

OBLIVITY

A scripted comedy series for radio

by Rob Stringer

EPISODE 3: REVOLUTIONS IN THE AIR

COLD OPEN: SCENE 1: INT. ORGANISPHERE

FX: GENTLE RUNNING OF WATER

CHRISTY: Morning, gorgeous. Look at you. You are *beautiful*. Yellow really suits you. It does! I mean it! I really *love* spending time with you. And you feel so... so...

LOWELL: AM I INTERRUPTING?

CHRISTY: Lowell! Jeez! How many times! *Knock* before entering the organisphere. It's not easy growing plants on Pluto; you can't just come clumping in with your big clumping cyborg feet in case I'm-

LOWELL: Perving on a daffodil. Got it.

CHRISTY: It's not a daffodil, and I'm not perving. It's research.

LOWELL: Dirty research. Got it. Anyway I did knock.

CHRISTY: On the door?

LOWELL: Yes.

CHRISTY: The door to the organisphere?

LOWELL: Ye - no.

CHRISTY: (SIGH) If you must know, it's a psychomimicellium. A psychic orchid. They imprint on the person who plants them, and create a sort of emotional bond, which is why I need to talk to her.

LOWELL: Her?

CHRISTY: She's a sort of... extension of me.

LOWELL: She's wilting.

CHRISTY: I know.

LOWELL: And all the other flowers look like they're trying to avoid her.

CHRISTY: Yes. I know.

LOWELL: Maybe she'll die alone.

CHRISTY: Did you want something?

LOWELL: The Commando wants you in the docking bay with her and bumface Burney.

CHRISTY: I'm working. What does she want?

LOWELL: Hang on; wrote it down. Look - flash cards. Made them by cutting up some of Burney's family photographs.

CHRISTY: Why would you do that?

LOWELL: To help me remember stuff, duh. Here y'go:
(READING) 'Get Christy. Why. Because we need her now. Can I help. No. Why not. Lowell, you are very sweet, but you have different a skillset to Christy and right now we need hers. What's my skillset. Well one of them is that you're very good at finding people. OK I'll get her. You don't need to write it down just get her. OK. Seriously, stop wri-' (PAUSE. STOPS READING) It stops there.

CHRISTY: I can't just run round after her. She doesn't own me. Tell her... Tell her I'm having time to myself - to tend to my flower.

LOWELL: Didn't think you'd care about some explorer who's about to crash-land into the base anyway.

CHRISTY: Explorer? Who?

LOWELL: I wrote that somewhere too. It was something dumb like 'a million bells'.

CHRISTY: Amelia Bell? Aviatrix and adventurer Amelia Bell who flew solo from Mars to Jupiter at just nineteen? That Amelia Bell? Amelia Bell the five-time winner of *Swoon* magazine's 'most swoony person' award? That Amelia Bell? Amelia Bell, author of best-selling book 'She Who Dares is Super-Daring' by Amelia Bell? *That Amelia Bell?*

LOWELL: Found it! (EXTENDED BEAT) Yep.

FX: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING OFF; DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED.

LOWELL: Christy? Christy! What about the flower thingy? Should I talk to it?! (BEAT) Uh... Hey. (BEAT) I said 'hey'. (BEAT) Fine, ignore me. (BEAT) Ugh you're JUST like her.

GRAMS: 'OBLIVITY' THEME MUSIC

SCENE TWO: INT. DOCKING BAY

FX: AN ALARM SOUNDS

FALCONER: Raising energy shields.

BURNEY: Stabilising traction beam.

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED

CHRISTY: Reporting for duty, Commander!

FALCONER: Officer Christy, our guest is in trouble - asteroid strike. We're actioning a manual assist, and I need you on comms. Use the transceiver.

CHRISTY: What do I say?

FALCONER: Ask what nail colour she thinks would look smashing on me.

CHRISTY: Really?

FALCONER: No! Get her engine status! Establish her position! Something useful!

BURNEY: Emergency runway clear for landing.

CHRISTY: I can't just launch in without preparing! I've never spoken to a famous explorer before! I need to say something *impressive*.

AMELIA: (D. THROUGH TRANCEIVER) 'You're not going to die' would be a start!

CHRISTY: Oh.

AMELIA: Altitude 2000 metres. Distance 10,000 metres. Trajectory... optimistic. Attempting to stabilise, which - given that a barrelling chunk of space gravel tore off one of my jets like King Kong waxing his bikini line - is proving to be an exciting challenge.

BURNEY: We have sixty per cent traction...

FALCONER: Is that enough?

AMELIA: I'll let you know. 'Yes' will mean yes, and a gurgling scream will mean - well, I'll keep that one a surprise shall I? Here goes nothing! Who needs an undercarriage anyway?!

FX: EXTENDED PAINFUL SCRAPING NOISE. SILENCE.

CHRISTY: Amelia? Are you OK? (BEAT) Amelia?

BEAT

AMELIA: (D) Remind me. Bone projecting out of arm: Good or bad?

SCENE THREE: INT. HANGAR

FX: ENGINEERING WORK: I.E. A TAP, CLANK AND GRIND OF METAL

CHRISTY: I'm glad the med-machine could fix your arm.

