

# ***WOMEN OF 4G***

*By*  
*Amy Tofte*

# WOMEN OF 4G

## **WOMEN OF 4G**

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WOMEN OF 4G

*for Marian, Mabel and Mary*

## WOMEN OF 4G

*Women of 4G* was originally produced at the Zephyr Theatre in Los Angeles, CA by Drive Theatre & Fierce Backbone, featuring the following cast:

Pierce.....Isabelle Loeb  
Stark.....Jully Lee  
Nataki.....Lily Rains  
Wollman.....Cady Zuckerman  
Baston.....Samantha Barrios  
Cava.....Janlyn Williams  
Toulle.....Jane H. Kim

*Women of 4G* received its 2<sup>nd</sup> production at the Factory Theater in Chicago, IL by Babes With Blades Theatre Company, featuring the following cast:

Pierce.....Jillian Leff  
Stark.....Ashley Yates  
Nataki.....LaKecia Harris  
Wollman.....Jazmín Corona  
Baston.....Catherine Dvorak  
Cava.....Renee Lockett  
Toulle.....Judi Schindler

### CAST: 7 Women

ENSIGN PIERCE	20s, first extended mission
STARK	40s, motherly
NATAKI	30s, fiercely loyal
WOLLMAN	40s, ambitious
BASTON	30s, a skeptic
DR. CAVA	50s-60s, seen it all before
DR. TOULLE	40s-60s, pragmatic

TIME: About 75 years in the future.

PLACE: Government spacecraft 4G in orbit around Mars.

# WOMEN OF 4G

## ACT 1 SCENE 1

*The con of the government space vessel 4G. Simple but functional. Lights flicker as the ship grinds and lurches in distress. (This scene could also be a projected video or a voice recording.) ENSIGN PIERCE delivers a frantic transmission...*

**PIERCE.** Mayday, mayday, mayday. This is Ensign Pierce from the 4G expedition and deployment of the EON 468 network satellite. Everyone on board is- (*Banging from outside, someone trying to break into the con.*) Again, I am Ensign Jacqueline Pierce of the 4G expedition for the EON 468 satellite- (*The banging increases.*) Oh, god, please...tell my family I love them... Please tell them I... Oh, God- (*Banging. The transmission crackles and fades as lights flicker. PIERCE looks behind her. The con door opens. Blackout.*)

## SCENE 2

*20 hours earlier on the con of the 4G. The lights are normal, the space neat and tidy. STARK stands over a dead body covered in metallic fabric. With her are NATAKI, WOLLMAN and BASTON.*

**STARK.** What did you see?

**NATAKI.** Nothing.

**WOLLMAN.** I turned and he was there. In the door.

**BASTON.** He was already bleeding.

**NATAKI.** He collapsed.

**STARK.** And he said nothing?

**BASTON.** Nothing.

**WOLLMAN.** Not a damn thing. (*CAVA and TOULLE rush in.*)

**NATAKI.** No, he tried to speak.

**CAVA.** Oh, Christ. Captain Reardon?

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**STARK.** Well, did he or didn't he?

**TOULLE.** What's happened? (*Cava kneels to examine the body.*) What happened?

**NATAKI.** He collapsed.

**CAVA.** Jesus. He's gone.

**STARK.** What did he say? (*Pierce enters.*)

**WOLLMAN.** (*To Pierce.*) It's the captain.

**PIERCE.** Oh, god...

**TOULLE.** What happened?

**WOLLMAN.** He clutched the door. Bleeding. Then grabbed his throat. I thought he was-

**NATAKI.** He tried to speak. He looked at me and tried to say... I don't know what.

**TOULLE.** Dear god. Oh, dear god...

**CAVA.** The internal cameras went down ten minutes ago. We were trying to re-connect when we heard Baston-

**NATAKI.** Ten minutes ago? You're certain?

**CAVA.** Yes. He was talking to me from his ready room.

**TOULLE.** That's correct. I was there.

**BASTON.** I must have bumped you off. There was a camera disruption. The internal switch failed so I wired in. I was trying to fix it when I heard him-

**NATAKI.** He was in his ready room.

**BASTON.** I checked the linear console and saw the alert. We didn't lose any other part of the ship. Only communication between the bridge and his ready room, then the medical deck.

**STARK.** Nataki, how would the internal switch fail?

**NATAKI.** Not possible. That connection is locked.

**BASTON.** It's possible if it was programmed pre-launch or hacked mid-flight-

**NATAKI.** I have the only over-ride codes.

**BASTON.** I didn't say it wasn't difficult. I merely said it was possible.

**WOLLMAN.** Someone cut his communications...

**TOULLE.** ...so he couldn't call for help.

**BASTON.** Which means it was pre-meditated.

**NATAKI.** Hold on. That's a big leap. We don't know what this is.

**STARK.** Cava, what do you think?

**CAVA.** (*Studying the body.*) Abrasions around the mouth.

**STARK.** Could it be a virus? Is the crew in danger?

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**CAVA.** My guess would be poison.

