

LANDING

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Final Draft

FADE IN

There are stars, and a planet in space.

EXT. SPACE, APPROACH TO PLANET---NIGHT

There is a spark of blue, and then a lighting-like arc of bright blue, and the spherical starship Salinas expands from nowhere.

DEREK

(O.S.)

Captain's log, continuing. Prime  
space emerge successful.

INT. SALINAS BRIDGE---NIGHT

Captain DEREK and Executive Officer KANSAS are in the command chairs. The main screen shows the planet with extra information overlays. The main screen LEGBA logo lights up.

LEGBA

Planetary traffic control contact  
established. Landing approach course  
and coordinates placed at prime  
control station.

Derek taps on the console in front of him.

DEREK

Course locked in and engaged.

The AGWE portion of the main screen gets highlighted as the planetary display data adds the Salinas' approach course. The FREYA portion of the main screen also lights up.

FREYA

Planetary atmosphere is acceptable  
for local life support. Planetary  
gravity standard is one point zero  
six. Transition of internal gravity  
from two point zero to one point zero  
six is scheduled and holding.

Kansas reaches out and taps on his console.

KANSAS

Gravitational transition is approved.

FREYA

All hands, prepare for internal  
gravitational transition.

(MORE)

FREYA (cont'd)  
 Transition will be from two point  
 zero to one point zero six. Internal  
 gravitational transition commencing  
 in five, four, three, two, one.

The internal gravity readouts start counting down from 2.0.

FREYA (cont'd)  
 Internal gravitational transition is  
 in progress.

KANSAS  
 Ex oh log continuing. Prime control  
 computers are Not reporting the  
 anomaly reported when we left the  
 space station archaeological site.  
 Legba has successfully received and  
 recorded our intended course. Loki  
 reports no engineering problems, all  
 power systems are fine. Freya shows  
 no life support problems. Ghede is on  
 standby because we're healthy and  
 nobody is shooting at us. And Agwe  
 shut down the tunnel drive with no  
 problems, a totally standard  
 transition from tunnel space to prime  
 space.

Kansas pauses.

KANSAS (cont'd)  
 All in all, a totally standard trip,  
 ship, cargo, and crew arriving right  
 on schedule . . . and I don't like  
 it. We had a system-wide anomaly  
 report and I want to know the cause  
 of it.

EXT. SPACE, HIGH ORBIT---NIGHT

The planet is now a flattening curve as the Salinas drops  
 towards it. The curve of the main shields can be seen as  
 they begin to deflect the upper atmosphere.

GHEDE  
 (O.S.)  
 Planetary traffic control reports  
 standard security challenge.

INT. SALINAS BRIDGE---NIGHT

The main screen GHEDE logo is highlighted. The planet view reflects the outside view, again with accompanying system data.

GHEDE

Transit Collective Treaty registration has been accepted for standard landing approach. Tactical systems remain at active standby.

DEREK

We are closing on planetary transition. Approach speed is decreasing.

EXT. PLANET UPPER ATMOSPHERE---DAY

The Salinas continues to drop smoothly towards the planet. The shielding is no longer visibly deflecting the atmosphere.

INT. SALINAS BRIDGE---NIGHT

The main screen now shows the planet as a large flat plain seen from a Very high altitude as the Salinas is clearly still traveling along the preset approach course.

The Freya portion of the main screen shows a readout of "Internal Gravity: 1.06 Planetary Gravity 1.06"

DEREK

Crossing planetary transition layer.

Derek taps on a console.

DEREK (cont'd)

Deactivating internal gravity in  
fife, four, three, two, one.

The Freya screen changes the internal gravity display to read "Planetary Gravity: 1.06 Internal Gravity: Offline"

DEREK (cont'd)

Internal gravity---

All five system displays light up as a klaxon howls.

GHEDE

Brace, brace, brace. Impacting now.

There is a loud thump as the main screen view flares completely white, then goes black. Both of Derek's arms and two of Kansas's four arms slam onto the armrests of their chairs. All the consoles start lighting up with ongoing blurs of scrolling text as the computers keep talking, with each main screen console lighting up as each system reports.

GHEDE (cont'd)

Nuclear fission detonation at one hundred meters. Point of origin negative fifteen meters. Remaining shields are at maximum. Attack systems offline.

AGWE

Class five damage to all decks. Hull breach on all decks. Maneuvering drive offline. Transferring to secondary maneuvering systems. Tunnel drive offline.

Derek and Kansas finally pop their arms loose of the chair arms and are looking back and forth at the assorted consoles.

AGWE (cont'd)

All cargo has been jettisoned. Distance to planetary surface is approximately fifty-five kilometers. Estimated time of impact is twenty-five minutes.