AMELIA: It's the ship I was worried about, but she's in fine fettle, all things considered. My fault for going full bore, full chat. Wasn't expecting such a hoosh never mind a jollop, but Quick scratch and sniff of the toaster, a whiffle of dove spit in the ticker, and I'll be purple as plums.

CHRISTY: Oh gosh, I'm sorry to hear that.

AMELIA: Forgive me, First Officer Christy. Too much time spent around aerospace engineers. Plummet me into a gaggle of grounders and suddenly I'm nose-deep in nebulae without my fog-goggles and -there I go again!

CHRISTY: Oh don't stop! And just 'Joy' is fine.

AMELIA: 'Just Joy' it is, 'just Joy'.

BEAT

CHRISTY: (ENRAPTURED) Sorry, who?

FALCONER: (CLEARS THROAT) You're really planning to circumnavigate the solar system in this?

AMELIA: That's the long and short of it. Or the long of it at least - just over four years or so by my reckoning, by the time I catch up with Pluto again. I'll be in hibernation for the most part, so it-

You don't look convinced.

FALCONER: It's just photonic travel has come so far. You could do the same journey in-

BURNEY: Two months, seven days, three hours and forty-seven minutes.

AMELIA: And what do they call you? The human calculator?

BEAT

BURNEY: Yes.

CHRISTY: But that's *photonic* travel. Where's the challenge in that? This is the *real* deal. No nonsense, no frills-

FALCONER: No seatbelt.

CHRISTY: It's back to the fundamentals! Getting your hands dirty and going under the bonnet type stuff!

AMELIA: Seems you do speak my language after all, 'just Joy'.

BURNEY: Christy, your face has gone red.

CHRISTY: Shut up.

BURNEY: It may be indicative of an allergy; a face-cream irritation; excessive wind-

CHRISTY: Don't you have somewhere to be, Burney?

BEAT

BURNEY: No.

AMELIA: Look, I'm sorry to arrive earlier than agreed, Commander. Plan was to give you fair warning, but conditions were golden, and I had to chance it. Snafu aside, I can still hit the schedule. But it does mean haunting your hangar for a night or two - just 'til I can get the old angel-

FX: RAPS ON HULL, WHICH ECHO SLIGHTLY
-shipshape again, then I'll be out of your respective tresses.

FALCONER: I see. We hadn't exactly prepared-

CHRISTY: You can have my bed.

FALCONER: Then where would you go, Christy?

CHRISTY: Go?

AMELIA: Appreciate the hospo, but if I'm knocking round this bucket for a few calendars. I might as well get used to it.

BURNEY: It's got two seats.

AMELIA: Chap's a mathemagician! How do you all keep up? Well, I'd best-

BURNEY: If it's purpose-built for a solo flight, why would it have two seats?

AMELIA: I'm sure you don't want me windbagging you with all that-

FALCONER: Actually I do.

CHRISTY: Commander she obviously doesn't want to talk about it.

AMELIA: No.. It's fine. No point in stealth when you're in the same squadron. And I appreciate you need to know I'm sound, Commander. I'm a new cuckoo after all.

There were two of us. Me and my co-pilot. Let's just say her priorities shifted. So now it's just me. Which is good! Purer. Me with nothing but nothing on my left-hand side for four.. years..

BEAT

CHRISTY: Well I can't think of anything more exciting! Full circle, the whole way around the very edge of the Sys'!

FALCONER: Officer, might I remind you that you live on Pluto. Travelling around the edge of the Sys' is what you've been doing for several years now.

CHRISTY: But not in a tiny, flimsy spacecraft!

BURNEY: Christy is studying to become a pilot.

FALCONER: (CAUTIONING) Burney..

AMELIA: Is that so? Tell you what, I'll give you a spin if you like. Should be fit for a sally.

CHRISTY: Would you?!

FALCONER: Officer Burney, I'm sure you have plenty of exceptionally probing questions about the craft. I'm sure Ms Bell would oblige.

AMELIA: Well..

FALCONER: Christy, a word.

BURNEY: I'm interested in the propellant efficiency..

**KEEPS TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING BORING
(PROPELLANT EFFICIENCY) AS WE CLOSE IN ON
FALCONER AND CHRISTY**

FALCONER: You are not going to who knows where with a complete stranger in a Pringles tube.

CHRISTY: You can't tell me what to do!

FALCONER: I don't know if you've ever looked closely at the word '*Commander*'...

CHRISTY: (MAKES NOISE OF ANNOYANCE)

FALCONER: We hardly know anything about this *gallivanter*, and given this morning's incident, I'm not surprised this 'friend' of hers bailed.

CHRISTY: But I *do* know *loads* about her! I read from her autobiography nearly every night! Or at least I look at the pictures. Especially the one of her winking at me, as if to say 'Christy - I know we've never met, but I think you're the most captivating - '

FALCONER: Stay on topic, Officer.

CHRISTY: Why didn't you tell me she was starting her voyage from here?

FALCONER: Might I remind you I've come to this base from years of fighting Defectors in a patch of no-man's-desert back on Mars. [A LITTLE ANGRY AND SCARRED BY THE MEMORY] And when I wasn't fighting, I was scouring the scorched earth for airdropped parcels of water and protein for my unit, while trying to avoid the searing hot enemy fire coming my way, just so we all might survive one more day. You'll have to excuse me if I didn't quite have time to grab the latest celebrity magazines.