**PIERCE.** Oh, God-

**BASTON.** Why was there blood if it was poison?

**TOULLE.** He bit his tongue from convulsing.

**STARK.** Could this be self-inflicted?

**CAVA.** We did his weekly psych survey. He was fine. Should I contact base with the medical beacon? There's nothing I can do for him but-

**NATAKI.** We left outer com reach ten minutes ago. We can't contact base until we clear orbit.

**TOULLE.** We left com reach and then this happens?

**BASTON.** Nope. Not pre-meditated at all.

**STARK.** Who did this? Huh? WHO DID THIS? *(They look at each other.)*

**WOLLMAN.** How can this be? Now? We're so close. We were almost there.

**TOULLE.** Yes. We're all inconvenienced. Including him.

**STARK.** Bas, you were with him. Right?

**BASTON.** We were testing the upload boosters against Wollman's updated profile. We found an anomaly that looked like a system bug-

**WOLLMAN.** There are no system bugs in my program.

**BASTON.** -looked like a system bug, but it checked out in the end. He sent me to re-set the console while he went to his ready room. I think he... He, uh...

**STARK.** What?

**BASTON.** I think he may have needed...the facilities.

**WOLLMAN.** He had to take a dump? In the middle of a diagnostic? Ha. Classic.

**STARK.** Wollman.

**WOLLMAN.** Sorry. Just happy to hear Captain Reardon was human after all.

**STARK.** *(To Baston.)* What exactly did you find in the console?

**BASTON.** The system was overloading, it- It was- Oh. Oh, no... *(Realizing.)* It was jammed manually. The overload was a decoy so I wouldn't notice when it took out his com. It was fine once I cleared the cache. He was away maybe eight minutes.

**TOULLE.** Dear God.

**STARK.** Wollman, where were you?

**WOLLMAN.** I was down the corridor when I heard the commotion.

**PIERCE.** *(Suddenly emotional.)* Oh, God. He can't be...he was...he was... *(Stark slams the wall with an open hand, angry.)*

**STARK.** SHIT! *(Everyone turns to Stark. Pierce checks her emotion.)*

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**WOLLMAN.** Stark. Captain Stark-

**STARK.** Whoa. No, no. I'm not captain.

**WOLLMAN.** You're the first senior officer-

**STARK.** But that's not how it works.

**NATAKI.** Tell us what you want, Stark.

**CAVA.** They're right. It's your ship now. Tell us what you want to do.

**STARK** (*Gathers herself.*) How long until live com reach?

**NATAKI.** Twenty hours before we clear orbit.

**BASTON.** At least.

**STARK.** What about an infrared signal? Morse Code.

**NATAKI.** Not with the radiation levels. We could try a boomerang-

**BASTON.** -but even that won't reach base for another six, seven hours. We're in dead space. We can't connect with anyone. Nothing.

**STARK.** How close to the data drop?

**NATAKI.** Five hours and forty minutes.

**BASTON.** If we can wait-

**WOLLMAN.** We cannot wait-

**NATAKI.** Wollman, enough.

**WOLLMAN.** I'm only saying what we're all thinking and-

**NATAKI.** Stop.

**TOULLE.** I'd like to hear what Wollman has to say.

**BASTON.** We're here because of her.

**WOLLMAN.** Thank you.

**CAVA.** Shouldn't we learn what happened first? I can't fully rule out disease-

**STARK.** You think disease is possible?

**CAVA.** No. I think he was poisoned. But we should work from facts-

**WOLLMAN.** Of course, we should but we can't delay our mission-

**NATAKI.** Wollman! Quiet! Give Stark some space. (*A silence.*)

**STARK.** Protocol dictates we inform base as soon as possible that our senior officer is down. Then we wait for instruction. But an incomplete mission impacts individual performance records. So, I'd like to hear everyone's thoughts before I make the decision. (*Another silence.*)

**BASTON.** I know the rules. But they'll send us back. If we send a com that this happened that's what they'll do.



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**WOLLMAN.** But they can't even respond to the boomerang for at least six hours. We're less than that from the upload. Send the message. But we make the data drop in the meantime. We do what we've come here to do.

**CAVA.** They'd have us turn back immediately. We have a dead senior officer-

**NATAKI.** We don't know what they'd do. This mission is level one priority. They could very well keep us on task.

**TOULLE.** The protocol is clear. If we continue, we risk reprimand. We could be stripped of rank and future missions. Period.

**BASTON.** Hell, I'm not ready to retire.

**TOULLE.** You think I am?

**CAVA.** Insubordination like that means prison.

**PIERCE.** Can they do that?

**CAVA.** And it wouldn't matter if he were taken out by only one of us, we'd all go down. So, whoever you are, thanks a lot.

**WOLLMAN.** We could be disgraced, of course. No matter how successful the mission. But the satellite's program upload is the single most important thing right now. We must continue.

**BASTON.** I'd like to point out that no one here—except maybe the kid—seems particularly distraught over the loss of Reardon. Just noting that.

**STARK.** Yes. I appreciate everyone's...professionalism. *(Pierce whimpers a bit.)*  
Pierce. What do you think we should do?

