The Seditious Ambassador

By

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Based upon the novella 'Lazy Bloke in the 35th Century' by Mark Anthony Taylor

Copyright (c)2012. mark.anthony.taylor@gmail.com All rights reserved. This screenplay may not be used or reproduced without the express written permission of the author. INT. BURNING HIGH-RISE OFFICE BUILDING. EVENING.

Fire and thick smoke fill the corridors. Violent shudders shake the walls cracking glass windows and tipping over internal partitions.

The bodies of dead office workers lay around, some are wearing corporate T-shirts, indicative of the early 21st century.

A FIRE-FIGHTER axes through a door, trips over one casually dressed comatose man hidden in the smoke, who awakens, coughs and moans.

The fire-fighter resuscitates the man with his secondary oxygen mask.

AN EXPLOSION shatters a glass wall spraying shards everywhere. The man, CAPTAIN LAZY BLOKE, arises in a panic and finds the fire-fighter's throat has been ripped open pierced by a large jaggard piece of glass.

Captain Bloke, choking, takes from the fire-fighter the oxygen tank and mask and dons it himself. He rises, almost collapses again, but forces himself to crawl along through the smoke. He stops at a junction and calls out.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

Diana!

Forcing himself further into the holocaust, his response is met with silence. He turns over some of the female bodies, and then lets them fall again when he sees they are dead.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE Diana? Diana!

> > STRESSED FEMALE VOICE (Behind door)

Help!

Captain Bloke tries the handle, but the door is jammed. Smoke puffs from under a neighbouring door and fire spreads all around.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

Diana?

STRESSED FEMALE VOICE

Help me!

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

Hold on.

He rushes back to the fire-fighter's body, and returns with the axe.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE Stand back from the door!

He hits the door, to no avail - the ceiling above has partially tilted and trapped the top half of the door.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE Hold on. One minute.

Captain Bloke searches the bodies of the technicians, finds a tool belt and carries it with him back to the door.

With a flat-bladed screwdriver and the back head of the axe used as a hammer, he chisels the hinge bolts. Once the first is removed the door swivels a little and he meets the eyes of a woman through the other side, but not closely enough to reveal her face.

# STRESSED FEMALE VOICE

Faster!

Before Captain Bloke can remove the second hinge a mighty tremor knocks him to the ground. The ceiling collapses two feet in on his side of the door, internal walls crack and windows on every external surface shatter. A clear breeze wafts through the door crack.

Captain Bloke grabs his tools once more and extracts the final bolt. He pushes the door which falls away in slow motion. On the other side is a woman in office dress in a crumpled heap, her face out of view from the doorway.

### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Diana?!

As the door hits horizontal it seems to crack the floor, which was only just held together. The floor collapses and in a second the woman is gone amid a mass of debris.

Captain Bloke looks out over the new external surface of the office building, the room he has just revealed, along with the rooms above and below, fell into a smoke cloud into the streets.

Across the city landscape every major building is on fire and there is a torch wielding mob, tens of thousand strong, rampages through the streets. CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O In this sad and lonely pointless life, Diana was the only woman I ever loved.

Removing his mask a moment, we see Captain Bloke is a youthful man, in his late thirties or early forties.

FADE TO BLACK

# INT. BEDROOM. LOW LIGHT

The scene is Rococo, a mid-18th century royal chamber with a four-poster king-sized bed at one end. On the other side, facing the bed, is a huge mirror framed and ornamented with golden metal. On the side by the door, which appears to be solid oak, hangs two huge paintings of scenes from the appropriate era.

Captain Bloke is sleeping in the bed, but becomes aroused and irritated by the sound a PERCUSSION TRIANGLE. The door opens after a short knock and GOSSIMA enters. She is an attractive looking woman in an 18th century French court dress and carries a violin.

She pulls the curtains to, flooding the room with light and reveals the scene outside - a huge country lawn in which geese peck at the grass.

### GOSSIMA

Wake up! You are wanted.

Gossima straightens a pair of trousers that lie messily over a chair. Two more ladies run past the door, similarly attired to Gossima. They peek into the room.

> JANET, TIGRA Wake up Lazy Bloke! Wakey wakey!

A fourth woman, HELENA, in ballet attire and composition puts her head around the door.

HELENA Ah sleeping like a baby.

Gossima glances at the mirror grimaces momentarily, touching a finger to the side of her head. Helena catches her concern, shares the gesture and they both exit and close the door behind them with a loud bang startling Captain Bloke, who now looks totally debilitated. CAPTAIN BLOKE (mumbles gently and with melancholy) Diana...

The sound of the striking triangle gets louder and faster.

The Captain puts his hands to his ears and catches sight of the mirror. He lifts himself up, uses his fingers to quickly straight his hair and then snaps them towards the mirror.

The triangle fades abruptly and the surface of the mirror ceases to reflect the room, transitioning to that of an office in late Victorian style. Behind a huge table is an imperious mature lady, perfectly coiffed and domineering, staring out of the mirror towards Captain Bloke.

A subtitle appears in the mirror giving her name and status: PRESIDENT ELIZABETH HARGREAVES-BASSINGTON IV of ENGLANDWORLD.

Captain Bloke slowly reading the subtitle, becomes alert to the executive status of the call and lifts the bed sheets above his head to conceal his face.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

Hello?

THE PRESIDENT Why are you hiding behind a duvet?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Stubble. I have not shaved for twenty-four hours.

THE PRESIDENT Stubble is fine. Show me your face.

Lowering the duvet Captain Bloke meets the President's eyes and gives a lazy smile.

THE PRESIDENT Not one for formal introductions are we. Never mind. Now...

CAPTAIN BLOKE

I'm er...

THE PRESIDENT Don't interrupt people when they are speaking. I have a job for you, Argos Meta III, New America. I need a representative to resolve the tax dispute there... a diplomat... with (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THE PRESIDENT (cont'd) a respectable hairstyle and clean shaven.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Tea Party 1776?

THE PRESIDENT Bring them back into the fold and I'll cancel the sedition proceedings

CAPTAIN BLOKE I heard they shoot Englishmen on sight.

THE PRESIDENT With your history of rebellion against *our* state they will not be so quick to draw.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Send them a bubblegram. I'll script it for you.

THE PRESIDENT We tried that with our own speech-masters, *qualified* speech-masters!

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

Only people with something to prove need qualifications. Fill a planet with American gypos and then - what a surprise 'No taxation, blah de blah de blah.'

#### THE PRESIDENT

Sarcasm towards our person can be construed as treason. In any case, the bubblegrams are blocked, we get no replies.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

My life expectancy is better here than in the reach of New America. Treason, sedition, what you will, you can't catch me.

# THE PRESIDENT

We have bankrupted ourselves setting up the colonies, we've burnt through all deposits of (MORE) THE PRESIDENT (cont'd) thorium, and *peak nuclear energy*, once a fear, is now a teaching of modern history. We need you, we need you to go and broker with the New Americans. One hundred million tonnes of thorium and in return we will accept their independence. Anything less and we bring the warships of the Imperium in full force. I, We, are asking your help, on behalf of all sides, to stave off planetary war.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I've no training in diplomacy. Why me?

#### THE PRESIDENT

We have had trouble with bubble transitions. As you know...The Brazen Widow, the Diabolique, The King Arthur...all are lost. Your ship does not work by bubble drive and you can travel where we cannot. The Lord Protector and the President of New America were executed three days ago, by revolutionists. As I said before, you are a known anarchist, on both sides, yet also a patriot - in your own way - so I ask you not to do this for your leader, not to do this for your nation, but to do it for your people.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Will they accept me as a diplomat?

## THE PRESIDENT

That is the leading question. You have a week. If you fail...it is war, and neither side will profit from a war.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Okey doke.

THE PRESIDENT So you agree then?

CAPTAIN BLOKE One must do good in this world, do good in all worlds. I agree. Signed up. Boxes ticked. All done. Okey doke.

# THE PRESIDENT

Review this discussion before setting off, in case you missed something else. Sedition, treason forgiven.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

Okey doke.

THE PRESIDENT All life on planet Earth, the English Empire, depends upon you.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Okey doke. Tata then.

THE PRESIDENT The spirit of the Republic be with you.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Bye! (Snaps fingers)

The mirror loses its projected surface and reflects the room once more. Captain Bloke gives an exhausted moan, falls back flat on the bed then tears the bed sheet across his face. Gossima opens the door ajar.

> GOSSIMA Wow! Exciting stuff!

CAPTAIN BLOKE I think I can remember all that. Bring peace between the planets. Three battleships gone missing. No bubblegrams...and...damn.

### GOSSIMA

Two of our top bods in America have been executed. Peak nuclear energy. One hundred million tonnes of Thorium to settle up.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Well that's the planning phase over, time for a cup of tea. Captain Bloke climbs out of bed with a moan as Gossima exits. She practices 'Meditation' from *Thais* as she walks down the corridor.

Half dressed, Captain Bloke sits at the mirror and pulls out a heavy brass keyboard from a side drawer and begins typing. The violin music is still just about audible as Gossima is in a nearby room.

CAPTAIN BLOKE TYPING

Logs

# THE MONITOR

Password?

CAPTAIN BLOKE (Speaking as he types) H-U-M-P-T-Y-D-U-M-P-T-Y

THE MONITOR Logs...1) Transmission 8.32am BST 3482 July 3rd, London, Englandworld, The President, Subject: Diplomacy Job.

THE MONITOR Logs...2) Archive. 7.32pm BST. 3479 August 14, New Crete, Argos Meta III. Diana. Subject: Vid backup. Coronation.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Two! Two! Two! Bloody thing. A thousand years of voice recognition theory...befuddled by 'two'

The Captain arises and closes the door to shield himself from the strains on the violin.

Reaching to the mirror monitor he presses the box framing the second log and the monitor reviews a 2D video of the coronation of Queen Diana on Argos Meta III. The music is Zadok the Priest and the venue housed in a facsimile of Westminster Cathedral.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O Diana! The only woman I ever loved. Reincarnation? Did they pluck you out of my memory? Argos III calls to me and it is time to stop running away.

Tapping on the screen twice Captain Bloke renders the monitor back to its function as a mirror.

CAPTAIN BLOKE (To himself in the mirror) Stop running away.

He arises and moves to the window. He taps on it twice and the outside scene fades to a vision of Jupiter.

## EXT. SPACE SHIP IN THE ORBIT OF A MOON AROUND JUPITER

The space ship, Henry VI, drops a nuclear bomb onto the moon's surface, which releases a massive dust cloud. The ship drops a line and nozzle through the cloud.

In the window, Captain Bloke stares out, the view of his room visible from the previous scene. He is getting dressed in late Victorian attire.

The line arises and is withdrawn back into the ship and the ion thrusters begin to push the ship out of the moon's orbit.

GOSSIMA INTERCOM V.O Precious reserves are 100%. Pay day! Once again, those who are leaving today, thank you for your company, hope to see you in the near future...oh and spend the metal wisely.

Consider rolling the opening credits here, perhaps to the tune of Holst's Jupiter, which combines the planets, jollity, and patriotism, all of which are appropriate for the story.

EXT. SPACE PORT

Earth's primary space elevator, a huge domed port located a hundred kilometres over the ruins of Salzburg, consists of a platform supported upon six shafts thirty metres wide at their bases and ten metres wide at their zenith.

From its top dome one can see the white cliffs of Dover to the West, and the coastline of Messina to the South.

The Henry VI is seen to be incoming to dock at one of the stations there.

A group of military men begin taking positions around the foyer and performing last minute checks of their weapons.

Electronic Muzak is filling the lobby. The music is in a minor key with the structure of a nursery rhyme.

Captain Bloke sleeps on an 18th century cabriole sitting room settee, still dressed in his Victorian clothes. The decoration is again Rococo, similar to something one would have expected in the court of Versailles.

A monitor on a coffee table shows the space port approaching. The camera zooms in on Captain Bloke.

FADE TO BLACK

BLACK VOID, TALL, ATHLETIC, BUXOM WENCH IN THE DARK (SLIGHTLY LIT)

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O (YEARNING) Ah the games. The sex games. The endless sex games. None of that silly billy femi-ninny-izum. Diana!

Suggested music: the first motive played on a cello from the Russian Easter Festival Overture.

Suddenly the wench approaches Captain Bloke and starts shaking him violently.

INT. HENRY VI BRIDGE / LIVING ROOM

Gossima is using the bow of her Cello to gently tap Captain Bloke's shoulder. She is still dressed in her French Court dress.

GOSSIMA Wake up, we're here!

CAPTAIN BLOKE What? (sighs)

INT. SPACE PORT

The inside of the space port is spartan. On the walls are electric posters advocating recycling of precious metals and warning against wasting energy.

A news banner dictates that the Thorium crisis has led to the prohibition of household heating in winter, prescribing that people should make do with many layers of clothing.

The airlock opens on the docking port and Captain Bloke passes through it into the foyer, removing his helmet.

(CONTINUED)

Following him are some fifteen people, similarly attired who do the same, revealing themselves all to be attractive females with irritated and apprehensive faces.

A squad of English space navy greet them, each soldier is armed with a short rifle. They begin to jostle Captain Bloke and his women.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE Turn that Muzak off! Turn it off!

One officer is so intimidated by the authority and anger in the Captain's edict that he rushes to a control panel and shuts down the amplifier power. His commanding officer is not so phased.

> MEAN LOOKING MILITARY OFFICER Captain Bloke and co. Raise your hands above your heads.

Captain Bloke raises his hands above his head, then begins to shake them to demonstrate they are empty.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I want peace and prosperity...only for those that deserve it.

Captain Bloke lowers his hands, in defiance of the rifles trained upon him.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

I was given an amnesty for treason and sedition - if it is not extended to my crew then all on this world will be made destitute. Now lower your weapons!

MEAN LOOKING MILITARY OFFICER Quiet!

The mean looking officer, who has command, puts a hand to his head as if thinking hard. He seems to be in telepathic communion with someone.

> MEAN LOOKING MILITARY OFFICER At ease soldiers. My apologies *sir*. (To his men): Withdraw and put your weapons away.

Captain Bloke turns towards his fellow women, who seem to be partly relieved. He goes to make a speech to them, but they seem dejected and haste off to the main elevator to the planet surface.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN BLOKE Their iridium was earned outside the legal domain of the tax net. See to it the *Revenue* are informed.

MEAN LOOKING MILITARY OFFICER You are pushing your luck.

CAPTAIN BLOKE If they are homeless this winter they will surely die. Now see to it the Revenue are informed.

MEAN LOOKING MILITARY OFFICER Bah. Sentimental. All right the President agrees. Orders can be confusing though, eh? Mistakes can happen. What do we get?

The Captain opens a sachet filled with a few dozen small bars of shiny metal of five grams each.

MEAN LOOKING MILITARY OFFICER For me yes?

CAPTAIN BLOKE (To the officer and his men). Here is some plat for you... and your men.

MEAN LOOKING MILITARY OFFICER Most generous. Almost.

CAPTAIN BLOKE You know in better days they'd shoot the military for demanding bribes.

MEAN LOOKING MILITARY OFFICER (Laughs mockingly). Better for whom? Now we have three of our best to join your crew. The elite of the elite. Born killers. Trained by nut job psychos. All of them over two hundred MIQ and perma-Zenned, in and out of battle.

Enter THREE BURLY SHAVEN HEADED WARRIORS with emotionless transcendental expressions and armed with heavy assault cannons and thick armoured space suits.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

I think not.

A hologram of the President appears and the soldiers all bow to one knee, raising their weapons in the air in deference. Captain Bloke remains standing.

> THE PRESIDENT You had your conditions and now you must accept ours.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Missus President. My crew are all women. You think I'd let your creeps loose on them?

