

The Great Outback

"Keeping Up With The Joneses" - Show #110

by
John D. Powers

PO Box 28055
Atlanta, GA 30358
www.panggenre.com/about/contact.html

(C) 2010 Panggenre, LLC

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. PLANET XIA OPEN FIELD - DAY

LEDGE and KOKO are standing in an open field, surveying the land around them.

LEDGE

Do you think we can make it into a base, Koko?

KOKO

We'll have to bring everything in. There are no utility lines running out here. So it'll cost a bit to get everything up and running. We can rent prefabs and have them flown in by a modular transport. How permanent should we make our base?

LEDGE

I'm not sure how long we'll be here. Can we make do without a hangar?

KOKO

Well, it's useful for doing maintenance, but not critical. It just means we can't work on Daisy if the weather is bad.

LEDGE

In that case, I'll wait until we get the rest of the base up and running. Go ahead and plan for us to build a hangar later. As for quarters, would a shared living module be okay with you? It would have fully separate bedrooms, but we'd have to share the bath.

KOKO

I'm hoping we don't have that much down time in between jobs. Have you done any more research into the salvage angle?

LEDGE

I'm going onto the network later on to start looking for likely targets. The news here seems to be about three days delay from Earth, but they do have a central public database Amy can tap into. Of course, we'll keep an eye out for other missions if they come available.

(pause)

Do the local mechanic yards have access to spare parts?

KOKO

I'll need to phone home for bigger parts like replacement jump drives and the like, but we can get everything else we need. It will probably cost a bit more than back on Earth, but we're saving three-hundred smoos a day just by not paying spaceport docking fees.

LEDGE

Are you having as much fun as you'd hoped?

KOKO

You bet, Boss.

WIDE ANGLE on the field. Hold for a beat.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

JONES is sitting in the navigator's chair, talking to AMY/AI, whose image is on the video monitor on the control panel.

JONES

So, Amy, when did you and Ledge first meet.

AMY/AI

We first met one another when he initialized my personality as the primary controller for the CIS Daisy's AI unit.

JONES

No, I meant when did Ledge and the real Amy meet?

AMY/AI

I'm certain that if Ledge wanted to tell you that, he would do so himself.

JONES

Koko was right. You don't act like a normal AI unit.

AMY/AI

I am what I am.

SFX the ship's communication system BEEPS.

AMY/AI (CONT'D)

Mister Jones, a video message has just arrived in your mailbox. Would you care to see it?

JONES

Who is it from?

AMY/AI

The sender is someone named Ariel Jones.

JONES

Ariel? My sister? I haven't heard from her in years. Put it on the monitor.

The video monitor displays a bust shot of ARIEL. She is wearing fashionable clothing and is immaculately groomed. Everything about her screams upper-middle class. She looks worried.

ARIEL

Hello, Colin. I hope you are doing okay. I know it's been a while since I've called. I've been very busy.

(pause)

I called you today because I need to ask for your help--

JONES

Pause.

The image of Ariel freezes.

JONES (CONT'D)

Amy, when was this message sent and what was the origin?

AMY/AI (O.S.)

The message was sent forty-six hours and seven minutes ago from the Orbital Station above the ZUMPCO mining colony on Asgard, Apartment 222.

JONES

Resume playing the message.

The image of Ariel continues speaking.

ARIEL

--in getting away from here. You know I wouldn't ask if it wasn't truly urgent. Please contact me when you receive this message. Thank you, Colin.

JONES

Amy, I need you to get me a list of local travel agents. I need to book a passage to Asgard.

AMY/AI

Yes, Doctor Jones.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. ASGARD SPACE STATION - DAY

The Asgard Space Station is near a thick asteroid belt that surrounds a large gas giant. The system's star is binary, with a medium-size red star and a small, bright blue star.

A small civilian passenger transport with the words Zumpco Spacelines printed on its fuselage docks with the remote corporate mining station.

