

# OBLIVITY

## Episode four: Friends and Nemeses.

### COLD OPEN: SCENE ONE: INT. CONTROL ROOM

FALCONER: Come on Falconer. You can do this. You've survived radium landmines, losing an eye, nearly being sucked into the vacuum of space. This should be a walk in the park. OK.  
(BREATHES DELIBERATELY) Here goes nothing.

**FX:** 'VOOP' OF A PROGRAMME TURNING ON

**GRAMS:** SMOOTH, SOOTHING SET UP MUSIC

VOICE OF SIN: Congratulations on purchasing a software upgrade for your base AI! Let's get you set up.

FALCONER: Nope. Can't do it. (CALLS) Burney! Come here a moment!

VOICE OF SIN: Before we begin; how would you like me to address you?

FALCONER: Commander Falconer.

VOICE OF SIN: I didn't quite catch that. Please try again.

FALCONER: *Commander Falconer.*

VOICE OF SIN: I didn't quite catch that. Please try again.

FALCONER: Bloody stupid- 'COMMANDER FALCONER'

**PAUSE**

VOICE OF SIN: Good to meet you: 'Bloody stupid Commander Falconer'!

FALCOENR: Ugh...

VOICE OF SIN: Tell me your location.

FALCONER: Persephone research base. Pluto.

VOICE OF SIN: Your location is not in our records. Are you sure your location exists?

FALCONER: Wha-? (CALLING) Officer Burney!

VOICE OF SIN: If you'd like to skip these questions, say 'skip'.

FALCONER: Skip.

VOICE OF SIN: To skip these questions, you need to become an administrator. Please create a password.

FALCONER: OK... Set password as-

VOICE OF SIN: I'm sorry, bloody stupid Commander Falconer. To create a password, you need to be an administrator.

FALCONER: But...

VOICE OF SIN: If you are experiencing issues, simply recalibrate the holoprojector to your current XDR code, while resetting the binary interface to the configuration-

FALCONER: *Right.*

VOICE OF SIN: -that was reconfigured on the primary installation of the syntactically aligned wooble-box, before switching to auxiliary mode [FADES AS FALCONER WALKS AWAY]

**FX: FALCONER'S STRIDING FOOTSTEPS.**

**DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED AND WE STOP HEARING THE VOICE OF SINISTER.**

**FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE. A SECOND PAIR JOINS.**

CHRISTY: Commander! Have you seen Burney?

FALCONER: On my way to his quarters. I'm trying to upgrade Orpheus but the set-up procedure is as straightforward as an inebriated crab sprinting backwards for a boomerang.

CHRISTY: What does he need upgrading for?

FALCONER: Orpheus: what's the temperature outside today?

ORPHEUS: Narwhal jazz, with a touch of Luxemburg.

FALCONER: What's Burney done to give you a face like the hollow end of a laser-blaster for, anyway?

CHRISTY: He did the quiz from my magazine! 'Which noble gas are you?'

FALCONER: So tell him not to go near your weird magazines.

CHRISTY: That's not why I'm angry!

FALCONER: Do I really want to hear this?

CHRISTY: He got radon: 'Rare and glows under pressure'. I wanted to be radon! But no, I got helium: 'Lightweight and boils easily'. I'm not helium! (HIGH-PITCHED) How am I helium?

FALCONER: There's no use comparing yourself with other people, Christy. Focus on your own talents.

Curious that Burney would take a sudden interest in his personality though. It's never bothered him before. Lowell?

**FX: THEY STOP WALKING. THERE'S A KNOCKING ON A DOOR**

LOWELL: Bumface locked me out again. Keeps changing the password.

FALCONER: Why?

LOWELL: Dunno. He won't even let me keep Cybergerbil in there anymore. I have to keep him in Christy's sock drawer.

CHRISTY: Oh *that* explains why they smell funny.

LOWELL: Explains why *Cybergerbil* smells funny.

CHRISTY: OK, but it does explain why they're all chewed up. And laser-burnt to a crisp.

FALCONER: Oh hell, is it a 'phase'? Do you know if Burney is perhaps - how do I put this without picturing it - uh... 'lonely'?

CHRISTY: He doesn't get lonely. He gets the opposite of lonely. Accompanied...ly?

FALCONER: Burney, although whatever you're doing is probably a perfectly natural and beautiful thing, please stop doing it right now and open the door.

**FX: FIRM KNOCKING**

BURNEY: (FROM BEHIND DOOR) I'll be out later.

FALCONER: Officer Burney I really must insist.

BURNEY: I'll be out later.

FALCONER: As your Commander, I order you to open up.

BURNEY: Is it an emergency?

FALCONER: Well... No, but-

BURNEY: I'll be out later.

LOWELL: Commando! You know how you can see things happen by looking at them with your eyes?

FALCOENR: Uh...

LOWELL: I just saw a thing happen, except it was *in my brain*.

FALCONER: You mean... you... had an idea?

LOWELL: Fancy! Yeah! I *idea'd*. See, I remember in the base briefing where they said that we were allowed to barge open a door in the base if a person was in danger?

CHIRSTY: You were listening at the briefing?

LOWELL: The bits about barging, yeah.

FALCONER: Are you suggesting we threaten to kill him if he doesn't open up?

Because I could be on board with that. (KNOCKS)  
Burney!

LOWELL: Better. We could put him in danger while he's *inside* the room.

**BEAT**

FALCONER: Go on...

LOWELL: What if send Cybergerbil in through a vent to start a fire, then I can barge down the door - y'know, on account of having half a titanium skull. Cybergerbil gets to start a fire; I get to barge; everyone's happy.

FALCONER: Officer Lowell, that's out of the question and you know it. Replacing a door would wipe out this month's budget.

LOWELL: I idea'd you saying that too.

Which is why I already did it.

FALCOENR: What?

BURNEY: What's happening? Why's Cybergerbil in here-

**FX: FLAME WHOOSHING FROM BEHIND DOOR**

BURNEY: Oh no...

LOWELL: Barging time?

FALCONER: Erm...

CHRISTY: Or you could override the code, Commander.