**PIERCE.** I want to complete my first mission. But, do you think someone...

**STARK.** Yes. Someone here murdered our captain. We all know it was one of us. *(Silence all around.)*

**PIERCE.** Oh, my god- Oh, God- *(Pierce becomes distraught, pacing.)*

**NATAKI.** Pierce. Calm down or leave the con immediately.

**STARK.** No. No one leaves.

**NATAKI.** I'm sorry, Stark. Tell me what you want. *(Stark inspects the body.)*

**STARK.** Dr. Cava's right. We turn back right away. It's not only protocol, it's-

**WOLLMAN.** But the satellite-

**NATAKI.** Hold yourself, Wollman.

**WOLLMAN.** *(Passionately to Stark.)* The satellite programming is specific to this orbit and the position of the primary moon in relationship to Earth, to the sun, to everything. If we don't take advantage-

**NATAKI.** I said stop. We know-

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**WOLLMAN.** You don't know! It took me seven years to complete this project, another twenty months preparing the upload program-

**NATAKI.** YOUR satellite program.

**WOLLMAN.** Yes! The most important thing I'll ever do! And I didn't come all this way to fail- *(Nataki pushes Wollman against the wall and holds her there.)*

**CAVA.** Hey, hey, hey!

**NATAKI.** I heard him last night. He said you miscalculated the upload range-

**WOLLMAN.** I didn't!

**NATAKI.** Perhaps he was calling things off?

**WOLLMAN.** Of course not!

**STARK.** Nataki. *(Nataki releases Wollman.)*

**NATAKI.** Perhaps you were inclined to change his mind? Or keep him from revealing your faulty system-

**WOLLMAN.** He was wrong!

**NATAKI.** So, you got rid of him?

**WOLLMAN.** Why would I do that? And risk your team's childish adherence to protocol? The last thing I want is to get turned around. Unlike you-

**NATAKI.** What? *(Wollman comes at Nataki...)*

**WOLLMAN.** You have far more to gain getting rid of Reardon which puts Stark in charge. You're now second-in-command of a priority one mission- *(Nataki goes after Wollman.)*

**STARK.** Nataki!

**WOLLMAN.** Everyone knows you'd do anything for her! Tell me I'm wrong!

**NATAKI.** You knew he was gonna pull the plug! *(Stark and Baston pull back Nataki. Cava and Toulle hold back Wollman. Wollman waits a beat then goes after Nataki again. Stark intervenes.)*

**STARK.** Enough! That's enough! Reardon is gone. This is not how we do things anymore. *(Nataki and Wollman settle.)*

**BASTON.** May I say something? Stark. May I?

**STARK.** Yes.

**BASTON.** Before we left, were any of you offered money to give up this assignment? I was. More than once. And it was a lot of money.

**STARK.** Why would someone do that?

**BASTON.** I don't know. But I wanted to be here. I told you that, Stark.

**STARK.** I remember.

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**NATAKI.** What's your point?

**BASTON.** They didn't get assigned on merit. They wanted to buy their way in. They wanted to pay me to back out. They were all men. And here we are.

**TOULLE.** I had an offer. Didn't even respond to him.

**CAVA.** Me, too.

**TOULLE.** And you didn't tell me?

**CAVA.** You didn't tell me.

**NATAKI.** ...I had an offer.

**TOULLE.** What do they know that we don't?

**BASTON.** This isn't a routine satellite upgrade. It's more than that, right? Stark? Wollman? Is he dead because of it? We have a right to know.

**CAVA.** I agree. We deserve to know.

**WOLLMAN.** *(To Stark.)* They should know.

**BASTON.** Holy shit.

**NATAKI.** Know what?

**STARK.** The satellite is still the EON 468. Construction completed three months ago. And we are uploading Wollman's new operating program into the unit through a routine, external data drop via spacewalk. That is what you signed up for. What you don't know is...we're funded by the United Nations with joint investment from the Global Rescue Effort.

**TOULLE.** So...it's not a communications satellite.

**WOLLMAN.** It is *also* a communications satellite. But that's only part of its functionality.

**STARK.** We have strict orders not to tell the crew until it's complete.

**CAVA.** Do not tell me it's a weapon. If we're up here manning a goddamn weapon, I'm done. I swear to-

**BASTON.** It has to be a weapon.

**NATAKI.** Stark?

**BASTON.** Look around. We're all military except Wollman.

**NATAKI.** *(To Stark.)* You said that was a coincidence.

**TOULLE.** The last time I was on an all-military crew, we dismantled nuclear warheads on the moon.

**CAVA.** I demand to know if this mission is about ending human life. I have the right to resist as defined by The World Health Council-

**STARK.** Cava, no. It's not a weapon.

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**NATAKI.** Stark?

**STARK.** The satellite, once online with Wollman's program, converts unfiltered solar UV radiation and sends it back to Earth. Wollman found a way to bombard particles with enough force that C-O-2 can be transformed into O-2 and O-3. Over time, it will repair the Earth's negative atmospheric changes. Wollman believes it could buy us...it could buy Earth at least another five hundred years. Maybe more.

