

SILENT UNIVERSE
Episode #2: “Chinese Chess”

An original dramatic podcast by
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PRODUCTION SCRIPT
[DRAFT 5.0]

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Prod. #7

CAST (in order of appearance. **Bold** denotes main cast)

Announcer	DB Cooper
Emmeline Kaley	Hilary Blair
Ben Hernandez	Esteban Silva
Narrator	Ross Douglas
Female Voice	Kelly West
Isaac Walker	<i>James Higuchi</i>
Garet Arrownny	Phillip Sacramento
Gordon Marcus	George Washington III
Ritsu Kobayashi	Debbie Munro
Gill Frye	Nick DeLillo
Winnie	
May Kobayashi	Kristi Stewart
Computer	Jodi Paige
Fem. Officer 1	
Cmdr. Chen	
Officer 1	
Jack Smyth	Mark Oliver

ACT I

ANNOUNCER: Last time on the Silent Universe . . .

SCENE ONE: INT. EMMELINE'S SPACECRAFT, CAUGHT IN THE GRAV-SHIFT.

PRODUCTION NOTE: EMMELINE KALEY and BEN HERNANDEZ lay strewn about the inside of their damaged shuttle, electronics sparking and a few alarms buzzing as the pair tries to get their bearings. This is immediately following the events depicted in "Mission 256."

SOUND. EMERGENCY ALARMS SOUND AND THE TINY SHUTTLE RUMBLES UNDER THE CRUSHING STRESS OF THE MALFUNCTIONING GRAV-SHIFT.

EMMELINE: (Yelling above the noise) What's happening?!

BEN: (Yelling) We're caught in the grav-shift!

SOUND. THE SHIP LURCHES VIOLENTLY AND THE STRUTS INSIDE IT'S SUPERSTRUCTURE BEGIN TO BUCKLE WITH A METALLIC GROAN.

EMMELINE: (Yelling more urgently) The hull's buckling!

BEN: (Maintaining a sense of professional calm) We can't handle a g-shear this strong. (BEAT) If we don't do something, it's going to crush us.

EMMELINE: (Sarcastic) Well *that's* encouraging . . . (Yelling) How can we break free?

SOUND. ANOTHER LOUD NOISE ECHOES THROUGH THE SHIP, AND SUDDENLY THE SOUND OF THE GRAV-SHIFT DISSIPATES, LEAVING ONLY A TENSE SILENCE.

EMMELINE: (BEAT) Okay, dumb question.

BEN: (Small sigh of relief) The gravity shift stalled. Our mass probably threw the field geometry out of whack—made the jump unstable.

EMMELINE: So we're safe now?

SOUND. A THUNDERING BOOM SOUNDS AS THE SHUTTLE SMACKS INTO THE BACKSIDE OF THE ASTEROID WITH A DEADENING THUD.

BEN: [GASP AND/OR YELP AT THE SUDDEN IMPACT]

EMMELINE: [GASP AND/OR YELP AT THE SUDDEN IMPACT]

EMMELINE: (BEAT) Okay, *another* dumb question.

BEN: Two for two, so far . . . care to try for three?

SOUND. LOW METALLIC CREAKING.

EMMELINE: What do ya suppose *that* was?

BEN: We *hit* something.

SOUND. BEN CHECKS THE COMPUTER.

BEN: Our hull's intact at least . . . roll down the blast shield.

SOUND. THE PROTECTIVE METAL LAYER ON THE COCKPIT WINDOW LOWERS WITH A SOFT HUM.

EMMELINE: (Perplexed) Hmm, that's strange. I don't see anything . . . not even stars.

BEN: I'll put on the floodlights.

SOUND. THE EXTERIOR FLOODS CLICK ON.

BEN: Looks like we soft-landed on the back of the asteroid.

EMMELINE: *You mean the one that's gonna explode?*

BEN: (Maintaining a professional calm) Possibly. I don't know how badly off course we are. I'll have to reboot the navigation computers.

SOUND. ELECTRONIC BUTTONS. BUZZING. COMPUTER REBOOTS AND BEN PUSHES MORE BUTTONS.

BEN: (Contemplating) Hmm.

EMMELINE: Well?

