

JOHNNY
HASTINGS

THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY

SHORT STORIES



**THE ADVENTURES OF
CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:
THE MADONNA ASSEMBLES**

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PART I:

The Short Story

The room is dimly lit, coated in the half light of the early morning sun that tickles through the worn, sheeted blinds. They normally only get like this in the summer heat, when the sun is refracted off the hordes of shapeless buildings, but today, today its power is magnified and manages to cut through the blackout blinds.

There's movement from underneath the bed, lying at the room's centre, nestled beneath the wall length windows and piles of clothes. A soft, neon glow fills the bottom of the room as small lights haze awake the floor. It's as the lights slowly envelops the room that a female voice, only slightly distorted by its robotic twang, starts.

“Good morning, Captain.”

The duvet shuffles a little more until a tattooed hand appears out of its top, a hand that belongs to our saviour, our hero, Captain Jonny Murray. He looks disheveled and broken against the white sheets and lack of sleep.

“How are you doing today, Captain?”

Captain Jonny Murray shuffles off the rest of the duvet and walks, naked as the day he was raised, into the bathroom: a small, white room, fitted with a soft pink light. The slight chrome furnishings reflect his tired body, tight and primed from his years in the Armada, fighting in the Cologne Wars.

“What's on the agenda today, Space Computer?”

He looks in the mirror a second too long, checking out his hot bod, a morning ritual that reminds him of how gosh-damn handsome he is. He raises an eyebrow and begins flirting with himself through mute conversation. Halfway through he cocks his leg to pee.

“Six thirty am, breakfast. Seven am, meeting with Warren Officer Falman. Seven thirty am to ten am, work-out... One moment, you've got a call waiting for you.”

“Okay, Computer.”

Captain Jonny Murray flushes the toilet and walks back into the bedroom. He kicks out his legs and starts to stretch for a second before moving over to the phone, a small metal orb, which he places to his ear. There's a small line of static before a voice cuts through.

“Captain Jonny Murray, It's Mr. President.”

There's a little silence.

“Who?” Captain Jonny Murray replies.

“Mr. President? The leader of Earth?”

When his face finally comes through the receiver, Captain Jonny Murray nods. It’s old and a little bruised, with greying hair frolicking a little across his scalp.

“Oh, you. ‘Sup, babe?”

“We need your help.”

Captain Jonny Murray pats himself down.

“How many men do you need?” He says, stunting the end of each word with added emphasis.

“No, we need you.” Mr. President pauses. “We need you and your old team.”

His old team, of course referring to a debut group of token characters that are second to Captain Jonny Murray, well, everyone except Amber Seshquarry. The two of them had plans to rule the galaxy, but that is a different time, and a different story.

“Do you have their location?” Captain Jonny Murray raises the blinds. He peaks around a little, the sky has turned a little duller, hazing a light red. It looks broken against the darkening clouds and the lines of buildings.

“We only need to locate Seshquarry. Everyone else is on file.”

Captain Jonny Murray looks up at the sky, then down at the ground. The size of the city sprawls infinitely to the ground, covered in a dense fog and feverish lighting. A seedy underbelly, writhe with debaucherous intensions and a luminous nightlife.

“She may not be out there, Babe.” He licks his hand and quiffs his hair up.

“You can find her.”

Captain Jonny Murray looks again at the Underpass, squinting as if trying to picture Amber Seshquarry’s exact location. Mr. President gets the impression that he knows where she is, years on the field with her and his pack have given him an acute disposition for sensing people.

“Come to me when you have your team. And we’ll give you more orders.”

Captain Jonny Murray raises a hand to cover his eyes, watching the oddly saturated light scatter over the infinitely tall buildings and hovering cars. The world is alive with vibrant colours and glossy, metallic shines that sit like a perfect veneer on the surface of every building. It all looks pretty thin and listless, lacking every sort of warmth.

“Captain Jonny Murray, we need you.”

The Captain moves a hand over his body, slowly touching himself up. He usually doesn’t like taking orders, but the chance to work with his old team somehow adds something to his composure. It’s either that, or the shape that’s moving in the bed besides him.

“It’s imperative.”

Captain Jonny Murray looks over at the bed. The covers shift a little and a woman, slight and unhinged, with traces of make-up tickling the pillows, peaks up from the covers. A small ray of light glitters through, elevating her features. Her body is covered by a thin sheet, pronouncing the shape of her body and the slight curve of her hips. She smiles and waves a hand over to him.

“Hey.”

Captain Jonny Murray grins.

