

ZOE'S AARC

"Pilot"

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INT. RUSSIAN LABORATORY - BLACK AND WHITE STOCK FOOTAGE

A dog, LAIKA, sits inside a SPACE CAPSULE. She wears a SPACESUIT. A SCIENTIST appears, places a helmet on her head.

ZOE (V.O.)

In 1957, as the Cold War was just heating up, Russia fired a shot heard round the world.

EXT. RUSSIAN LAUNCH SITE - BLACK AND WHITE STOCK FOOTAGE

A massive rocket belches exhaust, lifts into the sky.

ZOE (V.O.)

The Soviet dog, Laika, became the first creature to successfully orbit our planet --

INT. SPUTNIK 2 - IN ORBIT - BLACK AND WHITE STOCK FOOTAGE

Laika is alive and well. She barks.

ZOE (V.O.)

-- And an international sensation.

MONTAGE - NEWS CLIPS

RUSSIAN NEWSMAN

Today, Laika became a pioneer. A --

BRITISH NEWSMAN

-- canine cosmonaut was launched in Sputnik 2, also known as --

US NEWSMAN

-- Muttnick. And though this pooch may be Ivan's best friend, she is a commie we can respect.

END MONTAGE

A NEWSPAPER spins to fill the screen. Its headline reads:

**WORLD FEARS FOR SOVIET SPACE-DOG**

ZOE (V.O.)

It took everyone a week to realize that the Russians had no way of bringing her home.

INT. LOCKER ROOM (SECRET NASA TEST SITE) - JANUARY 1961

An ASTRONAUT faces away from us. She puts on a helmet.

ZOE (V.O.)

The public was outraged. They were fine with ants or rats dying for the national cause. But sending a cute dog on a suicide mission? Now that crossed a line.

The Astronaut exits, passing a window that overlooks --

EXT. LAUNCHPAD (SECRET NASA TEST SITE) - CONTINUOUS

A CRAWLER-TRANSPORTER vehicle lugs a SATURN 5 ROCKET towards the launchpad. A VOICE with a GERMAN ACCENT booms over a PA.

GERMAN VOICE

(over PA)

Five minutes till launch.

ZOE (V.O.)

But what people didn't realize is that the line had been crossed again and again for years.

Sirens wail. Red lights flash. On the flashes we flashback.

EXT. LAUNCHPAD (SECRET NASA TEST SITE) - YEARS EARLIER

A CRAWLER-TRANSPORTER lugs a Saturn 5 towards the launchpad.

Another Crawler-Transporter appears, lugging a KILLER WHALE in a custom space suit towards the launch pad.

MONTAGE

- ROCKETS of many sizes and nationalities explode in quick succession.

- We end on an American rocket. It explodes over a desert.

- The pilot, an EMPEROR PENGUIN, ejects. His chute opens. He floats down, lands in the sand. Above, VULTURES circle.

END MONTAGE

ZOE (V.O.)

Between NASA and the Soviet Space Program, pretty much anything that had a pulse was shot into orbit. Unlike humans, these animals were considered expendable. No one thought twice if they died.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - YEARS EARLIER

A CAPSULE splashes down. Its windows break. Water pours in.

INT. SINKING SPACE CAPSULE

An ASTRONAUT SLOTH slowly turns an escape hatch wheel.

ZOE (V.O.)

But what if I told you that not all of these animals died?

EXT. SPACE STATION - MARS ORBIT - 1961

DOZENS of ASTRONAUT SNAKES lie sunbathing on solar panels until the sun disappears behind the planet. Darkness.

ZOE (V.O.)

What if I told you that the survivors formed communities across the solar system, space stations in which different species lived and worked together to build a new life for themselves among the stars?

Light illuminates the snakes. They hiss in approval. In the distance, a MAKESHIFT SATELLITE reflects sunlight.

EXT. MAKESHIFT SATELLITE - MARS ORBIT

HUNDREDS of TURTLES hold onto a lunar lander piloted by a CHEETAH. The sunlight reflects off of the Turtles' shells.

ZOE (V.O.)

Well, you wouldn't believe me. Because only humans possess such advanced cognitive abilities, right? Wrong. That's a lie. Want to know another one?

INT. SPUTNIK 2 - GRAINY BLACK AND WHITE STOCK FOOTAGE

The same video plays. Laika is alive and well. She barks.

ZOE (V.O.)  
That Laika tragically lost her  
life.

EXT. THE VOID OF SPACE

Among the stars, we see a tiny grey dot. This is PLUTO.

ZOE  
Laika's fake death was just a  
masterful play of misdirection by  
Moscow. As the world mourned, Laika  
secretly set course for a small  
asteroid near Pluto. Now why would  
the Reds want to send their top  
animal agent on a secret mission to  
the edge of the solar system?

LAIKA'S SPACESHIP flies past.

ZOE (V.O.)  
We have no idea.

EXT. GANG PLANK - TOP OF THE LAUNCH TOWER - JANUARY 1961

SOLDIERS snap to attention as The Astronaut boards the ship.

ZOE (V.O.)  
Which is why President Kennedy  
ordered me to find her.

Through the capsule's window, we see The Astronaut's face for  
the first time. She is a CHIMPANZEE. This is ZOE.

ZOE  
And if I don't succeed, that cute  
dog might very well be the start of  
World War III.

INT. SPACE CAPSULE - SATURN 5

Zoe flips switches, presses buttons, checks system readouts.

GERMAN VOICE (ON HEADSET)  
T-minus five, four, three, two. . .  
Godspeed, Zoe.