BEN: It looks like we're still on course for Mars . . .

EMMELINE: Then that means there's going to be a nuclear weapon headed our way in short order.

BEN: Maybe . . . we're in a pretty wild spin . . . and our speed is way too high . . . we're a lot closer to Mars than we should be. (BEAT) At this rate, Yamamoto might not even have time to get his bomb airborne.

SOUND. BEN PUSHES MORE KEYS INTO THE COMPUTER.

BEN: If he doesn't, the impact is going to make a twenty-five kiloton explosion look like a cheap firework.

EMMELINE: What kind of time-frame are we looking at?

SOUND. MORE COMPUTER BUTTONS PUSHED. (CONTINUE UNDER)

BEN: Maybe . . . ten minutes . . . before we cross the safety threshold.

EMMELINE: Then that means we've got less than ten minutes to arm that backup nuke and get clear of this rock.

SOUND. LIGHT COMPUTER BUZZER.

BEN: (Gravely) It might not be that simple.

EMMELINE: What is it?

BEN: When the grav-shift overloaded, it must have damaged the transceiver on the bomb. The remote is completely fried . . .

- STANDARD INTRO -

MUSIC. OPENING THEME—UP. SLOW.

NARRATOR: There were those who thought that the dawn of the Second Space Age would unite humanity in a common cause. Dreams of grand utopias fevered the minds of visionaries and futurists, who proclaimed that the stars would save us from ourselves.

They couldn't have been more wrong.

SOUND. LIGHT WIND CHIME. CONTINUE UNDER.

FEMALE VOICE: (Whispering) . . . Silent Universe . . .

MUSIC. OPENING THEME ESTABLISH. CONTINUE UNDER.

NARRATOR: No Great Federation ever came together. Still, man stretched out his hands into space, building colonies and terraforming the moons of the solar system. But wars continued among the Earthen nations as they had done since antiquity. Nothing changed.

In time, even the colonies broke away in bloody struggles for independence, then fought amongst themselves for resources and territory. Sadly, instead of bringing us together, the promise of space only proved to tear us further apart.

SCENE TWO: COMMAND AND CONTROL, SERENDIPITY STATION.

PRODUCTION NOTE: This is the main planning and briefing center for SERENDIPITY. The room is cavernous, and broken down into open-air subsections, filled with computer terminals and hologram projectors of every size and configuration. Each division deals with a different area of SERENDIPITY's operations: communications, intelligence, codebreaking, mission control, operations and munitions planning.

SOUND. A CACOPHONY OF ELECTRONIC BEEPS, WHISTLES, AND THE HUSHED MURMURS OF SERENDIPITY OFFICERS.

ISAAC: [OVER HEAVY RADIO INTERFERENCE]--there's no sign of them, Gordon. The interference from the grav-shift blinded our sensors, then they were . . . just . . . gone.

GARET: [OVER RADIO INTERFERENCE] We're not picking up the beacon we placed on the asteroid, either. Which probably means it was damaged in the accident.

MARCUS: Understood. (BEAT) We'll proceed under the assumption that Ben and Emmeline were caught in the gravity shift and their ship was crippled. (BEAT) Isaac, use the tachyon uplink to send whatever nav-data you have back here.

ISAAC: [OVER RADIO INTERFERENCE] Yes, sir.

RITSU: [OVER RADIO INTERFERENCE] I just hope they're alright . . . the g-forces inside of a shift like that—

ISAAC: [OVER RADIO INTERFERENCE] (Interrupting) Are probably pretty intense. But if anyone would know how to survive that, it's Ben.

GILL: Uh, Director Marcus? You may want to take a look at this . . .

SOUND. MARCUS STEPS OVER

MARCUS: What is it, Mr. Frye?

SOUND. TELEMETRY SCANNER.

GILL: I think we've got something, sir. The report is only a fragment from a probe droid in the Hoth system, but it's the best lead we've had.

MARCUS: (Confused) *What?*

GILL: (Admonishing) No, no no. You're supposed to say "*We have thousands of probe droids searching the galaxy. I want proof, not leads!*"

MARCUS: (Sigh) Mr. Frye . . .