**BASTON.** Holy shit.

**WOLLMAN.** But it's so much more than that! We can re-build our atmosphere! Not only repair it, improve it. We've done it in the lab but we've lacked a viable power source to produce it on a global scale. And once it works on Earth we can go elsewhere, we can build atmospheres to sustain life. That's what the EON can do.

But only out here-

**CAVA.** How is that possible?

**WOLLMAN.** The EON draws power from the Sun and generates transmissions at nearly a quarter light-speed which is exactly what we've not been able to harness on Earth. Mars provides the proper mass to support the orbit of the satellite. You've seen the specs. The EON is gigantic-

**PIERCE.** Cross-pull gravity allowance.

**WOLLMAN.** That's right.

**CAVA.** Jesus. What are we doing out here?

**WOLLMAN.** We're saving the planet. We're saving humanity.

**NATAKI.** ...woah, shit...

**TOULLE.** I think I preferred not knowing.

**BASTON.** But Wollman's right. *(To Stark.)* Killing Reardon put you in charge of a very important mission. We'll be heroes when this is done, especially our leader. You and Nataki could have worked together and-

**NATAKI.** I knew none of this.

**CAVA.** Wait-

**BASTON.** *(Re: Wollman.)* Well? She's known since our training. Stark's known for fourteen weeks now in transit and chosen not to tell us.

**STARK.** I was ordered not to. Not until the data drop was complete. There was concern from above that...the pressure, the enormity would impact our focus-

**TOULLE.** Of course.

**NATAKI.** They said that?

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**STARK.** There is no imminent danger here! This mission is routine...a simple data drop and upload to jump-start the program. There was no need to make it any more than that.

**CAVA.** Then why not tell us? *(Silence.)*

**NATAKI.** *(To Wollman.)* Where's the report? *(To Stark.)* He asked for a stat report last night to check the coordinates for the system upload.

**WOLLMAN.** It doesn't matter!

**TOULLE.** If he was shutting you down, it does.

**NATAKI.** I heard him ask for it. Because you miscalculated the orbital degree. She's lying.

**WOLLMAN.** I am not!

**TOULLE.** If he was going to pull the plug, YOU had more motive than anyone to get rid of him.

**STARK.** Did he ask for another diagnostic?

**WOLLMAN.** Yes! And he was wrong! Everything came back normal. The trajectories, everything. I don't know why he doubted me. My program works!

**PIERCE.** I was there. *(Everyone turns to Pierce.)* She's telling the truth. I was there when Wollman turned in the report last night. It was around midnight. He saw the numbers and he agreed with her. I heard the whole thing.

**WOLLMAN.** You were there?

**PIERCE.** Yes. He told me to...

**STARK.** Pierce?

**PIERCE.** He told me to hide in the closet.

**CAVA.** Oh, god. That creep. *(Wollman laughs again. The other women all look at Pierce who hangs her head.)*

**PIERCE.** I'm sorry. He told me not to tell.

**TOULLE.** I'm sure he did.

**STARK.** Then what happened? After Wollman left.

**PIERCE.** He approved everything. He was showing me how it all worked. Why we had to do the drop with the spacewalk because the mass of the ship can't get close enough to the satellite and how we had to time the upload with the alignment of the moons. I wanted to learn.

**CAVA.** I bet you learned all kinds of things.

**BASTON.** Hands-on learning is best.

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**PIERCE.** It's all recorded on his private console. It would be time-stamped. He wasn't going to cancel the upload. Nothing was in danger. He told me all about it. He said when we returned, everyone would know our names. We'd be famous. I think he'd want us to keep going-

**WOLLMAN.** And he apologized to me! Because, unlike our navigator, I don't design programs with security flaws so someone can jam them and kill a captain! *(Nataki charges Wollman and pulls her to the floor, smacks her a few times. Wollman fights back. The women erupt into chaos trying to break up the fight.)*

**STARK.** Hey, hey, hey! Break it up! *(Stark grabs Nataki, puts her against the wall and holds her there. Wollman stays back of her own accord, fuming.)* I'm ordering you...and you... Both of you will stop this. *(Stark waits a moment then releases Nataki who sulks to a corner.)* Bas. How long to safely reverse alpha fields if we turn back? We won't have the gravity push and I don't want to run out of fuel.

**BASTON.** Two hours. At least.

**CAVA.** *(To Stark.)* You don't have to abort. I think a case could be made.

**BASTON.** Can the EON really do all that? Re-build an atmosphere?

**WOLLMAN.** Yes. It can. And it will.

**BASTON.** Well, then that changes things. Doesn't it? I agree with Cava. We don't have to abort. In fact, we shouldn't.