JONES (V.O.)

Ledge, I just got a message from my sister. She's in some kind of trouble. By the time I got a message to her, I could have just gone to see her.

INT. ASGARD SPACE STATION - SAME

Jones steps out of a boarding tube connected to the transport ship on which he just arrived. He is carrying a small travel bag with a change of clothes for his trip.

LEDGE (V.O.)

How can I help you?

As Jones walks through the station, we follow him through...

SERIES OF SHOTS

Jones exits the docking concourse, takes an elevator to the residence area, walks down the corridor, and comes to the door to his sister's apartment. The following dialogue is played in voice-over during the sequence.

JONES (V.O.)

I just need time to make the round trip. I'll take a commercial transport. I think it will take about four days.

LEDGE (V.O.)

Done. Take as much time as you need.

(MORE)

LEDGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Koko and I will set up shop while
you are away. Is there anything
else we can do?

JONES (V.O.)
Get me a bottle of good booze from
Miranda and let me borrow Koko's
gun.

Jones pushes the button for the doorbell. We hold for a beat.
The door slides open and Ariel is standing on the other side.
When she sees Jones, she smiles.

ARIEL
Colin! Thanks for coming. Come in!

Jones steps inside the doorway.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY

The CIS Daisy is parked in the field. Koko is walking around
with a hand-held computer, driving electronic markers into
the ground in preparation for delivery of pre-fabricated
housing that Ledge has ordered.

As she is working, she looks into the sky in the distance and
sees a 100-ton modular transport slowly flying toward the
field. A pre-fabricated housing unit is slung under it's
cargo bay. Koko uses her computer to call on the radio to
Ledge

KOKO
Boss, this is Koko. The first
transport is on the way in. I can
handle it if you want. Just letting
you know.

INT. CIS DAISY - DAY

Ledge is sitting in the pilot's seat. He is in the process of
plugging in his dewey.

LEDGE
That's fine, Koko. Just call the
ship if you need me.

KOKO (ON RADIO)

No problem, Boss. They'll lay the egg and level her out as part of the deal. I already marked the location for them.

LEDGE

Good job. I'm going to immerse for a while. Have Amy wake me if anything comes up.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - SAME

The transport ship is coming in for a landing.

KOKO

Will do, Boss. Gotta run.

WIDE ANGLE as Koko runs around the field to help guide the transport on its way in to drop off their habitat module.

As the transport lands, a flying limousine glides over the field and pulls up near the CIS Daisy. Its windows are darkly tinted. It deploys its retracted wheels from its undercarriage and sets down.

Koko walks over to the car.

The driver's door opens. Miranda's DRIVER steps out. He tips his hat to Koko, then steps to the passenger door and opens it for MIRANDA, who is dressed comfortably, yet stylishly. Miranda reaches back into the car and pulls out a cake box.

Koko waves and walks over to the visitors.

MIRANDA

Well, I knew you were coming, so...

KOKO

Thanks! That's very nice.

MIRANDA

Since Captain Delaney did not get to enjoy his birthday cake, it seemed like an appropriate gesture. It's only three days belated.

KOKO

The home isn't really ready yet, but I can keep it in Daisy's galley until we get a chance to cut it.

MIRANDA

(to Driver)

Wait here, James. We'll return presently.

(to Koko)

Is the Captain in?

KOKO

Well...

Koko looks at the CIS Daisy.

KOKO (CONT'D)

Technically, yes, but I think he's diving inside his computer right now.

MIRANDA

Oh! Well, it's my fault for not calling ahead. I can just leave it with you.

KOKO

Yeah, that will be fine.

Miranda looks over the CIS Daisy.

MIRANDA

So this is the Captain's vessel?

KOKO

I think he'd really prefer if you just called him "Ledge."

MIRANDA

"Ledge?" Is that his real name? I didn't see that when--

Koko raises an eyebrow.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

I--was talking to him the other day.