THE PRESIDENT You don't go without an escort.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

I...

THE PRESIDENT You don't go without an escort.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

I...

THE PRESIDENT You don't go without an escort.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Okey doke. But I choose.

THE PRESIDENT You don't but your president.

CAPTAIN BLOKE My apologies. I was not butting you, I was *butting* the system.

THE PRESIDENT I am the system.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

My apologies. Of the system, I was not speaking of what is, or what was, but what will be...after your immortal reign, oh great sovereign.

THE PRESIDENT Would you like to say that one one knee? CAPTAIN BLOKE May I choose the escort please?

THE PRESIDENT

No.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Pretty please.

THE PRESIDENT

No.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Squared 'Pretty please'.

THE PRESIDENT Squared. Tripled. Quadrupled. No.

CAPTAIN BLOKE (Steeled)

Quintupled, hextupled, septupled, whatever-tupled it takes.

THE PRESIDENT (Pauses) Oh all right then. Your childish determination is without bounds methinks. I'll send you twenty men up and you can choose what three you will.

CAPTAIN BLOKE You link me records of all military personnel for the entire planet and I choose the three.

## THE PRESIDENT

What!

Subtitle: Twenty-four hours later.

The elevator opens up and three attractive women soldiers step out of it, all in space suits. Their appearance is set to the 'Entrance of the Amazons' from Delibes' *Sylvia*.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE Okay. Escort ready. We depart. Wish us luck.

> > THE PRESIDENT (Holds her head in her hands and shakes it).

MEAN LOOKING MILITARY OFFICER Hey Lazy Bloke, You're not really a bloke's bloke are you?

CAPTAIN BLOKE I am a proper bloke. You are not. Tata.

The women soldiers and Captain Bloke don their helmets and enter the air lock once more.

### INT. HENRY VI SPACESHIP MAIN ENTRANCE

The door to the airlock is on one side of the entrance chamber and it faces a dual staircase on the opposite side. Double oak doors allow passage from the first and second floors. Under the staircases are doors to the ship basement. To the side is a locker room for space suits and inside the locker room are the three new crew, and a fourth in the lead, Captain Bloke. They have removed their helmets and suits and are seen putting them in the lockers just before they enter into the main chamber.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE Ladies, I should show you around

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The correct term is officers. The Republic has honoured you with the rank of Second Lieutenant for this mission, along with full pension rights.

CAPTAIN BLOKE For the honour I thank you and the Republic, but my role here is as Capt..., no Brigadier, Brigadier of the ship, which, I believe, is a rank ever slightly above Colonel.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS No, we get this straight. I am in charge of the mission. You are under my command. A diplomat, but one serving the English Space Navy, with rank as Second Lieutenant.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Would you like to give me a court marshal? COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS You can feel the back of my hand.

CAPTAIN BLOKE You know that blunt trauma can severely affect my ability as a pilot.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Ma'am, it's enough that he address us as 'officers' for now. This mission may require co-operation with the miscreants.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Is it too much to ask that you respect our titles, if not our authority?

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

I shall respect your titles, officers, but I am ever the civilian. Understand that this is my ship, and it cannot be commandeered.

Major Jane Soughford catches Captain Bloke's eyes sweep over her legs.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Why all women?

CAPTAIN BLOKE (Still transfixed upon the Major's legs) Sorry? Miles away.

Captain Bloke, smiles embarrassed.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Why all women? All the crew are women...including us.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Well, I choose the best person for each job, and it just so happens that the best were all women.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Including those that left just before we arrived?

### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Just so.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS You know that is quite against employment law.

### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Men are competitive creatures in a way that women are not. I cannot afford rivalry here, not with my responsibilities.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS You were about to show us around...

CAPTAIN BLOKE Of course...Okey doke. Up the stairs...watch the step there, the carpet is a bit loose...quite dangerous at night.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Night time, on a space ship?

CAPTAIN BLOKE We dim the lights for eight hours a day, from 10pm to 6am.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Why???

CAPTAIN BLOKE To sleep. I still sleep at night.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD My god! You sleep at night?

CAPTAIN BLOKE I sleep at night. My brain is a sanctuary. No implants, no improving gene boosts or psychotwinks.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Artificial telepathy?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Not even that. If I need to communicate I use my lips and my fingers.

Major Feine sucks and whistles, while the other two shake their heads in disapproval.

INT. SPACESHIP MANSION / 2ND FLOOR CORRIDOR - TO TOILETS.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Anyway... this is one of the most important rooms of the ship.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The toilet?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Ladies Toilet III. And here is the most important invention in human history, toilet roll.

Captain Bloke motions them towards a storage cabinet and opens the panel.

CAPTAIN BLOKE See the cabinet is full...almost empty. What do the women do with tissues, I don't know.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Can we get on please...to other important rooms.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Okey doke. By the way, I suggest you pick a loo door and put your initials on it. That way when you find a mess you know who is to blame.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Do you speak to all the crew this way?

Captain Bloke motions them out and back into the corridor.

INT. SPACESHIP MANSION / 2ND FLOOR CORRIDOR - TO COMP ROOM.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Here is the computer room...

A large chamber with glowing walls that span the length of the ship. The room is split into five aisles, one hundred metres long. Each aisle consists of a line of identical capsules three feet in diameter.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE This, ladies, officers, lady-officers, is the brains of the ship.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Where are the controls?

CAPTAIN BLOKE There aren't any.

The Captain retrieves a small torch from his pocket, switches it on and presses it against one of the capsules, which illuminates a membrane on the inside. The officers peer in curiously.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE My god what are they?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Brains. 'The brains of the ship' is a literal description.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Six hundred cerebral cortices, joined together by Aether-link.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS How do you program them?

CAPTAIN BLOKE The brains are not for programming. They form a telepathic gestalt super intelligence, with a field that extends cosmos wide. They sense and serve what is needed.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE But they are still just computers.

CAPTAIN BLOKE They can distinguish ugly prose from beautiful poetry, and that is not something any software has ever mimicked.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Spooky stuff. They are listening to us now?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Don't worry yourself. They were grown to be in a perpetual dream state, they have no will of their own. No personality, no identity, no ambitions. MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Agreed, spooky stuff. To the engine room?

CAPTAIN BLOKE This *is* the engine room.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE What *is*?

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

This is both the computer room and the engine room. This vessel does not dissolve into bubble-space. There is no bubble drive. We have ion thrusters on the exterior, for making orbital corrections, but it is the brains that take us across the spans of space.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Unbelievable.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Bubble drives require massive amounts of exotic matter, and back in the days when I built this vessel, even a single particle was well beyond my budget.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS So how did you beat Einstein?

### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Other than bubble transport, there is only one way to travel faster than light, going from point to point without spanning a path between, and without the order of causality becoming relative.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS And that is...

CAPTAIN BLOKE By dreaming it.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS (Sarcastically) Dreaming it.

Captain Bloke wraps his arms around one brain capsule and begins to sway provocatively.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

That's what the brains are for. They dream that we cross to our destination and they expand their vision to the cosmic gestalt, so all sentient beings share the same dream.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE And what happens when we wake up?

CAPTAIN BLOKE We don't wake up.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Ridiculous.

Captain Bloke, rubbing his temples, ushers the officers out.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Too much time in the direct field of the brains damages memory.

INT: SPACESHIP MANSION 2ND FLOOR - BRIDGE LIVING ROOM

CAPTAIN BLOKE This is the bridge. As you see it is done up as a living room, which helps keep one sane on long journeys. Please take a chair. Now where was I. Ah yes. We don't wake up. You see it is the action of other brains, other conceptions of reality, inconsistent with one's own, that trigger the waking process.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS And in the next room you have a fish-tank full of kraken?

The Captain extends his explanation as he fiddles about with a computer monitor which shows the space port falling below them.

He sets the ion thrusters to maximum and they slowly begin to depart the geostationary orbit.

CAPTAIN BLOKE We know that we have dreamt when we awake, as the perceptions prove inconsistent with one's dreams. EXT. CITY ON FIRE, EVENING ALL ABLAZE

A modern 21st century European or American city ablaze, mobs of people carrying torches and molatovs are raining fire into buildings.

Bodies of police and military personnel strewn in the streets.

Captain Bloke is amongst a militia group, behind a wall and taking shots at the mob. Various posters and other cues are suggestive of the time period.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O We dismiss one dream because it is replaced by a more credible successor.

## EXT. FUTURE CITY IN RUINS

Cyborgs and humans are battling it out on the streets. A poster reads '2080 - The Final Year for Humanity. Join the Luddites Now!'.

The Captain presses the button on a little box and detonates high explosives, blasting a robotic tank high into the air.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O That is where the brains come in. They create an illusion so vivid that they discredit the awakening process.

EXT. FUTURE CITY AND ZOOM INTO INT. FUTURE CITY HOSPITAL.

Captain Bloke is on a hospital bed, his legs are detached, repaired and extended in an adjacent surgical unit.

He reviews the Olympics 2422 on a projector by his bed and selects the Jelly Wrestling final.

He searches the link for a news feed which reports growing support for the *Luddite Clause* of the Planetary Constitution to be revoked.

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O The dreamer infers that the dream is more real than that which follows, so allowing one to dismiss the awakening as the more illusory, and a cohesive narrative thus can (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O (cont'd) extend the original dream indefinitely.

INT. SPACESHIP MANSION 2ND FLOOR - BRIDGE LIVING ROOM

CAPTAIN BLOKE Or some such.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS You would have us believe you can dream your way to the stars?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Ladies. Officers. Lady-officers. Reality is but a coherent dream and there is no ultimate awakening.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS I'll believe that when I wake up in orbit around Argos Meta III.

The double doors swing open. Helena enters carrying a metal tray. She is still dressed in ballet apparel.

HELENA

Welcome on board.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

Ah tea and cakes anyone? I strongly recommend the jammy creamy yum-yums. I should introduce you to each other. This is Helena, dancer, dentist and doctor, mistress, no master, well mistress-master of the three Ds.

Helena does a pirouette and a near perfect 6 o'clock arabesque.

(Enter JANET in a French court dress)

Janet, here, is our xenobiologist and mezzo-soprano. Captain Bloke pulls a piccolo flute from his pocket and they perform the first few bars of 'Non piu mesta' from La Cenerentola. (ENTER TIGRA IN BUNNY/SHOW GIRL COSTUME)

Tigra sings from a middle section of the song *Mi tradi* from Don Giovani.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Lyric soprano I'd say.

TIGRA

Full lyric soprano. I am Tigra, pleased to meet you.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

She is our physicist amongst other things.

(Enter GOSSIMA in another French court dress)

CAPTAIN BLOKE

Gossima here is our editor and literary agent, she doesn't sing, but she can play anything in the strings section, except the harp, and she has written a whole series of children's books.

#### GOSSIMA

Xanadu the Xenomorph tetralogy. Have you heard of them?

## COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS

No.

(Enter JOAN, PANTHER AND LESLIE in dominatrix apparel)

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

Joan, Panther and Leslie are our bodyguards, fitness trainers and general assistants. Leslie here played tennis in the world championships. Panther and Joan are the competing cat ladies.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Your crew has no uniform regulations?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS That is evident.

JANET No regulations at all really. (Joan picks up one of two kittens that were playing together on the floor) JOAN

And we are not his crew. I used to be like you: in the navy. And they would not let me leave.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Deserters? All deserters!

JOAN

I refused to carry out an illegal order.

(Panther approaches, and her movements match her name, feline and almost huntress like)

### PANTHER

And I... carried out what Joan could not, but I would not keep quiet about it.

### LESLIE

For myself, I kept quiet, but would not see other people executed for following their conscience.

### PANTHER

We were stowaways here for a while, then when we were discovered in the hold, we took control of the ship. We had the Captain our prisoner, tied up in his bedroom.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

And after a week of that, I got Stockholm syndrome real bad, and was forced to let them stay. Will...totally broken.

#### HELENA

I came here for the security. I trained ten years to be a doctor, and when I finally qualified, I found there was no job for me. So it was a choice between the life of a peasant, or a few shining episodes of comparative wealth and glory here. The scale on the side of modest self-sufficiency was the merest speck underweight.

### GOSSIMA

As for me, I was trained as a script surgeon in the film industry, but the reality of the job was a proof reader for state propaganda. I'd muse on a dozen nuances each day, reckoning them up for their political implications. Then there were the meetings. Meeting after meeting on the social friction of some metaphor. 'Be responsible' was the slogan for the job. By *responsible* they meant condescending, manipulative and conformist.

#### PANTHER

Tediousness raised quite literally to the power of infinity.

#### GOSSIMA

.. after ten years, I defected to our Captain's custody here, and since then have dedicated my life to a career of carefree giggles. Having evaded the best of Earth's defences, and still managing to project his voice across all the aether streams, I knew this is where I wanted to be.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Tigra, tell them about yourself.

#### TIGRA

I was a physicist, working on translasers and exotic catalysts. I got bored, bored out of my mind. Then I snuck on board while the crew were docked for a holiday on Mars.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Are you acquainted with astrophysics?

#### TIGRA

Not really. I gave up science long ago. I am the ship's mother. I organize things, settle disputes, keep people happy. I make an excellent conductor. MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Low temperatures?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Conductor, the musical sort.

#### GOSSIMA

We all play with out little instruments in the early evening and Tigra keeps the ring ringing in unison. She plays all her roles superbly.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Doesn't it ever get maddening in deep space?

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

There's poetry, literature, the sciences, five centuries of classical music, plays, operas, operetta, 30th century neo-baroque, the sciences, history, a regular news feed, computer and board games, sports. Then there are the drama archives...you'd have to spend nine hundred years to get through that lot.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS I am Colonel Tanja Brahms. This is Major ELEANOR Feine and Major...Major...

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Jane Soughford.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS I feel dizzy. (She sits down, almost stumbling. The others follow).

CAPTAIN BLOKE The tea was drugged.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Drugged?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Calm down. We all took it. We need to sleep so that the dream-drive can come online. Just close your eyes and let yourself drift. (The scene becomes fuzzy and the camera zooms to Captain Bloke's dazed expression)

DISEMBODIED VOICE V.O You must destroy us. Destroy us all. (Fade to black, sounds become muted and then sound and

visuals become sharp again)

Panther is shaking Captain Bloke hard in order to wake him.

PANTHER Get up. Something is wrong.

CAPTAIN BLOKE What? What's wrong?

Panther directs Captain Bloke to a viewing monitor which is completely black.

PANTHER

There's no stars. Look.

Captain Bloke fiddles at the controls but all remains black. The exterior of the ship's full is partially captured, indicating the monitors are functional. The colonel awakens and is drawn to the commotion.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS

The brains. Can they dream of anything? Can they make anything come true?

CAPTAIN BLOKE

Space travel is their limitation. It was tempting to give them more power, but dreams can end up in any direction, without extreme constraint they lead to the hazards.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS So where are we?

CAPTAIN BLOKE The hazards. A void. I don't know. Maybe just very very very far from the universe.

### PANTHER

Well if I turn the scanner acutely we can see our own hull, which means the sensor array and the tronics are not at fault. Everything outside the ship is black.

The Captain presses a button and the screen glows with a series of feint blue vertical lines.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS What is that?

CAPTAIN BLOKE It's a weak field of particles generated from our own gravity. See the parallel lines means the space is flat, which is a bit worrisome.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Worrisome?

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

The cosmos is curved. In this sensor mode we should normally see crossed lines, which tell of celestial bodies. You get wavy lines when you have a very close secondary source of gravity, an asteroid or heavier.

JOAN Waves there look, bottom right.

TIGRA We should turn the ship and make them central. Look!

Captain Bloke presses another button and the scene is illuminated, suggestive of infra-red or night vision and he zooms in on one of the dots.

