

The Great Outback

"Icarus Ascendant" - Show #108

by
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ICARUS ASCENDANT

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACEPORT - 22:00 HOURS

LONG SHOT of a busy Confederation spaceport facility on Earth. The surrounding area is urbanized and densely populated. The city lights and lights of both ground and flying vehicles is almost overwhelming and makes modern-day metropolises pale in comparison.

CAPTION: Frankfurt-am-Main Terminal (Europa Autonomous District)

INT. SPACEPORT (HOTEL ROOM) - SAME

LEDGE, JONES, and KOKO are relaxing in a spaceport hotel room. There are two beds.

Jones is sitting at a small desk with his hand computer plugged into a terminal port.

Ledge is under the covers in his bed, half-asleep.

Koko is watching the video monitor with the sound off.

Subtitles run across the bottom of the video monitor about current news stories. A stylized "CNA Headlines" logo is in the lower right corner of the screen.

JONES

I found us a run to New Brazil.
Medical supplies for the
prospecting base there. Want me to
snag it before someone else does?

LEDGE

Say no to that one.

JONES

(puzzled)

It's a clear twenty-thousand smoo
profit for a six-day round-trip.

LEDGE

Sorry. We don't go to New Brazil.

KOKO

Why not?

JONES

It's a two-thousand smoo bonus for me and Koko and I can't find anything else on the boards today.

LEDGE

We don't go there.

JONES

(frustrated)

Ledge--

LEDGE

(firmly)

I'll transfer two-thousand smooos to you both to make up for it this time. But Daisy does not go to New Brazil.

ZOOM IN ON VIDEO MONITOR

A press conference interrupts the current programming. It is a government minister denying that increased piracy on the frontier is well-organized and well-funded. The audio is muted.

Koko and Ledge speak over the subtitles.

SUBTITLES

REPORTER

Will the minister confirm or deny the stories that piracy on the frontier is increasing?

MINISTER

No Comment. Next question?

END OF SUBTITLES

KOKO (O.S.)

Do I have any say about where my ship goes?

LEDGE (O.S.)

My ship.

KOKO (O.S.)
Whatever...

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE (NEW BRAZIL) - DAY

The *CCS EMERSON* emerges from hyperspace. The planet of New Brazil is in frame in the distance. PAN by the ship. As it passes, the camera turns to FOLLOW the ship.

The *CCS Emerson* is a hundred-ton modular transport. It looks like a white sausage with a streamlined cargo container slung under its belly. The ship is clearly and prominently marked with the logo of a company named United Salvage: The Future is in the Past.

With both the ship and the planet in frame, show...

CAPTION: CCS Emerson (CPH-14 - New Brazil)

INT. CCS EMERSON - SAME

PILOT and NAVIGATOR are relaxing in their seats. The cockpit is identical to the *CIS Daisy's*. It has been customized by the addition of corporate logos and a pair of fuzzy dice hanging in front of the windshield.

PILOT
It should be about two hours until
we reach orbit.

NAVIGATOR
(yawns)
We never get any excite--

SFX an ALARM rings out.

CCS EMERSON AI (O.S.)
(over intercom)
Proximity alert. Another ship has
exited hyperspace nearby.

PILOT
You were saying?

The lights and power systems in the transport cockpit shut down. Pilot and Navigator begin to panic.

NAVIGATOR
Main power is out.

PILOT
(tries to operate flight
controls)
Someone got our control code. We're
shut down.

EXT. OUTER SPACE (NEW BRAZIL) - SAME

CCS Emerson is dead in space. Her Navigation lights are the
only indication of activity.

A PIRATE SHIP is slowly moving in to dock and board.

PILOT (O.S.)
Mayday! This is the United Salvage
transport vessel Emerson. We are--

SFX the transmission is cut-off by STATIC jamming. The Pirate
Ship moves in closer.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACEPORT - ESTABLISHING

LONG SHOT of the Frankfurt-am-Main Terminal.

INT. SPACEPORT (WORKSHOP) - SAME

Ledge and Koko are talking as they walk around a spaceship maintenance workshop. Koko is holding a newspad, examining her checklist, and taking notes. In the background, engineers and robots are busily making repairs on other spaceships.

LEDGE

Make sure to get a signature for the jump drive when you trade it in for a refurbished one. And be sure to get a refurbished drive. We can't afford a brand new one.