“Gotta dash. Universe needs me.”

He puts the phone down.

The streets are dark and filled with oddly radiant glows. Neon signs swing haphazardly in the slight breeze from the updraft, created by the heated bodies, industrial turbines and burning engines. It’s toxic and filthy down in the Underpass, full of liquored, crooked people, long raincoats, and silhouetted bodies. Captain Jonny Murray strides through the haze of people, scanning through the signs and orientating himself.

“Watch it, mate.”

Captain Jonny Murray turns around to a shrunken man, doped up on booze and the Devil’s Whip.

“Where’s Toni’s?”

The man flutters a little before pointing down a dark alleyway, down towards a blue light where ‘Toni’s’ grips its surface. Captain Jonny Murray has to fixate on the sign for a second, just so he can record its position. There’s enough hazy lights and dark turns to get lost down here.

Captain Jonny Murray nods, rubbing his Starsuit Supreme, and readjusting his junk. He clicks his fingers at a group of women, standing lazily outside a red house, before tracking the building upwards. It grows upwards, with each window growing smaller in the space of an instant, settling like tiny stars in the darkening space above him. Like everything here, the walls seem to seep and bleed with a green ooze, making the Underpass beautifully urban and cosmopolitan in the way it constructs its market-like stalls, neo-Toykian sheen, and in the way it holds its gritty sedimentation so elegantly.

Captain Jonny Murray smirks, undeterred by the sheer terror of the alleyway, the grotesque figures and fleshy, bulbous lumps that ooze over the sidewalks. This place is like a disease, infesting every inch of space, every person, robbing them of sustenance and sickly motivations.

Captain Jonny Murray looks disgruntled at the loss of life and the half-melting faces that pave in front of him, like Dr. Seuss himself had collaborated with Giger.

Posters of sessions and free drugs flit past Captain Jonny Murray, past empty doorways and rancid bile; past the windows full of sex and weak blowjobs; past the lines of tables and NoseStuff. It's crippling being down so far. The Captain doesn't mind it though, his head just remains high and focused, aimed arrogantly at his goal.

When Captain Jonny Murray reaches the bar, he stops outside, sniffing the air as if he may be picking up some kind of scent. He needs his pilot. He needs Amber Seshquarry to pilot the Starship Madonna. She should be just as strong and fiercely independent as before. The Underpass will have only made her stronger.

He struts into the room, EDM/jazz hammers off the wall like late night drunks; Captain Jonny Murray takes it in his stride though, moving past the doors and throwing a few notes to the doorman as he passes.

"Do you want a stamp?" One of them asks.

Captain Jonny Murray doesn't respond, just takes out his sunglasses and puts them on so he can lower them over his eyes. The bright lights can irritate his eyes, especially with so many colours.

The club is dimly lit, filled with smoke and groups of shattered people all trying to get a quick lay. Most of it is broken or falling apart, although no one seems to notice. It's just fitting in this environment.

Captain Jonny Murray walks up to the bar, a circular hub in the centre of the club where drinks and drunks spill over. The Captain pushes a few people out of the way as he does so.

A small man, mid-twenties, green, although purpling in this light, shows up in front of Captain Jonny Murray. He places three hands on the bar.

"What can I get you?"

Captain Jonny Murray holds up three fingers.

"Shots, and is Amber Seshquarry here?"

"Amber Seshquarry?" The man pauses, even withdrawing a little. "What do you want with her?"

The man finishes sorting out the shots.

“Can’t tell you.” Captain Jonny Murray lowers his glasses, pulling out a presidential order.
“Top secret.”

The man shakes his head. Not really wanting to be a part of the situation. This kind of stuff happens regularly around here, and the last time he tried to interfere, he lost an arm.

“She’s over there.”

He points with a spare hand, past the end of the bar to a closed off area, broken by a single red curtain: it hangs limply and frozen like an unmovable wall.

Captain Jonny Murray nods, downing two shots and slowly picks up the third, placing a random amount of cash on the bar. “See you around.”

He turns, knocking into a misshapen form, characterised by its trunk- sunken face and its hunched back. Captain Jonny Murray starts to walk past, but a hand lands on his chest.

“We dan’t want your kind ‘round ‘ere.”

“Hmm.”

The Trunkman presses its face to Captain Jonny Murray’s, spitting: “We DAN’T want your KIND ‘round ‘ERE.”

The Trunkman’s hand clutches at Captain Jonny Murray’s chest.

“You want to lose that hand, Babe?”

The trunk man holds his ground, even easing a little closer to Captain Jonny Murray.