DEREK

(over Agwe, to  
Kansas)

Fission??!!! That was the main hold!!!!

TRAFFIC CONTROL

Traffic Control to Tee Cee Ess Ess Salinas. Defense systems report unauthorized fission detonation in your vicinity. Planetary defense systems are active. Report your status immediately.

Derek taps on a console.

DEREK

Salinas to Tee Cee, situation is lethal, we do not know what the hell just happened, we're on our way down. System evaluation is occurring.

(MORE)

DEREK (cont'd)  
 Damage is major, propulsion is  
 offline, shields are---

Derek taps on another console

DEREK (cont'd)  
 ---going offline because Ghede says  
 we jettisoned the cargo.

Derek turns to look at Kansas as the main screen lights up to show Traffic Control, a human female with a headset and an annoyed expression.

DEREK (cont'd)  
 That was a warhead!!!! Those idiots  
 gave us a warhead!!!

Traffic Control's eyes widen and she starts speed reading the consoles on her end of the conversation.

DEREK (cont'd)  
 A live warhead!!! That was their  
 historic discovery!!!

TRAFFIC CONTROL  
 Salinas, your recorded manifest does  
 not include nuclear warheads.

DEREK  
 (still scanning  
 readouts)  
 Tee Cee, our manifest was assembled  
 by a research team on an abandoned  
 space station. They hired us to  
 deliver "priceless archaeological  
 artifacts". This is a cargo ship, not  
 a combat ship, so no we did not scan  
 for obsolete warheads.

LOKI and Agwe both light up on the screens.

DEREK  
 Drives on line, thirty percent---

Kansas speed types on his consoles as Derek keeps talking.

DEREK (cont'd)  
 Transferring emergency power to main  
 drives.

Loki lights up.

KANSAS

Freya's reactor is venting plasma.  
Other reactors are fine. Plasma vents  
are---

There is a distant bang somewhere outside the bridge.

DEREK

---Blocked.

Freya lights up, then flickers, then blacks out.

KANSAS

Freya completely offline. Propulsion  
at fifty percent. Stabilizers  
fluctuating.

An offscreen MALE TRAFFIC CONTROL interrupts.

MALE TRAFFIC CONTROL

(O.S.)

Salinas, what is the remainder of  
your cargo?

Derek stares at Traffic Control.

DEREK

A fine spray of radioactive fallout  
at this point, and You can see it a  
lot better than we can.

Freya lights up with a blue circle of light.

KANSAS

Secondary Freya online, already  
damaged.

Kansas taps on his console. Freya fades and Loki lights up  
some more.

DEREK

Enhancing Loki. System power still  
fluctuating.

Freya lights up again, but this time ringed in yellow.

DEREK (cont'd)

Freya is yellow!

FREYA

Emergency system override. Command  
module jettison in progress.

Loki and Agwe light up, flicker, there is a distant roaring noise, and the Agwe display goes black.

DEREK

Agwe just vented. Power at ten percent. Power controls offline. Propulsion offline.

FREYA

Transferring all system power to command module jettison.

Loki is still white, Agwe lights up in blue, and then Agwe and Loki start both broadcasting, in sequence.

AGWE

Emergency system override. All power to structural shielding.

LOKI

Emergency system override. Transferring all system power to Legba.

AGWE

Initiating emergency space station docking procedures.

MALE TRAFFIC CONTROL

Salinas, your command computers are conflicting!

Derek and Kansas start speed typing.

DEREK

We've got at least one bulkhead fire down there, I'll have to see if I can figure out why.

Derek pops a panel open, and grabs a handle.

DEREK (cont'd)

Transferring all power to tunnel drive,

Derek yanks the handle back all the way and his entire console goes black.

DEREK (cont'd)

Now.

Assorted alarms start squeaking in crescendo as Derek and Kansas stare at the screens

MALE TRAFFIC CONTROL

(O.S.)

Salinas, your power shut down!! You  
can't do that, you---

All the computer screens start glowing in yellow.

FREYA

Command module override. Emergency  
power to structural shielding.

Derek and Kansas are bodily sucked back and into their  
chairs, their arms wrapping up around their torsos. The  
chairs then spin around to face the center of the bridge and  
clearly lock into place.

FREYA (cont'd)

Emergency power to internal  
dampening.

EXT. SALINAS---DAY

The Salinas is spewing smoke and fire from a number of hull  
breaches. One of three large circular hatches near the top  
of the sphere have most of a set of clamps blow out as the  
command module starts to jettison.

FREYA

(O.S.)

Emergency power to propulsion.

The remaining clamps hold the hatch partially enough in  
place so that the module catches, bounces sideways and stops  
in place, still stuck to the Salinas's main hull instead of  
cleanly blowing free.