**WOLLMAN.** I agree. We have a duty to stay on task.

**BASTON.** Save the world. Hell. I'm up for that.

**TOULLE.** I don't want the mission aborted.

**CAVA.** I agree.

**BASTON.** I'll complete the upload, Stark. I can do it in my sleep.

**WOLLMAN.** Nataki?

**PIERCE.** He said if we failed there wouldn't be proper alignment for another twenty years. Is that true?

**WOLLMAN.** Yes. Which is why it must happen now.

**NATAKI.** You are out of order. All of you. None of you would behave this way if he were still alive. Stark is in command now. She alone will determine our course of action and you will respect it. She deserves that.

**STARK.** Dr. Toulle, can you please assist Dr. Cava with an autopsy immediately?

**TOULLE.** Of course. *(Cava and Toulle start to leave.)*

**STARK.** Hold a moment. *(The women wait.)* I don't care who you are or what your motives might be. I vouched for each of you joining this mission because you are

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the best at what you do. I know there are political and professional differences aboard, but that has never come between you and your good work. So please, this ends here. Now. With him. I will submit my report and let command have their due process with a formal inquiry. I've no interest in becoming a prosecutor. This ship requires a crew of eight and now we have seven. I need each of you to get us home. It's my duty to follow protocol. We will return to base because it's the right thing to do. There will be no data drop, no upload. *(Wollman and the others deflate a bit.)* We're all disappointed, none more than I. Yes. This death gives me command for the moment, but do you think they'll ever let me go out again? I'm a first officer who allowed *her captain* to be murdered. By a crew I hand-selected for the most important mission of my career. I'm done. This is my last ride. This failure lands on me, not you. So please, whoever you are, let me get everyone home. It's all I ask. But as a precaution, we'll pair up until we can safely change course back to base. *(Nataki reaches a hand out to Wollman. Wollman stays back.)*

**CAVA.** Take it. *(Wollman shakes Nataki's hand.)*

**TOULLE.** Cava and I will take him to the M-deck.

**STARK.** Bas, pair up with Wollman and prepare for the boomerang. Don't leave each other's sight.

**NATAKI.** That leaves me with you, Stark.

**BASTON.** *(Snorts a bit.)* Of course, it does.

**STARK.** Okay, Bas. You're with Nataki. Help prepare the boomerang transmission then you'll both manage the alpha re-set. Wollman, you're with me.

**PIERCE.** What about me? It seems I'm odd man out.

**STARK.** Go with Nataki and Bas. Keep the peace. Everyone back in 30 minutes.

### SCENE 3

*Later. The medical deck of the 4G. Cava and Toulle stand over a lit table performing an autopsy. Cava manipulates the medical devices while wearing a holographic helmet. Toulle watches the monitor and expertly hands off instruments as needed. There is no physical body visible.*

**CAVA.** ...lacerations down the esophagus...chemical burns... What's the tox reading here?

**TOULLE.** High. Eighty-seven.

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**CAVA.** Okay. That's first point of contact. Mark it. Radial burns. I'd assert diphinalin as our assassin's substance of choice. Probably in his coffee. The acidity would hide the taste.

**TOULLE.** Dear god...how did it cut that deep?

**CAVA.** Because she gave him enough to kill thirty men.

**TOULLE.** Or one great big asshole.

**CAVA.** Yes, he was. *(They work.)* Oh, I see. Caffeine. I see what happened.

**TOULLE.** I don't follow.

**CAVA.** See here? The caffeine was the problem. Diphinalin is traditionally used in tiny doses to look and feel like a heart attack in a weakened system.

**TOULLE.** But he was healthy so the intent was...

**CAVA.** Make him feel sick. Take him out of commission for a day or two. I bet she was slowly putting it in his food. A little at a time.

**TOULLE.** But there was a chemical reaction from the caffeine in the coffee. Which amplified the dosage. Times what? ...two hundred percent.

**CAVA.** I don't think she meant to kill him. That makes me feel a little better.

**TOULLE.** Uh, one of them failed advanced chemistry. I feel even worse. She must be an idiot.

**CAVA.** Synthetic poisons are sophisticated stuff. The fact she could even make diphinalin aboard this ship proves she's no idiot.

**TOULLE.** She. Who do you think?

**CAVA.** I assumed you did it.

**TOULLE.** That's not funny.

**CAVA.** Did you do it?

**TOULLE.** Did you? *(They laugh then go back to work.)*

**CAVA.** We shouldn't joke.

**TOULLE.** Would you have really stood down? If it were a weapons system?

**CAVA.** I took an oath. It's my right to stand down. And I'm gonna help nail whoever did this.

**TOULLE.** He hated Wollman.

**CAVA.** Everyone hates Wollman. She's a classic bitch.

**TOULLE.** I thought we weren't doing that anymore.

**CAVA.** Well, she is one.

**TOULLE.** He knew if we failed they'd send another team. How do we know there isn't a second team out there right now? Right behind us?



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**CAVA.** Stark would have told us.

**TOULLE.** She didn't reveal the mission until now.

**CAVA.** We have our orders.

**TOULLE.** And you trust her? Just like that?

**CAVA.** Come on, Sue. How many extended missions have you completed? And don't tell me you don't know the exact number.