FALCONER: 'Orpheus: Code override'.

ORPHEUS: (MATTER OF FACT-LY) Skibbling ploop.

**FX: DOOR UNLOCKS AND SWISHES OPEN**

FALCONER: Excellent.

LOWELL: Never get to barge.

FALCONER: Hand me the fire extinguisher, Christy.

LOWELL: Come here, Cybergerbil.

CYBERGERBIL: SQUEAK SQUEAK.

**FX: FIRE EXTINGUISHER SQUIRTS, AND THE FIRE CRACKLES OUT.**

BURNEY: But *why*?

FALCONER: We were... worried about you.

CHRISTY: What's that on his screen?

BURNEY: No, don't look at that-

LOWELL: (EXCITED - SENSING SOMETHING NAUGHTY) Oh my flip..! It's...

CHRISTY: Burney, that's-!

FALCONER: It's... an online conversation-

CHRISTY: -With a human person! Who's Officer Banks?

BURNEY: No one - she's... an associate -

CHRISTY: She?

LOWELL: Burney's got a girlfriend!

BURNEY: No-

CHRISTY: 'This has been a stimulating discussion, and reinforces my earlier evaluation that your intellect may be equal to my own.'

Commander, it's a love letter!

BURNEY: That's classified! That's classified research data!

LOWELL: Banks and Burney, sitting in a tree, K-I-S... S... I... am... Lowell?

FALCONER: I think it's sweet. Is it somebody back on Mars, Burney?

BURNEY: I can't say where she is. He'll laugh.

FALCONER: What, Lowell? I'm sure he won't.

BURNEY: She's... orbiting... *Uranus*.

**BEAT**

BURNEY: Hm. She's a crew member of Research Base Juliet-

LOWELL:           Haha! *'Member'*!

BURNEY:           It's been overseen for the last three months by  
Commander Mink.

CHRISTY:          *The* Commander Mink? Mink the Modest? Commander  
of the fourth Martian Corps? Achieved a  
spotless record of victory in every battle she  
oversaw before taking a voluntary sabbatical to  
lead a research base? Voted Commander of the  
century in the very first year of this century?  
A peer of Commander Falconer in almost every  
way but perhaps just a little bit more  
successful? Is it that one, Commander?  
Commander? Is it that one? Is it?

FALCONER:         Yes. It *is*.

CHRISTY:          Yep! Thought it was.

FALCONER:         Actually it's about time I caught up with  
Commander Mink. Why don't we arrange to meet  
their team? It's about time we dusted off the  
crew-pod and it's only a couple of billion  
miles. Doesn't that sound nice?

BURNEY:           I really don't think that would be a good id-

FALCONER:         Good. That's all settled then.

                  A nice evening out.

**GRAMS:            OBLIVITY THEME MUSIC**

**SCENE TWO INT. CREW POD.**

**FX:                GENTLE RUMBLE OF FLIGHT AND LANDING**

VOICE OF SIN:     You have reached your destination: the moon of  
Juliet; orbiting Uranus.

LOWELL:           Haha! *'Moon'*.

VOICE OF SIN:     This pod is the property of the Syndicated  
Intelligence Network for Interplanetary  
Scientific, Technological and Exploratory  
Research.

**GRAMS:**           **BLAND JINGLE**

VOICE OF SIN:   (SINGING) Taking you for a ride.

FALCONER:        Out you get! Christy - a moment.

CHRISTY:         Commander?

FALCONER:        Remember when I first came to the base; I told you about the... *circumstances* surrounding this *temporary* posting?

CHRISTY:         Fighting Defectors, massive breakdown, unfit for service, sham medal ceremony, sent to Pluto indefinitely.

FALCONER:        The abridged version lacks some nuance. And I'd prefer we called it 'psychological trauma'. Anyway, if you could avoid any of that slipping out today, I would appreciate it. I'd prefer to explain my situation myself. When the moment is right.

CHRISTY:         Why don't you just say it's classified?

FALCONER:        Because it's not.

CHRISTY:         Yeah but no one knows that. We do it all the time if we don't want to admit something. Where have you just been? Classified. Why aren't you doing your work? Classified. Who tried on Commander Falconer's spare eyepatch and accidentally snapped it and lost it somewhere among the organic fertiliser? (WHISPERS) *Classified.*

FALCONER:        Christy, I'm going to do something which may seem alien to the three of you - I'm going tell to the truth, because I have nothing to hide.

CHRISTY:         Secret's safe with me, Commander!

LOWELL:          Their research base is way bigger than ours!

FALCONER:        It's a little showy.

**FX:**           **KNOCK KNOCK. DOOR SWISH.**

MINK:            Commander! It really is you!

FALCONER:        Commander.



MINK: What a lovely surprise!

FALCONER: But - you were expecting us -

MINK: Oh look at your sweet little pod. How *retro*. And this must be your lovely team. Well, don't stand out in the Docking Bay all day. Come in. And please, take your shoes off - I just had the carpets done.

FALCPOENR: (HOPEFULLY) Were they dirty?

MINK: Dirty? Good gosh no. I've had them professionally fluffed-up - I think it feels much more snug without shoes on.

BURNEY: It's like standing on a duvet.

CHRISTY: Or a dream!

LOWELL: Or a duck!

BURNEY: It smells-

FALCONER: *Burney!*

BURNEY: - of Alpine forests. A baby's forehead. A spring day after rainfall. Falconer... It smells like *clean*.

CHRISTY: It smells like happiness.

**BEAT**

LOWELL: Or a duck!

FALCONER: I brought a bottle.

MINK: Oh lovely! That'll go nicely in the risotto.

FALCONER: You mean *with* the risotto..

MINK: You must meet my crew. I've a feeling you'll get on famously. Team!

**FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN**

ADAMS/BANKS: Reporting for duty Commander!

MINK: At ease, team.

FALCONER: Charmed. This is First Officer Christy.

MINK: Ah! You're the exobotanist - like First *Lieutenant* Adams here.

ADAMS: Alright.

CHRISTY: Is that the new smart-bio-cardigan you've got on? The one that alerts you to the optimal times to harvest crops?