ZOE (INTO HEADSET)  
Thank you, sir.

The Saturn 5 erupts to life.

INT. NASA CONTROL ROOM

DR. FAIRBANKS (30's) watches video of the launch, holding back tears. Around him, NASA SCIENTISTS monitor computers.

DR. FAIRBANKS  
(with a German accent)  
Godspeed.

Fairbanks is the German Voice we've been hearing.

His computer displays a map of the solar system. It reads:

**TRACKING [AARC]**

**(Animal Astronaut Reconnaissance Craft)**

EXT. EDGE OF EARTH ORBIT - 42 MILES UP - 20 MINUTES LATER

The bottom of the Saturn 5 detaches, falls back towards Earth. All is normal until - BOOM. The rocket explodes.

DEBRIS fills the screen. But then a smaller, sleeker SPACECRAFT bursts through the wreckage. This is Zoe's AARC.

INT. MAIN BRIDGE - THE AARC

Zoe watches the rocket burn up below.

We see that Zoe is taller and stronger than most chimps. She has a buzz cut and perfect posture. She looks almost human.

FAIRBANKS (O.S.) (ON VIDEO FEED)  
Congratulations, Zoe. You are  
officially dead.

Fairbanks is displayed on a screen. His round glasses and geeky haircut give him a scholarly, fatherly look.

FAIRBANKS (ON VIDEO FEED)  
We're penning the headlines now.  
What do you want to have died of?  
Gas leak? Air pressure failure?

ZOE  
 Just say, "American Chimp Goes  
 Bananas, Botches Mission." Moscow  
 will eat it up.

FAIRBANKS (ON VIDEO FEED)  
 Please, Zoe. You deserve a more  
 dignified fake death.

ZOE  
 I can handle it, sir. My self-worth  
 comes from the success of my  
 mission. Not headlines.

FAIRBANKS (ON VIDEO FEED)  
 I defer to your judgment.

An IMAGE of a high-tech SPACE STATION appears on the screen.

FAIRBANKS (ON VIDEO FEED) (CONT'D)  
 Now Zoe, when you reach the Moon  
 Colony. You will be met by Albert  
 II.

Zoe's eyes light up. She hides her excitement.

FAIRBANKS (CONT'D)  
 Albert II will be serving as your  
 first mate.

A photo of a RHESUS MONKEY (smaller than Zoe, tan, red-faced)  
 appears. This is Albert II. Next to the picture is a list of  
 achievements, medals, commendations.

FAIRBANKS (ON VIDEO FEED) (CONT'D)  
 He will introduce you to the crew  
 that he has hand-picked for your  
 mission. You will meet them, brief  
 them and cast off by 0700 tomorrow  
 morning.

ZOE  
 It'll be an honor to serve  
 alongside Commander Albert II, sir.  
 I must admit though I'm a bit  
 embarrassed that Albert II will be  
 serving under me.

Fairbanks chuckles.

FAIRBANKS (ON VIDEO FEED)

Zoe, my dear, I assure you that before the medals and the fame, Albert was a primate much like yourself. And after you bring back Laika, who knows, you might end being even more famous than him.

ZOE

(blushing)

Please, sir. I couldn't possibly compare myself to --

FAIRBANKS

Zoe, you are the best cadet I have ever had. I have prepared you for any challenge you might face except well --

(hesitates)

Zoe, I have waited to tell you this because I am ashamed of it. I am not sure what conditions you will find up there. The animals you will encounter will have been changed by their time in space. Those poor creatures have been forgotten by their countries, separated from their natural environments, and forced to endure unknowable hardships. They will need your strength more than anything.

ZOE

And I'm ready to give it to them.

FAIRBANKS

I know you are, Zoe. Now get some food and rest and contact me after you've met with your crew. I expect good news, Commander.

ZOE

And you'll get it.

Zoe salutes. Fairbanks smiles. The feed goes dark.

Zoe jumps towards the door. She floats in the low gravity.

INT. FOOD AND LIQUID STORAGE - CONTINUOUS

There is a GREENHOUSE for vegetables and SHELVES of FREEZE-DRIED FOOD. Zoe floats to an INDUSTRIAL FRIDGE, opens it.

Inside are HUNDREDS of TUBES. Zoe pulls one out. It reads:

**CIRCUS CRITTER SELECT: FROZEN BANANAS**

Its LOGO shows a MONKEY flinging FECES at a TRAINER.

Zoe rolls her eyes, sighs.

INT. DINING ROOM - THE AARC - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Zoe sits alone at a table complete with TABLECLOTH, FLOWER CENTERPIECE, and the FROZEN BANANA on a SILVER PLATTER. Classical music plays over the loudspeaker.

Zoe slices off a piece of banana, chews it in silence.

Through a window, we see THE MOON in the distance.

INT. COMMANDER'S QUARTERS - HOURS LATER

Zoe is asleep in a vertical sleeping bag, until WHOOSH. An ASTEROID shoots past the window. Alarms SCREAM. Sirens flash.

Zoe's eyes shoot open. She leaps out of her sleeping bag, but forgets the low gravity. She flies straight into the ceiling.

ZOE

Ow!

Zoe regains her bearings. She floats down to the window. Outside, the asteroid curves around the moon.

ZOE (ON HEADSET) (CONT'D)

Columbia, no emergency. Just an  
asteroid off of our starboard --

THE MOON COLONY comes into view. It has been battered, hardly resembling the image of the high tech space station we saw earlier. Smoke seems to be pouring out of it.

ZOE (CONT'D)

No!