CHRISTY: It must've been awful

FALCONER: It's just still a little raw.

CHRISTY: All those brilliant articles lying on the ground, completely unread!

FALCONER: Look. Some *gap year backpacker* called me to ask for a quick stop-off at the base this week and

again in a few years' time. I didn't think you'd be interested! In any case, she's here for a couple of days now. Instead of going out today in this Blue Peter project, why don't we first spend an evening getting to know this Amelia Bell *properly*? I'll whip up something nice -

CHRISTY: You can't cook.

FALCONER: *You'll* whip up something nice, and we can all get together and - play a fun board game.

CHRISTY: A game? You want to ask the most intrepid adventurer of our time to stay in and play Boggle?

FALCONER: It would be an adventure of the *imagination*.

CHRISTY: Ugh.

FALCONER: *Commander*. Remember?

CHRISTY: Fine- What's Burney saying?

MIC OPENS OUT AGAIN

BURNEY: All this leads me to conclude that while you're objectively very attractive, your tendency to risk your life makes you an unsuitable life partner.

CHRISTY: Burney, leave her alone.

AMELIA: No, it's rather nice to be back on the horse. Not used to it.

CHRISTY: Oh... Really?

AMELIA: Can't all be as pearly as you, Joy. Bet you're beating off the chaps all the time.

(AWKWARD BEAT)

FALCONER: (AWKWARD COUGH) Do you have plans tonight, Ms Bell?

SCENE FOUR: INT. RECREATION ROOM

FALCONER: *'Annihilation.* Vanquish your adversaries for supremacy over the entire universe. Begin your campaign of terror as unscrupulous corporate traders, depleting the natural resources of each planet you encounter while building an unstoppable army. March onwards until you are reigning supreme, and bathing in the blood of your opponents.'
Are you sure you couldn't find Boggle?

BURNEY: *Annihilation* is the best game there is. It's approximately forty per cent skill, forty per cent chance and twenty per cent ominous intimidation.

LOWELL: And the other nine percent?

BURNEY: Ignorance.

LOWELL: Now we're talking!

BURNEY: First pick your token.

LOWELL: I want the smashed-up skull.

BURNEY: I'll take the dismembered arm.

FALCONER: And I'll have this funny little clown.

BURNEY: That's actually a man who's been flayed ali-
(BEAT) A funny little clown.

FALCONER: Exactly how experienced are you at this, Burney?

BURNEY: I was seven-time champion in my university over six tournaments.

FALCONER: How is that possible?

BURNEY: The head of the games society queried my last win and demanded a rematch. I annihilated him.

FALCONER: This should be a riot.

LOWELL: Still sounds better than the last game that you made us play.

FALCEONR: That game turned a chore into something fun. I got the idea after that musical film you were

watching about the magical nanny with the umbrella.

LOWELL: (A BIT TRAUMATISED) she never defrosted the freezer while making Jane and Michael find out what all the frozen brown stuff in plastic tubs was by eating it!

FALCONER: Perhaps she did and they just cut that song.

LOWELL: That was the night I discovered cyborgs could have nightmares.

FALCONERS: Where *are* those ladies?

BURNEY: I saw them fifteen minutes ago heading for the docking bay in the hangar.

FALCONER: What?!

BURNEY: Should we stop them?

FALCONER: No... No, she's free to make her own mistakes. Let's just focus on the game.

BURNEY: If it makes you feel more comfortable, I have monitors set up outside that will record any unusual activity.

BEAT

BURNEY: Unusual *environmental* activity.

FALCONER: Thank goodness.

LOWELL: Did you play many games when you were fighting Deflectors, Commando?

FALCONER: *Defectors*. No. But I think I have the right strategic expertise to give this a go. In fact I believe twenty years in the field has given me enough tactical experience to make me excel at one thing that I'm sure board game enthusiasts know nothing about: *risk*.

BEAT

BURNEY: So before the game starts you need to pick a card to see which resource you'll begin trading with. Each offers different benefits and weaknesses. I will be... fracking for oil.

LOWELL: I'll be... mining for gold!

FALCONER: I'll be... excavating guano?

BURNEY: That particular card has no benefits.

FALCONER: Can I pick again?

BURNEY: No.

FALCONER: Why not?

BURNEY: Rules.

FALCONER: How do we play?

BURNEY: So. The first player rolls the dice, then moves their token the corresponding number of spaces on the board. Then-

LOWELL: Nope, you're gonna have to start again. I am so lost right now.

SCENE FIVE: INT. DOCKING BAY

FX: **FOOTSTEPS ON METAL LADDER**

AMELIA: Careful on the ladder. And in you get. And then I seal the hatch.

FX: **HISSSS**

AMELIA: Are you *sure* she doesn't mind? She didn't seem that keen on me.

CHRISTY: Course. She said, 'you two go and have fun in the spacecraft'.

AMELIA: I may be a blow-in, but I'm not a chump.

CHRISTY: Are you angry?

AMELIA: (LAUGHS) Do you think I got where I am by leaping when I was told? The only thing my boarding school taught me was perseverance.