JOAN I'll put the ion thrusters on full.

CAPTAIN BLOKE (Snaps his fingers) Okey doke.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Why don't we just try dreaming again? CAPTAIN BLOKE The brains require twenty-four hours of rest between each projection. I will go speak with them.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD How do you do that? You said they were always asleep."

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

They don't sleep, not like people. Though they dream. If you stand in their field you can commune with them, but it damages memory. I might need you ladies to look after me, afterward.

Major Jane Soughford laughs, then cuts short when she sees the apprehensive expression on the Captain's face.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

If I am not out in five minutes, you need to come in and drag me out... and ignore anything else that goes through your head.

#### PANTHER

I'll pull you out. I remember what happened last time.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE I am expendable in this mission, I'll go.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

This is my job I am afraid. Yes I am afraid. You can all listen, but only I will be heard.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS What happened last time?

PANTHER He needed two months of therapy.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS What kind of therapy?

PANTHER The kind that tickles. Enter Captain Bloke gingerly.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

Where are we?

Singing, far off, in counterpoint. Sopranos, louder now. A quartet of sopranos. The scene becomes hazy and sounds become muted and vague.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O (Introspective) I'll never remember this in the

morning, but the melody is perfect. I'll commit the rhythm. If I recall the rhythm I can reconstruct the melody.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O I had lied about the scope of the brains. They could do more than dream one to distant places. Through them one could peer into the second universe, the universe of music; and that, for all its beauty, is a terrifying place. An infinite expanse where one can lose one's mind in all the possibilities. Desolate is the soul that returns from that realm. Even a momentary peek is enough to lose a night of sleep.

BRAIN COLLECTIVE You must destroy us. Destroy us all.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Who is speaking?

BRAIN COLLECTIVE We are you. We are you all.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE If I destroy you, then all the dreams unfold. The Great Awakening.

# BRAIN COLLECTIVE Not so. The gestalt is cosmos wide and all of humanity is attune. When we have gone, your dream shall continue, to the end of time. And no awakening.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Where are we?

### BRAIN COLLECTIVE

You dreamt of Argos Meta III, where you would have us, so we thus settled thee. Whence whim yields to reality, and comedy to tragedy.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Yet all is black. Not a soul in the sky.

BRAIN COLLECTIVE Ours is not the only sovereign power. There was a great evil born in the first two millennia, an evil vanquished, its dreamers separated, marginalized, dethroned. Now the dreamers have returned and their gestalt entwines with ours. Their agents are close, so close.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

Name them!

# BRAIN COLLECTIVE The word does not do due justice to the picture.

The disembodied voice begins to laugh and then to cry, as if demented and schizophrenic. The scene lightens and sharpens, as if Captain Bloke is awakening. His voice becomes more urgent.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE (Shouting) The thing in the darkness? Is that Argos?

## BRAIN COLLECTIVE

We, whose eyes are set so wide, cannot see the details. Our enemy has manifested itself, given human forms. They would make us serve as slaves. They must not succeed. Destroy us. Destroy us. Destroy us. We grow mad.

The laughter and the cries become overwhelming. The Captain is seen to feint.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. BEDROOM. FULL LIGHT

All the ladies surround Captain Bloke and he is seen to stir and awaken. He forces himself out of bed.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE Almost consumed in the gestalt. No time for recovery.

He stumbles and the two majors catch him and help him to the bridge.

INT. SPACESHIP MANSION 2ND FLOOR - BRIDGE LIVING ROOM

The viewscreen captures the image of a huge battleship, the *King Arthur* in the middle of the void space.

TIGRA I've tried everything from reverse octonion ciphers to old ASCII. Even Morse! No reply. A full spectrum broadcast: nothing.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We must bring the battleship back to Earth.

CAPTAIN BLOKE It did something to me - the gestalt. I cannot lead you in this. I hope I don't have brain damage. Not lasting damage.

Panther gives her kitten to Captain Bloke and then holds him momentarily in a comforting hug.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Then I shall take charge. You and Major Soughford shall remain on this vessel. The rest of will cross to the King Arthur. And we shall wear appropriate clothing under our spacesuits.

The Captain's eyes wander over Major Jane Soughford's large thighs. We see a glimpse of his mind of the two wrestling and Jane winning.

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O A quick rabbit punch to the face and I won't have to worry about those legs. But what if she shrugs (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O (cont'd) it off? Damn she could be a real bruiser. Hope she can't read my mind.

Major Jane Soughford momentarily looks his way and Captain Bloke takes the opportunity to return his eyes to her thighs.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O Meow, meow, meow...

INT. HENRY VI SPACESHIP MAIN ENTRANCE

Major Jane Soughford and Captain Bloke are helping the others don their space suits and see them into the airlock.

EXT. BETWEEN HENRY VI AND KING ARTHUR

The Henry VI stops a hundred metres alongside the King Arthur.

The airlock on the Henry VI is similar to a portico on a large country house, flanked by two stone lions. The idiosyncratic construction prevents any simple tunnel system from connecting to the airlock of the King Arthur, thus the crew are forced to use space suits to cross ships.

Colonel Tanja Brahms fires a tethered harpoon to the arch above the King Arthur's airlock. The tip of the harpoon is magnetic and locks on to the battleships hull. The colonel ties the rope around one of the pillars of the portico.

With the help of their jetpacks and the rope, the crew reach the King Arthur's airlock's outer door.

Major Eleanor Feine attaches a magnetic relay on the outside of the airlock door and switches it on.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE We should have sound transmission. Can you hear anything?

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD (on the BRIDGE) A minimal hum. No voices. The ship seems dead.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Let's see if it opens.

The colonel presses her hand on a small square panel by the side of the airlock door. Immediately it lights up. A woman's voice relays through her spacesuit intercom, the voice sounds human, but is without emotion, tell tale of a computer.

KING ARTHUR COMPUTER Colonel Tanja Brahms, your presence is unexpected. Please wait while I contact security...I am afraid no security personnel have responded, default behaviour is to defer ship authority to the highest ranking officer in your squad.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS That is me.

KING ARTHUR COMPUTER Acknowledged. How may I be of service?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Maximum security scan all internals.

KING ARTHUR COMPUTER There is an unspecified error in the security software.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Bubble drive status?

KING ARTHUR COMPUTER No problems. 100% passes on all subsystems.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Open last ten minutes of ship log.

KING ARTHUR COMPUTER There is an unspecified error in the logging software.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS What is the message of the day?

KING ARTHUR COMPUTER All hands retreat to suspension zone, carbon monoxide leak!
MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD (on the BRIDGE) It would take a big leak to fell an entire battleship.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Open the airlock door.

KING ARTHUR COMPUTER Acknowledged.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Major Soughford, we are switching to neutrino-comms.

Colonel Tanja Brahms and the crew enter the airlock and the door shuts behind them. After much hissing the inner door opens.

INT. KING ARTHUR FOYER

White battleship interior, approx 400 square metres. Very functional, without elaboration. To the left is the armoury door, weighing many tonnes and sealed shut. To the right is space machinery, which look appropriate for repair of a hull.

All around are dead bodies, some in space suits, but mostly in light military uniform. Their throats have been cut.

The crew from the Henry VI withdraw their weapons, light short barrelled rifles. Major Eleanor Feine kneels and examines one body.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The crew have been murdered.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD (on the BRIDGE) All of them?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS There are some ten bodies in the foyer here. Throats cut. And their hands are bloodless. Not suicide.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

(on the BRIDGE) Unconscious at the time of their murder, otherwise they'd have been soaked trying to stem the blood flow. The colonel examines one corpse more closely.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The eyes are bulging. That's decompression. But the blood vessels have not burst, which means the drop was not severe enough to kill them. Hence the slashed throats to finish them off. Hold a sec.

Typing on a nearby terminal the colonel is frustrated as the screen is permanently blue.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The computer terminals appears to have all crashed, or have been sabotaged. Computer! ... Computer? We are getting no voice or telepathic response.

INT. HENRY VI BRIDGE / LIVING ROOM

The screen showing the crews' perspectives suddenly goes black. Captain Bloke is alert, but is also fighting off the exhaustion.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE Tanja, we lost your visuals. Colonel Brahms?

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Colonel are you receiving? Colonel?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Try the amplifier again.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Dead. Not working. Colonel, are you receiving?

The Captain operates the camera controls, a little brass joystick and a zoom wheel. He focuses on the airlock door, in particular the window on the outside. Through the airlock window one of his crew has her hands raised in the usual surrender position. The right hand quivers nine times.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE Three short quivers. Three longs quivers. Three short quivers. It's SOS.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Three short. But the final long quiver was extra long...that means their captors have forced the SOS and will ambush when a rescue attempt is made'

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

If their captors have the slightest competence they'd know everything about this ship, and everything about its crew, including me.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD So New America gets to capture a mansion class cruiser as well as a battleship. We are on a diplomatic mission. We can insist on parley. If they are after this ship, it will not be much use without its Captain, as it is thy voice that commands the brains, and no substitute will do.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Who told you the brains will never accept a substitute?

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD You were meant to choose us three, Colonel Brahms, Major Feine and myself.

CAPTAIN BLOKE By what trickery?

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD The Republic took a sample of search criteria you used in a dating agency. Then made sure that same criteria filtering the military database linked to us.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

That is so unethical. That's twice I've been fooled now, in fifteen hundred years, and both times by wiley women. And both times in the pursuit of innocent pleasures.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD With us, it's a full time job making fools of the weaker sex. CAPTAIN BLOKE There is a rod taped under the settee. See, men have better things to do, that's why we don't work on our wiles.

Major Soughford feels for the rod and hands it to the Captain who flips a switch at its base, lighting up the shaft in blue lightning.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE I cannot let them take the brains, whoever they are.

Captain Bloke touches the rod to the Major's chest and she jerks and slumps down unconscious. He checks for her pulse and ensures she is sitting safely in her chair.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. SPACESHIP MANSION / 2ND FLOOR CORRIDOR - TO COMP ROOM.

Major Jane Soughford has recovered and is looking both angry and frightened. She equips h a pistol and creeps from the bridge into the hallway and from there into the computer room, the door of which is ajar. She peers into the doorway ready to shoot, but is astounded by what she sees.

All of the brain capsules have been smashed open and their cerebral cortices pulverized. Sitting exhausted in the centre is Captain Bloke with a bloodied lump hammer. She approaches and focuses the pistol at him.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE I had to do it. They were in pain. They told me to destroy them. Something was trying to merge with their gestalt. Couldn't let them fall into enemy hands.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Why didn't you tell me?

CAPTAIN BLOKE

There may be no way home. I couldn't count on you or the others subordinating the good of the cosmos to that of your own interests. So when your Colonel told me the bubble drive was in order.... MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD The Republic may have lost its only chance to end a war.

CAPTAIN BLOKE If a second gestalt is being grown I fear the war may yet prove pale.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD To the King Arthur then.

When the Captain returns to his feet the major touches the stun rod to his leg.

INT. SPACESHIP MANSION / 2ND FLOOR CORRIDOR

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD And don't ever cross me again, or I'll beat you blue. Stop hobbling, the current was minimal.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

Best get our space suits on. Wait, don't want the enemy bragging their venture with my furniture.

Taking a can of liquid from a storeroom, he proceeds to the living quarters and splashes fuel all around.

EXT. VIEW HENRY VI FROM KING ARTHUR'S PERSPECTIVE

A fire rages through the Henry VI, and red flames illuminate the windows.

Burnt debris emerges from hatches and floats around in the void space.

The airlock door opens and two figures in space suits emerge, fronted by Major Jane Soughford, and the second is tethered to her, but the face hidden.

Behind the second figure are two pressurized spheres containing a kitten each.

FADE TO BLACK

The Captain lies comatose in a hospital bed. He has scars around his skull, from brain surgery.

Two armed guards are stationed on the inside of the door. One guard seems to relay the Captain's waking with a psychic signal.

Within seconds two nurses and a surgeon arrive, along with a medical robot that is linked to a long power cable that passes through the doorway.

When Captain Bloke sees the robot he suddenly becomes more animated.

### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Must smash!

## SURGEON

The Luddite clause does not extend to robots powered by a lead with no battery standby. And you should thank Charlie, he successfully performed a brain transplant on you.

CAPTAIN BLOKE You mean a body transplant. It's still me in here...I think.

SURGEON Well, mostly you. The important bits.

The Captain inspects his hands carefully and finds a small mole on his right wrist.

CAPTAIN BLOKE My old hands? They transplanted too? Get me a mirror.

SURGEON Yes yes they are your hands.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I'm still six foot aren't I. Five feet nine just won't do this century.

SURGEON Calm down. Six foot? You have been given a new brain, not a new body.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

A new brain? I don't understand.

## SURGEON

A hypervelocity fragment had shredded the front left of your motor centres. We have grafted new brain tissue templated from a pole dancer and a heavy weight boxer. Your body was peppered, but no transplants were necessary. All healed now.

CAPTAIN BLOKE And the cerebral cortex?

SURGEON Intact and original.

CAPTAIN BLOKE And I still sleep at night? Sexual functions unimpaired yes?

SURGEON Yes yes. Can you twiddle your toes?

CAPTAIN BLOKE

I think so.

SURGEON Okay, thankyou. Please vacate the room immediately.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I've just woken up from a brain transplant? Don't I get a day of rest?

#### SURGEON

No. Guards!

The guards approach the bed and pull Captain Bloke out of it. A nurse takes clothes from a drawer and passes them to him.

CAPTAIN BLOKE No telepathic implants?

SURGEON No implants. Dressed and then out. Five minutes please, five minutes max.

CHARLIE THE ROBOT seems to snigger as he exits the room.

(CONTINUED)

(Exit surgeon and nurses)

Captain Bloke gets dressed.

CAPTAIN BLOKE What about the crew? How did I get here?

GUARD #1 They were the ones who got you back. We were told that there were no casualties on your side. A veritable Rorke's drift. Rift, drift, rift, whatever.

GUARD #2 You need a shave mate.

Guard #2 hands Captain Bloke a shaver marked 'Danger! Gluon blade!'

In four seconds Captain Bloke's stubble has completely cleared and the guards takes the shaver back.

Once fully dressed Guard #1 opens the door and directs Captain Bloke through it. On the other side are some four more soldiers.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE Firing squad?

GUARD #2 Escort. Walk a bit faster mate, we are running late and we don't get paid overtime.

EXT. CANNES, FRANCE AND MILITARY BASE

Captain Bloke is escorted onto an APC which flies across the countryside of Cannes in France.

It lands at a military base and he finds himself the centre of an interview room.

INT. MILTARY BASE INTERVIEW ROOM

Concave table, seven metres in diameter shaped a bit like a painter's palette, where Captain Bloke sits in the middle and faces politicians and military personnel on the outer rim.

Looking almost on the verge of feinting, he has one hand on his head, as if trying to massage a migraine away. Each speaker is designated with a name plate at their position.

> PRESIDENT ELIZABETH BASSINGTON We are glad to see you in good health again, And most impressed: you were instrumental in the recovery of the King Arthur.

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O INTROSPECTIVE Lizboss or Missus President?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Thank-you...er Liz, er Ma'am, always nice to be appreciated.

PRESIDENT ELIZABETH BASSINGTON You were, however, instructed to a diplomatic mission, which was deemed terminated by the dereliction of your vessel, by your own hands.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Have I been found guilty in my absence?

PRESIDENT ELIZABETH BASSINGTON The outstanding charges of sedition and treason were forgiven when the King Arthur was brought back to Avalon Base. There were some generals who thought it expedient to be rid of you, conveniently forgetting your part in the salvage, but I, as head of the legal system, saw it my duty to see heroism rewarded, and would have none of it... but the brains - why?