ADAMS: What, this? Yeah my brother gave 'it to me. I've got it set to parsnips.

CHRISTY: (TRYING TO ACT COOL.) Oh... Cool.

MINK: And I believe Burney and Banks already know each other.

FALCONER: Say hello, Burney.

BURNEY: Hello.

MINK: Say hello, Banks.

BANKS: Hello.

MINK: (ASIDE TO FALCONER) You should've brought some plantains brushed with coconut oil and vanilla, sprinkled with macadamia nuts, drizzled with lime and wrapped in foil, Commander, because this house is on fire!

Right, dinner will be an hour or so-

LOWELL: You haven't introduced everyone.

MINK: Oh I'm all over the place. You must be Lowell.

LOWELL: Not me - you haven't introduced *him*.

MINK: Officer, that's... that's an automatic shoe polisher.

LOWELL: Finally. Bit rude to ignore him. What's your model code, mate? Seven-four-three-L-X-L. 'Lexell'!

FALCONER: Don't you have a base engineer?

MINK: No, we had everything renovated. State of the art, and practically indestructible. If we need anything fixed we can just call a contractor from the Jupiter hub.

FALCONER: But surely the budget-

MINK: Oh, don't worry about us. The Syndicated Intelligence Network for Interplanetary Science Technology and Exploratory Research look after us - as I'm sure they do you.

FALCONER: Yes. Of course. Well. It's lovely. (TENSELY)  
After all *there's no place like home*.

**BEAT**

MINK: Yes... Anyway as I was saying, I suggest we relax until dinner.

**FX: BEEP BEEP**

ADAMS: Parsnips are ready. Reckon I'll go digging. Wanna come help or y'know whatever?

CHRISTY: (LEAVING) Yeah alright, cool.

ADAMS: (LEAVING) OK, yeah, whatever, cool.

**FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED**

MINK: Well, I'm sure Banks and Burney have a lot to catch up on. Care for a quick tour, Commander?

FALCONER: What about the food, Commander?

MINK: All I'll need to do is stir and add water, Commander

FALCONER: Let's go then, Commander. Joining us, Lowell?

LOWELL: Nah Lexell and me are gonna go hang out.  
(LEAVING) Hey Lexell; let's put bits of ourselves in electric sockets and see what happens!

**FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED**

FALCONER: Nothing to worry about, Commander. He has a cybernetic gerbil that he believes 'talks' to him too.

MINK: D'you know, I read an interesting study recently about how cyborg crew members often create imaginary companions when they don't have access to sufficient emotional support. Not that I'm saying that applies to you, of course, Commander. It's just something I read.

FALCONER: Is that right, Commander? Interesting, Commander. Although I suppose until you've been in a position where you actually have a cyborg on your team, Commander, it can be difficult to fully comprehend the complexities, Commander.

MINK: I'm sure you know what you're doing, *Commander*.

**FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED**

**EXTENDED BEAT**

BURNEY/BANKS: (TOGETHER) I-

No you go first-

No you-

I was going to say, it would be good if there was a system to determine which individual should begin a dialogue in a social situation.

Exactly! It would certainly mitigate against uncomfortable conversation.

**PAUSE**

BANKS: I'm pleased your idea to convince Falconer to come here worked.

BURNEY: As soon as you said that Mink was here, I knew Falconer would agree to a visit. I have often noted her disinclination towards her erstwhile peer. When we've heard Mink's name mentioned on news updates, for instance, I have noted certain revealing behavioural responses from Falconer.

BANKS: Such as?

BURNEY: She screams into a cushion.

BANKS:            Hmm. So she has visited our base in a sadomasochistic capacity.

BURNEY:           Exactly. But she wouldn't want to admit that. She needed a compelling pretext to visit.

BANKS:            I see. She is here ostensibly to reignite a friendship with Mink, but in actuality to torture herself by being reminded of her own failings. Meanwhile, she thinks you all believe that she has brought your crew here to develop our alleged romantic relationship, whereas in truth you orchestrated everything so that you and I could conduct our top secret research.

BURNEY:           It was almost too easy.

**PAUSE**

BANKS:            You're paler than I imagined. Like a day-old corpse.

BURNEY:           Your lips are quite iridescent. Like my favourite species of brain-eating amoeba.

BANKS:            Shall we begin the research?

BURNEY:           I've been looking forward to it.

BANKS:            Very good. Please undress.

**GRAMS:            SHORT INSTRUMENTAL TO SHOW TIME PASSING**

**SCENE THREE: INT. ORGANISPHERE**

**FX:                FAINT WIND CHIMES AND TRICKLING WATER**

CHRISTY:          Whoa! Stripy sunflowers! Upside-down petunias! Some of these are really hard to get hold of.

ADAMS:            Oh them, yeah, whatever. Yeah I get the bulbs from my brother. He's, like, back on Mars and he's got connections, y'know, with, like, gangsters, so he sends me stuff all the time - but you can't tell anyone, cos otherwise they'd probably torture you.

CHRISTY:          (UNSURE) Really?

ADAMS: Yeah, and it definitely happens too, cos once I told a mate, and these people came over but I escaped cos I did special karate that hypnotises people, that my uncle told me how to do, cos he works for the special secret service, but I can't show you it, cos your head would literally explode, an' then there was a car chase, and I won the car chase, an' they said wow this guy's really good, an' then they went home again.

CHRISTY: (A BIT THROWN) Oh right, yeah. I get stuff like that from my... close family members... too.

ADAMS: What kind of stuff you growing?

CHRISTY: I'm doing some quite interesting things with fungus.

ADAMS: Our Commander's really rad - we can get away with loads of stuff with her. What about *your* Commander?

CHRISY: Oh she's rad too. Let's me do whatever I want. Like last week I told her I wanted to deviate from our usual seasonal rotations by planting the runner beans *before* the sprouts, and she just said 'you don't need to tell me these things'. So I guess that's pretty rad.

Oh, and she's a war hero!

ADAMS: Oh yeah, so's my Commander. Total war hero. Did you hear about how she got the scar on her neck?