CHRISTY: I see. You kept your chin up and made it through an experience you hated.

AMELIA: No, I mean it took me twelve attempts to finally run away without getting caught.

CHRISTY: I didn't know you'd gone to boarding school.

AMELIA: Should you have done?

CHRISTY: I usually know everything about the famous people that I fanc-

AMELIA: That you-?

CHRISTY: Fancy... learning about... Tell me more!

AMELIA: You won't read much about my salad days. I think it's important to hold back something that can be mine alone. Does that make sense?

CHRISTY: A mysterious back story!

AMELIA: (CHUCKLING) Exactly.

CHRISTY: The daughter of a double agent spy who built her first plane to deliver secret messages to her exiled father-

AMELIA: (LAUGHING) Spy? That'd be fun.

CHRISTY: Or a young inventor who fell in love with a... butterfly collector-

AMELIA: (LAUGHING HARDER) A *butterfly* collector?!

CHRISTY: Except it was unrequited so she built a craft to resemble her love's greatest passion - the lesser spotted... brown... fnurplewing!

AMELIA: (LAUGHING HARDER STILL) Is that even a real thing?

CHRISTY: Or a girl tragically orphaned, (AMELIA ABRUPTLY STOPS LAUGHING) who never had a real family and has been running from her life ever since!

AMELIA: (COUGHS QUIETLY)

CHRISTY: Oh.

AMELIA: (SUDDENLY PRICKLY) And you? If you want to be a pilot, what are you doing on a demi-planet billions of miles from any academy?

CHRISTY: It was Auntie Xi Win. My parents sent me to live with her, when the wars started.

AMELIA: Your parents. Are they..?

CHRISTY: I don't know. She's always looked after me though. Bit too much maybe. When I told her I wanted to be a pilot, she wouldn't let me apply to the academy without a fall-back option. So I did exobotany and got a placement here. It's a long-term plan of gaining non-combative military experience, and fitting in theory practice when I can. It's just turning out to be a bit longer-term than I hoped.

AMELIA: So you have a family that cares. That's nice. And, more awesomely, your actual job is to make things grow. You're basically a goddess.

CHRISTY: I guess that's kind of cool.

AMELIA: Well I can't see a fuming Falconer in my rear view mirror, so I think we're good to go.

FX: BUTTON PRESSING AND BLOOPING.

AMELIA: Visors down.

FX: SWISH OF VISORS

AMELIA: (BEHIND VISOR) Ready?

CHRISTY: (BEHIND VISOR) You're sure this is safe?

AMELIA: Would it make a difference if I said no?

BEAT

CHRISTY: Ready.

FX: WHIR OF ENGINES STARTING UP

SCENE SIX: INT. RECREATION ROOM

BURNEY: And if you land on a central square for a third consecutive time, and you have not negated any penalty rounds, but you do have a reverse direction card, the game enters into an extraordinary committee.

FALCONER: Seriously. It's been forty minutes. Let's just play. Roll dice; try to win. You go first.
(BEAT) *Please.*

FX: DICE ROLLING

BURNEY: Move two spaces. Get hired as a Management Consultant, execute half the workforce and take their salary as a fee. One thousand credits. An excellent start. Your go, Commander.

FALCONER: Move six spaces. 'You enter... a beauty competition.' A beauty competition? How pathetic. 'Enter a beauty competition, and lose when an opponent releases a virus that causes spontaneous vomiting and diorrhea'. What? That's outrageous! I won't stand for it!

BURNEY: I thought it was 'pathetic'?

FALCONER: It is, but it doesn't mean I should bloody lose. 'Give three thousand credits to the bank for your entry fee.' The entry fee was *three thousand credits? And I lost?* I will have vengeance.

LOWELL: My go! (ROLLS DICE) Oh no.

BURNEY: Is it bad? What does it say?

LOWELL: 'One of your factories is demolished by a heat-seeking missile. You receive damages of ten thousand credits'. I've been *damaged*. This game sucks.

FALCONER: Lowell, that's a good thing.

LOWELL: Is it? Go team me!

BURNEY: It's only the start of the game. Anything could happen. (ROLLS DICE.) 'Win 500 credits in a poker competition, by feeding your losing opponents to mutant crocodiles.' I'll use that to construct a new mine. There. Your go, Falconer.

FALCONER: 'You win 20,000 credits in a lottery.' Oh that's good! 'But the next player breaks your knee caps on your way to the bank, and takes the money.'

LOWELL: Ah man, whoever that next player is, is gonna be loaded!

FALCONER: It's you, Lowell.

LOWELL: Really? Sweet!

BURNEY: It's just a blip. I'll be back on top any moment. In fact I predict it will all hinge on the next card I pick, which says -

BEAT

FALCONER: Burney?

LOWELL: Whoa! I've never seen anyone's veins throb like that before, except in those secret magazines under his bed.

FALCONER: Are you OK?

LOWELL: His head looks like it might explode..

Let's play more!

SCENE SEVEN: EXT. UP IN PLUTO'S ATMOSPHERE

FX: SOUND OF SPACECRAFT MURMURING

CHRISTY: This is so ace! Can we do one of those loop-the-loops again?