INT. COCKPIT - SECONDS LATER

Zoe leaps into the Pilot's Seat, begins flipping on systems. Fairbanks pops up on the video feed.

ZOE (ON HEADSET)  
 Columbia, potential mayday  
 operation. The Moon Colony appears  
 to have been hit by an asteroid.

Static. After a beat, Zoe speaks again.

ZOE (ON HEADSET) (CONT'D)  
 Columbia, this is Zoe, I --

Another ASTEROID flies past. Alarms go off. Zoe watches it  
 curve towards the Moon Colony. She mashes buttons wildly.

ZOE (CONT'D)  
 Come on. Come on!

But The AARC is slow to boot up.

ZOE (CONT'D)  
 God . . . darn it!

Zoe rips off her headset, throws it across the AARC.

The headset floats until hits a locker. The locker door  
 swings open revealing PICTURES, POSTERS, ACTION FIGURES, even  
 a LUNCHBOX, all depicting ALBERT II.

An ACTION FIGURE of Albert II in a space suit floats out.

The action figure spins slowly in the low gravity until Zoe  
 catches it. She gazes at it for a moment, then tucks it in  
 her UTILITY BELT. Zoe looks up, redetermined.

Zoe throws herself across the AARC, straps into the Pilot's  
 seat. Focused, she presses a series of buttons, pulls the  
 throttle. The engines roar to life.

The AARC shoots after the asteroid.

Zoe is pressed back into her seat. Her eyes widen. It looks  
 like she just might make it! But the space rock is too fast.  
 It is about to hit The Colony when --

A HYDRAULIC ARM shoots out from The Colony, catches the  
 asteroid mid-flight. A SUPPLY CHUTE opens. The arm pulls the  
 asteroid in towards The Colony, drops it down the chute.

ZOE (CONT'D)  
 What the -- ?

The Supply Chute opens again, belches the "smoke" Zoe saw  
 earlier. But it's not smoke, it's fragments of asteroid.

Zoe gapes until a DOOR slides open on a lower section of the Colony. Zoe hesitates, then guides the AARC down.

INT. HANGAR - MOON COLONY - MINUTES LATER

HISS. A gangplank descends. Zoe walks down, scans the hangar. There's no one around. She presses a button on her helmet.

ZOE  
(on headset)  
Columbia, I have docked at The Moon  
Colony. The Station avoided  
destruction, but something is  
definitely wrong here.

INT. HALLWAY - MOON COLONY

A door slides open. Zoe steps inside, leaps back.

A KANGAROO lies against a door at the end of the hallway. It's eyes are red. It's hardly breathing. It's lying in a puddle of it's own vomit. Zoe cautiously approaches The Kangaroo, bends down next to it, takes its pulse.

ZOE  
You poor creature.

Suddenly, a high-pitched WAIL comes from the other side of the door. It's ear-splitting. Zoe falls to her knees.

The sound cuts off, but then a chorus of screams comes from the other side of the door. Zoe's eyes widen.

ZOE (CONT'D)  
(into headset)  
Columbia, if you can hear me, The  
Moon Colony seems to have been  
overrun by . . . I don't know what.  
I'm going to check for survivors.

Screams from behind the door grow louder. Zoe takes a deep breath, presses a button next to the door. It opens.

INT. AUDITORIUM - MOON COLONY - CONTINUOUS

Lights blind Zoe. She covers her eyes. The high-pitched scream wails again. Except this time the scream clarifies into something more recognizable - A GUITAR SOLO.

Zoe opens her eyes to see a PUNK CONCERT in its full glory.

Bigger animals (mainly PREDATORS) mosh in the front. Taller animals (ELEPHANTS, GIRAFFES) stick to the back. WINGED CREATURES crowd the rafters above.

Above the stage hangs a satellite. Spray-painted in red on it's side are the words:

**SPUT-DICK!**

A HUMAN SPACESUIT hangs from the satellite by a noose.

Zoe is frozen in shock, until A DRUNK COW staggers out of the crowd near her. The Cow holds a vodka bottle. She shouts at Zoe and the CROWD OF ANIMALS near her.

DRUNK COW

(slurring)

Three of my stomachs are full of  
Vodka! Who wants a white Russian?

THE ANIMALS around Zoe cheer.

The Cow raises her udders. Zoe's eyes widen.

The Cow launches a barrage of milk. Zoe rolls out of the way narrowly avoiding the streams of dairy. She pops up into combat position, ready to dodge another attack.

But instead, The Kangaroo appears, grabs the vodka bottle from The Cow. The Kangaroo takes a swig, puts the bottle in her pouch, hops shakily off. The Cow collapses. Zoe gapes.

Suddenly, a HERD OF BUFFALO stampede through Zoe's section.

BUFFALO

Sput-Dick! Sput-Dick! Sput-Dick!

Zoe tries to dive out of the way, but is shoved into the crowd. She careens through the audience, finally slamming up against the back of a DONKEY. Zoe goes down hard, barely missing The Donkey's kick.

Zoe tries to stand up. But then the guitar solo gives way to a drum and bass breakdown. The crowd of animals goes wild.

Zoe is stomped by CLAWS, PAWS, HOOVES, TENTACLES. It seems like she might be trampled until Zoe spots a MONKEY swinging in the rafters above. He's moving towards the stage.

ZOE

Albert!

In a surge of hope, Zoe grabs the tail of a nearby TIGER, pulls herself up. The Tiger turns, snarling.