“We DAN’T want your...”

There’s a sharp light and a scream. The Trunkman falls away, his arm left in two parts. The crowd surrounding them gasps before the music overtakes them again.

“Need a hand up? ‘Cos now you’re a hand down.” Captain Jonny Murray blows the end of his laser: a small, oval and chrome pistol, like something out of a cheap sixties sci-fi, it even has odd red bands and a pointed nozzle; and slicks his hair back.

Captain Jonny Murray holsters his gun.

“Time to get shot again.” He pours his shot onto the Trunkman’s wound, who winces a little. Captain Jonny Murray smirks before he starts to move through the dusty room to the red curtain. The Captain walks though the chaos in easy beats, approaching the curtain and its steady rhythm. It twists a little in the ambient noise, like a veil of thin skin in its appearance. He slides past the curtain and a sudden silence presses at him.

The hallway is long and regular: low lights are hung, steady, from the end of a number of singular, thin, black wires. A desperate burning red, glows, humming softly with a sharp buzz that

cuts through the bassline. The walls are all mirrored and reflect the world infinitely against the matted orange, zigzagged floor and the black ceilings. Captain Jonny Murray smells the air.

“Hmm.”

He catches himself in the mirror and looks over his body.

“Damn.”

He pops his guns and touches himself up a bit.

“I’ve still got it, baby.”

“Seshquarry?”

Captain Jonny Murray shouts when he reaches the end of the hallway. There’s nothing but a large, circular room full of deep seated sofas pressed into the ground like bunkers. They’re so low that even the thick haze, which floats heavenly above them, settles just below Captain Jonny Murray’s feet.

“Seshquarry?”

He moves forward, taking steps down below the smoke. A slow funky beat twists into the air, stealing away the sunken people and the orange glow that makes everyone looked red-faced and fat. Like a colosseum, the room arches slowly downwards with every row etching the way into small hovels, full of malformed people and bodies all piled together.

“Seshquarry?”

“Keep it down.”

A group of people, dissolving into their seats, looking bloated and septic, raise their heads as Captain Jonny Murray walks past. He takes very little notice of them, until he reaches the centre of the room, where the largest mess of cushions and people wrap, seemingly morphing into each other. Their eyes open too widely. Smoke exits from part of the mass, like a puff of steam extradited from an engine.

“Seshquarry?”

There’s a slow movement as the mass reorganises itself.

“She’s here, man.”

From the crowd, a woman emerges, like an odd birthing ritual, from between the squash of people, holding a drink and sipping from it occasionally. Her body, wrapped in a large Aztec- patterned sweater, seems to be evaporating in the muted room.

Amber Seshquarry moves a little and looks at one of the bodies.

“You here for the Sesh?” They talk for her.

Captain Jonny Murray nods. Not even the Captain has heard Seshquarry speak before.

Amber Seshquarry pushes back her hair and sticks out her tongue, letting it rest in the corner of her mouth. She reaches into the mass and somehow produces a drink that looks too strong: pale and effervescent in this steamy atmosphere.

Captain Jonny Murray takes the drink and downs it.

“Now, lets have a chat.”

“Here.” Another shape says as Amber Seshquarry motions him into the mass.

Amber Seshquarry pulls Captain Jonny Murray by the hand until he starts to descend into the pile of bodies. They start to blend and melt into each other as he slips past them. He feels their hands over his body and starts to evaporate into colour. Amber Seshquarry continues to pull on his arm; he watches it as it becomes unhinged and stretches away into the distance. Captain Jonny Murray moves, face stern, as the space around him waves and mixes with the surrounding bodies.

“Here.”

The voice is low and sounds like the recording has been stretched infinitely; his body floats away tripping over itself and letting his limbs squiggle and flatten into thin strips, like his whole life has been pressed into a single line.

“Babe.”

He portals through a black orb, warping his body into a tiny sphere, he can see infinite space and four dimensional images. There’s a dull silence before the faces of the surrounding bodies clip at the side of his vision. They start to enlarge and drip from the bottom of the blank space until they are everything.

“We need your help.”

Captain Jonny Murray is floating, thin and flat, on a river of heads, with colours vibrating all around him. He taps his sunglasses, but they weigh heavy on his face, remaining unmoved and fixed in their place.

“Here.”

The faces openly chant random syllables, mouths gaping and concave, forming new faces inside their black abysses. Chanting, chanting, chanting, and sailing on a sea of bodies. Captain Jonny Murray is rolled over the chanting voices: their faces disfiguring and flacking, melting away and dissolving into everything. Their skin butchering away in waves to tickle to their cartoonishly white and oval skulls. Still they chant:

“Here, it is here.”