GILL: (Going off into his own world) *That's it. The Rebels are there.*

MARCUS: (Fed up with it) *Gill.*

GILL: (Snapping out of it) *Erp. Yes, sir?*

MARCUS: (Annoyed. Takes a calming breath) I have a certain . . . *tolerance . . .* for your oddball behavior under most circumstances, but we're at alert status and *missing two of our people.*

GILL: Sir, I—

MARCUS: (Interrupting) Right now, I need the best of all my people. No distractions. We've been through this with Dr. Harper, before. If you can't control yourself, then I will have you removed from your post.

GILL: *No, I don't want to go back to—*

MARCUS: Then it's time to shape up. *Are we clear, Mr. Frye?*

GILL: (Somewhat more meekly) Y-yes, sir. Crystal.

MARCUS: (Relieved) Now, what is it?

GILL: (Hesitates) Ben and Emmeline . . . I think I just found our asteroid.

MARCUS: (Interest) How?

SOUND. TELEMETRY SCANNER GETS LOUDER.

GILL: I'm remoting through New Bradford's space-traffic-control computers. That LIDAR blip right there is consistent with our rock's profile.

WINNIE: (Surprised) New Bradford? You got through a military-grade firewall *that quickly?*

MARCUS: (Sighs) Good work. Copy that, Isaac?

ISAAC: [OVER RADIO INTERFERENCE] We did.

MAY: [OVER RADIO INTERFERENCE] (Sighs) Good thing, too.

WINNIE: Don't celebrate just yet. I can't raise them. I'm not picking anything up except dead static.

ISAAC: [OVER RADIO INTERFERENCE] Feed us that nav-data, Winnie. We're gonna go ahead and make the jump to Mars. We'll sort it out once we get there.

WINNIE: Sending.

MARCUS: *Hurry.*

SCENE THREE: INT. EMMELINE'S SPACECRAFT, CAUGHT IN THE GRAV-SHIFT.

PRODUCTION NOTE: EMMELINE KALEY, sits hunched over the radio transceiver inside of the shuttle, talking with BEN.

EMMELINE: I should be the one out there, Ben. Not you . . .

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] We're not going through this again, Emmeline.

EMMELINE: I know, but . . .

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] (Annoyed) Have you ever exploded a nuclear weapon before?

EMMELINE: Short of catching Jack in a bad mood? No.

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] Then let me do my work.

EMMELINE: There's got to be another way of going about this than manually detonating it. (BEAT) (Idea) If you can't fix the transceiver . . . then why not . . . put a *timer* on it or something?

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] I already thought of that. We don't have the parts onboard, and even if I did there's no *time*.

EMMELINE: But—

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] There are over 300,000 people on Mars, Emmeline. If this rock doesn't get exploded in the next (Pause) five minutes . . .

EMMELINE: You don't have to remind me.

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] You shouldn't even be *on* this rock anymore. The shuttle's still got one good engine, and the fuel cells are still charged. *Why* are you still here?

EMMELINE: I—

SOUND. COMPUTER ALARM. EMMELINE TAPS A BUTTON.

EMMELINE: (Concerned) Hmm.

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] What is it?

EMMELINE: Sensor spike. Might have been a computer glitch . . . looked like a target lock for a second . . .

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] And now?

EMMELINE: It's gone. (BEAT) That's funny. It's—

SOUND. COMPUTER NOTIFICATION. BUZZER THIS TIME.

COMPUTER: (Garbled) Warning. Nuclear launch detected.

(BASS HIT)

EMMELINE: (To herself) *Nuclear laun*—(Aloud) Yamamoto must have launched the bomb!

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] *What?*

EMMELINE: Computer, confirm last notification.

SOUND. COMPUTER PROCESSING.

COMPUTER: Confirmed. Incoming radiological signal detected.

(BASS HIT)

EMMELINE: Time to impact?

COMPUTER: External sensors are damaged. Exact time not available.

EMMELINE: Give me an estimate, then!

COMPUTER: Approximately three minutes.

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] *Dios mio!* I didn't think Yamamoto would have time to launch it!

EMMELINE: Might I suggest getting your ass back here *now?*

BEN: [OVER THE RADIO] *You won't get any argument there.*

EMMELINE: Computer, begin three minute count-down.