ZOE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. But I'm trying to --

The Tiger shoves Zoe backwards into a MOOSE. The MOOSE uses his antlers to head butt Zoe towards the stage. Zoe stumbles forward, knocking animals out of the way with her heavy suit.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Sorry! Ow! I'm -- oof. I'm supposed to be meeting Albert II.

Zoe collides with the stage. She looks up and finally gets a good look at SPUT-DICK.

The band consists of THREE POLAR BEARS on bass, drums, and electric guitar. The singer is a black-and-white dog, STRELKA. She howls into the mic. The crowd howls in response.

BELKA

(with a Russian accent)

Burn Washington! Torch Moscow!  
Flood London! Drown Krakow!

CROWD OF ANIMALS

Tear it all down! Tear it all down!

Zoe scans the stage, spots the monkey. But it's just a STAGE CREW LEMUR adjusting a light. Zoe sags in the disappointment.

Zoe's leg begins to shake. She looks down. A male DOG, nearly identical to Strelka, is humping her leg. This is BELKA.

Zoe reaches into her belt, pulls out a pistol, aims it at BELKA. The crowd around them gasps, backs up.

BELKA

(with a Russian accent)

Oh, shit. You're not -- I -- I'm sorry. Really. It's an inside joke with a friend and he looks just like you from the back.

But Zoe isn't listening. She cocks the pistol back.

STRELKA

(on mic, with A RUSSIAN ACCENT)

Hey! What are you doing to my brother?

The music cuts out. Zoe turns.

Strelka is staring daggers at Zoe from the stage. Strelka's three Polar Bear bandmates tower behind her menacingly.

BELKA  
 (whispering)  
 Please, do it.

ZOE  
 What?

BELKA  
 Shoot me. I've tried do it myself.  
 But I can't. Please. Do it.

ZOE  
 I --

STRELKA  
 Dastatachna! Enough!

Strelka stage dives, claws out, aiming for Zoe. But the Russian Dog bounces off of Zoe's suit. The crowd gasps. Strelka gets back up, growling.

STRELKA (CONT'D)  
 Wearing a space suit. That's  
 cheating you bipedal bitch.

The crowd of animals boo and jeer at Zoe.

ZOE  
 This is all a misunderstanding. I'm  
 here to see Albert II. I am acting  
 under the authority of the United  
 States of --

STRELKA  
 Well sorry, Miss America, now  
 you've got a date with the Red  
 Scare. Come on, take off the suit!  
 Face me like a real animal.

Belka circles Zoe. The crowd closes in, eager for a fight.

CROWD  
 Take it off! Take it off! Take it  
 off!

FELICETTE  
 (with a French accent)  
 Zut alors. Enough!

A French cat, FELICETTE (silver, well-groomed) cuts through the crowd. She walks up to Zoe, sizes her up, rolls her eyes.

FELICETTE (CONT'D)  
 Come. Now!

She grabs Zoe's hand, pulls her through the crowd towards a door behind the stage. Belka shouts into the mic.

FELICETTE (CONT'D)  
 (on microphone)  
 I bet Uncle Sam's dick is the only  
 banana she's ever eaten.

The crowd laughs. Belka points to her Polar Bear Drummer.

1-2-3-4! The music drops again. The crowd goes wild as Felicette pulls into through the door.

INT. MAIN CORRIDOR - MOON COLONY

Zoe collapses against wall in shock.

ZOE  
 Thank you. They almost killed me --

FELICETTE  
 Is this what the Americans are making you wear these days? Mon dieu! No wonder the crowd was telling you to take it off. You can't just walk around a punk concert looking like G.I. Je ne sais qua.

ZOE  
 What-- What's punk?

FELICETTE  
 You'll know in oh, 30 years. That's how long it usually takes our trends to trickle down into human culture. Now who are you?

ZOE  
 Oh, excuse me, ma'am.  
 (jumping up, saluting)  
 I am Commander Zoe of the US AARC.  
 Here to see Albert II.

FELICETTE  
 Who?

ZOE  
 Albert II.  
 (off Felicette's silence)  
 Your captain!

Felicette raises an eyebrow, gives Zoe a once over.

FELICETTE

You don't seem like Albert's type.  
He's not usually into other  
primates. Especially not pets.

ZOE

Excuse me?

FELICETTE

Our parlance for animals who still  
stink of human servitude.

ZOE

(flustered)

I -- Listen. I need to see Albert  
II. It is a matter of national  
security!

FELICETTE

Ah, mon ange. You'll soon learn  
that Earth politics don't matter  
one lick up here.

Zoe stares unbelieving at Felicette.

ZOE

Take me to Albert. Now!

Zoe's hand hovers over her pistol.

FELICETTE

Wow, are you going to shoot me over  
a little a joke? So American!

Felicette laughs and turns down the hallway.

FELICETTE (CONT'D)

I know who you are, Zoe. I am just  
giving you a hard time. Now, you  
want me to take you to see Albert?  
Avec plasir. Follow me.

She walks up to a door, hits a button. The door slides open.

Confused, Zoe follows after her.

INT. HERBIVORE HAVEN - THE MOON COLONY - CONTINUOUS

A lush RAINFOREST surrounds HOT SPRINGS. GIRAFFES and  
GAZELLES relax in the warm waters next to LIONS and CHEETAHS.  
A SHARK AND OTTER bounce a beach ball back and forth. BIRDS  
sing sweetly and WOLVES howl in harmony.

Above, an enormous SUCCULENT ARRANGEMENT spells out:

**HERBIVORE HAVEN**

Zoe stares around in disbelief.

ZOE

What is this place?