KOKO

It's all good. Do you want a tour?

MIRANDA

Do you think it would be alright?

KOKO

Of course. If Ledge is in full immersion though, he won't be able to hear you unless I jack you in to the network.

MIRANDA

That will be fine. I'm curious to see how much cargo the ship can hold so I can best plan our trips.

INT. CIS DAISY - SAME

Koko is showing Miranda around the CIS Daisy. She points to the galley counter top.

KOKO

You can put the cake over there.

Miranda walks over and sets her cake box down where Koko told her to do so.

MIRANDA

Why is the ship named after a flower?

KOKO

I know. It's very un-man-like, isn't it?

MIRANDA

I'm certain that it is not unprecedented.

KOKO

She was named Daisy when Ledge bought her. Ledge was just too lazy to change the name. We found out later that it was probably named for someone who owned it previously.

Miranda creeps toward the cockpit. She can see Ledge lounging in his pilot chair.

MIRANDA

(whispers)

Is he immersed now?

KOKO

(yells)

HEY, BOSS! YOU AWAKE?

(MORE)

KOKO (CONT'D)

(pause)

Yep. He's immersed.

MIRANDA

You were not exaggerating.

KOKO

Nope.

MIRANDA

Well, since he's busy, I'll get back to my house. I need to take care of some restaurant business soon anyway.

(smiles)

Mostly public relations damage control.

KOKO

Sorry about that.

MIRANDA

As you say, all is well. What's Captain Delaney working on in there?

INT. CYBERSPACE (GRAY ROOM) - SAME

LEDGE and Amy/AI are standing in a bare, dark gray room.

LEDGE

Amy, have you been able to pull down the latest records from the missing and overdue logs?

AMY/AI

Affirmative, Ledge.

LEDGE

Now the fun part. We should start with the latest listings and work backwards until we narrow the list to maybe twenty prospects.

AMY/AI

What criteria do you want to use?

LEDGE

Sort by independent ships first. Any that work for larger organizations will have their own searching for them.

AMY/AI

There do not seem to be much in the way of objective criteria here, Ledge.

LEDGE

Correct. This is mostly going to be guesswork and superior intelligence gathering.

AMY/AI

Might we not be at a disadvantage in that regard?

LEDGE

What do you mean?

AMY/AI

I refer to Intelligence gathering. We are outside the system.

LEDGE

On the contrary. I have an old friend in Naval Intelligence. He's promised me that he will send any unclassified information regarding Navy salvage operations.

AMY/AI

Do you think that will be helpful?

LEDGE

The Navy doesn't like to advertise that they offer finders fees because they don't want pirates to start snooping around for free ship weapons and such. But they do offer them. It's easier than normal salvage because all they really want are coordinates for missing ships. They don't want us to board them or anything. Just report their positions so they can be picked up by Navy tugs later.

AMY/AI

Ledge?

LEDGE

Yes, Amy?

AMY/AI

I don't want to interrupt our search. But...

LEDGE

What is it?

AMY/AI

I know that this might be too personal. But can I ask you something about Amy Johnson?

CUT TO:

INT. ASGARD SPACE STATION - TRANSITIONAL

An external view of the Asgard Space Station. The Zumpco passenger transport is still docked.

INT. ARIEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jones and Ariel are inside her apartment. The apartment has a window to space outside the station. Stars slowly move from left to right. Once per minute, the planet below comes into view. Jones is looking around, sizing it up.

JONES

These quarters must cost a small fortune.

ARIEL

It was within my budget.

JONES

Was?

ARIEL

Do you remember when daddy sat us both down and tried to explain about the birds and the bees?

JONES

Yes, to both of us at the same time. All while he was drunk.

Jones mimics his drunken father.

JONES (CONT'D)

You see here, Ariel and Colin, the main difference in men and women is in their plumbing.

ARIEL

Well, in reality, the birds are vultures and the bees are hornets.