COMPUTER: Countdown initiated. Estimated time to nuclear detonation . . . two minutes, fifty-nine seconds.

SCENE FOUR: COMMAND AND CONTROL, SERENDIPITY STATION.

PRODUCTION NOTE: This is the main planning and briefing center for SERENDIPITY. The room is cavernous, and broken down into open-air subsections, filled with computer terminals and hologram projectors of every size and configuration. Each division deals with a different area of SERENDIPITY's operations: communications, intelligence, codebreaking, mission control, operations and munitions planning.

SOUND. **LIDAR PING (ECHOING, GRADUALLY GROWING FASTER).**

WINNIE: Confirmed. LIDAR and radiological profile match for a Chinese DF-5B ISBM—fully armed.

MARCUS: *That's our nuke.*

WINNIE: *At current course and speed . . . it should reach the asteroid in just over two minutes. (BEAT) Isaac's team isn't going to make it . . .*

MARCUS: *How long until it crosses the safety point? Will the nuke hit it in time?*

SOUND. **WINNIE KEYS SOMETHING INTO HER CONSOLE.**

WINNIE: *Yes. It should hit with about a minute to spare.*

GILL: *(Quietly) Isaac and Emmeline are probably still on that thing. (Marginally louder) We can't just leave them there.*

MARCUS: *There's nothing we can do.*

SCENE FIVE: INT. EMMELINE'S SPACECRAFT, CAUGHT IN THE GRAV-SHIFT.

SOUND. **AIRLOCK SEALING.**

EMMELINE: *Well you just took your sweet time, didn't ya?*

BEN: *You try *running* in an EVA suit.*

COMPUTER: *Estimated time to nuclear detonation: thirty seconds.*

EMMELINE: *Strap in.*

SOUND. **SEATBELTS BUCKLING.**

BEN: *Alright, this might be a bit of a rough takeoff.*

EMMELINE: *Any kind of takeoff is better than blowin' up.*

BEN: Amen to that.

SOUND. **BUTTONS PUSHED. LAUNCH SEQUENCE.**

BEN: Hold on!

SOUND. **THE ANTIGRAV ENGINES KICK TO LIFE, THE SHIP BUCKS AND SHUDDERS VIOLENTLY. A FEW ALARMS AND BUZZERS GO OFF.**

COMPUTER: Estimated time to nuclear detonation: fifteen seconds.

EMMELINE: Got to put as much distance between us and the blast zone as we can.

SOUND. **THE SPACE ENGINE KICKS IN, ROARING LOUDLY AND INCREASING IN PITCH.**

COMPUTER: Ten seconds. Nine . . . eight . . . seven . . . six . . . five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . .

(Music suspense hold for a beat)

BEN: What happened?

EMMELINE: I'm not sure . . . the computer's estimate was probably off.

SOUND. **EMMELINE TAPS THE CONTROL CONSOLE.**

EMMELINE: (Gravely) Oh my God.

BEN: What is it?

EMMELINE: *It missed.*

BEN: *What do you mean "it missed" ?*

EMMELINE: *It didn't hit the frackin' asteroid! And that rock is about to pass right through the safety point!*

BEN: [In Spanish] *God save us all.* [In English] *We've got to go back!*

EMMELINE: *There's no time!*

SOUND. COMPUTER ALARM.

EMMELINE: *What's that?*

BEN: *It's a grav-shift . . . something's jumping *right on top of us!**

EMMELINE: *Maybe it's Isaac and everyone else?*

SOUND. THE GRAVITY SHIFT THUNDERS LOUDLY OUTSIDE.

(BASS HIT)

BEN: (Haltingly) *No . . . no I don't . . . think it's them at all.*

EMMELINE: *Huh?*

BEN: *That looks like battle-cruiser. And the writing on the side of it . . . *that's Chinese if I'm not mistaken . . .**

EMMELINE: *Chinese?*

COMPUTER: Warning. Nuclear launch detected.

EMMELINE: *WHAT?!*

SOUND. THE SOUND OF A NUCLEAR MISSILE STREAKS BY THE TINY SHUTTLE, GROWING DISTANT AND THEN EXPLODING IN A VIOLENT EXPLOSION THAT DROWNS OUT EVERYTHING ELSE, SHATTERING THE ASTEROID.