**TOULLE.** Twenty-two. This is twenty-three.

**CAVA.** Jesus. Really?

**TOULLE.** I'm going for the billion-mile record.

**CAVA.** You think that's a good idea?

**TOULLE.** I knew you'd say that which is why I never wanted to tell you. I think I can do it.

**CAVA.** You're well on your way. We have orders. You want to get another mission? We follow them. Here's another contact point. Mark that. (*They work.*) I don't think much of Wollman personally, but I've read her research. She'll be up there with Einstein, Galileo...all the dead white guys. Did you know the truth about the satellite?

**TOULLE.** I suspected something was up.

**CAVA.** And you kept that from me, too? Tsk, tsk. (*They move down the body. Cava works near his genitals.*) Well, well. Here's what all the fuss was about. The great Casanova. Doesn't look so great to me.

**TOULLE.** If more women saw dead men's penises, I don't think they'd get so crazy about them.

**CAVA.** This is certainly not what I would have expected. Not from his reputation.

**TOULLE.** What are we looking for down here?

**CAVA.** The usual...signs of trauma or...

**TOULLE.** I see it. That's not his hair.

**CAVA.** And there's another one.

**TOULLE.** You think Pierce spent the entire night with him? That would put them together this morning. When it happened.

**CAVA.** Let's run that for DNA to make sure. We're not here to prosecute, remember? We make a report and get home safely. (*They work.*)

**TOULLE.** Maybe Pierce did it.

**CAVA.** Ha. I don't think she knows a damn thing about what happened here. Such a green girl, that one.

## WOMEN OF 4G

**TOULLE.** She's a fool to mess around with him.

**CAVA.** Stark did.

**TOULLE.** He wasn't a captain then.

**CAVA.** Mark this, and there. He was her superior.

**TOULLE.** No, no. Not at first. They were at the same level for years. It was luck got him promoted ahead of her. I told you that story.

**CAVA.** Oh right, LUCK. Sure.

**TOULLE.** I feel bad for Pierce. I remember my first mission. All the men chasing after me.

**CAVA.** She should know better. I thought they taught that in the academy now. Hm. Turn him over. I want to check something... *(Toulle programs the monitor.)*

Uh-huh. Ah-

**TOULLE.** Woa. Maybe he hit his head on the console?

**CAVA.** Nope. See the broken edges near the ear...

**TOULLE.** I think our mystery woman has a pretty good swing. But why would she also hit him?

**CAVA.** Maybe he confronted her when he felt the poison. Maybe she thought she had no choice.

**TOULLE.** Or maybe she was pissed off. *(Cava steps back and works out hitting someone with an object, imagining how to match the position of the wound.)*

**CAVA.** She was left-handed. And facing him.

**TOULLE.** And there's a potential murder weapon.

**CAVA.** We should tell Stark to hold any debris disposals until we get back to base.

**TOULLE.** Maybe we can search the ship.

**CAVA.** It's metal. Look here. Trace atoms in the skin. About twenty-four inches long. Maybe thirty.

**TOULLE.** Mari. We should withhold this. Save these details for the inquiry.

**CAVA.** I have to file a full report.

**TOULLE.** Stark is left-handed. You knew that, right?

**CAVA.** This isn't something Stark would do. Not with the drop less than six hours away. She'd never show it, but she wants a successful mission more than anyone.

**TOULLE.** She's human. She had to know Pierce was sleeping with Reardon. We all have limits.

**CAVA.** No. No way.

**TOULLE.** She was pretty aggressive back there. That's not like her.

## WOMEN OF 4G

**CAVA.** What about Nataki and Wollman? You want to keep this under wraps and solve it yourself? That's not our job.

**TOULLE.** If we reveal there's a weapon, someone can get rid of it. That's all.

**CAVA.** Okay. We hold back the information until when?

**TOULLE.** Until the boomerang makes contact and we send a secure file.

**CAVA.** And how do I advise Stark?

**TOULLE.** We say nothing other than confirm the cause of death. Poison. What everyone already knows. Mari, you know it makes sense. If it was Stark, the inquiry will reveal it. Not us.

**CAVA.** Whoever she is, she'd know we found evidence of a murder weapon. Then whoever did this to him will come after you and me. If that happens before we send a secure file, all this information dies with us.

**TOULLE.** Jesus. We're not going to die.

**CAVA.** I'd like to believe that. But logic tells me not to ingest anything for the next forty-eight hours. (*Blackout.*)

### SCENE 4

*Deck of the 4G. Stark works at a console. Wollman works nearby.*

**STARK.** I'm sorry, Lizzie. (*They work.*) I thought I was prepared for everything.

**WOLLMAN.** Did they send a shadow team?

**STARK.** ...I don't know.

**WOLLMAN.** Come on, Stark. Tell me. They launched right on our heels, didn't they? Just in case Reardon and his *ladies* couldn't cut it.

**STARK.** We were the primary team. The best shot.

**WOLLMAN.** And some twenty-year-old shit with a hard-on is going to take credit for my work and get laid the rest of his life because of it. How old is the senior science officer on the shadow team?