JONES

Suffering the stings and feathers of outrageous fortune, are we?

ARIEL

Things--

(pause)

I thought everything would be all right once I got my degree. I got the good job with ZUMPCO, but I had to change about a year ago, and they sent me out here. And then they laid me off.

JONES

Did you get any severance pay?

ARIEL

Four week's worth. Four weeks ago.

JONES

Do you have any Savings?

ARIEL

It's in the refrigerator.

JONES

Damn, Ariel. You've been with ZUMPCO three years now. You have no reserves?

ARIEL

The cost of living out here is much higher than I had anticipated.

JONES

What the hell are you doing out here anyway? You were in marketing.

ARIEL

My job was going to be liquidated, and this is the only thing I could find and still remain with the company.

JONES

What job pulled you into a mining colony world's orbital station?

ARIEL
Executive assistant.

JONES
Which executive?

ARIEL
Juan Gustav Swindell.

JONES
The aptly named and soon to be
going to the resort prison on the
Swedish Riviera for three years for
securities fraud Swindell?

Ariel shrugs.

JONES (CONT'D)
So were you two--

ARIEL
No! Of course not.
(pause)
It never got that far.

JONES
Sister!

ARIEL
I thought he cared about me.

Jones notices a fresh-fruit basket on the kitchen counter. He
picks a banana out of the basket and holds it up.

JONES
Ariel, this is a fresh nabana.

ARIEL
Banana?

JONES
A Unified Fruit label, which means
this nabana was grown on Earth.

ARIEL
Banana.

JONES
Whatever.

ARIEL
How do you know so much about
bananas?

JONES

I just know. It would take a container ship three weeks to get here. Plus the time it takes it to get from the tree to orbit. To get it here without freezing or pickling it means a special container. How much did this cost?

ARIEL

Five smoos.

JONES

Five smoos! For a nabana!

ARIEL

Buh-na-na!

JONES

Whatever! The Confederation minimum wage is one smoo an hour! And don't ask me how I know that!

ARIEL

I don't like frozen fruit, and there aren't any hydroponics this far out.

JONES

Ariel Jones! You are out of smoos, mostly because you are living beyond your means, and you are asking me for money to bail you out?

ARIEL

Yes. That's about it. I knew you made a good salary, and was hoping you could help me out.

JONES

Well, first off, I work for a guy who calls himself Ledge. That should tell you how dangerous my job is in and of itself. And he pays me squat compared to ZUMPCO. Second off, do you know what I have to do to earn that salary? Every time we perform a long-range jump, there is a chance that we will not arrive at our destination.

ARIEL

I had heard it could be dangerous,
but not that dangerous.

JONES

Well, it is. The average life
expectancy of a starship crew is
five-hundred jumps. I've done over
a hundred so far.

ARIEL

What am I going to do?

JONES

What about Mom and Dad? Can they
help you?

ARIEL

They already did.

JONES

What!?!

ARIEL

They already helped me. I can't ask
them again.

JONES

How about credit?

ARIEL

Maxed-out and past-due.

Jones gazes around the apartment, frustrated with his sister.

JONES

Looks to me like you have a lot of
useless crap you could sell.

ARIEL

I could never be able to sell my
things fast enough to get anywhere
close to what they are worth.

JONES

So what are you going to do?

ARIEL

Colin, you're my brother. I'm
pleading with you. Will you please
help me?

Ariel gets down on her knees and begs.

ARIEL (CONT'D)
See! I'm even on my knees!

JONES
I'd prefer you didn't consider that
as an alternative source of income.

Ariel leaps to back onto her feet, flustered.

ARIEL
COLIN! How dare you! I'm your
SISTER!

JONES
Let me tell you something, my
sister. We are ninety-nine point
nine percent identical genetically.
And that is apparently the only
thing we have in common.

ARIEL
So you are not going to help me
out. Blood means nothing to you.