FELICETTE

Outdated is what it is. Even though we animals have settled the whole predator-prey thing up here, we moon colonists are still fixated by dualistic cultures of the past. Maybe it's our proximity to humans.

Felicette walks off confidently. Zoe runs to keep up. She has to jump over a STARFISH leading TIDE POOL CREATURES in yoga.

ZOE

What do you guys have against humans?

FELICETTE

They're destroying the Earth. They use us as pawns in their political games. Then spay and neuter us, stick us in metal tubes designed to fail and launch us into space. And don't even get me started on how a capitalist meat-centric diet is --

Zoe and Felicette arrive in front of a massive SPIDER WEB, multiple stories high. Dozens of SECURITY SPIDERS, wearing many pairs of sunglasses, crawl along the web on patrol.

CPT. CHARLOTTE, a black widow, holding a clipboard, drops down from the ceiling on a web.

CPT. CHARLOTTE

Hey Felicette, who's the stiff?

FELICETTE

This is Zoe. She's an American agent tasked with finding and assassinating Laika.

Zoe's eyes widen.

CPT. CHARLOTTE

That Ruskie pooch that bit it?

FELICETTE  
One and the same.

CHARLOTTE  
Fine. Whatever. Go through.

The Security Spiders create a doorway in the web.

FELICETTE  
Thanks, dear. So sorry to hear  
about your husbands.

Felicette keeps walking. Zoe stands, stunned and then --

ZOE  
Hey!

She sprints after her.

INT. CARNIVORE CASINO - THE MAIN FLOOR

Zoe now enters a gambling floor more Coney Island than Vegas.

Neon signs advertise:

**"FRESH MEAT - STRAIGHT FROM EARTH"**

A LEOPARD and PANDA rack up points at a SHARP-SHOOTING BOOTH, firing at human space helmets mounted like animal heads.

A LION throws a fang into a black-and-white roulette wheel manned by a Zebra. Both teeth land on white. The Lion roars.

A flashing sign advertises CAVERN COMEDY CLUB. Inside we see a pack of HYENAS. They're laughing uproariously at a puppet show. The puppets are HUMAN SKULLS.

Zoe sprints through the mayhem and grabs Felicette by the tail. Felicette yowls.

ZOE  
Are you working for the Russians?  
Who's your source? Tell me. Now!

Zoe twists Felicette's tail. The cat writhes.

FELICETTE  
You stupid ape. I hate them all.  
Americans, Russians. I don't care.  
(spits)  
I work for animalkind. For the  
colony. I'm the captain here.

ZOE

Liar. Albert II is captain.

FELICETTE

I took over from that sad sack years ago.

ZOE

So you're a mutineer?

FELICETTE

Albert gave up control gladly. He doesn't give a shit about any of us. I just kept my names on the transmissions.

ZOE

You're joking.

FELICETTE

You're right. This is a joke.

ZOE

(letting her loose)

Oh, OK. Good, I . . . -

FELICETTE

Yes, Commander Albert II is right this way. Come!

Felicette pulls Zoe onto a path running into a dark cave. Above, GLOWING JARS of JELLYFISH spell out:

### AQUATIC ACRES

INT. AQUATIC ACRES - CONTINUOUS

AQUARIUMS teem with slow-moving fish. A few NON-AQUATIC CREATURES watch the fish with wide eyes. Most are slumped, half-conscious. It's like an under-the-sea crack den.

Zoe sees a group of DALMATIANS congregated by a faucet, growling and jockeying for position.

ZOE

What are they doing?

FELICETTE

Stardust. Ground up asteroids.

Felicette points to a window. Outside, the HYDRAULIC ARM catches an asteroid. After a beat and a grinding noise, some powder pours from the faucet. The Dalmatians go wild.

FELICETTE (CONT'D)

I know you're judging them, but  
don't. It gets pretty dull up here  
and the effects aren't all bad.

(pointing behind Zoe)

Take Brandon for example.

Zoe turns, jumps back. A MAN IN A SPACE SUIT towers above  
her. But when "The Man" leans down. We see that a GOLDFISH is  
swimming in the suit's water-filled helmet. This is BRANDON.

FELICETTE (CONT'D)

You learn what the bubbles mean in  
time.

Brandon opens his mouth, bubbles come out. He sticks out his  
human hand. Zoe stares, then backs away without shaking it.

FELICETTE (CONT'D)

Now, you've met your entire crew,  
except for Albert II of course.

ZOE

I have?

FELICETTE

Oui. You pulled a gun on your  
medic, Belka, got into a fight with  
your pilot, Strelka. You've been a  
caca boudin to your engineer, moi.  
And you made a terrible first  
impression on your communications  
officer here.

Felicette points to Brandon. Zoe's eyes widen.

ZOE

The fish who can't talk is my  
communications officer?

Felicette nods.

ZOE (CONT'D)

The dog who attacked me is my  
pilot?

Felicette sighs, nods yes.

ZOE (CONT'D)

You're my engineer?

FELICETTE

Regretfully.

Zoe begins to laugh.

ZOE  
This is insane. Albert II would  
have never --.

FELICETTE  
Remember I am Albert, bitch. And I  
picked you a damn good team. Not  
that you deserve it. But whatever,  
go be with your all-American hero.

Felicette points behind Zoe. Zoe turns, sees a tunnel leading  
into darkness. Above ELECTRIC EELS form a neon-sign reading:

**BERMUDA BROTHEL**

**Those Who Enter, Never (Want to) Leave**

ZOE  
You're lying again.

FELICETTE  
If you really believe in Albert,  
then you have nothing to worry  
about, right?