AMELIA: Not if I can help it. As endearing as it might be when you excitedly fling your arms around, next time please watch out for my levers. Even if I *didn't* die in any accident we had, I'm fairly sure Falconer would finish the job. Look, there's your base.

CHRISTY: Wow! It looks like a research base for woodlice!

AMELIA: No... that's... that's your recycling bin. *That's* your base.

CHRISTY: Oh - yeah it's still quite big.

AMELIA: OK, we're on a pretty stable course now. Want to take the reins?

CHRISTY: Me? Steer?

AMELIA: Just reach over, and put your hands - there. Whoa there, not so eager - it's not a pinball machine. Easy now. Think less Beethoven's Fifth, and more Moonlight Sonata. Do you mind if I-? Like this. A little gentle encouragement... That's it...

CHRISTY: I'm flying!

AMELIA: Yes you are.

CHRISTY: This is totally ace! I can't believe anyone would want to drop out from doing this-! Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean-

AMELIA: It's OK. Really.

It was my dream anyway, not hers. I originally wanted to go into deep space - go further than anyone else. But then the solar system was privatised, and it became illegal to cross the boundary. I thought my career was over, and she urged me to retire - to focus on life at home. But then it hit me - why not do the full circle? One last hurrah. She agreed at first, but...

CHRISTY: It's hard to find someone who shares your dream.

AMELIA: Why don't we land over there for a bit. Take in the scenery. Head over to the ledge of that icy mountain over there.

CHRISTY: Which one?

AMELIA: The icy mountain in between those two icy mountains. Just to the right of the icy mountain? You see?

CHRISTY: I see.

SCENE EIGHT: INT. RECREATION ROOM

LOWELL: Ten thousand from both of you. Just add it to the pile. Hey, Commander! Looks like I've got

that strategical experterience you were talking about!

BURNEY: This isn't fair!

FALCONER: I'm struggling too, Burney. I had to give you my guano factory remember?

BURNEY: But I *always* win.

LOWELL: Don't like it when someone else is smarterer than you, do you, bumfluff!

BURNEY: You're not being smart you're just being lucky.

LOWELL: Yeah; lucky at being smart!

BURNEY: That doesn't make sense.

LOWELL: Sense making at being smart!

BURNEY: This is so unfair!

FALCONER: It's the taking part that counts.

BURNEY: No. It's a *game*. The whole point is to win. If you're not trying to win then you're just moving bits of plastic across some cardboard until bedtime. A board game is SO much more than that.

FALCONER: And there I was thinking it was about having fun together.

BURNEY: Annihilation is not about fun! Annihilation is about annihilating people, and it shouldn't be won by an idiot!

BEAT

LOWELL: *An idiot at being smart.*

FALCONER: OK. If you're going to act like four year olds, I suggest we take a breather. Burney, go and refill the nut bowl.

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED

FALCONER: Poor Burney.

LOWELL: What do you mean 'poor Burney'?

FALCONER: You know he takes things like this to heart. He's a tremendous sense of pride.

LOWELL: He's a tremendous arseho-

FALCONER: Lowell! (BEAT) If there's one thing I make it my business to know, it's my unit. And you know what I think? I think underneath it all he actually rather envies you. Yes he's a little more *academically* minded, but I sometimes wonder if he's a little bit in awe of you too.

LOWELL: Wh... of me?

FALCONER: Why not? You're stronger. More confident. Plus he literally worships computers - it would be his dream to be part robot.

I think it's in games like this where his one-upmanship really comes to the fore because it's his way of showing people his capabilities. It's only a game to us, but to him it's his *world*. I just wonder - and I'm not saying you should let him win - but perhaps you could be a little more... magnanimous?

LOWELL: I'm not going to let him win.

FALCONER: Of course not! He'd be insufferable! You couldn't anyway.

LOWELL: Why not?

FALCONER: Rules. He wouldn't allow it. In fact it'd damage his pride permanently if he suspected you of doing something out of pity for him.

LOWELL: Would it?

FALCONER: (FIRMLY) Yes! Don't even *think* about it!

LOWELL: Ohhhh... I see what you're saying.

FALCONER: I'm... I'm not saying *anything*. (SIGH) I'll go and give him a hand with those nuts. I imagine he's struggling to open the bag.

SCENE NINE: EXT. ON THE LEDGE OF AN ICY MOUNTAIN

FX: **A CHILL WIND**

AMELIA: OK. First kiss.

CHRISTY: Six years old. My Auntie Xi Win.

AMELIA: Um...

CHRISTY: Oh, you mean sexy kiss? Roger Watlington from technology class when I was fifteen. I mean, *he* must have thought it was sexy, because he made these noises, like a small helicopter trying to get off the ground: 'Mmm... mmm...'

AMELIA: But you didn't think so?

CHRISTY: You know when your dentist sticks their thumb in your mouth and waggles it around?

AMELIA: Was he your first... 'time'... too?

CHRISTY: No, that was my boyfriend.

AMELIA: Oh, I didn't realise-

CHRISTY: I liked him cos he had the coolest pencil case. Turns out that's not the best basis for a relationship. We broke up soon after.

AMELIA: He must have been upset to lose you.

CHRISTY: Not really. I saw him three weeks later holding Roger Watlington's hand. You?