ACT II

SCENE SIX: COMMAND AND CONTROL, SERENDIPITY STATION.

SOUND. BUZZING ALARM.

WINNIE: Nuclear detonation, sir! The asteroid's been destroyed.

MARCUS: I thought you said that it missed the target?

GILL: (Confused) It did. (BEAT) That cruiser . . . it launched another one.

WINNIE: A bigger one. At least a megaton.

MARCUS: (Sigh of mixed emotion) I want an ID on that ship, *now*.

GILL: (Hesitates) It might take a minute, sir . . . it's barely registering on LIDAR. It must be putting out jamming frequencies.

MARCUS: Keep at it. (BEAT) What's the status on those asteroid fragments?

WINNIE: We're in the clear. The large pieces are gonna miss Mars by about 400 klicks, and the rest should burn up in the atmosphere.

ISAAC: [OVER BAD RADIO STATIC] Serendipity control, this is Isaac. Come in.

MARCUS: We read you.

ISAAC: [OVER BAD RADIO STATIC] We just dropped from grav-shift. Looks like we missed the fireworks . . . are—?

MARCUS: (Dismissing the question before Isaac can say) Later. (Quickly) Can you get a visual on that ship?

ISAAC: [OVER BAD RADIO STATIC] It's kinda hard to miss. That's a *Taiyuan*-class Chinese Battlecruiser . . . pretty big . . . putting out some heavy interference, too. That's probably why they don't seem to have spotted—

RITSU: [OVER THE RADIO] Sorry to interrupt, guys, but they're launching boarding pods.

ISAAC: [OVER THE RADIO] Where?

RITSU: [OVER THE RADIO] Into the debris field. It's hard to tell exact coordinates with all the jamming noise. We'd have to get closer.

MARCUS: That's great news, Ritsu.

RITSU: [OVER BAD RADIO STATIC] What?

- MARCUS:** If they're launching pods, then that means there's *something* to board. We weren't sure if Ben and Emmeline were able to get clear of the explosion.
- ISAAC:** [OVER BAD RADIO STATIC] We should go in for a closer look.
- MAY:** [OVER BAD RADIO STATIC] That'll give away our position.
- RITSU:** [OVER BAD RADIO STATIC] Those pods aren't armed. And with all that interference . . . if we do a quick engine burn and glide in unpowered, it should give us a few extra seconds before the cruiser picks us up.
- GARE:** [OVER BAD RADIO STATIC] Should be enough time to grapple the ship and get the hell out of range before they can train their guns on us.
- MARCUS:** No. (BEAT) I want you to return to base, immediately.
- ISAAC:** [OVER THE RADIO] *What?*
- RITSU:** [OVER THE RADIO] But we've got them right here!
- GARE:** [OVER THE RADIO] You know what the Chinese do to their prisoners . . .
- MAY:** [OVER THE RADIO] We should give it a shot.
- MARCUS:** No. The decision stands. I'm not about to instigate a direct confrontation with the *People's Republic of China*.
- ISAAC:** [OVER THE RADIO] With all due respect, Gordon—

MARCUS: End of discussion, Isaac. (BEAT) Make a close enough pass to get the registry code of that cruiser, and then I want your team back here ASAP.

SCENE SEVEN: COMMANDER CHEN'S PERSONAL CHAMBERS.

PRODUCTION NOTE: Commander Richard Chen's personal chambers are more akin to a hotel suite than a military dorm. The room is ornate with artifacts and displays of ancient Chinese relics, as well as a few choice items from western societies (most notably British). Upon entering this chamber, any visitor would be aware that its owner was a man of high class.

SOUND: TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSIC. SOOTHING, QUIET. THE SOFT SOUND OF RUNNING WATER.

SOUND: AN ELECTRONIC BEEP.

FEM. OFFICER 1: [OVER THE COMM] (In Chinese) Your guest has been prepared and is ready to see you, Commander Chen.

CMDR CHEN: (In Chinese) It took you this long to get her situated?