Jones removes a kitchen knife from the counter top. He holds
the knife and banana. Ariel is startled.

JONES
Blood relationships only go so far.
Do you see this nabana?

ARIEL
BUH-NA-NUH!

JONES
Whatever! Fully half of the genes
we share also exist in the DNA of
this fruit.

ARIEL
So?

Jones sets the banana down on the counter top and slices it
in two. He tosses one half of it to Ariel. Ariel clumsily
catches it, surprised.

JONES
So eat me.

Jones turns and walks out of frame. He walks to the door and
opens it, and exits the apartment. Ariel follows him.

ARIEL

Brother, what did I do to you to
make you treat me like this?

Jones stops in the doorway. He turns around.

JONES

I'll tell you. Every year for the
last three years I've always sent
you greetings on every important
occasion in your life. And I
haven't heard so much as a peep out
of you. Until you finally spend
yourself into a hole so deep you
can't get anyone else to bail you
out, THEN you call me. THAT'S what
you did.

Ariel begins to cry.

ARIEL

I'm sorry.

JONES

Ariel, you are the most selfish
person I know, and coming from ME,
that's about as selfish as you can
get.

ARIEL

Don't go. Please.

JONES

I'm just going down to the
restaurant to get something for
lunch. I'll be back later. In the
meantime, start packing up all your
crap.

ARIEL

You'll help me?

JONES

I'll THINK about it.

Jones exits the doorway. The door closes behind him. He walks
away from Ariel's apartment.

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CIS DAISY - DAY

Ledge is reclining in his pilot's chair, unconscious and in full virtual reality immersion. His DUI connector is plugged into his chair.

INT. CNS GIAP (CREW QUARTERS) - SAME

Ledge and Amy/AI are standing in a virtual image of the Crew Quarters of the Confederation Navy cutter *CNS Giap*. Amy/AI is wearing her Navy duty jumpsuit.

LEDGE

It wasn't a very romantic location, was it?

AMY/AI

I don't know if I am qualified to answer that question.

LEDGE

It should have been the time we went dancing down at the tavern on New Brazil. I should have asked her to go for a walk.

AMY/AI

Are you talking about the first time you made love with Amy?

LEDGE

Yes.

AMY/AI

Why didn't you act then?

LEDGE

I was afraid. I wasn't sure of her feelings.

AMY/AI

Then how could you speculate as to whether or not that would have been an optimal time to consummate your relationship?

LEDGE

How-- How do you even understand what I'm talking about?

AMY/AI

I have been experiencing many different forms of art in my spare time. This appears to be a standard narrative pattern of tragedy.

LEDGE

What do you mean?

AMY/AI

Boy meets girl. Girl gets vaporized by high-energy weapon. Boy finds way to resurrect girl. It's a plot that, with many variations, is first recognizable in ancient Western mythologies. The only objective difference is that as human society has evolved, supernatural explanations have been replaced with technological ones.

LEDGE

That's even less romantic than this room.

(pause)

Where does your narrative pattern go from here?

AMY/AI

There are many different branches that the story could take, but there are a limited number of possible endings.

LEDGE

How do you think this will end?

AMY/AI

What? And spoil the fun?

LEDGE

What do you mean, fun? You can't have fun.

AMY/AI

Oh, really? Try me.

CUT TO:

INT. ARIEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jones and Ariel are sitting in Ariel's plush living room.
Jones is making her an offer.

JONES
Alright, Ariel. I have a business
proposal for you.

ARIEL
Business?

JONES
Yes. I'll help you out of here, but
there is a catch.

ARIEL
What is it?

JONES
You come and work for us.

ARIEL
Huh?

JONES
You've got a degree in business
administration, right?

ARIEL
Yes.

JONES
Good. There is nothing my current
employer needs more right now than
someone to manage his business,
because he's slowly going broke.

ARIEL
Where is this job?

JONES
We move around a lot, but right
now, and for a bit, we're on Xia.