They slow into a march of pink elephants, bouncing and elevating in rows, one after another. The heads shrink and grow and shrink and grow, and bounce. Again and again, jumping into each other, circling Captain Jonny Murray and trapping him in a pink ring.

“Here, it is here, so very clear.”

Amber Seshquarry’s face forms from the pink blob. Without a sound, she cackles and laughs with such ferocity that the space begins to shake. Captain Jonny Murray raises a thumb. His whole body is a thumb.

“It is here, it is here.” A face chants infinitely. “Never fear, Captain Jonny Murray is here.”

The face blooms into flowers and crackles as the edges, bursting into hundreds of fire-lit colours, like fireflies blooming into a watery grave. They fluoresce and burn brightly as the background drops away and Captain Jonny Murray floats on beds of bioluminescent lights. The edges foam and diffuse into the colourless air.

“Never fear. Your pilot is here.”

The foam shifts into shapes of spaceships, battles are paved way, full of interweaving vessels, small fires and the rapid burst of lasers shatters the world into broken colour; screams of the dead echo around Captain Jonny Murray’s head. He looks unfazed. Only noticing stars and an odd blue glow.

“Lightning madness. Here there, Atlas. Here there, Mars and Artefact sadness.”

A ship. A planet: Mars. Broken and barren. A cave. A feature. A glowing rock. A hand reaches out to grab it.

Again.

“Strong. Hearty. Tofu Party.”

Captain Jonny Murray grabs the artefact.

“Babe.”

He grabs the artefact.

Creatures, cloaked, and chasing.

Again.

He grabs the Artefact.

Again.

Lasers and bright lights.

Again.

A ship crashes through lighting.

“So what is the mission this time, Captain?”

He’s been working at the Compound for years, designing and testing spaceships that travel to new worlds. They used to work together, at the time of the Cologne Wars.

Captain Jonny Murray holds a hand to his chin, “No brief. Just Mars, a collection, and it’s a sexy space travel.”

Starchy’s short blonde hair looks wispy and black in places where motor oil has been stuck on his skin for years. He rubs his head, to think, and leaves it upstanding in some areas. Just like the unconfined nature of his hair, Starchy does not like Captain Jonny Murray and his ‘hum-damn-fine-leather-like-the-touch-of-that-damn-fine-booty’ boots. He finds him arrogant and poor mannered. The only reason he agreed to accept this mission was to get off the planet and provide safety to the rest of the crew.

“And we need a ship?”

Captain Jonny Murray puts on his glasses.

“Not any ship.” Captain Jonny Murray turns to Starchy. “We need the Starship Madonna. Seshquarry is going to pilot it again.”

Captain Jonny Murray looks at the sky again, watching as slight balls of fire spill over the city below. Like all the cities around here, they are constructed in three floors. The Underpass, an area devoted to haze; the Levelground, characterised by retail and the economic sector; and the Highground, where the apartments for the citizens are. It looks so small from this distance.

“What do you think Seshquarry?”

Amber Seshquarry is stood, silently admiring the view.

“...”

Captain Jonny Murray nods.

“You’re right. We need to get recruiting.” Captain Jonny Murray starts towards the Compound.

“Starchy.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Make sure Madonna is ready for me.” He rubs his chest. “I want her purring when I enter her.”

Starchy salutes, looking a little disgusted.

“I’m gonna grab Samtando.”

Starchy coughs, “He’s in an incubator.”

“I know.”

Captain Jonny Murray and Amber Seshquarry depart, walking back towards the Compound, eagerly anticipating the return of his crew.

PART II:

The Screenplay

FADE IN:

EXT. ARMY BASE, COMPOUND - DAY

Large, polished buildings cut into the landscape: white and windowed, next to a large body of water. You can clearly see the reddening sky, growing larger and more imposing, with the incoming clouds.

EXT. COMPOUND COURTYARD - DAY

Hovercarts fly past slowly.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY walks past one of the hovercarts as it is parking.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
We need Earth, Wind, Water, and
Fire to start up the SAMTANDO.

Captain Jonny Murray is speeding ahead of AMBER SESHQUARRY, whose trudging a huge handheld gatling gun behind her.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

Captain Jonny Murray nods.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
I like your thinking Seshquarry.
Everything we need is in the
Podbays.

They continue across the courtyard.