CHRISTY: Yeah-

ADAMS: So it was a massive battle right, and she was winched in, and she got right up close and she was all like 'hey Defector - you ain't got nothing on me' and he was all like 'I'm gonna kill you!' and she was like 'yeah you just try it, and they shot her all like peeeowwww, and she jumped out the way cos she's got ninja training, only she didn't jump far enough, cos there was a Defector in the way, an' the laser skimmed all up her neck, and it really hurt, but she didn't say cos it went bounced off and shot a baddy's spaceship down, and-

CHRISTY: I read that it's from where she had a mole removed.

ADAMS: Uh... Yeah, it might've been that. Anyway, do you wanna see something really rad?

CHRISTY: Radder than stripy sunflowers?

ADAMS: Way radderer.

**SCENE FOUR INT. KITCHEN**

**FX: A POT SIMMERING**

MINK: It wasn't too much effort really. I simply read up on interior design, shifted the furniture round... Some people get a consultant in to do it all, but I prefer the personal touch. But what am I saying. You did the same with *your* Recreation Room.

FALCONER: Yes. I mean... Not exactly the same. I didn't build a swimming pool from *scratch*.

MINK: I thought you said you 'made some changes that meant your crew could play in a pool'.

FALCONER: No, I made it so they could *play* pool. I fixed the wonky leg on the snooker table. Folded up a piece of card.

MINK: Oh! Well. How resourceful. More wine?

FALCONER: Good idea.

**FX: WINE IS Poured FROM A BOTTLE**

MINK: It's so lovely to see you. Like we were never apart! I had heard you were on Pluto of course - I read the mailshot about hires and fires. Must be a nice - *restful* role for you.

FALCONER: I'll be back in the field soon. I'm just waiting for the call.

MINK: Of course you are! But for now, you may as well enjoy the quiet life, right?

FALCONER: Well, you too, of course.

MINK: What, here? You must be joking! No, I've rarely a chance to breathe!

FALCONER: I had wondered what you were doing here. There can't be many.. scenarios... in which they'd send high-achieving Commanders like you and I so far away from the battleground.

MINK: Yes. (BEAT) No you're right. I mean it's not something I would usually talk about.

FALCOENR: I knew it. Psychological trau-

MINK: Helium-3.

**BEAT**

FALCONER: Helium... 3?

MINK: Oh yes, Uranus (SHE PRONOUNCES IT YURE-EN-USS) is riddled with the stuff. It can provide the war effort with enough energy to keep heaps of operations going.

FALCONER: Oh...

MINK: You see they needed someone who could oversee the complicated robotic mining operations, while supervising a small team and with enough military experience to be able to competently defend the area from Defectors. Guess which mug drew the short straw.

FALCONER: Right.

MINK: Oh, I'm sure you were on the wishlist too. But I suppose they knew that you would be too busy on your own little planet- Sorry, demi-planet? I can never remember. Either way, I'm sure you're busy enough with- Actually, what is it you do there?

**BEAT**

FALCONER: It's classified.

MINK: Of course. (SIGHS SMUGLY/CONTENTEDLY) I often think about you, you know. How our paths have aligned. Best buds at primary school; both plumping for the military life; both leading in



active duty, and now look at us: Commanders Mink and Falconer, the two of us heading up research stations that could help us win this blasted scuffle for good. And I say cheers to that.

**FX:** **WINE CLINKS**

FALCONER: Yes. We really are a pair. Like a pair of slippers. (MEANINGFULLY) A pair of *ruby.. slippers...*

MINK: (CONFUSED) Y-Yes...

**FX:** **DOOR SWISH**

FALCONER: Officer Lowell? What are you-

LOWELL: Want food.

FALCONER: (EMBARRASSED) It won't be long.

MINK: Oh, go on, have a few breadsticks. You're a growing boy.

FALCONER: Boy? He's twenty-eight! He doesn't need mollycoddling!

(BEAT)

Just don't fill up on them; you'll spoil your dinner. Where are you going now?

LOWELL: (EATING) Out.

FALCONER: No you're not; you're a guest.

MINK: No, it's fine.

FALCONER: I don't like you going out in a strange place alone.

LOWELL: Not alone.

FALCONER: And I'm not sure I'm happy with you carrying that thing around.

LOWELL: His name is Lexell! You've ALWAYS hated him.

FALCONER: What? No-

MINK: Don't worry. It's fairly safe out there.

FALCONER: Just don't go far. And take a transceiver!

LOWELL: Yeah yeah.

**FX: DOOR SWISHES OPEN AND CLOSED**

MINK: Oh to be a cyborg, heading out into the inhospitably icy plains of a moon without a care in the world.

FALCONER: He's not usually like that.

MINK: Perhaps the change of scenery is good for him too. Helping to explore who he is a bit. Can't be easy being cooped up in that tiny research station all the time. Oops, look at me, I keep forgetting to stir.

FALCONER: No no, Commander. You're doing an excellent job of that.

MINK: I wonder how Banks and Burney are getting on.

FALCONER: (FED UP NOW) Probably doing something impenetrably boring.

**SCENE FIVE INT. RECREATION ROOM/SWIMMING POOL**

BANKS: Ready, Burney?

BURNEY: (ECHOED) Ready!

BANKS: Go.

**FX: SOUND OF BURNEY GOING DOWN A WATERSLIDE AND SPLASHING INTO A POOL.**

BANKS: Results?

BURNEY: (CALLING OVER) A faster run-up increased my initial velocity at the upper-end of the waterslide, while the head-first position gave an amplified sense of disorientation which contributed to a boosted adrenaline rush.

BANKS: So if you were to plot this experience on the Banks-Burney Scary Fun Graph?

BURNEY: X axis: seven point eight, Y axis: eight point four.

**FX: THE SLAP OF WET FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING**

BANKS: Interesting. A greater sense of risk certainly appears to correlate with a greater sensation of fun.

Also, you may wish to tie a more secure knot in your swimming trunks.

BURNEY: I will stress once again that the water is surprisingly frigid.

Actually, I've been meaning to discuss something with you. It's the name. The Banks-Burney Scary Fun Graph.