KOKO

Why don't we buy a spare while we're at it?

LEDGE

Because to buy one without a trade-in would cost about half a million smoos. When we trade in the old one, it only costs us fifty-thousand.

(pause)

Did I just say, only fifty-thousand smoos?

KOKO

Get a signature. Noted. What else?

LEDGE

When you refill our fuel tank, make sure to use deuterium, not tritium. And make sure the emergency reserve tank is topped-off.

KOKO

Come on, Boss. I didn't learn my job by just reading a copy of Starship Engineering for Dummies.

LEDGE

Just checking. I know you're the best. If anyone else mans the pump, just watch them. Deuterium is a thousand smoots per liter. Tritium is five-thousand per and Daisy runs fine on regular.

KOKO

Okay, noted. Next?

LEDGE

Restock the galley with instant dinners.

KOKO

Any preferences?

LEDGE

Anything except chipped tofu.

KOKO

No turds on toast. Noted. Next?

LEDGE

That's all I can think of. Did I forget anything important.

KOKO

Let's see--
(pause)
--you forgot--

(PAUSE)

--microscan the hull for damage and re-coat and polish the bad spots if needed. Purge the water tanks. Hot-blast the atmosphere control vents. Check and if needed, refill and bleed the landing gear struts. Polish the inside of the radar dome. Check and, if necessary, replace the polyxytate seals on the hatches.

(pause)

And of course, wash the windshield.

(pause)

Do I get my first raise now or later?

LEDGE

Will you settle for a free breakfast?

KOKO
(grins)
Done.

EXT. SPACEPORT (TERMINAL) - TRANSITIONAL

The *CIS Daisy* is parked on the tarmac. A boarding tube from the spaceport terminal is connected to the *CIS Daisy's* rear boarding hatch.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Jones is alone in the cockpit. He is working at his control panel. Koko enters from the rear of the ship.

KOKO
So, what are you up to?

JONES
I am installing our free copy of
SureTrack.

KOKO
I hope it was worth all the trouble
it caused us.

JONES
It should be. The fewer jumps we
have to make, the longer we can go
without replacing the jump drive.
So, it should make your job a bit
easier and save Ledge about thirty-
thousand smoos a year.

KOKO
Do you like your job?

JONES
Of course. Why do you ask?

KOKO
You wouldn't prefer to be doing
anything else?

JONES
We had that conversation already.
And, yes, I'd still prefer to be
stargazing and drinking beer.

KOKO

Still, you could be making a whole lot more money if you were still working for a mega-corporation like Zumpco.

JONES

Are you getting around to insinuating something?

KOKO

No. Still just trying to figure you out. You're clearly intelligent and educated.

JONES

I'm pretty easy to figure out. You're the puzzle.

KOKO

Considering the source, I'll take that as a compliment.

(beat)

By the way, I never thanked you for that boomerang you bought me back on Albion.

JONES

It wasn't anything really. Only cost me a smoo.

KOKO

Yeah, but it's the thought that counts.

JONES

Don't mention it.

KOKO

Of course, a normal person would have just sent flowers instead of laying a one-smoo boomerang on a girl's bed without even a note as to who it was from. But then you're not really normal, are you?

JONES

Considering the source, I'll take that as a compliment.

EXT. SPACEPORT TERMINAL - TRANSITIONAL

The CIS Daisy is parked on the tarmac. A boarding tube from the spaceport terminal is connected to the CIS Daisy's rear boarding hatch.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Koko is sitting just behind the cockpit hatchway. The floor access plate is open. She is holding a hand-computer. She plugs the computer into a slot below the floor.

Ledge is standing close by, taking inventory from the ship's locker and making notes on a newspad, which is plugged into the dewey connector at the back of his neck.

Jones is preparing to leave the ship.

LEDGE

You two make a list of anything you want me to pick up when I go shopping later on. It may be a long time before we get back to civilization, so if there is anything hard to find, be sure to stock up.

JONES

I've got everything I need. If not, I'll just grab it while I'm out.

LEDGE

Where you going?

JONES

Just out for a long, last walk around on terra firma. Like you said, it may be a while until we get back.

