I did the thing. (WHISPERS) Burney - *What's the thing?*

FALCONER: (OFF) Lowell! A word!

LOWELL: Oh that's right. I didn't clean the Observation Room.

FX: WHISTLE OF METEOROID FALLING, HUGE SHAKING CRUNCH. SIRENS RING OUT.

LOWELL: Also, I didn't fix the fault.

CHRISTY: Commander!

FX: DOOR SWISHES CLOSED

BURNEY: The door just closed. Use the transceiver.

FX: TRANCEIVER BEEP

CHRISTY: Commander, there's sort of a little issue.

FALCONER: (D) What's happening?

CHRISTY: Thing is, there might have been a teeny fault in the observation screen which needed fixing, and the meteoroid hitting the base has made it worse, so basically any moment the screen will crack and all the air will disappear from the room, along with everything else, so you need to get out immediately before the door automatically-

FX: DOOR CLUNKING LOCKED

CHRISTY: -locks down.

BURNEY: You probably should have led with the 'get out immediately' part.

FALCONER: (D) What do I do?

LOWELL: OK Commando. I need you to listen very carefully to this.

FALCONER: (D) It's Commander. But yes, I'm listening.

LOWELL: The most important thing to remember... (BEAT) is that it's Burney's fault.

BURNEY: Me? Why?

FALCONER: (D) That's not exactly top of my agenda right now.

LOWELL: Really? In that case, yeah it was my bad. Phew! Feels good getting that out!

FALCONER: (D) I'd really appreciate some help here.

CHRISTY: Orpheus - sirens off!

FX: SIRENS END

CHRISTY: So, we can't get in the room with you to fix the fault before it all implodes, and we don't know how to fix it from outside.

BURNEY: I do.

LOWELL: Nobody cares, Bumfluff.

BURNEY: (UNOFFENDED) OK.

CHRISTY: No, we do care! Do you really know?

BURNEY: I memorised the manual before Lowell ate it.

FALCONER: (D) OK. Here's what I want you to do, and it's going to need teamwork.

BEAT

LOWELL: Please define the word 'teamwork'.

GRAMS: BATTLE-LIKE DRUMS CREATE A SENSE OF 'GETTING READY TO TAKE ACTION'

FALCONER: (D) Officer Burney, you're going to use transceivers to dictate the instructions to Lowell, who'll go outside and fix the fault.

CHRISTY: What about me? I could throw on a spacesuit and do it!

LOWELL: Yeah why can't she do it?

FALCONER: (D) Because putting on a suit is wasteful of oxygen which you might need if this room blows. Also, it takes time, of which I understand I

have precious little. While Officer Lowell, as he has himself pointed out, has a synthetic exoskin, and atmos-proof lungs, and can go outside without coming to any immediate harm whatsoever.

LOWELL: Oh well that's *convenient*.

FALCONER: (D) Go!

LOWELL: Alright... Come on Bunghole. (EXITS GRUMBLING)

FX: DOOR SWISH OPEN AND CLOSED

CHRISTY: What do I do?

FALCONER: (D) You have the most important job of all.

CHRISTY: Yessss! I knew it! Name it. I'm your girl.

FALCONER: (D) I understand the base is modular, and you can safely dispose of any single room if necessary.

CHRISTY: Yep. Under emergency conditions, for instance if one room compromises the rest of the base, we can switch on the incinerators and safely destroy - oh poo..

FALCONER: (D) If it looks to me at any point like the screen will break, I'll say the word, and you flick the switch.

CHRISTY: But-

FALCONER: (D) It's better than risking the whole base.

CHRISTY: I don't want to.

FALCONER: (D) No, but a good First Officer knows when they have to.

CHRISTY: Fine. Though I want it on record that this job sucks.

GRAMS: ENDS

SCENE EIGHT: INT. DOCKING BAY

F/X: A TRANCEIVER WHIRS ON

LOWELL: (INTO TRANCEIVER) This is Officer Lowell to Officer Burney. Do you copy, Officer Burney?

BURNEY: Yes. Can I have my transceiver now please.

LOWELL: OK. Got me dressing gown, got me fluffy hat. Ready to go.

BURNEY: And the repair tool?

LOWELL: Oh yeah! Mustn't forget that!

BURNEY: Opening internal door.

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN

LOWELL: Off I go.

BURNEY: The repair tool?

LOWELL: Oh yeah! I'd forget my head if it wasn't thermo-glued on.

FX: DOOR SWISHES CLOSED

LOWELL: CONT: (D) Internal door closed. External door opening. Oooh chilly!

BURNEY: Are you outside now? Copy.

LOWELL: (D) Yep. Wait... What's that? There's some sort of *thing* crawling out from the meteorite... It's seen me! It's going to - It's Aaaaaagh...!

BEAT

BURNEY: Lowell?

BEAT

LOWELL: (D) Haha! Got ya, ya wuss.

BURNEY: We should keep lines open for essential dialogue only. Copy.

LOWELL: (D) Then shut your stupid face. Copy.