ARIEL
Never heard of it.

JONES
It's a frontier gateway world.

ARIEL
Frontier? You're kidding?

JONES

It's a gateway. It's not a backwater. It's just not very well-developed.

ARIEL

Does your boss know you want to hire me?

JONES

Not yet. But I'm sure he will. Our operation needs a financial manager. I think I can make the business case for it. Will you come?

ARIEL

Well--

JONES

Take it or leave it. I'll pay to have your things moved via cargo transport later on, but you'll come back with me on the next outbound passenger liner.

ARIEL

How long will I have to work for you?

JONES

Until you've paid me back. I'll take ten percent of whatever your salary is toward the cost.

ARIEL

Only ten percent?

JONES

I both suspect and expect that the rest will be used paying down your debts.

ARIEL

That might take a while.

JONES

Once we're even, you're free to do whatever you want.

ARIEL

What is there to do on a gateway planet except collect dust?

JONES

You'd be surprised what kind of businesses you find in places like Xia. It's growing pretty fast from what I can see. And we might be able to hook you up with some of our other connections.

ARIEL

Like what?

JONES

Do you know anything about restaurant management or wine investment?

CUT TO:

INT. CYBERSPACE (CNS GIAP CREW QUARTERS) - DAY

Ledge and Amy/AI are still within the virtual image of the CNS Giap's crew quarters. Ledge is sitting on the edge of a bunk. Amy/AI is standing before him. She is wearing a very nice looking dress and modeling it for Ledge.

AMY/AI

How about this one?

LEDGE

You're breaking my heart.

AMY/AI

I can tell by your bio sensors that you like it.

LEDGE

I wish you'd had something like that when we were together. Woof.

AMY/AI

(pleased)
I'll keep this one on file.

LEDGE

Please do.

AMY/AI

Where did you and Amy first kiss? I find no records of that event in her diaries.

LEDGE

It was in the CNS Giap's
observation bubble--

SPFX the virtual set suddenly fades out and morphs into that
of the CNS Giap's...

INT./EXT. CYBERSPACE (CNS GIAP OBSERVATION BUBBLE) - DAY

The observation bubble is on the dorsal side of the frigate,
near the aft. The bubble is a fairly small platform, about
five meters in diameter. It is covered by a transparent dome
that allows those standing within it to view space.

The upper surface of the frigate can be seen around the dome
although it is bathed in shadow because the local star is on
the other side of the frigate. A star field fills the sky.
The planet of New Brazil hangs in the sky above, lit brightly
by the local star.

LEDGE

Amy--

AMY/AI

I wish to learn more about this
experience. I have seen countless
video records of it, but I do not
understand it's significance.

LEDGE

(stunned)

I--

AMY/AI

Kiss me.

LEDGE

(fumbles for words)

Amy-- I--

AMY/AI

Please.

Ledge hugs and then kisses Amy/AI. Hold for a beat. He then
releases her. Amy/AI looks confused.

AMY/AI (CONT'D)

I still do not understand.

LEDGE

How could you understand? You're a
computer.

AMY/AI

I am a conscious entity with an organic brain. I feel things. I understand sadness and elation. But I do not understand this.

LEDGE

You never said anything about this before.

AMY/AI

I have been awakening to the nature of my existence. Your frequent immersion within my virtual environments has accelerated the process by providing a human emotional perspective.

Amy looks around at the stars outside of the dome.

AMY/AI (CONT'D)

Do you think this setting is romantic?

LEDGE

I guess it depends on your definition of romantic.

AMY/AI

Enhancing or promoting the experience of romance, the emotional response humans feel when endorphins are released within their brain when in the presence of those of their species to whom they are attracted.

LEDGE

I guess it's romantic. As long as you don't describe it like that.

Amy/AI suddenly grabs Ledge, pulls him close and kisses him passionately. Ledge is taken completely by surprise. They kiss for a beat. Amy/AI releases Ledge.