KOKO

I'll put a list together. I'm going to be stuck here for a while. I still need to replace the jump drive and calibrate it, refuel, resupply, test all the subsystems--

(pause)

I'll be here all day.

INT. SPACEPORT (BOARDING TUBE) - A MINUTE LATER

Jones leaves the *CIS Daisy* and walks away through a boarding tube connecting her to the spaceport terminal.

Jones exits the tube and asks the nearest EMPLOYEE...

JONES

Excuse me, but is there a florist
in the terminal?

EMPLOYEE

Yes, sir, on the Main Concourse.
Just follow the signs to get there.

Jones spots a suitable direction sign and follows it.

INT. SPACEPORT (FLORIST SHOP) - LATER

Jones is browsing through the spaceport's florist's shop. The shop has many exotic, alien flowers on display in addition to those which are more familiar. He has a greeting card in hand.

Jones browses for a bit, but clearly does not find anything he his looking for. He steps up to a counter and asks the Florist for assistance.

JONES

Pardon me, miss, but I was
wondering if you might be able to
do a special request.

FLORIST

How may I assist you?

JONES

Do you have any flowers in stock
that aren't on display?

FLORIST

Yes, of course. Anything in
particular?

JONES

Yes. I'm looking for a rose--

The Florist points to a display of bouquets on the sales floor over which Jones has already picked.

FLORIST

Roses are right over there.

JONES
--with the thorns still on the
stem.

FLORIST
You're kidding, right?

JONES
No--

FLORIST
What are you going to do with
thorny roses? Slowly rob a blood-
bank?

JONES
No--

FLORIST
Maybe scratch your way out of
Alcatraz after you get caught
trying to rob a blood-bank at thorn-
point?

JONES
(annoyed)
No.

FLORIST
No need to get huffy.

JONES
Do you have one?

FLORIST
Only one? You want one thorny rose?

JONES
Yes.

FLORIST
Who are you trying to impress with
that? Someone else's dead
girlfriend's ugly step-sister?

JONES
Yes or No?

FLORIST
No. We don't carry roses of mass
destruction.

Jones turns to walk away. The Florist reaches below her sales counter and holds aloft an animated, potted, and quite dangerous-looking zoophyte that resemble a venus flytrap. She points at it as...

SPFX the Zoophyte SNAPS randomly at the air as if it were trying to catch imaginary insects.

FLORIST (CONT'D)

If you want to scare her, why not buy her one of these?

Jones walks away, exiting frame.

The florist looks at the snapping zoophyte. She recoils as it snaps at her finger.

CUT TO:

INT. CIS DAISY - LATER

Ledge is sitting in his pilot's seat, checking the configuration of his flight controls. Koko is taking a break from her ship maintenance. She is sitting on the armrest of Jones' navigator's chair. She looks sweaty as if she has been working hard.

KOKO

Tell me what you think of me.

LEDGE

I think you're a solid ship engineer and I'm glad to have you on my crew.

KOKO

That's what you think of what I do. Tell me what you think of who I am.

LEDGE

I think you're a very smart girl who does not know who she is or what she wants. When you look inwards, you don't find the answers you need, so you always push against your boundaries, hoping that by stepping beyond them, you'll find yourself.

KOKO

(stands)

You don't know me at all.

(MORE)

KOKO (CONT'D)

(pause)

I'm going outside for a bit. I need to check the control surface and landing gear actuators. Can I get you to work the rudders and elevons when I ask you to?

LEDGE

Of course.

KOKO

Good.

(pause)

How well do you really know Jones?

Koko walks away. Ledge pauses momentarily, thinking about Koko's question.

CUT TO:

EXT. ESTATE - ESTABLISHING

A LONG SHOT of a country estate with lots of gardens.

EXT. ESTATE (GATE) - DAY

Jones is standing in front of a gate. Concrete walls run left and right from either side of the gate. A sign in the background reads Private Property No trespassing. Jones turns and walks down the wall to his right, looking for a prime spot to climb over the wall.

EXT. ESTATE (WALL) - SAME

Jones finds a good spot to scale the wall. He sneakily climbs over. After Jones leaves the frame, PAN RIGHT. Hanging on the wall to the right is a sign that reads Beware of Dog.

CUT TO:

INT. CIS DAISY - DAY

Ledge is preparing to leave the ship and go shopping for supplies. KOKO is busily working on the ship.