Felicette smirks. Zoe turns towards the tunnel, walks in.

INT. BERMUDA BROTHEL

As Zoe walks into the dark, we see that the tunnel is  
actually a walkthrough aquarium. But there are no fish, until  
Zoe rounds a corner and sees ALBERT II behind the glass.

INT. BDSM DUNGEON - BERMUDA BROTHEL

Albert II is underwater. He is chained to a coral reef and is  
naked except for an old-timey diving helmet. An OCTOPUS  
DOMANATRIX, wearing fishnet stockings, whips him with KELP.

ZOE  
What are you doing to him? Stop it!

Zoe pounds on the aquarium glass. A small crack appears.

The Octopus Dominatrix looks over. Her eyes widen. She stops  
whipping Albert II, starts waving her arms for Zoe to stop.

But Zoe is dead-set. Zoe steps back, roundhouse kicks the  
aquarium. The crack quickly branches out. The glass shatters.

A jet of water blasts Zoe against the opposing wall.

Albert II, The Octopus Dominatrix, and a series of other AQUATIC SEX WORKERS (all in fishnets) pour out in the deluge.

The water finally stops.

Zoe sits up, coughing water. She looks over, sees Albert II trying to get his helmet off. She rushes over to him.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Sir, are you OK?

Zoe pulls off the diving helmet.

Albert II looks older and fatter than his picture. But it's definitely him. He squints at Zoe.

ALBERT II

Sir?

Albert II blinks, then notices Zoe's suit. He sees the American flag on it. His eyes widen. Zoe smiles. Albert II opens his mouth to speak. Zoe leans in close.

But then Albert II spins around, yells at The Octopus Dominatrix, JUANA, in a thick Bronx Accent.

ALBERT II (CONT'D)

You're still gonna ink on me,  
Juana! Or I want my money back.

INT. INTERSPECIES CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Zoe stands in front of a map of the solar system, pouring water from her boots. Felicette, Belka, Strelka, Albert II and Brandon sit around a conference table. They are all laughing (or bubbling) uproariously.

ALBERT II

And then she begins pounding on the glass.

BELKA

No way!

STRELKA

(crying from laughter)  
Keep going. Keep going.

ALBERT II

And I look over and I'm like,  
"Whoa, baby. Only one lady gets to  
swing on my vine at a time."

Zoe has had enough.

ZOE

That is not what happened! I  
thought they were hurting you.

The animals break into hysterics.

BELKA

Haven't you heard of BDSM, Zoe?

FELICETTE

Of course she hasn't. Look at her.  
She's more straight-edge than a  
ruler.

STRELKA

Let me give you a hint, Zoe. It  
doesn't stand for Bananas Done,  
Send More.

The group laughs even harder. Zoe clenches her jaw.

ZOE

Everyone but me and Captain Albert  
II out of the room !

STRELKA

(to Albert II)

Ooh, Captain. Albert II, are you  
going to take this new recruit  
below decks for an induction  
ceremony.

ALBERT II

Shouldn't you be sniffing your  
brother's asshole or something?

STRELKA

Hey! I didn't say anything. I --

ZOE

Get. OUT!

Zoe puts her hand on a lever next to the door. She's about to  
pull it. All the other animals gasp.

FELICETTE

No! Not that one, you idiot. This used to be the trash room. That lever will blow us all out into space. Use the button.

Zoe looks down at the button below. It reads:

**"USE THE BUTTON, IDIOT"**

Zoe pushes the button. The door opens.

ZOE

This place is a mess.

FELICETTE

You are a mess.

Felicette saunters out, glaring at Zoe. The other animals, except Albert II, follow. Zoe closes the door, turns on Albert II. He doesn't notice. He's leaning back in his chair.

Zoe walks over to Albert II. Clears her throat.

ALBERT II

Could please you cover your mouth when you cough?

ZOE

I was clearing my throat. And I'm wearing a helmet.

ALBERT II

It's more for the sound. I have a headache.

Albert II massages his temples. Zoe stares in disbelief

ZOE

Who are you?

ALBERT II

Albert II. First monkey in space and finest fuck in the galaxy at your service.

Albert II gives her a salesman smile. But it falls when his eyes meet Zoe's rage.

ZOE

You're not Albert II. You're a disgrace.

EXT. HALLWAY

Belka and Strelka have their ears against the door, straining to hear what's going on inside. Felicette grooms herself, bored. Brandon stares out of a window into space.

BELKA

No, I can't hear what's going on either.

STRELKA

(looking up)

Wait, I have an idea.

(to Brandon)

Brandon, my dear, if you would be so kind.

Strelka points up to a vent on the ceiling.

INT. VENT.

A panel is pulled back. Brandon's arms place his goldfish bowl head into the vent. It rolls down the vent, stops up against a slat. Through the slat, Brandon can see into the Conference Room. Zoe yells at Albert II.

ZOE

You are a traitor, a coward. You abandoned your country, your post and now my mission.

ALBERT II

(sitting up)

Listen, kid. I am all of those things, but at least I'm not full of shit. Fuck your mission, whatever it is. Pointless nationalist espionage I'm guessing?

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Brandon's headless body mimes Zoe and Albert II's conversation. Belka interprets Brandon's movements and translates what Albert II and Belka are saying.

BELKA

(translating for Zoe)

No. My mission is to prevent nuclear war, to save the Earth.

Brandon's headless body now lays back casually on the floor like Albert II. Belka lowers his voice for Albert II.

BELKA (CONT'D)  
 (translating for Albert  
 II)

Who cares about the Earth? It's so  
 much better up here without all the  
 humans.