INT. SALINAS BRIDGE---NIGHT

Derek and Kansas are still completely stuck to their chairs  
as the consoles flicker.

KANSAS

That didn't feel right.

FREYA

Command module is clear of primary  
hull.

Behind them, the main display replaces Traffic Control with  
a circle made of the five command logos, this time in blue.  
The blue Ghede lights up, followed by Agwe.

GHEDE

Intruder alert. All power to defense systems.

AGWE

Impact imminent. All power to Propulsion.

EXT. SALINAS/COMMAND MODULE---DAY

The command module rips loose as the emergency thrusters finally ignite, sending the module tumbling through the air.

INT. SALINAS BRIDGE---NIGHT

The blue command logos blink out, leaving the screen black.

DEREK

Oh! Now we're moving.

TRAFFIC CONTROL

Salinas, the command module has cleared the main hull.

FREYA

Internal dampeners activated.  
Stabilizers activated. External shielding activated.

EXT. COMMAND MODULE---DAY

On the underside of the tumbling command module, the vents of three thrusters are black and empty. Two more are intact, with blinking lights.

FREYA

(O.S.)

Planetary braking activated. Engaging emergency beacon.

The blinking lights start flickering Really Erratically.

FREYA (cont'd)

(O.S.)

All systems are stable.

INT. COMMAND MODULE---NIGHT

Derek and Kansas are Really stuck into the chairs. The main screen readouts are blurring numbers by as the command module is getting closer to the surface, but that is All that is visibly moving.

TRAFFIC CONTROL  
Salinas, do you copy?

DEREK  
Oh, we copy Tee Cee, but until the dampening charges finally run down, there isn't anything that we're going to be able to do except to relax and enjoy the ride.

EXT. HILLSIDE---DAY

A steep hillside is covered in dust and rock, with an occasional extremely stunted tree. All is peaceful as three tiny humanoids are laboriously climbing up the hillside. Two of them are pinkish and the third is scrawny and green, and they are clearly Very tired of climbing this hill. The three of them then look up into the air over their heads, their eyes get Really Wide, and the command module crashes down upon them, smashes them flat, and then tumbles back into the air and further down the hillside.

EXT. COMMAND MODULE---DAY

As the rest of the universe goes wildly cascading on past the module, the blinking lights on the two remaining thrusters have stopped blinking and are now a steady red. The cover on one of them starts to char to black.

EXT. HILLSIDE---DAY

The tumbling command module hits the ground again and the two thrusters finally detonate. The explosion rips away an entire section of bulkhead as the command module then takes off again, continuing to wildly spin and bounce on down the hillside.

INT. COMMAND MODULE---DAY

Derek and Kansas are still very much glued to their chairs. The bulkhead facing them is what has been ripped away by the detonation and impact, and they now have a clear, unlimited, and very busy view of the outside world.

KANSAS

That's the outside world, isn't it?

DEREK

Yes, that is the outside world.

KANSAS

Oh, Dear.

EXT. COMMAND MODULE---DAY

The command module hits the ground again, but now the hops are shorter as it hits again, tumbles again.

INT. COMMAND MODULE---DAY

Derek and Kansas stare with fascination as the outside world hits, tumbles and spins on past them, as the internal readouts on behind them show exactly what the ongoing power levels are descending to.

EXT. COMMAND MODULE---DAY

The command module finally bounces one last time, does a lazy spin through the air, plows itself into the hillside surface, and toboggans on down the hillside for a few more hundred yards, sending great sprays of dirt and broken rock out of the way as it does so. As it finally scrapes and screeches to an amazingly level stop, the open bulkhead faces back up the hillside.

Far off uphill, far off in the distance, a column of smoke and flame is rising from the summit, with a smaller one a bit down the slope which marks the impact point of the Salinas's main hull.

After a moment, a couple of pieces of debris come crashing down out of the sky. After another moment, an additional explosion rips through the far off hull off the Salinas, sending flaming fragments and billows of smoke over the nearby hillside.

INT. COMMAND MODULE---DAY

Derek and Kansas are still extremely stuck to their chairs as assorted console alerts are audibly and visibly running down, down, and finally out entirely.

Several screens finally go completely blank. Derek's chair rotates slightly as the dampening field finally shuts down and his arms are able to drop back down to his lap. After a moment, Kansas' chair does a slow, complete, 180 degree turn as Kansas remains totally motionless.

Finally, Derek turns the chair back to where it had been locked, peers around what is left of the command module, and peers back up the hill towards the smoking caldera and the crumpled remains of the Salinas.

DEREK

Kansas? . . . I have the feeling  
we're not in toto anymore.

FADE OUT