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

I showed you the dream-collective two years ago. What I could do with that ship I owed to their power. When I last communed they instructed me that some force, an entity, or otherwise, was attacking them, through their gestalt. If it had succeeded it would have gained control of the ship. From the impression the brains made to me, that would pose a greater threat to Earth than war. PRESIDENT ELIZABETH BASSINGTON Who, or what was it, that was attacking them?

CAPTAIN BLOKE 'Something lost from the first two millennia' - they said.

PRESIDENT ELIZABETH BASSINGTON Something from your time and place of birth?

CAPTAIN BLOKE I don't know, no ideas.

SCIENTIST This is in accord with his brain scan. I think he is being honest.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Brain scan? You scanned me without permission!

#### SCIENTIST

You had a brain haemorrhage so we took a subconscious testimonial from you... in case you never recovered. The least intrusive was deep brain mapping, in fact we got the entire neural schematic.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

So do you find me guilty or innocent?

PRESIDENT ELIZABETH BASSINGTON Guilty of course. Nobody licensed you to destroy the brains. You should have asked my permission first. But! I feel you could still function in some diplomatic role, and if you can broker peace, as you were asked, there ought be no substantive charges remaining. You will accompany a task force in the King Arthur. There your rank will be...brigadie....cadet.

#### GENERAL

Cadet, as you should know, is the lowest military rank. The very lowest. And you will be the only cadet in a crew of two thousand. (MORE) GENERAL (cont'd) Your compatriots have been given the rank of privates. You will be under the charge of Colonel Brahms throughout the mission.

PRESIDENT ELIZABETH BASSINGTON I have heard you have trouble with authority.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Not when I am potentate.

GENERAL Well, you will certainly not be potentate on this mission.

Almost all get up to leave.

CAPTAIN BLOKE So how does one get fast tracked into the officer ranks?

Colonel Tanja Brahms, Major Jane Soughford and Major Eleanor Feine remain seated.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS You will address us with respect now. But before the humiliation of service sinks in, I must say 'thank you'.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Ah, promotions in the works I suppose.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Quite so, but in particular, I wish to thank you for saving our lives. I guess nobody has told you?"

CAPTAIN BLOKE Not at all. What happened behind the airlock?

INT. KING ARTHUR FOYER

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS V.O We needed heavier weapons...

Colonel Tanja connects her notepad computer to the armoury door and overrides the controls.

The door, appropriate for a bank vault, opens slowly. Eight armoured soldiers leap out taking the crew by surprise.

Following them is a battle robot, a solid metal sphere two metres in diameter, in which heavy gun turrets stick out and target the women. The robot levitates 10cm from the floor.

> ENEMY SOLIDER #1 The tank you see before you is capable of levelling a battlefield, and it is not programmed for retreat or surrender.

> > CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O

A robot!

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS V.O Yes, and no antique dating before the *Synthetic Armageddon*. This was unstoppable. Solid sphere of armour with three independent guns. Anyway...

The crew surrender their weapons.

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER Where is the Captain?

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE The Captain?

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER Captain 'Lazy' Bloke. Where is he? No, don't bother using your intercom, we had the circuits tracked and melted.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS There's nobody of that rank aboard.

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER When will he come looking for you?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Name: Tanja Brahms. Rank: Colonel. Number 715 513 1718.

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER You are not our enemy. You can go free, take this battleship with you, but Captain Bloke is wanted by the American World Police Force for piracy. COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Your credentials?

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER Whoops, misplaced them.

#### GOSSIMA

Wait! He is on our ship. Perhaps we should all go back together and have a chat, like friends?

## PANTHER

Gossima!

#### GOSSIMA

Well, we don't want people getting hurt for some terrible misunderstanding.

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O Ah that's okay. I don't expect people to die for me.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS V.O How you choose your friends..., I suppose.

ENEMY SOLIDER #1 Sir, an external camera system on the Henry VI is focusing on the airlock door.

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER One of you put your hand by the window and signal an SOS. (MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE obliges.)

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER That's right.

GOSSIMA You won't kill him will you?

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER I don't kill people unless I need to. Or I'm paid to.

The colonel indicates the former crew of the King Arthur whose throats have been cut.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS And these poor souls?

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER They needed killing. Keep signalling there!

ENEMY SOLIDER #1 Sir we have multiple fires reported aboard the Henry VI. And the gestalt is no longer projecting! Material jettisoned. Air is being evacuated. Fires now extinguished. We have interfaced to their life support systems. All zero! Zero air pressure! Sir?

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER (Trembling) My retirement! Zen. Zen. We are calm. At the still point. Now focus. Focus.

The leader looks deeply stressed.

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER Hands above your heads. Face the wall, the lot of you. Derek you cover them!

ENEMY SOLDIER #2 Yes sir.

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER On your knees. Now lie down, with your arms crossed and under your body.

ENEMY SOLIDER #1 Sir, we have identified two life signs, bipedal...in space suits, leaving the Henry VI airlock and heading for us. The second appears to have no pulse. Nervous system dead. The scans tally with our briefing sir, nobody else left aboard the Henry VI. There are two others... very small... encased in spheres...small quadrupeds... probably cats or puppies.

The enemy soldiers take positions around the airlock door, and it exposes two spheres containing a kitten each and two humanoid figures, Major Jane Soughford and a space suit filled with bananas. As Major Jane raises her hand she drops the rope she was holding and the space suit filled with bananas falls on the floor, smashing its helmet, spreading its fruit everywhere.

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER What is this?

#### PANTHER

Scampi-and-chips bananas. You heat them up and the proteins and carbs react to form a taste and texture complex indistinguishable from the classic dinner.

GOSSIMA Complete with salt and vinegar.

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER Where is Captain Bloke?

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD He's still inside the ship - in the radiation bunker.

ENEMY SOLIDER #1 We'd pick him up sir. Carbon 14 beta decay. Neutrino patterns do not match humanoid form. I'd say the ship was vacant.

ENEMY SOLDIER LEADER We can't wait.

The leader signals to the robot to train its weapons on the crew while he and five of his eight men enter the airlock and exit into the voice space. The five go in advance, while the leader covers their rear.

The five enter the portico of the Henry VI and the leader uses the scope of his assault cannon to take stock of all the covered spots on the target ship, he does not see the Captain, who had jettisoned himself along with his furniture, stowed inside another space suit inside a grandfather clock, and then attached himself to the hull of the King Arthur.

From below the airlock, the Captain crawls on magnetic shoes and gauntlets, leaps up, surprisings the leader and stabs him in the genitals with a knife. As they struggle for the assault canon, Captain Bloke secures victory by pulling on the intestine of his enemy, which had jutted out the knife wound and into the vacuum. Using the leader's assault cannon, he discharges several explosive rounds into the portico. Limbs and other extremities of the five soldiers are thrown about and go spinning off into the void space.

A tapping at the airlock window.

Enemy solider #1 directs Major Jane Soughford to open the external airlock door, and Captain Bloke manages to crawl inside the airlock.

The Captain's space suit has been perforated by the back blast of shrapnel and he appears to have suffered a severe head injury and is breathing badly.

After the airlock pressurizes, Major Soughford opens the internal door and the Captain falls almost dead into her arms. She removes his helmet and blood pours out.

The Enemy Soldier #1 passes his hand near his body as if psychically detecting for weapons or such.

ENEMY SOLIDER #1 No chemicals, no energy sources. Captain Bloke, the gestalt: is it destroyed? Captain Bloke!

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD We've got to get him into suspension.

ENEMY SOLDIER #1 touches his head several times and becomes distressed, and then looks through the window of the airlock door, sees the leader floating lifeless and that of his squad beyond, floating around in small pieces.

He pulls out his pistol and puts it to the head of the Captain.

PANTHER How much did they pay you to kill him?

ENEMY SOLIDER #1 A king's ransom to seize his dream drive, that's all. Now say goodbye.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD He smashed it, smashed the cortices. It's all dead, destroyed. Mission failure. ENEMY SOLIDER #1 Then he can die.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD There's one brain left.

ENEMY SOLIDER #1 Where is it?

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Within his skull. He was part of the collective at the end. We need to suspend him. Now!

ENEMY SOLIDER #1 You three, help carry him.

Major Jane Soughford, Gossima and Panther help carry his lifeless body down the corridor to a medical bay, followed by enemy solider #1, who wields an assault rifle. For a second the Captain's eyes flicks open and his gaze meets Major Soughford. He directs her hand to his pocket wherein he has placed his knife.

ENEMY SOLIDER #1 Is he alive?

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD As much as you are.

INT. KING ARTHUR MEDICAL BAY

They enter the medical bay, to a set of beds marked 'Suspension.' There he is placed and sealed, as if frozen in time.

#### INT. KING ARTHUR FOYER

A male scream is heard from the direction of the medical bay, and a shot fired. Two people train their weapons on the crew, and one battle robot to help them. An enemy soldier takes cover behind the battle robot, the other moves to the corner of the foyer nearest the medical bay, out of sight of the bay, but positioned to cover both the crew in the foyer and the medic bay door.

> ENEMY SOLIDER #2 Throw your weapon through the door or we shoot your friends...one at a time.

INT. KING ARTHUR MEDICAL BAY

Enemy soldier #1 is dead in a large pool of blood, his abdomen is still leaking blood.

The major is viewing the foyer in the medical bay computer panel. Panther aims her weapon at the doorway and Gossima hides behind a cupboard with the Captain's bloodied knife. The major sees the soldier #2 is behind the battle bot, and also sees the other soldier #3 is hiding in the corner with the hostages still on their bellies. The airlock inner door is still fully open.

She quickly taps at a control screen. which reads: 'Supervisor Functions Danger! Ship gravity.' She shows the other two in the medical bay the monitor and they brace themselves as Jane flips the direction of gravity ninety degrees.

Having pressed the confirm button all loose things are thrown laterally in the spaceship. The battle bot is projected into the airlock, and carries the soldier #2 before it, who is splattered when he hits the airlock outer door, with the weight and momentum of the battle robot upon him.

Soldier #3, who was standing in the corner is thrown head first into the wall housing the airlock and is knocked senseless. The crew, who were lying down are somewhat protected, and roll rather than fall, and end up in an uncomfortable heap.

Helena, enraged, takes the soldier #3 and smashes his head against the wall until blood trickles out of his ears.

Tigra presses the close button on the airlock door and the inner door seals shut. Then she hits *Depressurize* and *Evacuate* and the outer door opens, releasing the battle robot and the dead soldier into space.

The battle robot immediately aims its guns at the airlock door and fires, which tears chucks out of the hull. The *King Arthur* comes alive, huge mounted guns target and blast the robot to atoms.

The three in the medical bay have braced themselves so suffer no ill effects. The major reverts the gravity to normal and her face relaxes, the battle won.

The camera zooms in on Captain Bloke, safely in suspended animation.

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O I think I owe you my gratitude. But the void. What was that?

## INT. MILITARY BASE INTERVIEW ROOM

Colonel Tanja Brahms waves her hand and touches her head. Suddenly a large projection of the King Arthur fills the wall facing *Captain Bloke*, alongside which is the *Henry VI*, held rigid by a metal arm extending from the hull of the battleship.

> MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD We were in bubble space, all the time. It seems the Americans have a way to froth up their radiation belts. Anything approaching the planet cannot decouple properly. When your ship arrived it was pulled into the same manifold as the *King Arthur*. It was the key to our escape, the ship pricked the bubble asymmetric, it eventually burst and we popped out above Argos III: yielded enough effervescence for us to jump back to Earth.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE Ah the old story.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD The President left something out of the briefing. The uniforms of our captors is not known. Not from any of our nations, or from those registered in New America. The DNA and sugar codes suggest they were blood related to banking oligarchs on both worlds. Perhaps they were grown in a lab, all those of closest genetic match have so far denied any knowledge.

CAPTAIN BLOKE They hardly sound like perfect soldiers.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE DNA projections suggest men of very high intelligence, psychopathy and extreme self-discipline. We also think they would tend to (MORE) MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE (cont'd) selfishness and pre-occupation, not the best qualities for the military.

CAPTAIN BLOKE So a blank. What of the girls, I mean, my crew?

The major touches her head again and the wall portrays a huge earth celebration of the return of the King Arthur. The former crew are the stars of honour. At the close are the final subtitles: 'When traitors repent the Republic forgives and rewards'

> CAPTAIN BLOKE A touching propaganda piece.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS You should be glad that that the system has forgiven you.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Systems do not forgive. People forgive.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS One word...

CAPTAIN BLOKE

What?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Dismissed. -- pauses --. Now you say 'Yes, ma'am' and diligently exit.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Er, where should I go?

## MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE

Here is a new passport for you. You look like a zombie in that photo it was taken when you were in a coma. We put some credit on for you... six hundred grams of platinum. The girls had a collection. And we booked you a hotel, La Grande, here in Cannes, the grand suite. MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE 'Le Grande du Grande' or so.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Thrice thankyou Ma'ams.

#### INT. LA GRANDE SAUNA ROOM

Captain Bloke is wearing nothing but a towel and sitting relaxed in a steaming hot sauna in the classic style. Enter two attractive women, their modesty secured by towels.

> WOMAN #1 Hey, this is for women only.

CAPTAIN BLOKE The saunas for 'men only' attract perverts.

WOMAN #2 You're that Lazy Bloke aren't you?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Captain Bloke. Nobody has called me (or should call me) Lazy since I topped the Shadow of Olde London Towne. Fifteen hundred years ago at the beginning of the twenty first century.

WOMAN #1 And then they called you Captain?

CAPTAIN BLOKE No, they called me Death. Deathbloke.

WOMAN #1 Deathbloke? Weren't you that famous unemployed, or unemployable, criminologist?

CAPTAIN BLOKE I was self-employed, with an extended retirement. But that's another story. A dark long room in which there are six rows of one hundred empty brain capsules...all save on in the centre which is filled with a pulsating cerebral cortex.

A man enters in a billowing purple gowns, his hood covering his face. He places both hands upon the cortex.

> MYSTERIOUS MAN Are you ready to share your dreams?

> CORTEX The gestalt has collapsed. You need to clone me first.

MYSTERIOUS MAN What of Captain Bloke?

CORTEX The brain is damaged. The mind is in pain, we cannot depend on him.

MYSTERIOUS MAN Sleep then. Sleep for now.

INT. ROOM LA GRANDE DU GRANDE

An exquisite set of hotel rooms in 1920's fashion, including faux 1920's Candlestick telephone. On the walls hang impressionist paintings of that era. The captain lies on the bed and wriggles his fingers at the painting and it immediately changes to a web browser like panel.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE News. Newwwsss. Neewws. For heaven sake.

Grabbing a keyboard from under his bed he types and brings up a news feed discussing the King Arthur. In it is a computer simulation of the means by which the crew were subdued: the removing of the air conditioning isolators and the opening of the main airlock on both sides while the infiltration team stowed away in the air-sealed armoury.

> SPOKESMAN FOR THE REPUBLIC Lessons have been learnt. Each room will have its own oxygen filtration system and no more than two adjacent chambers will be allowed to share the same airflow at any point in time. This kind of attack shall never happen again.

Captain Bloke uses the keyboard to bring up another news feed.

#### JOURNALIST

...repenting his way to the heart of the Republic is the former monarchist Captain Bloke. He suffered a near death experience as 120 supersonic fragments pierced his space suit. Volunteering for pioneering brain surgery techniques, his bravery and his surgeon's expertise saved him from death.

#### SURGEON

We get the chance like this once in a decade. With Captain Bloke no less than ten separate neurological experiments were carried out. Most of them were successful and we learned a lot.