AMELIA: Twenty-one. I went to a party in the Alyssian Quarter. My foster father wasn't thrilled. He said 'always watch out for anyone who asks if you want to see their model spaceship collection'. Anyway, I was in the corner of the living room, and being around so many people - I was nervous. This girl with pink hair started talking to me. She said she was training to be a pilot. I was impressed, and I got a bit shy. I said it was time to go, and she said...

CHRISTY: Model spaceship collection?

AMELIA: Bingo.

CHRISTY: How was it?

AMELIA: (KNOWINGLY) Messy. Disordered. Incomplete.

CHRISTY: Oh. And the sex?

AMELIA: Ha! You're sweet.

CHRISTY: Why? I don't get it.

AMELIA: Nevermind. Anyway, it was talking to her that inspired me to want to do the things that have made me who I am today.

CHRISTY: That's so cool.

AMELIA: Penultimate question, I promise. And the final question depends on your answer.

Best date you've been on?

CHRISTY: Can I answer that tomorrow?

AMELIA: Good answer. Final question...

SCENE TEN: INT. KITCHEN

FALCONER: Are you joining us, Burney? Here - pass the bag, I'll do it.

FX: BAG OF NUTS OPENING, AND BEING POURED INTO A BOWL

BURNEY: We'd run out of salted peanuts so I found cashews. Even though salted peanuts are better than cashews, it was still the cashews that won.

FALCOENR: Lowell's just having his moment in the sun.

BURNEY: Not even he could survive being inside the sun.

FALCONER: I know he might be being a little more obnoxious than usual-

BURNEY: He's finishing every round with a ten-minute victory rumba with the lightstand.

FALCONER: (SIGH) He envies you, you know.

BURNEY: Me?

FALCONER: Yes! I make it my business to know my unit. You're smart. You're determined. You can count on your fingers without having a battery short out. He rarely gets a win like this, so he's acting up. But don't worry, I've had a word with him. I asked him to tone it down.

BURNEY: What? That'll make him even worse! He'll be even more smug just to annoy me!

FALCOENR: Oh I give up. I just wanted a nice evening with my crew. I didn't realise it would be so bloody competitive. You know, if I just had one percent of your titanium shares I'd be over the moon.

BURNEY: Depending on your relative viewpoint of the solar system, we are over lots of moons.

FALCONER: See? Clever.

BURNEY: OK. He can have this. And then I'm never playing again.

SCENE ELEVEN: EXT. ON THE LEDGE OF AN ICY MOUNTAIN

CHRISTY: The whole way?

AMELIA: I know it's a big decision. And I know I hardly know you. But since meeting you I feel...

CHRISTY: I know. (BEAT) Oh, but I don't have a license

AMELIA: No need. It's leisure cruising. I can show you the basics. You already managed flying it and that's half the battle. Tackle taking off and landing, and we're golden.

CHRISTY: But what if I annoy you? I annoy myself, and I have to wake up with myself every morning.

AMELIA: There's nobody else I'd rather wake up annoyed by.

CHRISTY: In that case... Yes! Why not! Let's do it!

AMELIA: That's super! You've got me grinning like a goose! It's going to be spectacular, Joy!

CHRISTY: Just think what it'll be like out there!

AMELIA: Nothing compared to who will be in here.

You know, you could raise your safety visor now. If you wanted.

CHRISTY: Why?

AMELIA: Why do you think?

CHRISTY: Oh!

SCENE TWELVE: INT. RECREATION ROOM

LOWELL: Back for more are you? The game's all set just how you left it. Wink.

BURNEY: Why did he say 'wink'?

FALCONER: No idea. Why did you say 'wink'?

LOWELL: I don't know. I guess we'll just keep playing. Wink. Your go, Burney. Pick up a card. No, the top one.

BURNEY: That's not a card. It's... That's my cousin Derek. Why is there a photograph of cousin Derek in the game?

LOWELL: Just read it, bumface.

BURNEY: It's written in crayon, and the Rs are backwards.

LOWELL: It says 'collect one flillion credits off of Lowell for some stupid science award'.

BEAT

BURNEY: But...

FALCONER: Lowell, that's a nice gesture but I don't think he'll-

BURNEY: I *am* good at science.

LOWE/FALC: What?

BURNEY: I was expecting an award like this. I can now afford to upgrade my merchant vessels, secure fuel, train my army, and fast-track to the end of the board. Championship maintained. Thank you for playing with me opponents, but you were no match.

LOWELL: Commando, you said he'd hate it!

FALCONER: Burney, that's not a very honourable way to behave.

BURNEY: *Annihilation* is not about honour. It's about winning at any stretch. Thank you for helping me to orchestrate this, Falconer. In return for reminding me that I'm superior to Lowell, you may have one percent of my titanium shares as you wanted. Not that it will help you.

LOWELL: Eh? But Commando, you said *I* was better than *him*!

FALCONER: I said nothing of the sort.

BURNEY: Bedtime now.

FALCONER: Not so fast... No, all I said to either of you was just what you needed to hear.

BURNEY: Needed to hear for what?

FALCONER: For you to come to the cusp of winning, but not before handing me one percent of your shares.

BURNEY: Eh?

FALCONER: Where's your token Burney?

BURNEY: Oh... No...