INT. COMPOUND BASE RECEPTION - DAY

The hallways are clean and reflective, like the base is made of tiny mirrors. It is open planned, but broken and confined due to the amount of traffic. Thin wires hang from the ceiling. Some odd colleagues stroll past looking tired and bothered, even with the air conditioning on. Odd people stop to salute Captain Jonny Murray as he passes.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Remind you of the red room.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY

Thought so.

They walk with arrogance.

INT. COMPOUND BASE HALLS - DAY

More people salute Captain Jonny Murray and Amber Seshquarry. They're owning it. Captain Jonny Murray even puts on his sunglasses after a few turns.

INT. COMPOUND BASE HALLS - DAY

The lights in this hallway are bright, but not as bright as the other hallways, making the area look dirty. Captain Jonny Murray pulls up next to a door. PODBAY is written on a small plaque to the left of the door. Captain Jonny Murray types in a code.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY

Open the Podbay doors.

He claps his hands.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY

Open the Podbay doors.

He claps his hands again.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY

Babe, how many Flazkerts do I have to pay to get this thing to work?

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY

Open the goddamn Podbay doors. I'm Captain Jonny Murray, Goddamn. I'm too sexy for this.

Amber Seshquarry uses the handle. Captain Jonny Murray looks at her a little too intently.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY

I knew you were more than just eyecandy.

They enter the room.

INT. PODBAY - DAY

Captain Jonny Murray turns the light on. A small room, full of cupboards, labelled with four sophisticated words.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
If only I knew science.

Amber Seshquarry points to a cupboard. They approach and Captain Jonny Murray opens it. Inside are rows of shelves filled with small vials labelled with the four basic elements.

AMBER SESHQUARRY
...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Science.

They bag a few and then leave.

INT. COMPOUND BASE UNDERGROUND - DAY

A small room. Clean, reflective lighting. Odd metallic cabinets and medical benches line in smooth, regular arrangements.

Captain Jonny Murray and Amber Seshquarry enter the room. Captain Jonny Murray turns on a light, turning the room into a classic 70's science fiction setting: full of glass beakers and low lighting.

They approach the back of the room where four poles stand: thin and eerie. The four elements are written on the poles in kanji.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Seshquarry, you're handling this.

AMBER SESHQUARRY
...

Captain Jonny Murray approaches one of the the cabinets and starts strutting in front of it, while Amber Seshquarry carefully removes the elements from their vials. She empties the vials onto the podiums. Small hisses emanate from the towers and start to light up in a neon pink.

AMBER SESHQUARRY
...

Captain Jonny Murray turns around.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Exquisite work, Seshquarry. Once
this is over we can scrap, ay?

Captain Jonny Murray starts tapping Amber Seshquarry in
the sides with his fists.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

Captain Jonny Murray stops immediately.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
I was just trying to
celebrate. Nip around a little
like I used to.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
I wasn't raised in the woods.

The towers all glow in unison until they split open. A
thick line of pink light connects the four pillars into a
square.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
I will cut you off, Seshquarry.
Eyecandy can always be replaced.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
You're right, you're too good for
me to do that.

A door opens up from between the four pillars. Fog pools
and swirls out of them, hazed by a green coloured light.
An odd POD: clear with red veins, sprouting from the
bottom, raises out of the hole. A man, the scientist
SAMTANDO MORRIATTI, is nestled in the middle, only
wearing
a pair of briefs and odd breathing tubes. They wrap around
his body in thick tangles.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
No, Seshquarry, he looks fine.
He's always doing this to
himself.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
We just have to see if he agrees.

The Pod stops moving and pauses when it has finished its ascension. There's a small tone and the Pod opens. Water flows across the floor.

Captain Jonny Murray feels around in the water. Pressing it between his fingers.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Texture like that of FLOOVIN
blood. Odd creatures. Easy to
kill. Remember our battles in the
Cologne Wars.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Our men sure were good shields.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
(Laughing)
You really know how to fill a
room with energy, Seshquarry.

Captain Jonny Murray cups some of the water.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

Captain Jonny Murray laps the water.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
You're right. It does taste
different.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Tastes like my ex.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Wanna try?

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Your loss.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI starts to violently shake. His eyes burst open. He coughs. Looks around, scared. The lights start to brighten with a surge of energy. Samtando shakes his body, lifting his arms to remove his breathing apparatus.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI

Once this baby hits 88 miles an hour...

Captain Jonny Murray approaches Samtando and places a hand on his shoulder.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Samtando.

Samtando becomes still for a second, only his chest moves up and down.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI
You always know exactly what to say, Seshquarry.