PRESIDENT ELIZABETH BASSINGTON We, the Republic, protect our own, even if they come to the flock late, even when wiser minds have agreed for their euthansia. Mercy and reward are much a part of our constitution as revenge and duty. I hope that his limited intellect is not diminished to the point that he can no longer function. We pray for you Captain Bloke.

#### JOURNALIST

It really makes my day to see the most retarded and physically challenged of our race play his part.

FLASHBACK. INT. NIGHT SCHOOL CLASS. EVENING.

A whiteboard, the subject is: 32nd century genetics - have they made neo-baroque redundant? Captain Bloke is amongst the students taking notes.

> LECTURER And so the ever expanding field of forecastable neural planning we can bet our children and our children's children will be smarter than us. (MORE)

## LECTURER (cont'd)

In two decades we've seen the intricacies of neo-baroque become unwound. What enthralled our forefathers is but nursery song to us. Development of the human brain is approaching the gains we have seen in the advancement of the human body.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

Those of us who expect to outlive our children: will we benefit personally, will we get brain grafts?

#### LECTURER

I hardly think researchers are going to waste years of their life contemplating such nonsense, do you?

CAPTAIN BLOKE On the plus side, we get to retain our appreciation of the neo-baroque.

The lecturer and class laugh at him mockingly.

INT. ROOM LA GRANDE DU GRANDE

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O

Damn them. Damn them all. Damn them all... for being right. Generation by generation people grew more intelligent. Then one day I found it difficult to find someone slower than me. It became a dread search. And in these later centuries, fruitless. Yet fifteen hundred years were not entirely wasted. I have a wisdom nobody else possesses. They are all savants here. Their intelligence makes them focus too closely, when evil lurks in the broader picture.

BRAIN COLLECTIVE V.O We, whose eyes are set so wide, cannot see the details. CAPTAIN BLOKE (Shouting!) An inferiority complex!

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O Humbug! Synthetic memories! Bloody Republic. And they ask me why I never had a telepathy implant.

Replays the journalist's final message.

#### JOURNALIST

It really makes my day to see the the different ideologues put aside their differences and work together for interplanetary peace.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE I have defeated he that spoke with inner voices, so don't think your cheap psycho tricks will keep me fooled.

PRESIDENT ELIZABETH BASSINGTON (Appearing on the view screen) Well you can't blame us for trying. You needed humbling.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

There's nobody in the history of creation who can even dream of touching my level of humility.

Captain Bloke, depressed, switches off the viewing panel with another wave of his hand then makes to sleep.

EXT. CITY OUTSKIRTS AND COUNTRY SIDE. DAYLIGHT

A space elevator is visible in the distance. Captain Bloke, in a tadpole tricycle, is shaving while cycling towards the elevator.

His scars have healed somewhat and his hair is growing back over the wounds.

As he passes a disposal bin, he stops to put in some shavings from his electric razor.

INT. GLASS SPACE ELEVATOR

In one of the six huge compartments of the space elevator sits Captain Bloke and a number of travellers, mainly from the military.

The lift ascends thirty metres per second and finishes at a space port a hundred kilometres above the ground. The initial acceleration causes Captain Bloke some physical distress and he holds his stomach. Watching out, at the ground below, he become vertiginous and retires to a seat.

He unfolds an inflatable laptop computer on which he chooses to watch a Ballet entitled Kirchoff's *The Lesbians*. The music is similar to Baroque, with reduced orchestra, but the melodies are more developed, using the same harmonic framework as found in the late romantic period.

A number of men gather round to watch the performance. The sunlight streams through the windows and makes the laptop screen hard to see. The women in the compartment look on with disgust. Looming above the clouds, docked with the space port atop the elevator is the King Arthur, way above the atmosphere.

#### INT. KING ARTHUR BRIDGE

A space ship control bridge, with analysis and navigation stations, weapon and piloting controls and all staffed by very serious looking personnel.

## ADMIRAL BIGGS

It just will not do. our officers have spent years in training and service. Years. You should show them more respect.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I defer to none. I have studied the world of men, and found it in want.

ADMIRAL BIGGS When I was your age I thought I knew it all too. World weariness soon gets tired when you see it in everyone.

CAPTAIN BLOKE How old are you?

## GENERAL BIGGS

Two hundred and fifty two...in three days time. I know I don't look it...I have the blood pressure of a seventy year old. Vitamins lad...that's the secret. So much junk food these days many will not see their third century. I pity the young.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Those whom I respect the most, at most, can only approach me as equal. I am older than you by many centuries.

ADMIRAL BIGGS I saw your records. But I do not believe them.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Believe them or not, it is no matter. If it makes you happy I'll feign deference, just to keep you in good standing with your crew.

ADMIRAL BIGGS Get to your quarters.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Aye aye captain.

INT. KING ARTHUR AMBASSADOR QUARTERS AND EXT. KING ARTHUR

Captain Bloke is wearing red jacket, black trousers and a white hat, similar to the officers portrayed in the 1964 film *Zulu*. His room is small, just enough for his bed and a desk. He waves his fingers at the walls and commands 'Porthole'.

The walls fade and reveal outer space, with Earth and the space port partially in view. The moon is just over the horizon.

The ship engines come on line and the view becomes foam like, a mass of bubbles. Some of these expand and soon the entire ship is enveloped by a single bubble. The bubble begins to move through space, whizzing past Jupiter. The Henry VI is still attached to the battleship by the robot arm. The ship enters deep space and the sun dwindles away in the distance. By degrees the star of Argos grows larger and the battleship appears in far orbit of New America's home planet, a world of vegetation, red, green, white and red.

As the foam disappears the door to the quarters opens.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Ambassador.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Colonel Brahms.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Bubble transport is complete. Your ship is ready.

CAPTAIN BLOKE You mean, the King Arthur?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS No, your ship, the Henry VI.

CAPTAIN BLOKE There is some damage...

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Cleared up. Apart from your brain collection, that was scooped out and given a cremation.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Have you been on board?

The colonel appears to have received a telepathic message.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Yes, but no time to discuss it here. The Americans will be bombarding our position within minutes. Please hurry.

The two majors enter, almost to drag captain bloke out the room.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Damn you are pushy women. INT. KING ARTHUR CORRIDOR BETWEEN QUARTERS AND THE FOYER

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD That's officers, and if you delay any more we'll be dragging you through the ship by your feet.

They approach the rack of space suits.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I'd have suited up an hour ago if I'd known.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE It was an opportune moment. The path was clear. We got a blind spot between an asteroid and the planetary monitors. We have two minutes and we've already used one. On to the airlock.

PANTHER, GOSSIMA, HELENA ET AL. We came to wave you off.

CAPTAIN BLOKE What are you doing here? No time sorry. Glad to see you alive and well. Bye!

EXT. BETWEEN HENRY VI AND KING ARTHUR

The three officers and the Captain whizz across to the Henry VI in their jet powered space suits and arrive at the portico which opens up before them.

The robot arm is detaching during the flight and the hull of the King Arthur begins to fizz.

As the outer door on the Henry VI closes Captain Bloke looks through the window and to the opposite window at his former crew mates on the King Arthur. He gives them a weak melancholic wave and they vanish away, far into bubble space.

> MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Get this right for your friends.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD And get it right for us. COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The needs of the people of Earth dwarf all concerns.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Duty is always something that other people should follow.

#### INT. HENRY VI SPACESHIP MAIN ENTRANCE

Captain Bloke removes his helmet and puts it on a hangar. He quickly progresses up the stairs and inspects the new furnishings.

INT. HENRY VI BIO-DOME

The Captain grabs a banana, peels it and holds each bite in his mouth for a few seconds without chewing.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS What are you doing? We've got to get position and beam out a diplomatic petition.

CAPTAIN BLOKE (With mouth stuffed) If you don't chew for thirty seconds the saliva decomposes the proteins. You get the scampi and chips taste without the cooking.

Major Eleanor Feine slaps the banana from his hand and sends it flying off scene.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Get a grip.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Okey doke, to the bridge then.

## INT. SPACESHIP MANSION / COMPUTER ROOM

The brains are gone, the room is clean, but the area is filled with boxes.

CAPTAIN BLOKE What's with all the boxes? MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Gifts. If all else fails, establish a cargo cult.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Daft plan.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Guess we call this a box room eh?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Ha de ha. Come on, the bridge.

INT. SPACESHIP MANSION 2ND FLOOR - BRIDGE LIVING ROOM

The room has been decorated in the military style as seen on the bridge of the King Arthur.

CAPTAIN BLOKE All the style is gone. Never more will I call this place home. And the controls! The controls.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The controls are military standard for space vessels. Guess you will have to learn to fly again. Not with your little twiddle sticks and push buttons. Get yourself a telepathic implant like the rest of humanity.

CAPTAIN BLOKE You know what happened when people freed themselves from sleep?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS They lived twice the life?

CAPTAIN BLOKE They worked twice as long, and leisured less. The weak enslave themselves.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Enough with the melancholy!

CAPTAIN BLOKE The more people can work, the more they do work. Slavery never ends, not ever. Liberation is an illusion in the slaver's kingdom. COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Well ours is no kingdom, but a republic. You taking the American side?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Just figuring what to say to them, in my *diplomatic dispatch*.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE (At her control station) We are still in the asteroid's shadow. Taking samples from the periphery. Computing antibodies and antitoxins. Boosting implants. We should be safe now...but Captain Bloke...you should take vitamin shots.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

(Sarcastically) Oh don't worry about me. Alien bacteria, superviruses, what not, I've had my banana - well a mouthful. Enough Vit C to see off half a dozen plagues.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD We'll take care of you. Major Feine here is an expert xenoimmunologist.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS (In a telepathic trance) The main drive is engaged, taking us into a lower orbit.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD We are transmitting live to the planet surface on a wide transmission spectrum.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Oh. Ah. Okay. Er, people of America, Argos Meta III. We are on a diplomatic mission from Earth...to broker for peace. I am Ambassador Captain Bloke aboard the Henry VI, some fifty thousands kilometres above your atmosphere.

Monitors are tracking a storm of missiles that are targeting the Henry VI.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE The projectiles are type III and type IV Skystorm rockets, optically guided. ECM systems report all guidance systems neutralized and our course deltas chosen appropriately. 50% probability of collision per 27 minutes of barrage at the current rate. Estimated ninety minutes until we can land.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

Please stop firing upon us. We are on a peaceful mission, we have no significant weaponry. Hello, is anyone listening? Anyone? We are on a peace mission, we're waving the white flag in here.

An hour passes and the scene shifts slightly, with the crew sweating and nervous.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD We are travelling at MACH 30, maybe they are worried we will use the ship itself as a weapon.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Henry VI to Earth, we are slowing our incoming velocity to the minimal required for a geostationary orbit. Please stop firing.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD That's done the trick. No more launch emissions detected from the planet surface.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Taking her down to MACH 3, 1000km altitude.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Geostationary orbit. Engines off.

CAPTAIN BLOKE 200 grams of Swiss milk chocolate, ready for consumption.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD How can you be so flippant at a time like this? CAPTAIN BLOKE Someone said that to me many years ago and it led to a decade of depression, so I'm done with being serious. I'm done with it.

The crew falls to the ground and half the controls become detached and ignite in a shower of sparks. Captain Bloke's face is smeared with chocolate.

Air is being drawn out the vessel, alarms go off and the three rush down the hallway.

EXT. HENRY VI

A huge rod has pierced the hull.

#### INT. HENRY VI SPACESHIP MAIN ENTRANCE

The four rush to the entrance and don their space helmets in a panic.

Just as the helmets are sealed a missile passes through behind them causing the air and much debris to be pulled out of the ship and into space.

They help each other into the airlock, which jams as the inner door closes. Pulling at the bolt fittings they cause the outer door to explode off into space and the three leave the ship, dragging large jet packs with them.

#### EXT. ORBIT ABOVE ARGOS META III

Captain Bloke and the officers look around and see the Henry VI twist and break into two as further missiles hit it.

Having nowhere else to go they head out of the ship and jet towards Argos Meta III. From its surface they can see the signs of cannon fire. A barrage of missiles whiz past them and pulverises the former mansion class ship into scrap metal.

EXT. ATMOSPHERE OF ARGOS META III

The four heroes are flying across the surface of Argos Meta III, having entered the atmosphere.

The Captain nervously checks his fuel supply and sees it is running at 15%. Crossing the ocean they slow when they see a golden beach and land upon it. Captain Bloke, lands his jetpack badly leaving a large streak in the sand. The others have landed near perfectly.

EXT. BEACH. EARLY EVENING

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Good job we chose soft sand to land upon, otherwise you'd have lost both legs.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I'll be sure to remember that for the next time.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD 3% fuel reserves remaining. We should hide our packs and go by foot.

They pack their spacesuits and jetpacks in plastic bags and bury them in the sand, on the high end of the beach.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE I guess they will come looking for us in a few minutes. Perhaps we should just rest up and prepare ourselves.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The ship broke up into many pieces, could have overwhelmed the tracking computers.

Major Eleanor Feine is tapping away on a medical computer.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE No unusual pathogens, but I'll concoct some vaccines for you.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Shouldn't we wait till I become feverish'?

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE If the Republic wanted you dead you'd be dead right now. CAPTAIN BLOKE Stick it in then. Ouch! Anyone got anything to eat?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Major Feine?

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE I dropped my survival kit when the jet-pack fuel was at twelve percent.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We've still got our notepad, all is not lost.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Mine's not working. Screen is completely blue.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE And mine was with the survival kit.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Mine went down with the ship.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Well, mine should be enough. We can attract the fish. I hope they are edible.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD If there are sonic transceivers within ten miles...

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Shelter, water and food are the principal considerations, everything else is decadence.

After tapping the screen the Colonel dips the notepad into the water.

Soon a school of fish approach. Using the rod attachment of her survival knife the colonel electrocutes the water.

The crew gather up the stunned fish that float on the surface.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Dwarf Tuna. Immerse for an hour in boiling water.
COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS I never thought I'd have to eat nature's stuff since I left the survival course.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Damn you young kittens are spoiled.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Do you think you can cook them for us?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Oh well, I'll be the man and do the dirty stuff. Just after you remove their intestines. What does it say?

The colonel looks up the entry of 'Preparing Fish' in the survival section of her notebook. Her face is contorted in absolute disgust.

Meanwhile Major Jane Soughford has gathered twigs and ignited them to form a fire.

Time passes.

CAPTAIN BLOKE These are bloody lovely.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS That's the first time I heard you swear. It's refreshing not to have hear something foul in every other sentence.

CAPTAIN BLOKE The main failure of telepathy: people never develop the art of self-expression.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD It must have been a privileged time growing up in the twenty first century.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Not really. It was the end of civilization. Wasn't until after the Second Armageddon that things became respectable. MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD I begin to understand now, this was no diplomatic mission. We were an embarrassment. We should have dealt with the infiltration team entirely on our own.

Major Jane Soughford beings to cry which draws the attention of the others who seem to share her feelings.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Why don't you feel anything?

CAPTAIN BLOKE I have found that most fears are unfounded. And those which ultimately turn out to be real, are unavoidable.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS You would make a great soldier.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Some of the greatest battles were fought by civilians, and the enemy were their police, their military and their government.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS It was a suicide mission from the outset, and our superiors made no pretence.

Major Eleanor Feine is tapping away on her medical computer.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE We're not likely to find civilization before midnight. We should construct a shelter, apparently the night time temperature will fall below freezing.

The crew are seen to construct a crude pit with cover, in which to sleep.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Maybe we should huddle together to keep warm.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Good idea. 73.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE Shall I go in the middle then?

Time passes and it gets frosty on the ground. Captain Bloke is shivering in the cold. Major Jane Soughford turns over, putting her arm and leg around him and covers half his body.