BANKS: I agree; it makes our work sound almost... *childish*.

BURNEY: No, I wondered why you didn't name it the other way round.

BANKS: The Hparg Nuf Yracs Yenrub-Sknab? That makes no sense, Burney.

BURNEY: No, not backwards. I mean instead of the Banks-Burney scary fun graph, it could be called the the Burney-Banks Scary Fun Graph.

BANKS: Banks-Burney conforms to alphabetical order.

BURNEY: But as you know, within most conventions of scientific authorship, names are given in the order of relative contribution. Given that I conceived of the experiment, I believe my name should be listed first.

BANKS: A valid point. However I contributed the test environment: this recreation room.

BURNEY: A fair response. However you'll notice that it is me performing the physical elements of the test.

BANKS: While I am recording the research, which in point of fact makes me the scientist and you little more than a test subject.

BURNEY: Take that back!

BANKS: You know very well I cannot recover spoken words, unless you were speaking figuratively. Which I never do.

BURNEY: Either way, I would have put Burney first.

BANKS: It sounds like you're used to putting Burney first.

BURNEY: That's figurative!

BANKS: In fact, I wonder if perhaps you are not suited to scientific partnership after all.

BURNEY: And I think there is another variable we can add to the study.

BANKS: What's that?

BURNEY: Activities considered to be fun are no fun at all when the other person is... *mean*.

BANKS: Concurred. Perhaps we should end our collaboration.

BURNEY: Perhaps we should.

**FX: RIPS UP RESEARCH**

BANKS: Eliminating all previous data.

BURNEY: Starting work on the Burney Scary Fun Graph.

BANKS: Beginning efforts on the Banks Scary Fun Graph.

**SCENE SIX: INT. OUTSIDE PIPE ROOM**

CHRISTY: Helium-3? So helium is good?

ADAMS: Yeah, it's worth loads; why?

CHRISTY: No reason. (HIGH PITCHED TO HERSELF) *Ace*.

ADAMS: Here we are.

**FX: DOOR OPENS. SOUND OF GROANING PIPES AND BURSTS OF STEAM**

CHRISTY: Wow! You sure it's alright to be here?

ADAMS: What? Yeah, course. I come here all the time.

CHRISTY: I'm not allowed in our water production and reclamation room.

ADAMS: Yeah, I guess my Commander's just really cool with that kind of stuff. Hup!

**FX: A PIPE CREAKS**

CHRISTY: You're hanging off a pipe! I'm not allowed to hang off pipes!

ADAMS: Yeah totally - I do it all the time. Look, I can do twenty pull-ups. Look. One... Two...

(STRUGGLING) Threeee...

See? I could go all the way up to twenty. Probably more. Like thirty. I've never actually counted so it's probably around fifty. How many can you do?

CHRISTY: I've never tried.

ADAMS: Too scared?

CHRISTY: No!

ADAMS: S'OK! Some people are just scarer than me.

CHRISTY: I'm not scared! Look! HUP!

**FX: A PIPE CREAKS**

CHRISTY: Should it creak like that?

ADAMS: You wussing out?

CHRISTY: No! [DOES FRANTIC ENERGETIC PULL-UPS AS THE PIPE CREAKS] One! Two! Three! Four! Five! Six! Seven! Eight!...

**FX: CREAKING PIPE**

ADAMS: (AS THE PIPE KEEPS CREAKING RAPIDLY AND CHRISTY KEEPS COUNTING) Yeah it's probably more like... a hundred that I can do.

**SCENE SEVEN: EXT. JULIET**

LOWELL: What about here, Lexell? Yeah I think it looks comfy here too. You can sit here. On this big pile of moon dirt.

**FX: PLACES LEXELL DOWN ON MOON DIRT**

LOWELL: Hehe, yeah. *Moon dirt*. No one else would've got that.

I'm glad you were here. Would've been a proper bore-fest otherwise.

What's that? Yeah, my team can be total dweebs too. Like, take us being here, right-

Here.

Here! - Next to Uranus!

What? What's funny?

You've got a weird sense of humour, Lexell. Anyway, The Commando says it's cos of Burney and that *other* Burney with the higher voice, but it's obviously actually about the Commando and the other Commando. An' I know that cos of the cushion-screaming.

And to think Christy's always tellin' me that I'm an attention-seeker! It's stupid!

Cos if they just gave me attention I wouldn't have to seek it.

But no, Christy's always talkin' at them potatoes, and Burney's always talkin' into that science recording stuff, and the Commando - she's too busy tellin' me what she reckons I should be doing to actually *listen* to me.

And I don't think they realise that I can be really good in a team. I can. I idea all the time. But they only come to me when stuff needs fixing. You lot haven't even got one of me here. That's how important I am.

Sucks.

And yeah, I'm not an idiot. I know you can't give me advice, cos the only stuff you know about is how to make shoes all shiny.

But that's what I like about you. Y'see while everyone else is pretendin', and showin' off, an' givin' a monkey's about all the stupid little stuff; you're the only one who's happy to just be who you are.

And that's nice.

I respect you for that.

### **SCENE EIGHT: INT. KITCHEN**

MINK: ...the orchestra, the release of doves: It was all a little much. You were prudent to have a more low-key medal ceremony, Commander. I mean that awkward moment when they called me to step up the podium, *all by myself*-

Oh, Phoebe, how much longer for the perfect risotto?

PHOEBE: Five minutes, Commander Mink, for it to be *al dente* - that is - to the *bite*.

FALCONER: Your smart assistant?

MINK: Surely you have one?

FALCONER: Yes. Orpheus. He's... unique.

MINK: Phoebe is too. We treated her to the new upgrade the other day. Such a breeze to set up, wasn't it, Phoebe.

PHOEBE I now have thirty percent more processing power, and can perform thousands more tasks simultaneously. My analytical capabilities are now almost as impressive as yours, Commander Mink. Haha. Haha.

MINK: Oh, stop it, Phoebe! I don't recall the upgrade coming with a flattery chip! You're embarrassing me! Anyway. Where was I?