Samtando Morriatti slumps a little before fully regaining consciousness. He rubs his face and pushes the odd, viscous gum off his body.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI To what do I owe the pleasure?

Pause.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI Captain Murray.

Samtando looks at Captain Jonny Murray who's striking a pose for the hell of it.

CONTINUED:

7.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
We have a mission.

(CONTINUED)

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI
Important?

AMBER SESHQUARRY
...

Samtando places a hand to his chin.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI Classified?

AMBER SESHQUARRY
...

Samtando unclasps himself from the Pod.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI It must be
important then.

He steps from the Pod.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI (coughing)
Although after that last one, I
didn't know if I was going to
live again.

Pause.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI
If you hadn't transferred me to my
MetaDimensionMatterAssembly Pod,
I would have died for sure.

Captain Jonny Murray and Amber Seshquarry look at each other.

AMBER SESHQUARRY
...

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI I'll be fine.

Samtando Morriatti looks confused, still feeling the effects of the MetaDimensionMatterAssembly Pod.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI When are we
heading out?

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Now.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI
I need to get some supplies...

Captain Jonny Murray softly slaps the Samtando's face.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
We don't have time for that.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI

What?

Samtando Morriatti looks at Amber Seshquarry.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

Captain Jonny Murray walks up to the door.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

Samtando Morriatti follows.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

Samtando Morriatti opens the door and nods to Amber Seshquarry.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI
Okay, I'll wait in the ship.

They exit the room. The lights stay on for a few seconds, highlighting the mess on the floor and the much too sleek cabinets.

The lights turn off.

INT. MR PRESIDENTS OFFICE, COMPOUND BASE - DAY

The office is completely white, and it is empty apart from a long thin desk, a master chair, curved at the back of the desk, and a couple of tub chairs, which are nestled in front of it. There is a huge room length window that, if one were to look out of said window, they would see the whole city and the darkening red skies above. The whole compound can be seen from this height, as well as the stretch of river that cuts the landscape.

There's a knock on the door.

MR. PRESIDENT
Come in.

The door opens. Captain Jonny Murray and Amber Seshquarry walk in. Whilst Amber Seshquarry closes the door, Captain Jonny Murray walks up to the desk. The chair turns around and Mr. President turns to face them.

(CONTINUED)

MR. PRESIDENT
Good afternoon, Captain Jonny
Murray.

Pause.

MR. PRESIDENT
And Seshquarry.

Captain Jonny Murray places a hand on the desk.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
So this mission?

MR. PRESIDENT
Just head to Mars and everything
will be revealed.

Pause.

MR. PRESIDENT
Here.

Mr. President reaches into a draw and pulls out a small device. He presses the surface and the ARTEFACT, a small oval shaped box, appears in a blue hologram. It remains in the air for a few seconds before it shrinks. Earth is then shown before there is a small second of retraction, revealing the solar system, before it focuses on MARS.

MR. PRESIDENT
Use this to track the Artefact.

Captain Jonny Murray picks up the device and looks at Amber Seshquarry.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

Captain Jonny Murray throws the device to her.

MR. PRESIDENT
Bring it back to us. It was
incredibly expensive.

Pause.

MR. PRESIDENT
You're our only hope, Captain
Jonny Murray.

Captain Jonny Murray nods.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
I know.

He turns to leave.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
Let's go, Seshquarry.

Captain Jonny Murray and Amber Seshquarry turn to leave.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

They reach the door.

MR. PRESIDENT
And good luck.

AMBER SESHQUARRY

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY
That's right, Seshquarry. We
don't need luck, I'm Captain
Jonny Fucking Murray.

They leave.

Mr. President turns in his chair and walks to the window. He watches the sky, which has grown much darker now, and then over at Compound. He picks a small hair off his shoulder pad and throws it to the floor.

MR. PRESIDENT
God speed, Space Commander.

A silver spaceship pulls into orbit. The engines ignite and it bursts into the atmosphere.

MR. PRESIDENT
(Saluting)
God speed.

FADE OUT.

END.

PART III:

The Play

ACT I

Scene 1

The whole cast is collected around a table. CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY, captain of the STARSHIP MADONNA, is wearing his STARSUIT SUPREME, looking lean and well purposed; AMBER SESHQUARRY, pilot of the MADONNA, is also wearing a STARSUIT SUPREME, looking broodish and owning it; STARCHY, looking tired and dirty, wearing a cut away flight suit and dungarees; and SAMTANDO MORRIATTI, looking disheveled and wearing a large lab coat over his flight suit. They all look a little nervous. Trying to keep balance while the aircrafts stabilisers finally kick in. The lighting is low and dusty. There is food on the table. They all sit down slowly, picking up food and starting to eat.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

Alright. Now, I don't want to beat around the bush.