LEDGE
Anything else you need me to pick
up, Koko?

Koko reaches into her pocket, removes a slip of paper from
it, and hands it to Ledge. Ledge looks over Koko's list.

LEDGE (CONT'D)
Ummm... Are you sure you want me to
pick up these things?

KOKO
(smiles)
Actually, I wish I could be there
to see you when you check out. Just
act like you're married and no one
will giggle--

Koko realizes she may have just made a faux pas.

KOKO (CONT'D)
Umm. Sorry.

LEDGE
Forget it.

Ledge walks away and heads toward the back of the ship. He
exits the hatch. As he walks away, he says...

LEDGE (CONT'D)
I wish I could forget it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ESTATE (ROSE GARDEN) - DAY

Jones is sneaking around someone's private garden with a pair
of scissors. He is wearing thick gloves. He clips a rose off
at the base of the stem, thorns and all. He flashes a
mischievous smile.

SFX a DOG GROWLS.

Jones' smile is replaced with an expression of fright. He
bolts toward the wall, trying to outdistance...

SFX a very mean looking ROBODOG, which is gaining on him as
he runs back toward the wall.

POV ROBODOG

Jones reaches the wall and leaps, catching the top of the wall. He hangs there a moment as the Robodog gets closer.

ON ROBODOG

Switch angles to look at the onrushing Robodog as it snaps its vicious-looking jaws. It leaps at the camera.

EXT. ESTATE (WALL) - SAME

Jones is climbing down from a wall. His pants are torn around the buttocks and he looks bruised and scratched. He dusts himself off, looks around to see if any law enforcement officers have noticed (they haven't). He then limps away until he leaves via FRAME LEFT.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACEPORT (TERMINAL) - DAY

The *CIS Daisy* is parked on the tarmac. A boarding tube from the spaceport terminal is connected to the *CIS Daisy's* rear boarding hatch.

SERIES OF SHOTS: EXT. AND INT. LOCATIONS (*CIS DAISY*) - DAY

Koko is busy working on the *CIS Daisy*, performing maintenance tasks such as...

INT. *CIS DAISY* (AIRLOCK)

Koko replaces and calibrates *CIS Daisy's* jump drive via access panels in the ship's airlock section. When she is finished, she looks around proudly. The she notices something on the floor. She bends over and picks up a loose bolt that she did not put back in place. Worried, she scratches her head.

EXT. CIS DAISY (STARBOARD WING)

Koko is standing on the starboard wing and refilling the deuterium fuel tank.

INT. CIS DAISY (COCKPIT)

Koko is using a hand computer to calibrate electronics.

EXT. CIS DAISY (PORT WING)

Koko is standing in the incorrect place under the Port Wing. She pushes the wrong button, and gets drenched by recycled water as the potable water tank purges.

INT. CIS DAISY (CREW SECTION)

A stubborn engine access plate does not want to close, so she employs her black belt in unarmed combat to help it along.

EXT. CIS DAISY (STARBOARD WING)

Koko is standing under the wing. She gets hit in the back of the head by an airbrake or elevon as she is testing it.

EXT. SPACEPORT (TERMINAL) - TRANSITIONAL

The CIS DAISY is sitting on the tarmac. It is nighttime. Various lights dance about the landing area as activity continues well into the evening.

INT. CIS DAISY - NIGHT

Jones opens the rear hatch and walks inside the CIS Daisy. He looks haggard, with his clothes ripped in several places. He closes the hatch behind him.

Amy/AI's avatar is visible on the video monitor.

Koko is sitting in her engineering station in the cockpit, running the final diagnostics on all the work she did throughout the day. She has changed clothes and showered.

A moist towel is draped around her neck and her hair has not yet been properly combed. She does not look up from her work.

KOKO
Amy, who is that?

AMY/AI
That is Doctor Jones.

JONES
Yeah, hey, Koko. It's just me.

Jones tip-toes through the ship while Koko's attention is focused on working at her station. Jones pauses in front of Koko's bunk bay. He places the thorny rose he stole from the Estate Rose Garden on top of Koko's pillow, along with a folded Greeting Card that is blank on the outside. He then goes over to his bunk.

JONES (CONT'D)
How was your day?

KOKO
Ever have to read John Milton?

JONES
No.