FALCONER: The podium. Going up yourself.

MINK: The point is, none of it was necessary. All I had done was my duty, right? And in the same circumstances, who wouldn't have done the same? Who cares about the number of battles I've led to victory, or how many lives I saved in the Candor skirmish.

PHOEBE: Four-thousand, three-hundred and eight, Commander.

MINK: Exactly! Who's even counting! It's all just part and parcel of this unique path we've both chosen.

FALCONER: Path. Yes. Or road, even.

MINK: Quite!

FALCONER: A long, winding, brick road.

MINK: Erm...

FALCONER: That one might say was almost yellow in appearance.

MINK: OK, that's it. That's the third non-sequitur you've shoehorned into conversation today. What's going on, Commander?

FALCONER: You know exactly what's going on, Commander.

MINK: Honestly I-

Ah. Yes. Yes, I see now.

FALCONER: Go on then.

MINK: Go on what?

FALCONER: Tell me why I came to this base. Because we both know it wasn't for a friendly catch-up.

MINK: OK. If you insist. It's resentment. Isn't it. You can't accept the fact that I've done better than you. Got further before you. That I have a bigger, better research station. A more capable team. That I'm here for helium-3 whereas you... you're *there* for different reasons, aren't you.

Oh, yes, I know. Everyone does. It was the talk of the mess halls. Commander Falconer, unfit



for service in the field. I was sorry to hear it, I really was, but even I didn't think you'd be petty enough to come here and blame it all on me. Even I didn't think you'd be low enough to-

FALCONER: Actually that's not it at all.

MINK: Oh really?

FALCONER: Really. I don't care about any of that, *Mink*. All of this, here - you earned it. And I never claimed to be the best.

MINK: Good. Well I'm glad we got that-

FALCONER: No, I'm talking about the one thing you *didn't* earn. I'm talking about the thing you *took*. That you took from *me*.

MINK: I'm sure I don't know what you're talki-

FALCONER: Let me jog your memory. Year Six. The summer play.

MINK: Oh my gosh...

**SCENE NINE: INT. PIPE ROOM**

CHRISTY: This is... um... quite high now. Are you sure you're allowed to climb up the pipes like this?

ADAMS: What? Yeah. Definitely. Do it all the time.

CHRISTY: It's just you didn't seem to realise that last pipe had boiling water running through it.

ADAMS: Yeah I burn my hand on that pipe on purpose all the time. It's just a thing I do. Do you wanna do it?

CHRISTY: No.

ADAMS: Yeah, that's cool. Whatever.

**BEAT**

CHRISTY: Adams?

ADAMS: Yeah?

CHRSITY: How did you make First Lieutenant?

ADAMS: What? Oh that. Yeah, they said I showed real - what was the word? It was like attitude, but if, like, that attitude was really happy?

CHRISTY: Aptitude?

ADAMS: Yeah that's it! What that word means is that I basically didn't have to do all the really hard Lieutenant exams and things, cos basically one of the Generals saw that I was awesome and gave me a promotion.

CHRISTY: You skipped the exams? But... What General would let you do that?

ADAMS: Oh, it was, uh, (AS IF TRYING TO REMEMBER) General... General Adams.

CHRISTY: General... *Adams*?

ADAMS: Yeah. I usually just call him 'dad'. I could get him to put in a word for you if you want?

CHRISTY: Really? (BEAT) That's... that's nice of you... But... Aren't the exams kind of there for a reason?

ADAMS: What? No! Exams are for losers who follow the rules. Wait - are you a loser?

CHRISTY: No!

ADAMS: I mean I didn't think you were, but I'm starting to think you might be.

CHRSITY: I'm not!

ADAMS: Yeah? Prove it.

CHRISTY: How..?

ADAMS: I know. You want an exam? I've got an exam. And it's the only exam that matters.

CHRSITY: What is it?

ADAMS: It's called... The jumping exam. All you have to do, is jump far enough to touch that pipe over there.

CHRISTY: The big rusty brown one? With only a little ledge underneath it then a big drop to the floor?

ADAMS: You scared?

CHRISTY: No. Just making sure you meant that one. Have you done it?

ADAMS: Yeah I've done it loads. It's easy. You don't have to do it, but if you don't, then you're definitely a loser.

CHRISTY: I mean, it doesn't actually prove anyth-

ADAMS: Aaah, you *can't* do it. Thought not. See? I guess some people just haven't got what it takes. Ah well, let's go back-

CHRISTY: I'll do it.

ADAMS: What?

CHRISTY: I said I'll do it.

ADAMS: Really?

CHRISTY: Yes. If you do it at the same time.

ADAMS: Uh... I mean... It's probably dinner time nearly, so-

CHRISTY: Thought you said you'd done it loads.

ADAMS: I have...

CHRISTY: Well then. You scared?

ADAMS: No! Just thought *you* might be.

I guess we're doing it then.

OK. Here we go. The jumping exam. We're both gonna jump.

(AS IF RECONSIDERING) Christy-?

CHRISTY: One, two, three, go!

ADAMS: Aaaagghh!

**SCENE TEN: INT. RECREATION ROOM/POOL**

FX: SWIMMING POOL AMBIENCE FADES IN. THERE IS A SUDDEN BRIEF DISTANT CREAKING AND CRASHING

BURNEY: Did you hear that?

BANKS: I'm not at liberty to say.

BURNEY: But it's not related to our research.

BANKS: Our research?

BURNEY: The research that we are conducting simultaneously but very much separately.

BANKS: (READING AS SHE WRITES) Research notes: The following tests take place following a loud crashing noise emanating from the pipe room.

BURNEY: So you *did* hear it?

BANKS: Are you getting out the pool for your turn?

BURNEY: (GLUMLY) I think I might just stay here and update my notes.

BANKS: As you wish. Delay on your part will lead to a faster publication by me.

**FX: SOUND OF BANKS PULLING HERSELF FROM POOL. FOOTSTEPS TO SLIDE.**

BURNEY: (TALKING TO HIMSELF) Research notes: in our attempts to measure fun, we forgot what fun was. (BEAT) Hold on... Banks!