FALCONER: What was it?: "If you land on a central square for a third consecutive time, and you have not negated any penalty rounds, but you do have a reverse direction card, the game enters into an extraordinary committee." Well consider this an extraordinary committee, attended, as it happens, by your new shareholder: me.

BURNEY: But that was - I'll buy you out.

FALCONER: You can certainly motion that. However buying me out requires a unanimous shareholder decision. I'll ask my people. My people refuse.

BURNEY: Then I'll go to war with you.

FALCONER: Hmm. My civilians are concerned of the threat of war that they've just decided to stop exporting guano, and formed a union until they can be guaranteed protection from this hostile takeover.

BURNEY: I'll destroy them. I own that factory anyway.

FALCONER: The factory that's about to get burnt down?

BURNEY: What?

FX: MATCH BEING LIT

FALCONER: All it takes is one flame and the guano factory goes up in smoke. Burns very well, guano.

BURNEY: But that's...

FALCONER: Arson? That's how your insurance company would see it. And having 99 per cent in the shares, you'd be in a rather interesting position - such as jail.

BURNEY: You can't set fire to the board!

FALCONER: Why not?

BURNEY: Rules!

FALCONER: It's not *not* in the rules. Lowell, would you mind reading the rules and seeing if there's a line about setting fire to the board?

LOWELL: (MEEKLY) I'm a bit scared...

BURNEY: So what happens now.

FALCONER: I win.

LOWELL: But it wasn't a real card! I wrote-!

FALCONER: Did you, Lowell? Think carefully. For you to write the card would have meant you wanted him to win - and I strictly told you *not* to do that

so it must have been your own decision. So the question is: were you doing something nice for Burney? Say you did something nice for Burney, and I'll concede defeat.

BEAT

LOWELL: You're mean.

FALCONER: Well. I can't see an easy way of proceeding, other than declaring me the winner and ending the game there. Agreed?

BURNEY: You are *evil*. (BEAT) I'm impressed.

FALCONER: (BLOWS FLAME OUT) Thank you. You see, I make it my business to know my unit better than they know themselves. That way I always have the upper hand. I might not be experienced at board games, but I am bloody good at *the game of life*.

BEAT

BURNEY: Actually, that is a -

FX: ALERT SIREN

FALCONER: What's that noise?

BURNEY: It's my seismometer. A nearby cryovolcano may be about to explode.

FALCONER: A what?

BURNEY: They're like normal volcanoes, except they eject ice and methane. We're safe as long as we're inside the base.

FALCONER: Right. (BEAT) Oh hell.

SCENE THIRTEEN: EXT. ON THE ICY LEDGE

FX: A CHILL WIND

AMELIA: What is it? Why did you stop?

CHRISTY: My stomach feels strange.

AMELIA: Mine too! It was like the earth moved! Come here-

CHRISTY: Amelia, I think we're on a cryovolcano. And I think it might be about to erupt.

AMELIA: A cryo- Move! MOVE!

FX: TRANCEIVER BEEP

AMELIA: Commander, can you hear us? We need clearance and access immediately.

FX: WHIR OF ENGINES

FALCONER: (BROKEN) Chri- ar - ou - eiv -

CHRISTY: It's going to-

FX: GASEOUS, SPLASHING ERUPTION OF VOLCANO AS THE CRAFT LIFTS OFF

AMELIA: I can't control it! Hold on tight!

CHRISTY: OK!

AMELIA: I meant to your seat!

CHRISTY: Oh, ok!

AMELIA: No, don't stop!

FX: NNEEEEEEOOOWWW - A CRAFT FLYING FAST, AND FADING...

SCENE FOURTEEN: INT. INFIRMARY

FX: A MUFFLED NOISE CLARIFIES INTO THE SOUND OF A SPOON ON A BOWL, AND LOWELL HUMMING AND CHOMPING AT FOOD.

AMELIA: Wh..Gu... I... Wh...

LOWELL: (WITH A MOUTH FULL) You're alive then?

AMELIA: Where am I?

LOWELL: Infirmary. This is yum. I didn't know we had any rhubarb crumble left.

AMELIA: (GASPS) Joy?

LOWELL: She didn't make it.

AMELIA: She's.. She's dead?

LOWELL: Eh? She didn't make the *crumble*. Think it's Lidl.

AMELIA: Where is she?

LOWELL: Napping. She was looking after you while Burney and I fixed your ship.

AMELIA: Thank goodness... My ship! How's my ship?

LOWELL: Yeah it's fine. More or less.

AMELIA: What?

LOWELL: Well, you know how some things are like how they are in your head, and then you see them and they're a bit different, but then you realise you prefer them that way and soon you forget what it looked like in the first place?

AMELIA: Maybe...

LOWELL: We had to reshape it a bit. One seat. But that's OK, cos you were going solo anyway, right?

AMELIA: Oh. I see. And... me? I feel numb all over.

LOWELL: Let me look at your medical sheet. Oh...

AMELIA: What?

LOWELL: You know how some things are like how they are in your head, and then you see them, and they're a bit different-

AMELIA: Tell me.

LOWELL: We lost your foot.

AMELIA: My foot?

LOWELL: Yep - ah that's a bummer. But it means your socks'll last twice as long. So: every cloud.