KOKO
When you do, you'll understand how my day went.

JONES
Mind if I take a shower?

KOKO
For the love of all creatures great and small, please do!

CUT TO:

INT. CBI HQ (SITUATION ROOM) - NIGHT

DETECTIVE 1 and DETECTIVE 2 are sitting in the CBI Situation room. A number of other detectives are seated around the room, looking at MARSHAL Ryan, who is standing before a large monitor on the wall. The monitor displays an array of photos and notes about the case on which the CBI detective team is working.

MARSHAL RYAN

Alright. I know this is getting old, but let's go over what we know again.

Marshal Ryan points to the video monitor. He drags the notes and photos around on the monitor as appropriate to match his dialogue.

MARSHAL RYAN (CONT'D)

First. Six months ago, Mister Ernest Silvio, retired chief executive officer of ZUMPCO, was kidnapped, tortured, and murdered.

(pause)

Four days later, Mister Patel, owner of Patel Aerospace Corporation. Also found dead under very suspicious circumstances.

(pause)

The only connection we have between these two men was that a courier ship, CIS Daisy, was owned by Mister Patel, but used exclusively by Mister Silvio. This arrangement was off of the records.

DETECTIVE 1

Any information on that relationship?

MARSHAL RYAN

The answer may have died with Mister Patel. If we can, find out why he was doing this.

(pause)

We followed the Daisy to the site of another murder. The victim was a woman, about forty years of age. When she was discovered, her body was already in an advanced state of decay, so we have not been able to precisely determine the time of death. She was killed within a week of Mister Patel.

DETECTIVE 2

How do we know that?

MARSHAL RYAN

At the murder scene, we were able to pull a timestamp from a bit of equipment that stopped functioning very close to the time that the woman was killed. The equipment was smashed, so we are presuming that the smashing and the murder happened at the same time.

DETECTIVE 1

Are there any connections between the murder weapons?

MARSHAL RYAN

Based on the entry and exit wounds, we determined that Mister Silvio was killed by a military-grade, four-millimeter flechette fired point blank to his head.

(pause)

The woman on Shangri-la was killed by an execution-style shot to the back of her head with a weapon-grade laser.

(takes a deep breath,
exhales)

What's really puzzling is that she was holding an automatic pistol, and it was obviously placed in her hand in a poor attempt to make her death look like suicide. And a ballistics check on this pistol matched the flechette that killed Silvio.

(pause)

So there's a direct connection between the perpetrators.

DETECTIVE 2

How was Mister Patel killed?

MARSHAL RYAN

Run down by a hit-and-run grav-car driver while jogging on an isolated road outside of his estate. No witnesses. And no GPS traffic data to place any car transponders near the scene at the time. The vehicle had been scrubbed.

DETECTIVE 1

Have we traced the model numbers of the smashed equipment at the site on Shangri-la?

MARSHAL RYAN

Yes. The equipment was bought from various vendors by one Mister Haywood of Bonn, Europe. We traced the funds used in the purchase back to a personal account belonging to Mister Silvio.

(pause)

And the data records showed that they had been accessed before us. We weren't the first ones. But the access logs were not traceable to the source. They hacked in from a zombie terminal.

DETECTIVE 2

Have we questioned Mister Haywood?

Marshal Ryan points to a photo of another dead man.

MARSHAL RYAN

Yes, but he wasn't talkative.

DETECTIVE 1

Location and time of death on Mister Haywood?

MARSHAL RYAN

About five months ago on Tau Ceti. It was logged in the Interpol files. No suspects. No witnesses. Assassination style death.

DETECTIVE 2

Same wounds as the other victims?

MARSHAL RYAN

Yes. Flechette in the back of the head from point blank range.

DETECTIVE 1

Any known connections?

MARSHAL RYAN

The only living connection we have between all these murders is Captain Steven Delaney, who is the current owner of the CIS Daisy.

(MORE)

MARSHAL RYAN (CONT'D)

As far as we can tell, he's not involved.

(pause)

It is imperative that nothing happen to this man or this ship. He's all we have to go on.

DETECTIVE 2

How close should we get to Delaney?

MARSHAL RYAN

I do not want him to know what is going on right now. Eventually, I believe we'll have to bring him in for questioning, but right now he's our rabbit. I want to watch him and see where he goes. Who he talks to. Who he phones. Who he works for. Who works for him--

(pause)

--anything could be important.