Beat.

Even if that bush is fineeeee.

Beat.

But we're after this.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY points to AMBER SESHQUARRY. Everyone stops eating.

Babe's orders.

There's an odd quiet in the room, like they're waiting for a laugh to break the tension. AMBER SESHQUARRY places a DEVICE on the table.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

Pause.

Everyone looks at the device. The ARTEFACT is shown on a blue screen. A couple of seconds pass by before the image changes to that of a small planet. A yellow dot is highlighted.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

It's on Mars.

Beat.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI picks up the DEVICE and examines it closely.

Everyone starts eating again.

(CONTINUED)

STARCHY:

And once we get there?

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

We'll just take it and bring it home.

Pause.

STARCHY:

That confident?

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY doesn't even flinch.
Or stupid?

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI coughs.
Do you remember what happened last time we followed
one of

STARCHY uses air quotes.
'Your' plans?

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY nods.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

We defeated the ARMADA.

STARCHY snuffs.

STARCHY:

And thousands of our own troops were annihilated in
the process.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

*STARCHY moves uncomfortably in his seat. CAPTAIN
JONNY MURRAY raises a hand.*

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

And you still came back anyway?

SAMTANDO coughs again.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

SAMTANDO messes around with the DEVICE.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

Seshquarry is right. We've got a plan this time. Just
settle down. There're no hostiles. We just need to
retrieve the Artefact.

*STARCHY leans back in his chair. Resting his
feet on the table.*

STARCHY:

Sorry, I...

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI coughs again.
Morriatti. Carry on.

STARCHY reluctantly settles down. He shifts a little.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

Okay, so.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI places the DEVICE in his chest pocket.

I'll rig up the device to the ship when we're out of orbit. It'll set our location and then we can enter hypersleep. It'll take about a month to reach Mars. Seshquarry will pilot us onto the new terrain, and to the DEVICE'S location, once we get there.

Pause.

STARCHY:

Hypersleep?

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY gives a thumbs up.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

Seshquarry is right. It's either that or you chill around by yourself.

STARCHY:

...

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI coughs.

An odd mood settles on the crew.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI laughs a little.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

You two are basically the same.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

Everyone but STARCHY laughs.

There's another odd silence. Years apart really have broken down some of their similarities.

STARCHY:

And once we get this ARTEFACT, do we just head home?

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

Yes.

STARCHY:

Great.

STARCHY puts more food onto his plate and starts chomping it down, finally feeling a little more comfortable.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

Jesus, Starchy, slow down.

STARCHY:

I'm hungry, working in the bowels of the ship takes a lot out of you.

STARCHY slows down a little anyway.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

Christ, you're pounding down this stuff like there's no tomorrow.

Pause.

Like the Captain here with his meat.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY looks up, feasting on a raw steak.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

Raw in the sack.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY leans back, spreading his legs, and licking his fingers.

Better for the ladieees.

He flexes his muscles.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

Everyone chuckles, bar CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY. He takes a glove off his hand and picks at his teeth with a sharp nail.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

What can I say? I'm just a lone ranger.

The SHIP shakes a little.

STARCHY:

That's us out of orbit.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI takes another bite.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

We can hit hypersleep soon. After this.

*Suddenly SAMTANDO MORRIATTI
grimaces.*

STARCHY:

What's wrong?

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

Nothing - just eating too quickly.

*SAMTANDO MORRIATTI grimaces again; he starts
to ball up.*

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

I don't know... I'm getting cramps.

*Everyone, bar CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY, stares at
him in alarm. SAMTANDO MORRIATTI starts to make
a low grumbling noise. Clutching at the end of
the table. Knuckles turning white.*

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

*Panic and deep breathing. SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI screams.*

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

Oh God, it hurts so bad.

*SAMTANDO MORRIATTI stands up. Gripping his
stomach before falling backwards onto the table.*

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

(unperplexed)

Lightning madness. Or fleas.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI screws up his face.

If it's Lightning Madness, he'll need to be thrown
overboard.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

Arrgh. I think I'm going to burst.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI pounds the table with a fist. STARCHY steps back. CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY starts to scratch his head.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:
Jettison the Science Officer!