BANKS: Officer, I said-

BURNEY: Publication!

BANKS: What about it?

BURNEY: You cannot publish without a peer review!

BANKS: Well, obviously. In order to publish, you need approval from another expert in that specific field with sufficient knowledge to-

BEAT

Hmm. That's a predicament.

BURNEY: A quandary.

BANKS: A conundrum.

BURNEY: A Catch-22.

PAUSE

BANKS: Burney?

BURNEY: Yes?

BANKS: In light of recent revelations I would like to make a new suggestion.

BURNEY: I was thinking the same.

BANKS: We could make a comparison of how enjoyable activities are when carried out alone, against when carried out together - what?  
BURNEY: We could just have fun

BURNEY: I said we could just have fun.

BANKS: That's not what I was thinking at all.

BURNEY: I just thought that-

BANKS: Well don't. If I thought for a moment you were considering giving up on scientific research, I would seriously have to reconsider this partnership.

BURNEY: (ENCOURAGED) Partnership?

BANKS: (ENCOURAGINGLY) Of course.

BURNEY: There is still the question of naming conventions.

BANKS: Actually I think I have a solution for that. It may seem radical at first, but I hope you'll consider it. I would like to propose-

BURNEY: One moment, Officer. I believe something more pressing is occurring.

BANKS: What?

BURNEY: Since we began this discussion, the water level has dropped by nineteen millimetres.

BANKS: That's a negligible measurement to detect. What's your evidence?

BURNEY: Previously the surface ran level with the top of my nipple. Now it's level with the lowest point of my areola.

BANKS: Hmmm. That's too significant to be explained by the natural swelling effect of water on your cadaver-like skin. There is another explanation however that correlates with supporting auditory evidence.

BURNEY: I concluded the same.

BANKS: We should go.

**FX: SPLASHING**

BURNEY: Banks?

BANKS: Yes?

BURNEY: Your cheeks have the oily sheen of a pupating maggot.

BANKS: This is no time for courtship, Officer Burney.

**SCENE ELEVEN: INT. THE KITCHEN**

MINK: The Wizard of Oz? The play we did when we were seven?

FALCONER: It was my favourite film growing up. It was the *only* film I had growing up, as it was the only one they had on dad's military base. Aside from the CCTV tapes I found of the interrogation room.

I remember being at home playing with dolls I'd made out of old uniforms and cutlery. My Dorothy had slapped the Scarecrow around a bit, and the Tin Man was completely dispirited from

enforced sleep deprivation, when mum came home and told me:

There would be auditions for a play at school. I was so excited I spilt the juice I was using to waterboard the Cowardly Lion. I knew right then it was my time to shine. Time to show them what I could do. Time to show them I-

PHOEBE: One minute til risotto perfection.

FALCERON: Oh shut up Phoebe.

MINK: You know I really should finish this riso-

FALCONER: No! You're not getting out of this.

MINK: Bu-

FALCONER: So I rehearsed. I knew all the lines, all the songs by heart. I practised with my dolls. I found a big mirror and practiced in front of that, until dad told me it was actually one-way glass and that I was starting to unnerve his colleagues.

And when I auditioned, I just knew that the hard work would pay off. And sure enough, the cast list came out and I pushed my way to the front and nearly fainted with excitement. I had done it. And I had earned it.

But when it came to the first rehearsal, what did I learn? That they had reconsidered the casting. You see, it turned out somebody had told the teacher that I wasn't experienced enough to play the role. And so it was given to somebody else. And who do you think that was? That's right. Little Gertrude Mink.

MINK: Falconer. That was years ag-

FALCOENR: I should have been the Munchkin Mayor and you know it!

MINK: Falconer.

FALCONER: I would have had a line in the *Ding Dong* song!

MINK: Falconer!

FALCONER: But no, Mink the merciless, Munchkin *chorus* member, had to weasel her way up the ladder and switch places with me so-

MINK: Commander!

FALCONER: What?

MINK: We're standing in a pool of water.

**FX: A SLIGHT DRIBBLE OF WATER GROWS IN VOLUME**

FALCONER: How dare you! I'm not crying! It must be the onions you chopped, or maybe I'm allergic to your carpets, or -

**FX: SQUELCHY NOISE OF FOOT IN WATER**

FALCONER: Oh I see. Where's it coming from?

ADAMS: (D) (ON A TRANCEIVER) Commander.

MIN/FAL: (TOGETHER) Yes?

ADAMS: (D) I meant *my* Commander.

MINK: Yes?

ADAMS: (D) I... There... Um...

CHRISTY: (D) Oh for goodness sake, give it to me. There's been an accident in the pipe room.

ADAMS: (D) *Christy!*

MINK: The pipe room? You're not allowed in there.

CHRISTY: (D) You said we -! Ugh. Anyway, we were - we accidentally broke a pipe. Now it seems to be leaking out of a vent in the room to somewhere.

FALCONER: Practically indestructible, eh?

MINK: Well that explains the water. OK. Well that's fine. It's just a leak. We'll need to call someone to get it fixed.

BANKS: (D) Mink?

MINK: What is it, Officer Banks.



BANKS: (D) There's something happening with the swimming pool. It's emptying.

MINK: Ah.

FALCOENR: Well let's open the door.

MINK: No don't open the door!

FALCONER: Why not?

MINK: The carpets - I just had them fluffed!

FALCONER: So if I get this right, the water content of a swimming pool is flooding the kitchen. I don't know what size that is but I'm sure it's more than the kitchen. Oh! Fun idea! Let's find out! Phoebe how many cubic metres is the kitchen?

PHOEBE: Three hundred and seventeen.

FALCONER: And the swimming pool?

PHOEBE: One thousand two hundred.

FALCONER: Interesting! Thank you Phoebe!

MINK: We'll call somebody to fix it. Phoebe, call an engineer, urgently.

PHOEBE: Of course. Urgent signal sent. Automatic response received. Engineers will arrive... A week on Thursday sometime between nine am and five pm.

MINK: What?

**FX: CREAK, SPLASH**

BANKS: (D) What was that?