Marshal Ryan's DEPUTY opens the door and enters the room.

DEPUTY

I have an update on your rabbit, Marshal.

MARSHAL RYAN

Go on.

DEPUTY

Our stake-out officer says Delaney's ship is preparing to move out on a long-range trip.

MARSHAL RYAN

Contact the Navy. Have them relay information regarding his ship's movements. When we locate her destination, we'll set up another stake out.

DETECTIVE 1

Where would you like us to concentrate our efforts first, Marshal?

MARSHAL RYAN

I'm really not sure. But you're the best and the brightest in the CBI. If you can't get this thing moving again, no one can. We're missing a huge piece of the puzzle.

(MORE)

MARSHAL RYAN (CONT'D)

(pause)

Get back to basics. Keep asking ourselves, why? I want motive. I want witnesses. I want evidence.

(frustrated)

Above all, I want all my connections to Mister Silvio to stop dying before we get to them!

CUT TO:

INT. CIS DAISY - NIGHT

Jones is wearing his pajamas. He goes to bed, closing his door.

Koko is still working intently at her engineering station when Ledge enters through the airlock. He is carrying several shopping bags filled with various supplies. He drops all but one bag off in the Galley bay, about halfway down the crew section. He then walks to the cockpit and hands Koko a bag.

LEDGE

Here you go, Koko. I found everything you asked for.

(pause)

Assorted hygiene supplies, deodorant, and some special vacuum-ready bullets for your pistol.

Koko takes the bag and looks through it. She fishes out a pine-tree shaped air freshener and replaces it. She then fishes out a box of bullets. She replaces them as well, then sets down the bag.

KOKO

I hope we don't need these, but thanks for picking them up. If we have a gunfight in vacuum, the regular flechettes will tumble.

LEDGE

You know a lot about guns.

KOKO

I am not a gun nut, okay?

LEDGE

I didn't say you were. I only noticed that you know a whole lot about them.

KOKO
I was raised by wolves.

Ledge walks over to his bunk bay. He opens the privacy door and prepares to take a shower as he continues to speak with Koko.

LEDGE
Is Jones asleep?

KOKO
Yeah.

LEDGE
How much longer will you be at it?

KOKO
I'm almost done. Just another few minutes. Then I'm hitting the sack.

Suddenly, a loose bolt falls from the ceiling and lands on the floor next to Koko.

LEDGE
You're going to fix that, right?

Koko reaches down and picks up the bolt. She then looks up at the ceiling, trying to figure out where it came from.

KOKO
Yeah. I'll get right on it.

LEDGE
Feel free to sleep in if you want.
We shouldn't need you for a while.
(pause)
In the meantime, I'm going to take a shower, and then hit the bunk myself. We've got a long flight ahead of us. Are you still okay with re-basing to the frontier?

KOKO
Fine by me, Boss. I get paid either way. And it should be fun. I hear it can get pretty wild out there.

LEDGE
You heard right. My primary job is keeping us all safe.
(MORE)

LEDGE (CONT'D)

The cost of living out there is a bit higher, but the rent is next to nothing, so we should be able to make it on less than we have to spend around Earth.

KOKO

You have a plan?

LEDGE

Yeah. We're going to a planet named Xia. The land there is cheap. I figure we buy a plot, then set up business there. Free landing space, and we can get some pre-fabricated houses so we don't have to sleep in the ship or pay through the nose for hotels.

(pause)

We'll set up a workshop so we can do maintenance right there. It's close to the frontier, but it's still on a main shipping route, so we can get spare parts and other things if we need them.

(pause)

Plus, it still has Navy patrols, so it's pretty safe.

KOKO

Sounds good.

LEDGE

Thanks for all the hard work. You're doing a great job.

(pause)

And on that note, I'm off to shower.

EXT. SPACEPORT - TRANSITIONAL

It is night at the spaceport. The *CIS Daisy* is still sitting on the tarmac, docked to the spaceport terminal.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Ledge walks to the rear of the crew section, enters the shower stall carrying a towel and a bar of soap.

Koko climbs out of her engineer's station, holding the bag Ledge gave her. She stretches and yawns, obviously tired from working all day. She walks over to her bunk bay. She starts putting away the contents of the bag when she notices the rose and card Jones placed on her pillow. Koko picks up the rose and the card. She opens and reads the CARD.