**STARK.** I never said there was a shadow team.

**WOLLMAN.** You didn't have to. That's why you're ready to turn back so easily.

**STARK.** What should I do? One of them killed Reardon. Forget about me...they'd *all* be grounded for life, court-martialed if we keep going. Some of the best talent banned from space forever because one of them fell for his narcissistic bullshit-

## WOMEN OF 4G

**WOLLMAN.** Except now we're simply the female crew that failed. In fact, we were right on track until our captain with the penis died. Then it all fell apart for us. How old is he?

**STARK.** Reardon?

**WOLLMAN.** The senior science officer on the shadow team. The one with the pimples and training wheels. The one that's going to complete the upload and get credit for my work.

**STARK.** There is no shadow team. It's only us. *(They work.)*

**WOLLMAN.** Were you still fucking him?

**STARK.** Irrelevant. And none of your business.

**WOLLMAN.** I'm only assessing your emotional state.

**STARK.** I don't have an emotional state.

**WOLLMAN.** I know. Like a psychopath.

**STARK.** You think I did it?

**WOLLMAN.** Worse things happen in the name of power.

**STARK.** I know you're not used to this because you spend most of your time doing ground work. But we face risk every time we go up. Circumstances change. You'll be told you're going to spacewalk and fix a satellite but you get there and it's soil samples and network testing. This is normal.

**WOLLMAN.** There's nothing normal here. How old is he?

**STARK.** There is no shadow team! There is only us!

**WOLLMAN.** With the fate of an entire planet? Eight-point-five billion people counting on us and there's no understudy waiting in the wings?

**STARK.** I'd appreciate if you didn't challenge my authority in front of the others.

**WOLLMAN.** Because you "lead from behind." Which never works, I might add.

**STARK.** Because I'm in charge now.

**WOLLMAN.** How old is he?

**STARK.** Thirty-one, okay? He's not in his twenties. He's potty trained. He's thirty-one and he's brilliant. He's not as brilliant as you but he's a good man. He'll do you proud. The shadow team is all very qualified-

**WOLLMAN.** HOLY SHIT. Do I know him?

**STARK.** He knows all your work inside and out and-

**WOLLMAN.** Forget it. I don't want to know. What's the name of their ship?

**STARK.** Lizzie, come on-

## WOMEN OF 4G

**WOLLMAN.** They named it, didn't they? They don't even give us a proper name...government vessel 4G. Like we don't even exist. And what are they?

**STARK.** ...Adonis V. (*Wollman laughs.*)

**WOLLMAN.** Well! No one said they didn't have a sense of humor about it. All men, right?

**STARK.** It's how the test scores came back. Reardon got first choice and we picked our crew. He took everyone I wanted and-

**WOLLMAN.** Oh, they really got you now.

**STARK.** What?

**WOLLMAN.** Nothing.

**STARK.** What?

**WOLLMAN.** Why are we turning back?

**STARK.** The protocol states-

**WOLLMAN.** No. The real reason. (*Stark keeps working.*) Right. You keep hiding behind it over there.

**STARK.** Behind what?

**WOLLMAN.** It, them, him. Adonis V.

**STARK.** Speak directly, Lizzie. What do I hide behind?

**WOLLMAN.** Anything that keeps you from trying. You cling to the protocol because you're afraid that we- That *you* might fail.

**STARK.** That's not true.

**WOLLMAN.** Now that he's gone you can't hide behind him anymore. And you need to hide behind something-

**STARK.** No-

**WOLLMAN.** YES. (*Stark keeps working.*) I've always imagined a ship as a microcosm of the world. Like a test-tube in some grand experiment. On that ship we have leaders and followers, politics and personal relationships. There are moments of enlightening order and precision, then overwhelming chaos. But it's all a test of whether you will succeed as a people, a species, and return safely to your home orbit or implode with your pettiness and die, lost to the oblivion of the stars.

**STARK.** Right. And on that ship, there's always someone who has to make the unpopular choice. Do the actual work that gets everyone home. Funny how we all conveniently forget that part.

**WOLLMAN.** And where is the mighty Adonis V right now?

**STARK.** ...They'll reach our orbit in forty-eight hours.

## WOMEN OF 4G

**WOLLMAN.** They're only *two days* behind?

**STARK.** They have to be. Everything is lined up now. The window is slight. No one wants to wait another twenty years for this. The drop must happen now.

**WOLLMAN.** And you'll give up to them. Give in-

**STARK.** You said it! Eight-point-five billion people are watching! This has to happen or we have very little to go home to. It doesn't matter how. Or who. We're all on the same team-

**WOLLMAN.** He did this to you, too. Reardon was also doubting you. Not just me! He doubted us! (*Wollman pushes away her work.*)

**STARK.** I heard you the first time. (*Changing course.*) It's your research. It's your programming. That will never be lost on anyone. Everything we know that matters will not only survive but has a chance to really live again. The weather patterns, the ground water, the rain forest. Who would think we'd solve our most devastating problems out here?

**WOLLMAN.** I did! I thought it up! I did all the work! When no one would listen, I kept going. Called me a crazy bitch among countless other things but I was RIGHT. I created the solution. I deserve the credit. And I don't apologize for wanting it.