Strelka howls in approval.

STRELKA  
 That's god damn right!

FELICETTE  
 A votre santé, Albert II!

BELKA  
 (translating Zoe)  
 OK, all of you might hate humans.  
 But did Felicette tell you all that  
 if we succeed my government will  
 give you each a lifetime supply of  
 food and relocate you anywhere in  
 the solar system?

INT. VENT

Brandon perks up. He rolls his fishbowl head down the vent.

INT. HALLWAY

BELKA  
 (translating for Zoe)  
 All you need to do is help me stop  
 Laika.  
 (in his own voice)  
 Laika!?

STRELKA  
 Laika!?

Both dogs turn on Felicette. Belka and Strelka start shouting  
 in Russian interspersed with barks and snarls.

FELICETTE  
 Listen! I can explain. I --

Meanwhile, Brandon's head roll out of the vent. His body  
 catches it, screws it onto his suit. He runs for the door.

INT. INTERSPECIES CONFERENCE ROOM -

Zoe stands over Albert II. Albert II tries ignoring her, but can't. He's getting curious.

ZOE

And if we succeed you'd be a hero again.

ALBERT II

You have to understand something, Zoe. Humans brainwash us with heroic fantasies to get us to do things they don't want to do. It's all fake. I am not a hero and I never was.

ZOE

Well you were a hero to me.

Zoe pulls her Albert II action-figure from her pocket. Albert II's jaw drops and then breaks into a smile. He reaches for the action figure as the door opens.

Brandon stands in the doorway, but then Strelka runs between his legs. She sprints towards Zoe with Belka just behind.

Strelka runs to Zoe, puts her paws up on Zoe's shoulders.

STRELKA

What do you know about Laika? When did you last see her? What are you going to do to her?

BELKA

Sis, get down.

Belka pulls his sister back, looks at Zoe apologetically.

STRELKA

What she means to say is we're in. We'll join your mission.

ALBERT II

What?

ZOE

Really?

STRELKA

Just tell me when you last saw her.

ZOE

I can't yet. It's classified. And before I accept you as my crew, tell me what connection you two have to Laika.

STRELKA  
 We can't tell you.  
 (getting in Zoe's face)  
 It's classified.

ZOE  
 (staring her down)  
 Fine. You're both in.

Suddenly, Brandon shoves Belka and Strelka out of the way. He kneels in front of Zoe, lowers his head.

BELKA  
 Brandon says is he's in too.

Zoe hesitates, unsure what to do. She taps Brandon on the shoulder like she's knighting him. He stands.

BELKA (CONT'D)  
 See, Zoe? I told you he looks like  
 you from the side.

STRELKA  
 No, he doesn't.

BELKA  
 Come on. Watch!

Belka walks over, mimes humping Brandon's leg.

ALBERT II  
 I'm in too.

All the animals look to Albert II in surprise. He's still holding the action figure. He looks to Zoe.

ALBERT II (CONT'D)  
 If the world needs saving, I want  
 credit for saving it.  
 (holding up the action  
 figure)  
 Can I keep this?

ZOE  
 (sighs)  
 Sure.

Zoe looks at Brandon, Albert II, Belka and Strelka. This team might actually work. But then her gaze lands on . . .

## FELICETTE

Maybe it's time I remind you that this animal - if we even call can her that - is an agent of the enemy. She has been sent here by humans to convince us to hunt down one of our own. She is a pet. She's what we came here to escape.

The air goes out of the room.

## FELICETTE (CONT'D)

I had originally signed up to be the engineer on this voyage as a way of getting a free ride out of this hellhole. By the way --

(turning on Albert)

I'm done running your ship and taking your shit, Albert!

(pointing at Zoe)

But she's even more insufferable than you! I quit. Now, I have called station security. They will escort Zoe back to her ship and then everything will go back to --

WHAM. Zoe punches Felicette in the face. The cat crumples.

Zoe grabs Felicette, begins dragging her towards the door. The other animals look on in shock.

## ZOE

Sorry for that everyone. But we don't need someone who can't see past their blind hatred of humans to ground this mission before it has even taken off.

Zoe pulls the lever by the door, looks up expectantly. A WHIRRING fills the room. Zoe looks down, her face falls.

## ZOE (CONT'D)

Oh no.

(to her crew)

Everyone get --

WHOOSH. A CHUTE in the ceiling opens to THE VOID OF SPACE. A tremendous sucking pulls the animals into the air.

Brandon grabs Belka. Belka grabs Strelka. Strelka grabs Albert II and Albert II holds onto the table. Zoe grabs the door frame, but in doing so, loses grip of Felicette.

The unconscious Felicette is pulled towards the void.

BELKA  
Felicette, hold on!

Felicette wakes up, looks around. She scrambles to find grip, but can't. Brandon, Albert II, Belka and Strelka form a chain trying to reach her. Zoe watches in horror.

BELKA (CONT'D)  
Grab my paw!

Felicette readies herself. She leaps for Belka's hand . . .  
. . . but misses.

Felicette is sucked up through the chute and out into space.  
All of the animals scream. Zoe closes her eyes.

INT. AARC BRIDGE - MOON COLONY HANGAR - LATER

Zoe sits in her Captain's chair. Belka, Strelka, Brandon and LARA, a HEN (brown, buxom, motherly), stand or sit around the room. Albert II is nowhere to be seen. Zoe clears her throat.

ZOE  
Uhh, hi, everyone. I want to start off by asking that we all send thoughts and prayers to Felicette, who's currently recovering after her accident.