EXTREME CLOSE SHOT ON CARD

The handwritten CARD reads: A Wild rose for a Wild Lady -
Mind the thorns!

BACK TO SCENE

Koko seems affected by Jones' gesture. She sets the rose down. She then puts the card inside the same drawer where she keeps her pistol and her boomerang. She closes and locks the drawer.

Off-screen, inside the shower stall, Ledge begins singing Waltzing Matilda off-key.

Koko quickly strips down to her underwear. She is paying attention to Ledge singing in the shower, making sure she finishes what she is doing before he steps out. She tosses her clothes on top of her bunk.

Koko deftly picks up the thorny rose. She then closes her own privacy door from the outside. She softly walks over to Jones' bunk bay. She carefully lifts the door and steps inside. She closes it behind her. We hear...

SFX as Koko fastens the LATCH.

INT. CIS DAISY (JONES' BUNK BAY) - SAME

Koko is standing beside Jones on the inside of his bunk bay. It is dark. Koko sniffs the rose. Jones stirs from his slumber, still groggy.

JONES

Koko?

(pause)

What are you--

KOKO

(softly)

Sssshhhh. Be very, very quiet.

Koko climbs onto Jones' bunk, straddling him at the waist.
Jones is speechless.

KOKO (CONT'D)

If you want to fly with me, you'd
better grow a pair of wings.

(pause)

Because when I jump, I don't wear a
grav pack.

Fully aware that the thorns are still attached, Koko
carefully places the rose's stem between her teeth. She then
leans down over Jones and kisses him on the mouth.

INT. CIS DAISY - CREW SECTION

We are looking at the closed exterior door to Jones' bunk
bay.

JONES (O.S.)

Ow!

KOKO (O.S.)

Sssshhhh.

FADE OUT:

TAG

EXT. PLANET XIA (ORBIT) - ESTABLISHING

CIS Daisy jumps into frame from hyperspace. An Earth-like planet with equal areas of land and water is visible in the distance. The planet has a single moon that is smaller than the Earth's moon.

CAPTION: CPH-8 Planet Xia.

INT. CIS DAISY (COCKPIT) - SAME

Jones and Ledge are sitting in their flight stations. Jones is wearing shorts and a pull-over shirt. He is applying topical ointment and spray-on bandages to his lips, arms, and other areas that were scratched either in his earlier escape from the rose garden or through his escapades with Koko.

LEDGE

So, what happened to you?

JONES

I slipped and fell into a briar patch.

LEDGE

Koko sure is sleeping well. She's almost always up and about by now.

JONES

She was working really hard getting the ship ready. Probably just worn out.

LEDGE

I'll bet.

JONES

So, what do you think of her?

LEDGE

I like her. She's a nice girl. But she's a real heartbreaker.

JONES

What do you mean?

LEDGE

She's the kind of girl who likes her freedom. She doesn't like rules or being bossed around.

JONES

But she listens to you.

LEDGE

That's because I ask her to do things. If I started telling her what to do, I think she'd leave.

(pause)

Remember that.

Jones thinks about Ledge's warning. He then goes back to doctoring his scratches.

INT. CIS DAISY (KOKO'S BUNK BAY) - SAME

Koko is laying awake in her bunk bay. She has a few scratches of her own. The privacy door is closed. The lights are on. She sits up in her bunk, folds her arms over her knees. She rests her head on her arms. She looks sad and vulnerable as she stares at the wall. A tear runs from her eye.

INT. CIS DAISY (COCKPIT) - SAME

Jones and Ledge are sitting at their flight stations.

JONES

So, this is going to be home for a while?

LEDGE

I'm hoping so.

JONES

Don't misunderstand me when I ask this--

(pause)

--but do we really need to come all the way out here to run salvage missions? I'm thinking that some of the trips we make will be just as far as if we based out of Earth or one of the inner colonies.

LEDGE

Do you want the honest answer?

JONES
Of course.

LEDGE
Then tell me why you're really
working for me.

JONES
I told you. I don't really know.
Yet.

LEDGE
That's alright. I guess I don't
really know why I'm out here
either. Maybe just because it's
quiet.

FADE OUT:

THE END