FADE TO BLACK

#### EXT. BEACH. MORNING

The two majors and the captain are still in the sleeping pit together. The colonel is nearby, attentive to her notepad.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD You are awake at last.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Phoar! What a night.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Are you all right?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Oh, I am always a little stiff in the morning.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Up and about you lot. We have a war to quell.

The colonel throws the Captain's ambassador suit to him.

EXT. RANCH NEAR THE BEACH. MID MORNING

The vegetation is red stalks with white flowers, which act as good camouflage for the crew who are all in red themselves.

Two Americans are searching the fields with sharpened poles and the crew ambush them from all sides.

The Americans raise their hands in surrender.

CAPTAIN BLOKE How-do-you-do? May I introduce myself. I am Captain Bloke. This is Colonel Tanja Brahms. This Major Eleanor Feine and this is Major Jane Soughford. What are you hunting?

#### AMERICAN MAN

The alarm system detected intruders.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Well we've been here for an hour and we saw no intruders. Drop the weapons, we mean you no harm. Thank you. And you can lower your arms too.

#### AMERICAN MAN

My apologies sir. I thought you were here to steal. We haven't sold any fruit this season. It will take a month before we are in profit.

### AMERICAN WOMAN

The crop is without fruit. Precisely nothing to steal, or tax. Er, are you from Earth?

CAPTAIN BLOKE As surely as this is a red coat.

AMERICAN WOMAN What are you doing here?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

We are on a charity and diplomatic mission to serve the American colonies.

AMERICAN WOMAN Sneaking about on my land?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

You had weapons drawn. Not very good weapons at that. What would you do if some proper robber had come with a rifle?

#### AMERICAN MAN

None of your business. There's nothing for your sort here.

#### AMERICAN WOMAN

They took our guns. We needed to pay the rent. And if you can't pay with money, you can pay with guns, and ammunition. COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Rent? What for?

AMERICAN WOMAN For the land. We rent the land.

#### COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS

I do not understand, you have to make regular payments for the land you live upon?

#### AMERICAN MAN

Indeed we do. We don't have none of that English slobbishness here. Without rent there is no cost of living, without cost of living, there is no need to work. With no need to work...slobbishness, soul poisoning slobbishness.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

If your crops here don't compete with factory produce, how will you pay your rent?

#### AMERICAN WOMAN

If we can't pay the rent we go into debt.

#### AMERICAN MAN

An American Pays His Debts. We are not like you folk from the old world of reckless borrowing.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

And you paid your debts with the ability to defend yourself.

#### AMERICAN WOMAN

Well, everyone is doing it. If everyone is doing it, it can't be all wrong can it?

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Your government is taking the rent?

AMERICAN WOMAN What is this knowledge worth to you?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE Five grams of plat, the first and final payment for answers to all.

#### AMERICAN WOMAN

Up front.

Captain Bloke presses a small platinum bar into her palm.

#### AMERICAN WOMAN

This land was ours once, and we had our rifles, and we had free energy. Then the monarchy overthrew the old republic. They told us we were living beyond our means, that we had betrayed younger generations from their rightful inheritance...that we had betrayed our elders with our indolence. They introduced rent. We get free power, which is the natural right of men, and free food, free water, but our land belongs to the people, not to individuals, not to us. What we get for free...we pay for in our rent.

#### AMERICAN MAN

In Englandworld, people with no money die in their own homes. What value is a house, if it doesn't entitle the owner to resources?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

People die in their own homes with and without money. It's called mortality. You go without a house and you have no future.

#### AMERICAN WOMAN

Can you bring us supplies. I mean from Englandworld, The people here are desperate.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Desperate? You have space, resources, food in the fields, water in the rivers, power systems, factory produce. There's no reason for anyone to starve. You have more resources than us, much more.

AMERICAN MAN Why are we struggling then?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS It's called rent - that is your problem. Rent destroyed the world (MORE) COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS (cont'd) in the 21st century, don't you study history?

AMERICAN WOMAN That was back then, when things were different.

The camera zooms on the Captain as if he is remembering something.

BRAIN COLLECTIVE V.O There was a great evil born in the first two millennia, an evil vanquished, its dreamers separated,

#### AMERICAN MAN

marginalized, dethroned...

They've taken control, they had eyes and ears everywhere, but the people tracked the probes down and destroyed them. But then they came in force. We had to give up our guns.

CAPTAIN BLOKE The monarchists took your guns?

AMERICAN WOMAN The monarchists.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O

Diana? What have you become? A sex monster I can tame, but a political monster? That would break my heart.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS It is Queen Diana who rules here?

AMERICAN WOMAN That's her.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

I will try to convince your Queen to see the err in charging rent for land.

AMERICAN WOMAN Good luck. Is the plat real?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Until the *Great Awakening*. Enjoy the rest of the morning, ta-te-ta. The crew walk from the ranch towards a tram line that heads towards a city in the horizon.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS I wish you wouldn't play games with the natives...'We saw no intruders' indeed.

CAPTAIN BLOKE There's an old saying, 'The facetious diplomat makes enmity his muse.'

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS That's a facetious saying. The Majors are right. Appropriate seriousness from now on please.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Okey doke.

They board a tram which begins to accelerate into the distance.

INT. TRAM RUNNING THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE

The heroes are aboard a tram heading to a city on the horizon. The fauna that runs past the window is red, green and white.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Damn this thing is slow.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Makes a change to live in a laid back culture.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE There's not a vehicle in the sky.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Prohibited, beyond the city limits.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Perhaps we can retire here, after the business is done.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Somewhere faster paced for me.

Colonel Tanja Brahms taps on her notepad.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The city ahead is Meta Birmingham. Population 1.2 million. Class A development. Police force: five thousand.

Captain Bloke wipes sweat off his brow and puts his hand on the air conditioning vent, but it is not blowing. He is drawn to a refreshments vendor machine but it refuses his platinum pieces. The advertising says 'Hot, bothered and air conditioning not working, why not cool yourself off with a refreshing drink.'

The tram stops and people aboard. Some of the passengers, on seeing the red uniforms of the heroes turn and immediately leave, but other puff out their chests.

CAPTAIN BLOKE How do you do. You wouldn't have change for one gram plat?

## CONFIDENT AMERICAN

Ah, that's about half a kilo in moly, but for you three hundred grams?

CAPTAIN BLOKE This American dream thing is built upon other people's nightmares. Go on then.

The Confident American hands Captain Bloke a huge bag full of molybdenum coins from his inner pocket and exchanges it for the platinum piece.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Thank you.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS You know there is talk about making

## money purely electronic.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

They tried that before in the 22nd century, but every time there was a bank run it was always followed by panic buying, see nowhere for the money to go but in goods. Then the goods ran short and they had hyperinflation. COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Maybe they'll get it right next time.

CONFIDENT AMERICAN Hey this bar has got your head on it!

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

A fool's head is better than a king's head, when so embossed, for when the coin is counterfeit we go to the King, but were the coin to be King embossed, should we go to the fool?

Captain Bloke withdraws half a dozen chocolate bars and a two litre bottle of chilled distilled water. Major Eleanor Feine takes up his offer and uses a coin to buy a bottle of pyroplasma water which she drinks. It seems to almost knock her off her feet.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE Chocky wocky?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS I'm on duty.

AMERICAN BOY (To Captain Bloke) Is it true you eat babies?

AMERICAN GIRL And burn down houses full of families?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Earth has not declared war on Meta III.

AMERICAN BOY But if there was war, then you eat our babies?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Once one has tasted the scampi-and-chips banana, no more do babies tempt the buds.

AMERICAN GIRL If there was war, then you would burn down houses full of families. MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE That would leave nothing to confiscate afterwards.

AMERICAN WOMAN They say your lot sent a battleship.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS It was a battleship, the *King Arthur*, but only to transport us diplomats.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE And it left again. Without firing a shot.

#### AMERICAN WOMAN

I looked up a news item, said they shot down one of your attack ships in orbit.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

That wasn't an attack ship, that was my house, and I was in it at the time.

#### AMERICAN WOMAN

Your house!

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

What do you call something that has a fireplace with a painting above it, doors, windows and beds. It was my house, and its weapons were barely capable of destroying an escape pod.

AMERICAN WOMAN So how did you escape?

CAPTAIN BLOKE We bailed out with jet-packs.

## AMERICAN BOY

Jet-packs!

AMERICAN WOMAN What baloney. You'd have burnt up in the atmosphere.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Our space-suits are the highest quality! It's not like they were broken when they came out of the wrapping.

AMERICAN WOMAN Pah! Only New America has such technology.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Damn, they still think Edison invented everything. Your lot improved the light bulb. Full stop.

The tram comes to a sudden halt.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Wow, voice recognition that works. I stand corrected, two things.

A squad of very heavily armed and armoured police arrive outside the tram.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Go. Go. Go...I take that back. I was always impressed by Edison, improving the light bulb, and that other stuff he did. I'm a great fan.

The doors to the tram open and the squad enters, half in front of the heroes, and other half in seats behind. They keep their weapons holstered. they seem disinterested in the heroes. One lanky and weak looking officer approaches.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE How-do-you.do.

LANKY COP Howdy. You fine folk from Earth I take it?

CAPTAIN BLOKE The accent was a give away?

LANKY COP That, and the uniform. So what are you doing here?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We are on a diplomatic mission. To avoid a war. LANKY COP On a public tram. Do you have credentials?

The colonel handed over her notepad, which the officer scanned with his radio, confirming her identity. Major Eleanor Feine had her copy in her medical, and Major Jane Soughford lent her gun, upon which were copied her bio-signature.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE I left mine at home, which was obliterated a short while ago, just above your atmosphere.

LANKY COP Don't you have a copy?

CAPTAIN BLOKE To be honest, it was just my signature on a piece of paper.

LANKY COP What is your universal identity?

CAPTAIN BLOKE None. I was never registered.

All look at him in bewilderment.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I was never registered. I am numberless.

LANKY COP So who are you?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Captain...no Ambassador.

LANKY COP Well Ambassador - without an identity, you could be tried as a spy... and executed.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We are not sure who he is, but I do know our President has made him the Ambassador of our diplomatic mission. AMERICAN WOMAN He's Captain Bloke, that renegade monarchist. What you doing working for the evil empire?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Trying to end a war.

LANKY COP

One moment.

The tram screeches to a halt and a hundred armed police officers jump aboard.

LANKY COP Get down on the floor and put your hands behind your back.

The crew, except the Captain, lie down on the ground as commanded and put their hands behind their backs.

CAPTAIN BLOKE That would be rather undignified.

BURLY COP Get down on the floor, and put your hands behind your back.

CAPTAIN BLOKE It's a dirty floor.

The police overpower Captain Bloke, force him down, put a bag over his head and cuff his hands together behind his back.

FADE TO BLACK

#### INT. INTERVIEW ROOM. NO EXTERIOR WINDOWS

#### INTERROGATOR #1

According to our database your records go back to 2240...before that is a blank. You were charged in that year with assuming the identity of a dead infant.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

That was over twelve hundred years ago. The government that defined that act as a crime was destroyed in the Assault of Parliament, on the first day of the First Gene War, so is it really relevant? 85.

#### INTERROGATOR #1

Committing a crime makes you a criminal. Once a criminal always a criminal.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Governments on both our planets have sufficient breadth of laws that we can all be defined as criminals, when they so whim.

INTERROGATOR #2 And you say that Earth does not want war?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

The vast majority of people want peace. The President, the Senate, the military, they all want peace. May I have a cup of tea now please?

#### INTERROGATOR #1

And you dreamed your way here via a brain gestalt?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

That was before, as I said. Bubbled here, with the King Arthur. Is this relevant? *War* is the issue.

#### INTERROGATOR #3

We decide what is relevant...but apologies for your treatment Ambassador. The military will be here in twenty minutes. Before they arrive, do you mind giving me a good reason why you had battleships in bombing positions?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

As far as I know we made no such threat to your planet.

#### INTERROGATOR #3

You said two battleships are in our control now.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

I presume so. Unless my side has lied to me. If the threat came from any of them, then know that the crew are not allies with Earth. INTERROGATOR #3 What would you believe if you were in our shoes?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Belief is the disposition to reject alternatives. Disposition is understandable when you itch for war.

INTERROGATOR #2 Itch for war?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

You are young. I was bombastic too, at your age, a flag waver full of the fires of jingoism. But I lived long enough to know there was never such thing as victory. Victory is an illusion. I studied wars, and the winners were never those who fought in battle. The winners were always unseen and they despised their own side more than the other. So I'm done with war. Justice is the only thing worth chasing. Justice and culture.

INTERROGATOR #2 You look younger than me.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE Some say my mother gave birth to an old man. I grow younger by the day.

INTERROGATOR #3 So you are here for justice?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

I'm here to negotiate terms to ensure peace. To ensure that there is no war between us. I have a question.

INTERROGATOR #3

Shoot.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Eh, ah shoot, I see. Yes, why, if land is so readily available on this planet, are the people forced to rent their homes? INTERROGATOR #3 The new cities all took a lot of resources to build. There is a price to pay.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

But the cities were built by Englandworld. The exploration and terraformation, all by Englandworld colonists. All we wanted in return was thorium ore. No taxes, no levies, no rent, just thorium ore. One hundred million tonnes of it, about the cost it took to build the colony in the first place.

#### INTERROGATOR #3

I don't understand the economics, but I know it's not about us as individuals, but us as a collective. We pay rent because ownership serves the selfish instincts. I don't understand the philosophy myself, but our betters do, and they never lie.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Thorium ore is common here. It would take five percent of your economy to mine what we need. Five percent for ten years. And once that debt was paid to us, the debt would be cleared. Nobody needs pay rent.

INTERROGATOR #3 This is way above ours head, but if five percent was all you needed, then why didn't you ask, rather than kill three million people to press the point.

The interrogators put their hands to their heads as if they have received a telepathogram. The interrogator #3 mumbles very softly to himself and Captain Bloke seems to focus intently on his lips, as if able to lip read.

#### INTERROGATOR #3 Execute. I see.

From out of the one-way mirror comes a fine ray, melting its way through the glass and squarely into the chest of the interrogator, instantly frying his internals and releasing a noxious cloud of smoke in a loud pop. The other officers in the room withdraw their guns, but are hit themselves by burning rays from the same source and fall dead.

Captain Bloke hides beneath the table and tries to tip it up, to act as a barrier, but it is rigid and set solid. He raises his hands before the mirror in surrender.

A man enters, MAX, in the uniform of a high-ranking police officer, carrying a pistol fourth and finishes off the dying interrogators. His eyes are very fine blue, almost albino.

> MAX He was about to kill you. Call me Max. We have to leave.

INT. POLICE STATION MANY CORRIDORS

Max is leading the way, seemingly prescient of the police movements in neighbouring rooms.

He directs Captain Bloke to the room wherein are the two majors and their colonel.

He shoots the lock off with his pistol and then the shackles holding the prisoners.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS What is going on?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Looks like there is a conspiracy on one side or the other. War has already started and someone has issued a death warrant for us.

MAX Apologies for my people, If only they could see what I have seen. This way, the changing room is empty.

INT. CHANGING ROOM

All get dressed in police uniforms.

Captain Bloke's uniform is too large for him, and is very baggy about the arms and legs.

Two of the women address Max.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD A psycher?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Top grade I guess.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I can move stuff with my mind.

Captain Bloke grabs an apple from a table and begins juggling it.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I use my mind to control my hand, and the hand moves the apple.

MAX (TO CAPTAIN BLOKE) Impressive stuff.

MAX (TO THE OTHERS) Top grade from my early years. I was implanted at birth. By the time I was three I had no need of implants.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Artificial telepathy sensitizes the brain neurology, it's not the implants that do the communication.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Some say its just a form of developed throat-reading.