SCENE NINE: INT. CONTROL ROOM

CHRISTY: How are you doing, Commander?

FALCONER: (D) I was looking at the view, but somehow staring out at the vacuum you might get sucked into isn't very soothing. I've found some twenty-first century literature in the bookcase instead.

CHRISTY: Burney insisted on those. He says they're 'early deconstructionist classics'. It must have been very hot in those times, going from how few clothes the people in the pictures have on.

FALCONER: (D) Christy, have you ever been in a position like this?

CHRISTY: Depends - which one are you reading?

FALCONER: (D) I mean a position like mine right now. Confronting your mortality.

CHRISTY: Can't say I have, Commander. This isn't about Burney is it? Cos five minutes with him and suddenly getting sucked into space seems quite a rational life-decision.

FALCONER: (D) You think you'll learn from your mistakes, then before you know it, it's Mariner Valley all over again.

SCENE TEN: INT. DOCKING BAY

BURNEY: Have you located the breach? Copy. (PAUSE) Have you located the breach?

LOWELL: (D) Mate, there is a MASSIVE ice-drift out here. Sort of looks like a Danish pastry. It's wicked for sliding. Waaahhaayyy!

BURNEY: Falconer said we have to work together.

LOWELL: (D) Oh *did* she. Well the maintenance book is in *my* belly, which means whatever *I* say is right. And right now I say... Hold on... Just waiting for a burp... It'll be funny, trust me... Any moment...

FX: A SIREN BLARES

LOWELL: Did you hear it?!

BURNEY: No. The warning siren was too loud.

LOWELL: (TASTING BURP REMNANTS) Ugh. Courganteloupe.

SCENE ELEVEN: INT. CONTROL ROOM

ORPHEUS: *Implózia za päť minút*

FX: SIREN ENDS

CHRISTY: Orpheus estimates **five** minutes until implosion.

FALCONER: (D) Get ready to flick the switch.

CHRISTY: Commander; what did you mean?

FALCONER: (D) What?

CHRISTY: You said "It's Mariner Valley all over again."
What did you mean?

FALCONER: (D) It doesn't matter. Pretend I never said anything.

CHRISTY: Right. (BEAT) The thing is, I'm not very good at pretending. At school, when the other kids played soldiers, I played 'sitting in the corner of the playground on my own eating my sandwich and watching the other kids playing soldiers'.

FALCONER: That sounds... sad.

CHRITY: Oh no, I was *the best* at it!

FALCONER: (D) In any case we don't have time.

CHRISTY: We do! We've at least-

ORPHEUS: *Apat na minuto*

CHRISTY: **Four** minutes.

FALCONER: (D) Fine. But only if you flick the switch immediately afterwards.

CHRISTY: Exobotanist's honour! (BEAT) It's a real thing. Among exobotanists.

FALCONER: It was meant to be our last mission before coming home. A couple of cornered Defectors they said. An easy round-up job. We were just a small crew.

CHRISTY: A ragtag bunch of-

FALCONER: (D) Misfits, yes.

But something wasn't right. The canyons were quiet - I mean they always are, but this was different: like holding your breath; like the gap between heartbeats.

They came out of nowhere. No, that's not right. They came out of everywhere. The fissures in the rock. The shadows cast by debris. They weren't hidden in the terrain, they were the terrain.

Somebody spoke. And somebody moved. And somebody fired. I yelled for my unit to retreat, but my voice disappeared in the crossfire; into red beams and screaming and terrible confusion until-

I looked up. Into the vastness of the sky, and its stars: each of them so small, yet each burning so fiercely; both distant and immediate; both ancient and so, so new. And suddenly I was up there with them, looking down at the people below; their tiny lives like sparks from a fading fire. I wanted to stay up there forever.

When back-up arrived, they found me hiding like a coward and shaking like a rabid dog.

I should have been discharged; but they wanted a hero. There was a sham medal ceremony, notice of a temporary reassignment, then they packed me off to the armpit of the Sys' where I could 'recuperate'. Their words.

So that's what happened. I failed. Now flick the switch.

BEAT

CHRISTY: OK!

Initiating incineration in three, two, one -
Hang on. The *what* of the Sys'?

SCENE TWELVE. EXT. PLUTO'S SURFACE

FX: **A CHILL WIND**

LOWELL: OK...breach ...*b-reach*... *brea*-ch... b-r-eeeea- Oh hey!
I can see the Commando through the screen! Hey
Commando! Look! She's not looking this way. Hey
Commando! Nah she can't hear me. (BEAT)
Commando!

FX: **A TAPPING ON GLASS, FOLLOWED BY CREAK OF GLASS
FURTHER CRACKING.**

LOWELL: Oh... Umm... Breach located. Copy.

BURNEY: OK, are you ready with the tool? You have to
follow the instructions exactly or it won't
work.

LOWELL: Ready.

BURNEY: One: remove the cap. Two: spray evenly over
damaged area. Three: wait for it to dry.

FX: **A SPRAYCAN SOUND**

LOWELL: Done. How long does drying take?