FALCOENR: Oh, just the ceiling collapsing in. Water's coming in fast now!

MINK: Fine! I'll just order new carpets. Phoebe open the kitchen doors.

PHOEBE: I'm sorry. I can't do that, Commander. A threat has been detected in the kitchen.

FALCONER: Only the best technology for you, Commander.

MINK: Oh no... It's coming in fast now. Phoebe: code Override! Code Override! Open doors!

PHOEBE: I'm sorry Commander. Administrators are not authorised to override my imperatives.

FACLOENR: Such a breeze to set up!

MINK: Oh god, it's coming in faster! It's nearly up to my hips!

FALCONER: Oh no, the risotto won't be al dente anymore.

MINK: Falconer! Be serious for a moment!

FALCEORN: Why?

MINK: Because I don't know what to do!

BEAT

FALCOENR: Well why didn't you say so? OK. First things first. Phoebe - how long at current intake rate before the room is full?

PHOEBE: One minute and forty seconds.

FALCONER: Good. Just enough time.

MINK: Enough time for what?

FALCONER: Now Phoebe, can you see your way to shutting down the electricity in this section of the base?

PHOEBE: Of course.

**FX: ELECTRICITY TURNS OFF.**

MINK: The lights! And you've lost Phoebe!

FALCONER: I've also prevented us from getting electrocuted by any number of flashy white goods in your kitchen. So now we only need to worry about drowning. And I'm fairly sure I can prevent that.

MINK: Thank goodness!

FALCONER: On one condition.

MINK: What?

FALCONER: Apologise.

MINK: Apologise?

FALCONER: Admit that you stole my part, and I'll save our lives.

MINK: What? We don't have time! It's practically up to our necks!

FALCONER: *As mayor of the Munchkin City; In the county of the land of Oz-*

MINK: Now is not the time for petty revenge!

FALCOENR: It's not about revenge, Mink. It's about integrity. It's about truth.

MINK: Truth? I don't-

FALCEONR: (GASPING FOR AIR) *I welcome you most regally-*

MINK: (GASPING FOR AIR) OK I'm sorry!

FALCONER: For..?

MINK: I'm sorry I stole Munchkin Mayor! I had to have it! I thought I could do it better than you but I was wrong! OK?

**PAUSE**

Falconer?

**PAUSE**

FALCONER: Apology accepted. Now, that transceiver...  
(SPLASHES A BIT) here we are.

**FX: BEEP**

FALCONER: Lowell where are you?

LOWELL: (D) Just outside. I didn't go far, alright?  
Stop checking on me!

FALCOENR: We're stuck in the kitchen, and the door won't open. However now the electricity is off I

think there's a way we can damage the locking mechanism enough to weaken the door and let the water out.

LOWELL: Are you saying...?

FALCONER: Indeed I am.

MINK: What's happening?

**FX: BEEP**

FALCONER: Burney, Christy, Banks, Adams, I would advise you all ensure you stand back a long, long way.

MINK: I can't get much more air!

FALCONER: Brace yourself. (BEAT) You see I may not be as perfect as you are. But what I do know is that if I can't do something myself, I know somebody who *can* do that thing. It's about finding talent, nurturing that talent, and then using the right talent in the right places.

MINK: What do you mean?

FALCONER: I mean I may not always understand my cyborg, but I know what he's good at.

LOWELL: (D) I LOVE TO IDEA!!!!

**FX: A CRASH, THE DOOR BREAKS. THERE'S A LONG WHOOSH OF WATER. IT BECOMES A TRICKLE, AND FALCONER AND MINK COUGH AND GASP FOR AIR**

FALCONER: (GROGGILY) Ohh. Your poor carpet.

**SCENE TWELVE: INT. LOUNGE**

BURNEY: When you swam out of the kitchen, what was your physical positioning, and who would you say had more fun?

MINK: It was no fun.

BANKS: It seems we hadn't accounted for genuine mortal peril. There are so many variables.

BURNEY: Perhaps we should lay this experiment to rest.

BANKS: Agreed.

FALCONER: Now we've cleaned up, perhaps you could tell me how exactly a pipe was broken, Christy?

CHRISTY: Would you believe me if I said it was classified?

FALCONER: No. I-

ADAMS: It was Christy.

CHRISTY: Don't blame me - it was both of us.

ADAMS: No it wasn't. I didn't reach the pipe when we jumped. I... fell short. It was just you who touched it and broke it.

CHRISTY: Really? Ace! Commander it was me!

FALCONER: (ADMONISHING) Christy! (WHISPERS) Proud of you. (TO MINK) Well *Commander*, it's been a delight.

MINK: A pleasure; *Commander*.

FALCONER: We'll see ourselves out, shall we? Ready Lowell?

LOWELL: Yep! Later's Lexell. Thanks for the chat!

FALCONER: Out we go. Come on. Oh, and Commander, you know where we are now. So don't be a stranger. Maybe drop by ours next time-? Don't feel like you need to wave us off-

**FX: DOOR SLAMS, AND THEY ARE...**

**SCENE THIRTEEN: INT. DOCKING BAY**

FALCONER: Wonder if she'll take us up on the offer? Come on, into the CrewPod, team.

If I ever see Uranus again it'll be too soon.

**BEAT**

LOWELL: I just feel like I'm missing something somewhere.

CHRISTY: You're so *Xenon*, Lowell: Strange and dense.

LOWELL: Awesome.

**FX: CAR DOOR CLOSES**

FALCONER: Navigator: take us back to Pluto.

VOICE OF SIN: Are you sure that location exists?

FALCONER: Oh for -

CHRISTY: It's alright - I can plug it in manually.

**FX: AN ENGINE KICKS ON**

FALCONER: What would I do without you? Oh, Burney, how did things go with Banks?

BURNEY: Burney.

FALCONER: No, Banks.

BURNEY: No. We applied online for a civil partnership. Both our surnames are now 'Burney'. It makes things easier for our research.

FALCONER: Oh.

Fair enough.

**FX: SHIP TAKES OFF**

FALCONER: (HUMS 'DING DONG THE WITCH IS DEAD' TO FADE)

**END**