STRELKA  
(fake coughing)  
Not an accident!

Zoe stares Belka down.

ZOE  
And I'd like us all to extend a warm welcome to Lara, who will be replacing Felicette as our engineer.

STRELKA  
(fake coughing again)  
Until she talks back.  
(clears her throat)  
Wow, excuse me. Must be the vomit that came up after I saw Zoe try to murder Felicette.

ZOE  
Listen, I didn't mean to hurt  
Felicette.

BELKA  
You did punch her in the face.

ZOE  
It was a mistake, a miscalculation.  
But I understand that you are all  
angry with me. So I am willing to  
make some concessions.

STRELKA  
What do you mean, "concessions?"

ZOE  
I will allow each of you one thing  
that would not normally be allowed  
on such sensitive a mission -  
within reason of course - as a  
means of regaining your trust. It  
is highly against protocol.  
(falls back in her chair)  
But it appears that my crew is as  
well.

There's a brief silence and then --

STRELKA  
Why does Kennedy want Laika? And  
none of this "it's classified"  
bullshit.

ZOE  
Laika was sent by your government  
to Pluto. Her objective is unknown.  
Whatever her purpose is, if we do  
not find and retrieve her by May,  
my government will declare war on  
yours. And it'll probably be  
nuclear war. Happy?

Strelka stares Zoe down, then sits, satisfied.

ZOE (CONT'D)  
Next?

The animals look at one another, surprised.

BELKA

I want to save mine. But when we first met I mentioned something you could, umm, do for me. Something I can't do myself.

Belka raises his paw, puts it to his head like a gun, then scratches behind his ear. No one but Zoe notices.

ZOE

(hesitant)

Agreed.

Brandon turns to Strelka, bubbles.

BELKA

He says he wants to bring a friend along.

ZOE

I'm sorry. But that is one thing I can't allow. We need have some level of security on this --

Brandon holds up a jar. Inside is a PINK JELLYFISH.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Alright. I'll allow it.

Brandon looks at The Jellyfish, nods. Zoe looks to Lara.

LARA

(with a Cockney accent)

Oh, dear. Umm, you really mustn't feel obliged to concede something to me, luv. I wasn't exactly involved. But if you are offering and it's not too much trouble I'd be chuffed if I could have the room closest to the kitchen.

ZOE

Done.

LARA

Oh wonderful. That'll make things so much easier for when the chicks get the midnight tumbly-rumblies.

Five BABY CHICKS jump into Lara's lap. Zoe stares in shock. She's about to say something, then sighs, accepts it.

Albert II enters. He's wearing his old space suit. He looks just like Zoe's action figure.

ALBERT II

I reserve the right to disappear  
whenever I want to. If I want to go  
fight or fuck or something, I go.  
No questions asked.

ZOE

Fine.

All the animals look impressed. BING.

The screen behind Zoe says "INCOMING MESSAGE - FAIRBANKS."

STRELKA

Oh, Daddy's calling. And his little  
girl has been bad.

Strelka scampers out of the room. Zoe sighs.

ZOE

Please everyone. To your stations

Belka looks to Zoe, a flash of sympathy, but then it's gone.  
He exits. Lara waddles out, chicks trailing behind. Brandon  
follows. Albert II heads for the door, but stops.

ALBERT II

Say hi to Fairbanks for me. It's  
been a long time.

ZOE

I will.

Albert II exits. Zoe is alone.

She reaches towards the screen, then stops. She notices  
something on the arm of her spacesuit.

Zoe looks closer, sees that they are SCRATCH MARKS from  
Felicette's claws. They run all the way up her arm.

The screen keeps binging, but Zoe hesitates. Finally, she  
reaches out, declines the call.

Zoe stares at the claw marks. Tears fill her eyes. Zoe takes  
a deep shaky breath and then speaks into her mic.

Her voice is totally calm.

ZOE (CONT'D)

(over loudspeaker)

Let's get ready for take off.

The AARC's engines roar to life.

INT. MEDICAL FACILITY

Felicette sits up with a gasp. She's in a CAT BED covered in hospital linens. Half of Felicette's face is covered in bandages. Her fur is mangled and burnt. Felicette moans, pulls at the bandages, until there's a loud SQUAWK.

PARROT

I wouldn't do that if I were you.

Felicette turns, gasps.

A MAN in a BLACKED-OUT SPACE SUIT sits across from her.

This is THE LOST COSMONAUT.

The Cosmonaut's helmet is mirrored. We can't see his face at all. An AMAZON PARROT sits on his shoulder, speaks for him.

FELICETTE

Who are you?

PARROT

I am an ally.

FELICETTE

But you're human.

PARROT

Once perhaps. But now we both have the same goal: stopping Zoe from reaching Laika.

FELICETTE

Ugh, I'm sick of being a pawn in the games of humans!

Felicette falls back in her bed, winces in pain.

PARROT

Zoe was right about one thing, Felicette. If her mission fails then humanity will wipe itself out. This is why we must ensure that she fails.

FELICETTE

And how are you going to do that?

The Parrot flies from The Cosmonaut, lands on Felicette. He begins pulling at Felicette's facial bandages.

FELICETTE (CONT'D)

Hey! What are you -- ?

Felicette screams in pain and then in terror as she sees herself reflected in the window. She's horribly disfigured.

PARROT

By letting out your inner animal.

Felicette begins to cry. Through the window, we see The AARC fly around the moon and disappear towards the sun.

Now in the reflection, The Lost Cosmonaut appears behind Felicette. He reaches out his hand and very slowly begins petting the crying silver cat.

THE END