BURNEY: *About one minute.*

SCENE THIRTEEN: INT. OBSERVATION ROOM

ORPHEUS: *One minute 'til breach compromised*

FALCONER: Oh! Orpheus spoke in English!

CHRISTY: (D) You're changing the subject.

FALCONER: I didn't mean *armpit* exactly. Look, the rescue
mission clearly isn't going to work. Flick the
switch. And that's an order.

CHRISTY: (D) You didn't want to be posted here at all,
did you.

FALCONER: What? No I did. Really, I did. It's a *superb* research base-

CHRISTY: (D) You're just saying that because you want me to incinerate you.

FALCONER: No really! And you're an excellent crew.

CHRISTY: (D) Go on...

FALCONER: What? Well... Um... You, Christy... You have... drive! So much in fact, that sometimes I wish you could bottle it.

CHRISTY: (D) You mean I could make a ton of money from selling it?

FALCONER: Yyyes...

CHRISTY: (D) And the others?

FALCONER: Well... Burney knows a lot of things about space. Why go *into* the endless void, when he can give you the full experience just by opening his mouth? And Lowell. Where to start with Lowell? I guess the most important thing you can say about Lowell is that he is... also here.

CHRISTY: (D) So what you're saying is...

ORPHEUS: Ten seconds.

FX: FAST-PACED BEEPING

FALCONER: Oh! I see! Yes, what I'm saying Christy, is that you're a 'ragtag bunch of misfits'!

CHRISTY: (D) Yes! Aces! Best damn team in the Sys'!

ORPHEUS: Five seconds.

FALCONER: Switch!

CHRISTY: (D) Affirmative, Commander! Flicking the... Euuuggghh. There's earwax all over it. I'm not touching that!

FX: BEEPING ENDS. SILENCE.

ORPHEUS: *Brot tryggd. Door Lás*

FALCONER: What was that?

CHRISTY: (D) Ummm... Icelandic.

FALCONER: But what did it say?!

CHRISTY: (D) Oh, it said the breach is secure. (BEAT)
That means they fixed it!

FX: DOOR SWISH OPEN

SCENE FOURTEEN: INT. CONTROL ROOM

CHRISTY: Commander!

FALCONER: (MUFFLED) I'm not really a hugger. (BEAT) I see
you are. (BEAT) Please stop.

FX: A DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED

BURNEY: (APPROACHING) Get away from me!

LOWELL: It's only a snowball.

BURNEY: It's frozen nitrogen!

FALCONER: Lowell, I bet you can eat that snowball.

LOWELL: Ah, no, you're not going to catch me out with
that one again!

FALCONER: No, you're right, I'm not.

LOWELL: What? Yes you are! (SWALLOWS) *Damnit!*

FALCONER: Did you find the meteorite?

BURNEY: It wasn't a meteorite actually.

FALCONER: Meteorite, meteoroid! Can you not just answer a
straight-

BURNEY: It wasn't even a rock.

FALCONER: Oh? Oh I see! The ball of waste; it fell back
down.

BURNEY: No, although it did originate from the base.
You see, we do that with *all* our waste - not

just the dust and litter. This was actually a dense composite of frozen human faec-

FALCONER: Stop right there, Officer Burney. I witnessed many horrors in battle that I can never unsee. I'm going to lie down and reminisce about those for a while.

SCENE FIFTEEN: INT. INFIRMARY

LOWELL: That's the observation screen reinforced from the inside. It's now completely safe for looking out at stars and..

CHRISTY: Planets?

LOWELL: No. The big invisible one with all the swirly bits.

BEAT

BURNEY: Space?

LOWELL: Yeah that's it. (*Relishing the word.*) Space.

FALCONER: I confess it is actually quite soothing.

CHRISTY: Yeah. I love how close it all seems, almost as if you could reach out and touch it.

FALCONER: I'm not even a kitten sort of person. But it's something about the way it's peeping over the rim of the watering can. You were right, the view is lovely in here.

LOWELL: And..

FX: A FIZZLE

LOWELL: Haha! Right on time again Mr. Sparky! Brilliant.

CHRISTY: Did you mean what you said back there? About us being the best team you've ever worked with?

FALCONER: I... couldn't ask for a better crew.

CHRISTY: Ace.

FALCONER: I put in a request, but Headquarters refused.

CHRISTY: (WISTFULLY. OBVIOUSLY NOT LISTENING) Best damn team in the Sys'.

LOWELL: Wanna see something cool? I can smash my head with this wrench and be absolutely fine on account of me half a titanium skull! Look!

FALCONER: Other side!

LOWELL: Oh yeah - that would've been embarrassing. Look!

FX: A THUNK, FOLLOWED BY A THUDDING OF LOWELL COLLAPSING ON FLOOR

FALCONER: No... Not the other side of the wrench.

CHRISTY: Should I wake him?

FALCONER: We *could*. Or we could leave him to rest for an hour.

BURNEY: A Pluto hour is six times longer than a Mars hour.

FALCONER: Yes it is. (CONTENTED SIGH) Yes that sounds exactly right.

GRAMS: OBLIVITY CLOSING THEME