AMBER SESHQUARRY:
...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:
I don't care, Lightning Madness is contagious.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY goes to grab SAMTANDO MORRIATTI, but is stopped by AMBER SEASHQUARRY's glare.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:
...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY raises his hands.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:
I'm the captain here, Seshquarry. Don't go undermining my authority.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI collapses onto the table. AMBER SESHQUARRY slams a fist onto SAMTANDO MORRIATTI's chest. SAMTANDO MORRIATTI stops moving.

STARCHY:
Is he...?

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:
Well, that's sorted that. Evacuate him from the vessel.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:
...

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY just shakes his head.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:
If you're sure, Seshquarry.

AMBER SESHQUARRY taps SAMTANDO MORRIATTI's chest again. SAMTANDO MORRIATTI's body doesn't move. AMBER SESHQUARRY taps his chest again. SAMTANDO MORRIATTI starts to shudder. STARCHY steps forward. SAMTANDO MORRIATTI takes a deep breath before vomiting on himself and STARCHY.

STARCHY:
Man.

Beat.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STARCHY: (cont'd)
My outfit.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:
...

STARCHY:
Hey, I just washed this yesterday.

AMBER SESHQUARRY looks at SAMTANDO MORRIATTI.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:
...
Beat.

STARCHY:

You're right, I do look like a mess. But I'd like to see you do better.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:
...

STARCHY:
You didn't.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:
...

STARCHY:
You're right.

AMBER SESHQUARRY lifts SAMTANDO MORRIATTI up. He throws up again.

Come on Morriatti.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI wipes the brow of his head with the back of his hand.

SAMTANDO
MORRIATTI:
Yeah, I...

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI wipes his mouth.
I think I just had a delayed reaction to my prolonged status.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI wipes his mouth again, then his forehead.

STARCHY:

Something to look forward to?

The DEVICE starts to stutter and glow a blue light. SAMTANDO MORRIATTI reaches into his chest pocket.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

I guess this is ready.

SAMTANDO wipes his mouth again and climbs off the table.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

I'll go set this up.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI looks at the table and his clothes.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI:

And, I'll clean this up later.

SAMTANDO MORRIATTI exits.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY stands up.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

I'm going to my room.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY exits.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY just looks at the mess.

STARCHY:

I'm going too.

STARCHY looks concerned.

I've got to get ready for hypersleep.

STARCHY exits.

AMBER SESHQUARRY looks at the table and then stands.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

SESHQUARRY exits to the flight deck.

Scene 2

The whole crew is sat inside one of the ships hulls, surrounding a round table. They all look tired and a little sickly, a side-effect of hypersleep.

STARCHY:

Who's up next for the video log?

AMBER SESHQUARRY yawns, climbs to her feet and raises her hand.

STARCHY:

After that I'll do mine then we'll start our descent.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY:

Sexy.

CAPTAIN JONNY MURRAY stretches and exits the room.

STARCHY:

He hasn't changed a bit.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY starts getting defensive.

STARCHY:

Yes. I am still on with this.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY:

Is he the best hope we've got?

AMBER SESHQUARRY leans closer to the table.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY:

As long as we get out of this alive.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY starts to act up.

STARCHY:

You know how quickly he was going to throw Morriatti overboard. What's to say he wouldn't do the same to us?

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY stands.

STARCHY:

I knew I shouldn't have come back.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY picks up his drink and takes a sip.

STARCHY:

I think I'm getting too old for this.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY laughs.

STARCHY:

I've missed you.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY laughs again.

STARCHY:

Things have never been the same since the Cologne Wars.
How long has it been? Five? Ten years?

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

*STARCHY takes a seat again. Relaxing enough to
place his feet on the table.*

STARCHY:

It can't have been fifteen years.

Pause.

We are getting old, aren't we?

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

*AMBER SESHQUARRY and STARCHY look at each other
from across the table, slowly reflecting on the
past.*

...

STARCHY:

I want to make sure everyone is okay. A team is only
as good as their ship. We need this ship in good
condition. Any less and if we run into trouble..

Beat.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY:

If we run into trouble. We'll need someone to give us
that extra boost.

Silence ensues.

I don't know what I'd do if I lost my team when I wasn't there.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY laughs.

STARCHY:

Yeah, I guess even the Captain.

Beat.

He's... We're the best hope the world has.

STARCHY drains the last of his drink.

AMBER SESHQUARRY:

...

STARCHY stands from his place.

STARCHY:

Let me know when Morriatti is finished.

STARCHY exits.

AMBER SESHQUARRY looks around and waits a few minutes. She looks reflective.

The lights turn off.

End.