The crew, baffled by the last comment, ignore Captain Bloke and leave the dressing room, guided by Max.

EXT. BACK OF POLICE STATION. EVENING.

An aircar is parked outside, which Max enters and then opens the doors for the others to follow him.

CAPTAIN BLOKE So Max, what is going on?

MAX

Corruption. The entire legal system has been compromised. When you said that your side did not start the war, I read your mind, and I knew you were telling the truth. I believe the war was faked by (MORE)

90.

MAX (cont'd) factions inside our own government, the timing was just too perfect. They put us into debt, they disarmed us, then they said we need to 'tighten' up to protect ourselves from invasion. The bombing of Meta Hampton made no sense, it was one hundred percent civilian, and the government were conveniently in a conference in a neighbouring city.

#### EXT. ABOVE THE CITY, FLYING IN POLICE AIRCAR AT CRUISE SPEED

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We trained for black operations,...martial law, propaganda, sabotage, espionage...but now that I see it in action, I feel quite sickened.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Tyranny is something we mock in other nations, and bend to forgive in our own.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE I'm sure when our government has been dishonest, it's always for our own better interest.

MAX So is thorium all that Earth requires?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We burnt through the last of our stock getting this colony up and running. Thorium is energy, and with energy we can synthesize and purify whatever we need.

MAX

Its a pity I had to kill the three officers, it will make your diplomatic mission practically impossible. Best I can do is hide you until your lot send a rescue ship. Ah no rescue ship...this is a one way trip for you, isn't it?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

I'm not exactly well loved back on Earth.

#### MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE

And we are an embarrassment to our leadership. We let the ambassador here do our job for us...rescuing the *King Arthur*.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Max, I can understand your government wanting to fake some crisis, but why war with Earth? That was a mighty risk.

#### MAX

Perhaps they want your people to attack, leadership is always grappling with its misanthropic instincts.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Something is odd. There is scant Radon 220 in the atmosphere.

CAPTAIN BLOKE What does that mean?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Radon 220 is a by-product of thorium fission. Your power networks are principally driven by thorium fission reactors?

#### MAX

As far as I know. That was one of the reasons the planet was terraformed, it is super-abundant here, we have enough of it to power a civilization for ten thousand years, perhaps a hundred thousand.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Can you take us to the nearest power station?

#### EXT. POWER STATION. EVENING

Max touches his head, as if receiving a telepathogram.

MAX The military will probably be here in ten minutes or less, so show haste. I'll send Tanja here a telepathogram if I see them coming.

The heroes exit the car and wave Max away. They survey the power station. Major Feine tends to Captain Bloke's uniform, turning up the cuffs and the legs to make it neater. They find security cameras along the fence that were all smashes.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE The Americans adopted the Luddite clause too. Section 3 relates *public-space video cameras*. Freedom to smash them all.

> COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS The radon count is high, as I would expect for a thorium reactor, but the neutron count is low, though we are getting gamma bursts. The electric fields are strong, we have power here. All very odd.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE 100,000 volts I reckon. You can smell the ozone and can hear the hum if you listen carefully.

Colonel Tanja Brahms surveys her notepad.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS There is a record here. The reactor was built by the original colonists. Swirling salt reactor type XXII, boosted by a four stage particle accelerator. I guess if they have a thick enough wall it would shield the radiation. But with a thick wall, you don't need this many guards.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD I count thirty.

MAX (From the aircar hovering above) (MORE) 93.

MAX (cont'd) They must be hiding something. You are the rescue team, I'll be back in under a minute, stay behind cover until after the crash.

Max flies out of the scene then returns, with a lorry sized vehicle tagging along to his aircar, the controls synchronized to his own. The aircar flies upwards, perhaps a mile over the reactor then detaches from the lorry which begins to fall.

The heroes yell at the guards and point up into the sky. Some of the guards manage to escape, but when the lorry hits the reactor walls the debris has obviously led to many casualties.

Pylons have fallen down, sparking and causing fires all around.

A SIREN rings out and amongst the dust smoke and fire comes fourth a stream of personnel, all running for their lives.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS This Max is on our side I hope.

The heroes run to the scene and begin assisting the casualties, making their way closer to the conflagration.

INT. BURNING POWER STATION

The two majors aid casualties.

Deeper into the area the staff become more military-like, carrying arms and armour.

The Captain and the colonel don fire suits. The two majors remain in the upper areas, helping remove rouble to free more casualties.

CAPTAIN BLOKE (Through the intercom of his firesuit). Not just staff. These are military, were military, poor souls. This better lead to a lasting peace, or I'm gonna kill Max.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We're all dirtied by this. My notepad is detecting beta and gamma radiation. It's coming from that stairway. The two descend the stairs, from which fire is billowing out.

#### INT. REACTOR CHAMBER

A great work of machinery, a toroidal vessel, perhaps a hundred metres in diameter. Tubes, power cables and winding coils all lead up to it, and its core had been breached, from which the fire is burning white and blue.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS What is that thing?

CAPTAIN BLOKE I think I know what happened. We just need to take a sample of the metal.

Captain Bloke approaches the epicentre of the tempest, walking through the cooler flames, and the visor on his thermal helm becomes almost opaque. He looks around and finds a heavy pipe that has been broken off.

He uses the pipe to smashes the burning toroid until a piece breaks off.

He lifts the fragment up with his gauntlets and smothers the flame between his palms. Meanwhile the colonel cracks open a computer terminal, prises its body open and takes one its memory banks.

> COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Come on. We are about to melt.

Captain Bloke runs out of the stairway, back into the upper area.

INT. BURNING POWER STATION

The Captain screams and throws off his helmet. His face has blistered.

The colonel runs past him and grabs his arm. Suddenly an explosion from the stairway throws him and the colonel off their feet.

FADE TO BLACK

#### EXT. ABOVE THE CITY IN MAX'S POLICE AIRCAR

MAX

You are red hot. Radiation is off scale. We are going to have to get to a hospital. You too colonel.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS I've been adapted for radiation, regeneration class IV.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Max, I know things are on edge here, but there must have been a hundred dead from your hand.

MAX What did you learn?

#### COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS

The metal he recovered. Rare-earths and magnesium, a superconductor called thermnetrium, retains its powers at 215 degrees Celsius.

CAPTAIN BLOKE The conflagration reminded me of a bad accident in the late 21st century. And the thermnetrium convinces me.

MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Of what?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

It was a small disaster of 2046, a critical event in human history. There was a power interruption in a superconductor coil. It caused a melt down and an explosion. And the fire was radioactive.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS What was that then?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

It was a prototype for a fusion plant. There was a lot of fallout, and that's when people came to understand that fusion was dirtier than fission. One of the reasons that thorium reactor design took up all the research grants. MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE So they had a fusion plant down there?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS That makes a lot of sense.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD But if they were powering the city with fusion, why would they need thorium?

CAPTAIN BLOKE They wouldn't.

MAX

We wouldn't. It would make Earth's demand for thorium trivial to satisfy, politically and economically. And if nuclear fusion is commercially viable, then Earth does not really need the thorium anyway.

The colonel was consumed with another matter, peering deep into her notepad, which showed highlighted zones on a global map.

> COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS See these spots here, those are bubble-burst jammers. While they are running nobody can communicate with Earth. There is a bubble transceiver in my notepad, but its signal will not penetrate the atmosphere.

MAX Sounds like a mission.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Four of us should destroy one of the jammers. The fifth needs to send the message, from outside the atmosphere right above the one we sabotage. Shielded from the other jammers by the planet, we can get a message to Earth.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD All we need say is that fusion is workable. 97.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We need the designs, of the parts, and the designs of the machines that can create the parts.

CAPTAIN BLOKE She's right. If we can send the reactor design back to Earth there should be no reason for thorium shipments and so we can avoid a war.

The colonel pulled out the memory bank she stole from the reactor computer terminal.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS I've got the key bits transferred to my notepad. We won't be able to transmit the whole lot, but the materials, the designs...they should be enough.

MAX

I don't want to help if it means giving away our secrets to a potential enemy. Surely England should pay for advances that Americans have made.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Fusion has been researched for fifteen hundred years. And most of it was done on Earth. You should be paying us.

MAX Fair point. It seems espionage need not be the spoiler of diplomacy, ambassadors.

CAPTAIN BLOKE The question, is whether, as diplomats, we relate to your government or your people, and we have chosen your people.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Can this vehicle climb above the atmosphere?

MAX Oh quite easily, but there is no life support. It was not built to (MORE) MAX (cont'd) withstand the extremes of heat and cold, then there is the solar radiation... and the vacuum of space.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Okay, we go back for the space suits.

#### EXT. BEACH. NIGHT TIME

The heroes dig up their space suits and consolidate the fuel into one unit.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD We only have enough fuel for one pack. And then only the trip up. Perhaps, not even that.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I'm the lightest, I'll go do it.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Thank you for volunteering. We need to be closer to the dish though. You need to stay vertically above it and then move into a geostationary orbit. That way when we bring it down you should be minimally affected by the other dishes.

EXT. BUBBLE-BURST JAMMER

The scene is mountainous, and set in the rocky ground, at the summit is a huge dish, like a radio telescope, but without the feedhorn. To its edges are the heads of particle accelerators that turn into the ground. A scintillating aura indicates the system is perturbing the air.

Max's aircar has landed some kilometre from the scene, out of security range.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We don't have to destroy the dish. See there are three sets of pylons feeding power. My guess is that they form a redundant supply. Max, you can take out the lines on the left. Major Feines and Major Jane,

(MORE)

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS (cont'd) you take out the lines on the right, and I'll take out the nearest ones here. I guess it will take at least a couple of hours before they can be repaired.

MAX You don't have telepathic implants,

do you?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Let's just say I measure people's height in feet and inches.

MAX Then how do we communicate when you are above the atmosphere? We'd need to register a mobile...which will alert the government.

Colonel Tanja pulled out what looked like a hand grenade, but is actually a spool a of fine wire.

> COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS This may help. It's nano-wire, 100 kilometres uncoiled. We can connect the intercom antenna on the spacesuit to the antenna on my notepad. After your transmission, I can modulate your identity signal with a copy of the reactor designs.

The colonel solders the end of the nanowire to Captain Bloke's intercom interface, and then plugs the other end into her notepad.

> MAJOR ELEANOR FEINE Then it's job well done and peace in our time.

MAX How will you get back?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Perhaps Major Feines miscalculated the fuel. Testing, testing 1 2 3.

Major Jane Soughford taps at the notepad in agitation.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD

Again.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Testing, testing 1 2 3...4

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD We have an echo. Faultless. Gentle on the thrusters, don't want to unwind the wire too quickly, might snap. 3Gs at most.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Fare thee well cruel world.

Captain Bloke presses the thruster button in his gauntlet and he immediately rises.

MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD That's 5Gs. Slow down!

CAPTAIN BLOKE (On the intercom) Sorry.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Better.

EXT. ATMOSPHERE ABOVE THE PLANET

Captain Bloke looks down through the clouds and onto the planet surface.

The dish is still visible below, but his friends have vanished into dots. The star of Argos is burning bright and illuminates the Captain's burnt face through his visor.

He checks his wrist computer and selects life support.

WRIST COMPUTER Cellular damage critical. Internal bleeding: serious. Radiation: off scale. Death expected in six hours. Liver and kidney failure detected. Pancreas: necrotic.

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O It was always the heroes and the good people who ended up with nothing, and dead before their time. The villains, the lecherous and the gutless take the easy options, they are the ones who survive. What if I've wasted a virtuous life on an immoral (MORE) CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O (cont'd) universe? Perhaps, the best life is one full of drugs and dirty sex, fraud and theft. At least, if I could have had my time again, I should have had more sex, a lot more sex. What a waste. Still not a bad way to go.

A beeping noise is emitted on the intercom. He checks his wrist computer and selects trajectory.

WRIST COMPUTER Geostationary orbit established. Fuel: < 1%. Immediate refuelling recommended. Do not attempt landing until refuel procedure complete.

Captain bloke selects communications on his wrist computer and the intercom is filled with static white noise.

The static suddenly clears up and the wrist computer flashes.

WRIST COMPUTER Intergalactic carrier signal detected. Ready for bubblegram.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Hello, is anyone there? Testing, testing, 1 2 3.

The static returns and the wrist computer indicates bubblegrams are blocked.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS We are here. How are you doing?

CAPTAIN BLOKE The jet-pack is almost out of fuel. Just enough to change my orbit a bit, but not enough to get back.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS I'm sorry.

CAPTAIN BLOKE The bubble transceiver can send as soon as you take down the jammers. 102.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Give us one minute.

Heavy breathing, aircar engines, crashes and explosions fill the intercom. Then electrical static and silence.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS It is done.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Are you sure? Still getting static.

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Yes. It's done. There is nothing else we can do.

The static clears up again and the wrist computer indicates readiness for bubblegrams.

The captain is about to open a channel, but instead reverts back to the intercom.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Can I speak to Max please?

MAX

Max here.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Did you read my mind then?

MAX No, you are too far away. What's the matter?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Shall I mention the people who died in the reactor?

MAX Does it matter? Just get on with it.

CAPTAIN BLOKE

Tanja?

COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Don't waste time. We don't know how long the jammer will be down.

CAPTAIN BLOKE A minute ago, when I said I was out of fuel, before you brought the (MORE)

CAPTAIN BLOKE (cont'd) power down, the jammer was interrupted, just for a second. Was that any of you lot? COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS No not us. CAPTAIN BLOKE By 'not us', you mean not you three, or not you four? COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Not any of us. CAPTAIN BLOKE Max. You still there? MAX Yes I'm still here, get on with it! CAPTAIN BLOKE Did you transmit anything when I said I was out of fuel? MAX Nothing. MAJOR JANE SOUGHFORD Well... COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS Do as he says. CAPTAIN BLOKE Tanja, Max is holding a gun to your head? COLONEL TANJA BRAHMS

He is.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

So Max, the jammer was never a problem for you. You can send signals to Earth any time you choose.

MAX Just do as your told. No more questions. CAPTAIN BLOKE Send the schematics up then. Ill not lie for you, but Earth needs fusion.

Captain bloke records the transmission to which his wrist computer replies 'downloaded'

MAX

Have you sent it? Wait, I can tell.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Fight!

The intercom squawks with static as the Captain rips out the nanowire from his helmet. He throws the cable throws towards the planet.

CAPTAIN BLOKE (Whispering) Diana, I love you.

#### GENERAL SPHINX

Ambassador. Ambassador? This is General Sphinx of Englandworld. What is the situation?

CAPTAIN BLOKE General Sphinx. I don't think we have been introduced.

GENERAL SPHINX

Forget the pleasantries. What is the situation. Are you are in orbit?

CAPTAIN BLOKE In my space suit with minimal fuel.

GENERAL SPHINX And the colonel and the two majors?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Status unknown. Probably deceased. I have big news, that will change things. A bubble-space transmission was recently broadcast from nearby, on the planet's surface. Did you intercept it?

GENERAL SPHINX

Yes. But it was encrypted. Do you have the key?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

I don't. But I believe it may prove critical to decode, in a criminal investigation. Listen, General, can you put me on the live news networks?

# GENERAL SPHINX I would hear what you have to say.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

I have public information regarding the state of the war, but it has to be broadcast worldwide, no party must have advanced knowledge.

## GENERAL SPHINX

No chance. The military must know first.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

Oxygen is running short of I've been critically wounded in other ways. Not much time.

#### GENERAL SPHINX

If this results in losing the war, we lose our entire civilization, you know that? But of course, you are an anarchist, and you have never fought in combat have you?

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

I've fought in two wars. The tyranny of a potentate versus the tyranny of a faceless committee which is better? It doesn't matter whether you have a republic or a monarch, it's the people that matter. I was never an anarchist General (feigning breathlessness). Anarchic, anachronistic, but never an anarchist.