AMELIA: But I *need* my foot - the floor controls - the maintenance - the -

LOWELL: Hang on, my mistake. It says 'boot'. We lost your boot. Christy really needs to write more clearly. Could lead to horrible misunderstandings.

CHRISTY: Maybe you could go now.

LOWELL: Okey coke!

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN

LOWELL: Oh hey Christy. She was really good and ate all her dinner. Bye!

FX: DOOR SWISHES CLOSED

CHRISTY: How's my patient?

AMELIA: Ratty and unattractive.

CHRISTY: I wouldn't say that.

AMELIA: Liar. I'm glad you're OK. I'm also surprised Falconer didn't strangle me in my sleep.

CHRISTY: She was angry, but then she saw that it was only you that was injured and she got over it. Besides, she doesn't hold you responsible for unprecedented natural disasters.

AMELIA: Oh. Well that's nice.

CHRISTY: She can actually be quite reasonable sometimes. Look, about the craft...

AMELIA: I heard. And it's OK. (BEAT) Joy... What if I stayed? I'm a dab hand at mechanics, and I make a mean rehydrated ratatouille. Besides, who needs to go in a big circle anyway? I'll just be a few years older and back where I started.

CHRISTY: That sounds nice. But no.

AMELIA: But-

CHRISTY: When we were falling, my life passed before my eyes, and it went by *really* fast, and I realised that there hadn't been very much of

it, and what I'm saying is - I'm not ready. For this. For us.

AMELIA: Hard to find someone who shares your dreams, huh?

CHRISTY: Are you angry?

AMELIA: Of course not. You really are pearly, 'just Joy'. (BEAT) So looks like I'm leaving tomorrow after all then, hey? Well, perhaps I'll take advantage of a comfy mattress after all. And this bed really is... very comfy..

CHRISTY: It should be. It's anti-allergenic synthetic down.

AMELIA: No what I'm saying is, it's quite *spacious*.

CHRISTY: The dimensions are fairly standard for a single bed-

AMELIA: No, what I'm saying is... Would you like to see my model spaceship collection?

CHRISTY: Oh. (BEAT) Oh!

SCENE FIFTEEN: INT. CONTROL ROOM

CHRISTY: Morning Falconer! Morning Burney! Did you get Orpheus fixed?

ORPHEUS: Good Easter tidings Señor Barbeque.

BURNEY: Sort of.

FALCONER: Christy, you're... glowing..

BURNEY: Did you hear it?

CHRISTY: Hear what?

FALCONER: Burney, I don't think she wants to-

BURNEY: A weird repetitive noise that went on for ages last night. It was like the squeaky wheel of a shopping trolley. Or balloons being rubbed. Or an unsecured dishwasher. Or a-

FALCONER: Officer Burney, eat your Coco Pops. So, Ms. Bell has departed, has she?

CHRISTY: Yep.

FALCONER: I don't enjoy being the bad guy, you know. I wasn't always popular with my troops back in battle either. But nonetheless, it was up to me to look after them even if they didn't like how I did it. We may be millions of miles from the war out here. But I still have a troop. Do you see?

CHRISTY: You won't always be able to protect me.

FALCONER: Won't stop me trying.

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND SHUT

LOWELL: Hey Christy! I saw your psycho daffodil in a million bells' craft earlier on.

CHRISTY: Yeah, I potted it for her.

LOWELL: It had gone all big and alive and shiny. Guess is prefers not being around you too. Oh, did anyone else hear that weird noise last night? It was like a tiny mooing cow.

BURNEY: Or windscreen wipers on dry glass.

LOWELL: Or a pigeon being punched over and over again.

FALCONER: Boys. I do believe working hours have begun.

LOWELL: I'm just getting' Burney. You ready?

FALCONER: Thank y- wait- ready for what?

BURNEY: Just some research.

FALCONER: Together? You and him?

LOWELL: Yeah? So?

FALCONER: You're playing *Annihilation* aren't you.

BURNEY: It's a rematch.

BEAT

FALCONER: Wait five minutes and I'll join you.

LOWELL: No way, you're horrible at games.

BURNEY: You take it far too seriously.

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN

LOWELL: (LEAVING) I wanna be the gangrenous arm this time.

BURNEY: (LEAVING) I'll be the disembowelled civilian.

FX: DOOR SWISHES CLOSED

CHRISTY: Well. I'd better-

FALCONER: It's a funny thing, Officer. I glanced over the repair records, and it didn't actually look necessary to rebuild the craft for just one person.

CHRISTY: Really? Weird.

FALCONER: Hmm. You know in some ways it's lucky you didn't choose to go with her. If you had, you'd have been in breach of contract of your position here. It would have seriously set back your chances of acceptance into pilot academy.

CHRISTY: I suppose it would've, now you mention it, yes.

FALCONER: You know, sometimes I think I might not actually be the most underhanded person on the base.

CHRISTY: I don't know what you mean.

FALCONER: No of course you don't.

CHRISTY: Do you mean Lowell?

FALCONER: Alright, don't overegg it...

FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN

CHRISTY: (LEAVING) Orpheus? Oh! Burney? Or Cybergerbil?

FALCONER: Never mind.

FX: DOOR SWISHES CLOSED.

GRAMS: 'OBLIVITY' CLOSING THEME