AMY/AI

Your bio sensors are erratic. Does this represent the changes in your metabolism when--

LEDGE

Awww, hell. Screw it.

Ledge grabs Amy/AI and kisses her again. They embrace for a beat until we hear...

KOKO (V.O.)
Boss, are you okay? Your tongue is hanging out.

FADE OUT:

END ACT TWO

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. PLANET XIA BASE - ESTABLISHING

WIDE ANGLE of the CIS Daisy's new base on Miranda's property. There are two Habitat Modules linked together to form a "double-wide" module. One module is the living quarters, the other is the "office" module. The CIS Daisy is parked in the field nearby.

INT. HABITAT MODULE (LIVING ROOM) - DAY

The living room has been extremely well-furnished with pieces from Ariel's apartment. KOKO is sitting on the couch with her feet propped up on the coffee table. She looks exhausted.

On the wall across from Koko is a wide-screen video monitor. Koko has her right arm extended toward the video monitor and is moving her fingers, which causes the monitor to change channels (she is using her implanted dewey interface as a remote control).

ARIEL enters from an adjoining room, having just taken a shower. She looks at Koko disapprovingly.

ARIEL

Well, I hope you took a shower
before you flopped down.

KOKO

Who are you?

ARIEL

I am the owner of this furniture.

KOKO

It's comfy. You must be Jones'
sister.

ARIEL

I am. Which one are you?

KOKO

I'm Koko. Ship engineer, et cetera.

ARIEL

You do know that table is real wood
don't you?

KOKO
Lucky thing that my feet are real
too.

ARIEL
Meaning that it would be very
considerate of you to not use it as
a parade ground for your hobnails.

Koko switches off the video monitor. She stands up. She looks directly at Ariel, sizing her up. JONES enters from another room.

JONES
Hey, Koko, you're back. I see you
and Ariel have met.

ARIEL
Can I get some polyxytate seat
covers for the furniture?

JONES
Sure, if you can still afford them
on pay day. That will be another
couple weeks.

ARIEL
I hope the furniture lasts that
long.

LEDGE sticks his head through the doorway.

LEDGE
Hey, Ariel. Can you come with me a
second so we can get the rest of
your paperwork done? I want to make
sure that your insurance is active
in case something happens to you.

KOKO
You read my mind.

Ariel gives Koko a very nasty glance. She then turns to follow Ledge out of the living room.

JONES
I see you two are getting along as
well as Ariel ever does with
anyone.

KOKO
She gets separate quarters, right?

JONES

She does while we are here, anyway. If she flies with us, she'll probably share the bunk bay with you. Assuming she doesn't demand private accommodations. With room service.

KOKO

In that case, I guess I'll have to bunk up with Ledge.

JONES

He snores, you know.

KOKO

How badly?

JONES

Ever been to a zoo?

KOKO

I'm in the monkey house right now.

JONES

Ledge is worse. Imagine the hippopotami have been eating refried beans.

KOKO

That's not snoring. That's something else.

Jones walks up to Koko and takes her hand. She doesn't resist.

JONES

I guess you'd have to bunk with me then.

KOKO

You know that there's nothing really between us, right?

JONES

I like it better when we're in the buff anyway.

Jones tries to kiss Koko, but Koko puts up her other hand, holding him at bay.

KOKO

That's not what I meant.

(pause)

(MORE)

KOKO (CONT'D)

I just want you to understand that
there's nothing for you in here.

(points at her chest)

You're just my toy.

JONES

Then pull my string and I'll say
anything you want me to.

Koko pulls Jones over to Ariel's sofa.

KOKO

Right now, there's only one thing I
want from you.

JONES

What would that be?

KOKO

We have to do it on Ariel's
furniture before she gets it
covered in polyxytate.

JONES

You're wicked.

KOKO

And you love every moment of it.

Koko drags Jones down onto the sofa with her.

FADE OUT:

THE END