FEM. OFFICER 1: [OVER THE COMM] (In Chinese) (Apologetic) She—resisted her handlers, sir. I—

CMDR CHEN: (In Chinese) (Mildly annoyed) Save your excuses. (In English) Send her in.

FEM. OFFICER 1: [OVER THE COMM] (In English) Yes, sir.

SOUND: AN ELECTRONIC BEEP.

SOUND: A LARGE PAIR OF CREAKING WOODEN DOORS SLOWLY OPEN, AND TWO OFFICERS WALK EMMELINE KALEY INTO COMMANDER CHEN'S CHAMBERS. SHE ANGRILY PULLS AWAY FROM THEIR GRIP.

EMMELINE: (Defiant) Let go.

CMDR CHEN: (Bemused) (In Chinese) Guards, you may leave.

SOUND. THE TWO OFFICERS LEAVE AND THE LARGE OAK DOORS CREAK CLOSED BEHIND THEM.

CMDR CHEN: (Politely) (In English) Please, sit down.

EMMELINE: (Coldly) I'll stand, thank you.

CMDR CHEN: (In English) As you wish. My name is Richard Chen, I'm second-commander aboard the *Zhang Qian*. (BEAT) You may consider yourself my guest.

SOUND. THE COMMANDER SHIFTS IN HIS CHAIR AND POURS HIMSELF A HOT POT OF TEA. HE PAUSES FOR A MOMENT, AND THEN TAKES A SIP.

CMDR CHEN: (In English) Would you like some tea? (BEAT) It's called *Dian Hong*, one of the finer blends from a province in my country called *Yunnan*.

EMMELINE: (Interrupting irately) Skip the charm-job. *What do you want?*

SOUND. COMMANDER CHEN TAKES ANOTHER SIP OF HIS TEA AND THEN SETS HIS CUP DOWN ON A SAUCER BESIDE HIM.

CMDR CHEN: (In English) Oh, now I think you already know what it is I'm interested in, Ms. Kaley. If you'd prefer to forgo the social niceties, then I very well could oblige you, but I thought perhaps this setting might be a little more . . . conducive . . . to *civilized* conversation.

EMMELINE: Is this some kind of interrogation?

CMDR CHEN: (In English) It doesn't have to be. (BEAT) Now, I'll ask once again, would you like to have a seat?

SOUND. EMMELINE HESITATES, GROWLS SOME TO HERSELF, AND THEN TAKES A SEAT ACROSS FROM HIM.

CMDR CHEN: (In English) There now, see? That wasn't so bad, was it? (BEAT) You're sure you don't want some tea?

EMMELINE: If I did, how do I know you didn't drug it?

CMDR CHEN: (In English) (Chuckles to himself) Ms. Kaley, allow me to be frank. If I wished you harm, there would be no question of it in your mind.

EMMELINE: (Muttering) Yeah, tell Ben that . . .

CMDR CHEN: (In English) Oh, *Ben*. So is *that* the name of your companion? (BEAT) Let me offer my assurances that he is being treated with the utmost care in our medical ward.

EMMELINE: (Muttering) After your men nearly bashed his skull in, I have a hard time buying that.

CMDR CHEN: (In English) It was his own fault. Had he not given our soldiers such trouble when we boarded your craft, he would be in considerably better health, right now.

SOUND: **CHEN SIPS HIS TEA AGAIN.**

CMDR CHEN: (In English) Now, let's start at the beginning. You will outline to me the full extent of the American Republic's involvement with the incident on Funkakou. Was your government working in collusion with Yamamoto's forces? What was your ultimate goal?

EMMELINE: (Confused) What? What are you talking about?

CMDR CHEN: (In English) (Sighs) Ms. Kaley, please. Let us drop the pretense. You know full well that we passed that nuclear weapon to the Japanese colony, because you are an American agent, posing as a mercenary. (BEAT) You accepted an assignment that we planted in your own State Department, and then went through the trouble of hijacking an asteroid in order to neutralize the threat. I must commend your government on its covert intelligence operations . . . but one question refuses to quiet itself inside my mind. *Why?* (BEAT) If you knew so much about our plans for Funkakou, why did you simply not prevent our proxy from passing the bomb to Yamamoto? Surely it would have been less trouble than faking a rogue asteroid impact . . .