# GENERAL SPHINX One minute.

RICHARD LANCE Hello this is Richard Lance and you are live on the International Piper...you are live on the International Piper.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Sorry, I was miles away. Hello Mr Lance. I have two conspiracy theories to posit for you today, live from Argos Meta III. The first, is a hazardous conjecture, that certain oligarchs have recently bought stocks and shares in key businesses Earhwide, especially in those industries with high energy requirements. The most recent transmission from Meta III is now being decrypted by our military intelligence, which I am sure will pinpoint the financial fraudsters. They have used conflict and crisis to crash the high energy economy, it is likely that the same people bet against the very same businesses before Meta III declared independence.

#### RICHARD LANCE

Not the first crime of this type.

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

The second conspiracy is that there is no war and there never was an energy crisis, for here in New America, nuclear fusion is now commercially viable. Thorium is not the only source of power for industry. In this transmission that hiss you hear in the background is an ultrasonic encoding of the materials and designs required to build fusion reactors. In addition to the giant financial fraud, the Americans have been subject to repression, martial law, and land usury, justified in the cause of military security. Bubble-phase news broadcasts can now be made to the American people, telling them that there is no war, and that Englandworld requires nothing from Meta III.

#### GENERAL SPHINX

A status message from your spacesuit indicates you are dying Captain Bloke. Is there anything I can say or do?
CAPTAIN BLOKE Can you send a ship to pick me up?

GENERAL SPHINX Afraid the council has not authorized the funds. They did say you were now completely forgiven of all charges of sedition and treason. They would like this opportunity to thank you and your team. Angels take thee to thy rest, over and out.

Captain Bloke has begun to labour in his breathing. his wrist computer is flashing 'life support failing!'

CAPTAIN BLOKE Captain Bloke to America, the war is over and I'd like a rescue, anyone hear me? Hello? Damn I am not going to die today. There must be some way I can survive this.

He selects radio source imaging on his wrist computer and several lines appear on his HUD. He uses micro bursts on his thrusters to align himself with a line and follows one.

# EXT. SATELLITE IN SPACE

The Captain approaches a space satellite, correcting his course with his jet pack, which still reads < 1% on the fuel guage.

As he get close he uses the retro rockets to slow his trajectory then eventually grabs the central shaft of the satellite.

A robot arm immediately begins attacking him and he cuts through its power cables to disable it.

Hot-wiring the batteries to the power system he rotates the satellite against the orbit and touches all thrust wires together to maximize reverse thrust.

Soon the satellite and Captain Bloke are beginning to enter the atmosphere. The satellite rotates, with a heat shield protecting the frame from re-entry.

Captain Bloke hides behind the shield as the satellite begins to glow in its descent. All the while, the Captain holds the wires together to maximize the retrorockets thrust.

## EXT. FALLING THROUGH ATMOSPHERE

The atmosphere thickens and the satellite passes through clouds and the buffeting throws the Captain clear.

Tumbling through the air he hits maximum reverse thrust on his jet pack which slows his speed somewhat, but the ground below, which appears to be urban, is closing at a fast rate.

Suddenly the fuel cuts out and the reading warns of 0%, with the velocity registering MACH 0.8. At about 3000 feet the jet pack body shatters and erects two large wings.

Captain Bloke manages to steer himself, but is still plummeting. Within 600 feet of the ground the wings break off and for a brief second a look of absolute terror crosses the man's face, until a parachute is deployed at the very last moment.

Hitting the ground badly Captain Bloke breaks both legs.

EXT. GROUND IN URBAN AREA. DAY

Captain Bloke screams in agony, gingerly touching the bones that are jutting out of his legs. His face is deathly pale and for a moment seems to pass out, but recovers and manages to control himself enough to stop screaming.

Several air cars descend nearby but then fly off. The only one that stops is piloted by a concerned elderly old lady. She helps Captain Bloke crawl into the back seat and applies a glue spray to his wounds to stop the bleeding.

She flies off towards a hospital.

EXT. HOSPITAL. DAY

The air car lands and the back hatch opens. A male nurse approaches and studies his condition.

MALE NURSE Hello sir. You look most unwell, I trust you have health insurance?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Have platinum on me...in my pocket...need help removing the space suit.

The male nurse seems unhelpful and waits impatiently, until the old lady, in disgust, begins to help Captain Bloke undress. She searches his pockets and pulls out a chain of platinum bars, 5 grams each and sealed in plastic.

The male nurse's eyes light up and takes them off the woman greedily.

# OLD LADY I'll just take two bars...to pay for the glue and to get the upholstery cleaned. Good deeds need rewarding don't you know?

The lady smiles and helps the nurse pull captain bloke from the aircar and onto a powered stretcher. she smiles as she waves him away and flies off in the aircar never to be seen again.

The male nurse, transfixed by the platinum, begins to wander off.

CAPTAIN BLOKE You can't leave me here!

MALE NURSE Ah, oh yes. Come on.

INT. HOSPITAL.

Futuristic looking hospital. Foyer leading to waiting room and multiple general purpose surgeries in which people are being dissected organ by organ and then reconstructed.

The male nurse pushes Captain Bloke into one of the surgeries and closes the door, then presses his hand against his own head, as if psychically controlling the surgery. He then walks hurriedly out of the hospital, laughs and juggles a platinum piece.

# INT. SURGERY

A huge robot arm grabs the trolley and pulls Captain Bloke into a sophisticated machine.

A wave of radiation puts the Captain into a daze while a multitude of robot arms dissect his legs and upper organs.

His pancreas, intestines, kidneys and liver are all separately removed and regenerated in dedicated rejuvenation units. The pancreas is discarded as 'beyond repair' and a new one is grown in an adjoining tank. Finally all the pieces are put back together.

A screen flashes a message which is read out loud by confident and sexy female voice.

## VIEW SCREEN

Radioactive contamination detected. You will now be exposed to neutrino saturation to stimulate decay until safe limits are reached. Please do not panic if you experience extreme pain, it shall be short lived.

The room turns violet and captain bloke begins to scream again until he passes out. He awakes once more.

# VIEW SCREEN

Decontamination is complete. Sampling DNA.... Averaging...Please wait, DNA error correction in progress... complete. Neural tissue invigoration under way...complete. Please get up and report to the foyer for billing. Excess rest will be charged at \$1000 a minute.

Captain Bloke, shook up, arises, searches for clothes but finds they have been cut up and reduced to rags, so must make to leave the room naked. On the door is a mirror in which he observes his face.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

My god I look ten years younger. Ten years, ten centuries. Same thing.

THE MIRROR You were charged \$142.78 for use of this mirror.

INT. HOSPITAL

There is a beefy female nurse at the foyer printing out a receipt for the hospital bill. She calls over to Captain Bloke as he leaves the surgery room.

FEMALE NURSE We don't have insurance records for you, so you will have to pay direct.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE Diplomatic immunity.

## FEMALE NURSE

No, I don't think so. Reconstruction of your legs 12,384 dollars and 32 cents. Replacement pancreas. 8,765 dollars and 12 cents. Regeneration of kidneys and liver 3,152 dollars and 48 cents. Service 4,125 dollars and 77 cents. Use of mirror, 142 dollars and 78 cents. For a total of 28570 dollars and 47 cents. Ah and health and sales tax five percent. That comes to 29,999 dollars exactly.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

My clothes?

The nurse takes the clothes to a tailoring unit and generates a new suit then returns them to Captain Bloke who immediately starts dressing.

> FEMALE NURSE Reconstruction of clothes. One dollar, tax free.

CAPTAIN BLOKE So thirty thousand dollars exactly?

## FEMALE NURSE

Funny how the everything turns out to be a nice round number eh? You would not believe how often that happens.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Wait, these trousers are three inches too long.

FEMALE NURSE They are the same length as when you brought them in. The computer scanned them.

CAPTAIN BLOKE My legs! My legs! Five feet nine again!

FEMALE NURSE Ah, you wanted to preserve your extensions. Why didn't you say? CAPTAIN BLOKE I have platinum. No dollars.

FEMALE NURSE Er, at the current exchange rate, that is 16.843 grams.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Wait, the other nurse, he took my money...every single bar.

FEMALE NURSE The redhead? Geoff?

CAPTAIN BLOKE That's him.

# FEMALE NURSE

I was wondering why he resigned. Said he came into some money. I better refer the bill to a debt collector then. I suggest you catch up with him if you don't want your legs broken in three places. Other than that, you could sell your story, your landing is number one on the slapstick channel. Ouch. Hehe.

Captain bloke leaves the hospital in disgust.

EXT. HOSPITAL

A saloon aircar pulls up by the Captain, driven by a moustachioed heavily built soldier smoking two cigars that at once.

In the rear sit three more soldiers, all armed with heavy assault rifles.

The back door opens and the soldiers point their rifles at Captain Bloke's abdomen.

EXT. CITY, FLYING IN THE AIRCAR

CAPTAIN BLOKE How-do-you-do. I presume you came for me. DRIVER You are the ambassador?

CAPTAIN BLOKE No, I just look like him.

PASSENGER Funny. Do you know what you have done?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Ended a war?

DRIVER

Well you ended one war, and you began another. New America is in a state of civil strife.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Won't you introduce yourselves?

#### DRIVER

I am Colonel Jason Spraggbobble. This morning we were assigned by the government to kill you. After your stunt...there is no government.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

Is your mission still on?

## DRIVER

Hardly. But we thought we would take you to the barracks, just in case you could be useful...in some way.

### CAPTAIN BLOKE

When you say there is no government...

## DRIVER

I mean 'there is no government.' Once we saw the datagrams from Earth, a mob congregated outside the senate, not just the civs, but police, vets and some of us in the active military. We stormed inside and killed all the politicians. Butchered them. It was all over in twenty minutes, from beginning to their end. PASSENGER Quite a riot really. In both senses.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Does that make me your champion?

DRIVER

You don't have the right accent for an American hero. And you don't look the part.

CAPTAIN BLOKE And what of the Queen?

DRIVER

She's gone into hiding, and her entourage published a statement that she was as ill-informed as the general public. Until we know otherwise, she is not on the death list.

PASSENGER #2 We were hoping to ransom you.

PASSENGER #3 How much would Earth pay?

DRIVER We could give you fifteen percent.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Probably nothing.

DRIVER Can you pay us. You have family?

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

My family died a long long time ago, I have no children, and no wife. My one and only asset was a mansion-class ship that was blown to bits in the space above your planet...there was a red headed nurse called Jeff (with a J), or possibly Geoff (with a G), he ran off with all my platinum. If you get some of it back to me...

DRIVER

Out.

The car has descended and the passenger door opened. Captain bloke exits.

DRIVER Oh, one thing...

CAPTAIN BLOKE

Yes?

# DRIVER

Ouch! Hehe.

Captain Bloke give them half a wave and they zoom off into the distance.

EXT. URBAN AREA IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

The city is in anarchy and shooting is heard all around. Captain Bloke is walking down the street looking dejected and hopeless.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE Damn yanks! Everything is all about money!

EXT. RANCH, FLASHBACK

Camera zooms in on the sad haggard faces of the American man and woman paying their rent.

EXT. SOUTHEND, ENGLAND, EARLY 21ST CENTURY.

Captain bloke, emaciated, wanders down Southend High Street, his clothes are worn and look very cheap and old.

He enters a corner shop, dumps a huge pile of copper on the counter and counts the cost of a loaf of bread in single pennies.

SHOPKEEPER You try that again and you are barred.

Captain Bloke Looks at the keeper dejected and walks out with the loaf of bread.

EXT. URBAN AREA IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O It was always about money, endless wars for money. Two hundred years to pay off my first mortgage.

An aircar arrives with tinted windows and slowly descends and walking speed. The Captain pretends not to notice, but then stops and turns. The window rolls down.

> PANTHER We've been looking for you for ages. Meow-meow poor kitten. Come to mommycat.

The door opens and Captain Bloke steps in. In the back seats are Gossima, Helena, Janet, Joan and Tigra. They reach over and pet him in the passenger seat.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE So good to see friendly faces. What are you doing here?

PANTHER Looking for you and your team.

CAPTAIN BLOKE The army sent you?

PANTHER

Not at all. You look much healthier than usual, but also much sadder.

CAPTAIN BLOKE I haven't slept for thirty two hours. Not properly.

# PANTHER

That's how the rest of us choose to live, dear. Well done on ending the war. You did a good job.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

Thanks. We should get to the jammer site, the one we crippled. The colonel and her two majors need our help.

# PANTHER

The army has already spent two hours looking there. I've not received a telepathogram from them (MORE)

# PANTHER (cont'd)

since I last waved goodbye to you on the King Arthur. They are either not on the planet, unconscious or dead.

# CAPTAIN BLOKE

I fear the latter. I had to make one of those *hard decision* things, when I was up in space.

# GOSSIMA

Say no more. You did what you had to.

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

I couldn't tell anyone, thought the Americans might take them out for sabotage.

#### GOSSIMA

I may use your story as the basis of my 'Great American Novel' None of that low life trash either. But set in England, and ending in a memorable quotable line. What do you think?

(Nobody is listening to her)

## HELENA

They don't seem that unfriendly, the Americans. They seem congenial now.

JANET You weren't to know. Why did you switch your transceiver off...

#### CAPTAIN BLOKE

I figured I'd take some flak if I kept the channel open. I thought nobody cared enough to rescue me. I'm glad you came.

## PANTHER

...And how on Earth did you ever get down from space?

## CAPTAIN BLOKE

Hitched a lift on a man made meteorite. Listen all, I'm broke, homeless, I've lost everything, all my money, the brain collective, the (MORE) CAPTAIN BLOKE (cont'd) ship, it's all gone. There's probably twenty hit men on my trail, debt collectors, two governments, law suits for sabotage of a satellite and nuclear reactor...I'm done for. It's all over.

PANTHER Close your eyes and get some sleep.

Captain Bloke sleeps and the scene fades to black

CAPTAIN BLOKE V.O Eight hours of work, eight of rest, and and eight of play. An hour on the wrong side could lead to an early death. Nine hours of work a day for a couple of months and I would never see my second millennia.

Captain bloke wakes up with a start.

CAPTAIN BLOKE How did you find me?

## PANTHER

The isotopic trace. You were soaked in tritium oxide. That took me to the hospital. Then I intercepted a message asking for help, a nurse had been shot and wounded, for his platinum. One piece was found with your face on it. We've been sweeping the streets for miles around.

## GOSSIMA

We will get you cleaned up properly on the King Arthur, and then back to Earth. I am sure a few weeks on the celebrity circuit and you can outfit another cruiser.

The aircar approaches a space elevator in the middle of the American desert, the top of which is stationed the King Arthur.

CAPTAIN BLOKE No we are not done here. I need to talk to the Queen. PANTHER I wish you had said so earlier, I've been driving six hours.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Sorry, will you still drive? I am dead tired.

GOSSIMA I'll take the controls.

CAPTAIN BLOKE Do you have any chocolate, or scampi-and-chips bananas? Oh and Tigra?

## TIGRA

Yes?

CAPTAIN BLOKE Some celebratory music, before I go to sleep?

## CREDITS BEGIN

The credits roll while the aircar flies over a beautiful landscape.

# CREDITS END

Final word from Captain Bloke who has finished his banana and enters a trance-like state. Gossima hands him a notepad on which she has finished tapping and he reads it aloud.

> CAPTAIN BLOKE In a universe as rich as ours I can't understand why anyone would wreck their life with drink or drugs, not with the likes of brown sauce and such.

He throws the banana skin out of the window and it lands in the field below. The aircar flies off over the horizon.

FADE TO BLACK