EMMELINE: I don't know what to tell you. I don't work for the Yanks.

SOUND: **COMMANDER CHEN SIPS HIS TEA ONCE AGAIN.**

CMDR CHEN: (In English) (Some annoyance in his voice) I can see already that you do not intend to make this easy—

EMMELINE: No, you're not listening to me. I *don't* work for the Americans. I don't even *like* them.

CMDR CHEN: (In English) (Mild sarcasm) I'm sure.

EMMELINE: I was born and raised in Titan City. If your intel people know *anything*, then they know it's nothing but Scots, Irish and Northerners down there, and we're not mighty big fans of the Yanks.

CMDR CHEN: (In English) (Sighs) You tire me with this, Ms. Kaley. We observed your rendezvous with the other members of your team while in Funkakou, and your rather . . . *daring* escape. We thought—

EMMELINE: *I didn't even know who those people were until they ran into me!*

SOUND: CHEN BANGS HIS FIST ON THE TABLE, SHAKING THE TEACUPS.

CMDR CHEN: (In English) (Snapping) *Do you take me for a fool?*

EMMELINE: (Smirking) Is that a rhetorical question?

CMDR CHEN: (In English) (Takes a moment to gather his composure) I was mistaken to pursue this style of questioning.

SOUND: THE COMMANDER SNAPS HIS FINGERS TWICE IN THE AIR. TWO OFFICERS APPROACH AND SIEZE EMMELINE.

CMDR CHEN: (In Chinese) *I want this prisoner dismissed, immediately.*

EMMELINE: (Struggling) *What is this?*

CMDR CHEN: (In English) Since you leave me no alternative, I'm forced to revert to more traditional methods to extract the information from you. (Sighs) Captain Wan was right, a *haggis-muncher* like yourself wouldn't have any appreciation for social niceties. (To the guards) Take her to holding with the other one, for now.

EMMELINE: (Angry) *Now you wait a bloody minute—!*

SOUND: EMMELINE STANDS AND THERE IS A BRIEF STRUGGLE.

CMDR CHEN: (In English) I sincerely wish we could have done this differently, Ms. Kaley. I find unnecessary bloodshed distasteful . . .

SCENE EIGHT: THE BARRACKS OF THE ZHANG QIAN.

SOUND. THE ROARING DOORS TO THE BRIG OPEN, ADMITTING TWO JACK-BOOTED OFFICERS AND EMMELINE KALEY, WHO IS GIVING A BIT OF A STRUGGLE AS SHE IS ESCORTED TO HER CELL.

EMMELINE: (Struggling) Let me go, ya frackin' ingrates!

SOUND. FED UP, ONE OF THE OFFICERS PUNCHES HER IN THE GUT, AND EMMELINE GASPS FOR BREATH.

EMMELINE: *Ack!*

OFFICER 1: (In Chinese) **This one.**

SOUND: THE OFFICER KEYS IN THE SECURITY CODE, THE ELECTRO-CHARGED BARS DISENGAGE AND SWING OPEN.

SOUND: THE TWO MEN THROW EMMELINE INSIDE. SHE HITS WITH A THUD AND THE BARS CLOSE AND REINGAGE BEHIND HER.

EMMELINE: (Coughs and mutters to herself) . . . bloody bastards . . .

SOUND: THE TWO OFFERS RETURN DOWN THE HALL AND EVENTUALLY SWING THE MASTER DOOR CLOSED BEHIND THEM.

EMMELINE: (Still muttering to herself) (Sarcastic) Well, isn't this lovely?

SOUND: ECHOING FOOTSTEPS.

EMMELINE: (Surprised) What? Who's over there?

SOUND: THE FOOTSTEPS STOP.

EMMELINE: Don't bother hiding, I heard you. (BEAT) *Show yourself.*

SOUND: MORE FOOTSTEPS.

JACK SMYTH: (Shock) Oh my God. I thought I recognized that voice . . . I—I thought you were *dead*.

(Long Bass Beat)

EMMELINE: (LONG BEAT)—*Jack?*

NARRATOR: . . . TO BE CONTINUED.

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