**STARK.** Nor should you. I was at the Kyoto Summit when you first presented, you know that? They were merciless. Offensive. I heard the whole thing.

**WOLLMAN.** You were there?

**STARK.** But you held your own. Against all of them. I called Reardon that day and told him we had to help make this happen. I wanted to put your work into action.

**WOLLMAN.** That was the day I almost quit.

**STARK.** I tried to find you after but you disappeared.

**WOLLMAN.** Into a bottle of tequila. Kyoto Summit. What a bunch of assholes.

**STARK.** Because you insist you're the only one smart enough. (*Stark picks up Wollman's work and finishes it for her.*) Sure, you have the grand idea but you can't navigate this ship. You can't even spacewalk which is necessary for the upload. And the things we do here require order and structure or it doesn't work. You think I like making the tough decisions? You want to call that hiding? Anyone who thinks they can do better being in charge of anything already has the wrong mentality for it. Sure, none of us are as smart as you. But you'll never achieve anything sitting on a pedestal and demanding the credit. I know that much.

**WOLLMAN.** I- ...No. I didn't mean-

**STARK.** I have flaws. I am aware of them.

## WOMEN OF 4G

**WOLLMAN.** I do have respect for you. All of you. I'm conditioned to push. I push very hard. It's the only way I can move my ideas.

**STARK.** People don't understand what we do out here. They think we keep our heads down and follow orders. Yes. Sure. We also explore and question.

Experiment. Constantly managing doubt and fear in quantities that would kill a normal person. We see first-hand how progress doesn't have to be a fight. It's a negotiation. Your satellite is an unconventional, technically creative, modern marvel. And when it works, no one can deny it. Or you. And I know it will work.

**WOLLMAN.** Thank you.

**STARK.** We should prep to signal the Adonis once we're back in range. Let them know our plans. *(They work a bit.)*

**WOLLMAN.** May I ask a personal question?

**STARK.** Maybe.

**WOLLMAN.** Did you know about Pierce and Reardon?

**STARK.** Wasn't it obvious?

**WOLLMAN.** Will you miss him?

**STARK.** Things are certainly quieter without him.

**WOLLMAN.** You haven't shed a single tear.

**STARK.** I'll grieve on the way home. Privately.

**WOLLMAN.** I've only had one other long mission like this. My father died while in transit. I received the cable in general assembly and burst into tears. They sent me to psych for an exam.

**STARK.** Who gave that order?

**WOLLMAN.** The captain. Said it fell outside my parameters.

**STARK.** Jesus.

**WOLLMAN.** I swore off missions. I wasn't gonna be made a fool ever again. Not by a man.

**STARK.** Well, he was wrong that captain. Your father died. It's hard to be out here when things happen back home.

**WOLLMAN.** They should castrate men in power since they can't seem to separate church from state, if you know what I mean.

**STARK.** Reardon was a good captain-

**WOLLMAN.** Reardon was your equal until it came to politics.

**STARK.** A good captain often has an excellent first officer.

## WOMEN OF 4G

**WOLLMAN.** He kept you under a convenient thumb. I did a little research. You're one of the most decorated first officers in the last century. Did you know that?

**STARK.** I wouldn't characterize it-

**WOLLMAN.** Come on, Stark. You're a great leader with exceptional technical skill who sucks at politics. But what passes for great leadership in the world requires the most disingenuous of character traits. Which you don't possess. The minute I stepped on board I saw it. Everyone sees it. This was your ship, Stark. From the beginning.

**STARK.** What are you telling me? *(Wollman pulls out a metal pipe. The end has a rough edge.)* Is that blood? Where- How did you get that?

**WOLLMAN.** He must have tried to alert Cava when he felt the poison. So his killer made sure he couldn't get help. I was in the corridor when it happened. She dropped it.

**STARK.** You saw it?

**WOLLMAN.** I saw everything.

**STARK.** Why didn't you say so before?

**WOLLMAN.** Because I'm very good at politics. You and I must negotiate a plan to move forward.

**STARK.** Nothing you say will change my mind.

**WOLLMAN.** I think I already have.

**STARK.** We must turn back. It's the right thing to do.

**WOLLMAN.** You think Adonis V is ever thinking about protocol? Or are they in their galley right now waiting to pop the champagne when the 4G concedes and turns for home? No more hiding, Stark.

**STARK.** What do you want me to do?

**WOLLMAN.** I saw what happened. I want to negotiate. *(The lights flicker.)* That's a conduit surge. *(Stark checks a monitor.)*

**STARK.** It's coming from engineering.

**WOLLMAN.** The beacon circuits- *(A loud jolt rocks the ship. An alarm.)*

**STARK.** Nataki- *(They rush from the deck. Blackout.)*



## WOMEN OF 4G

### SCENE 5

*Engineering panels of the 4G. Nataki lies on her back, working on the underside of a console with insulated gloves. Pierce uses a device to monitor the progress. Baston works nearby on another console.*

**NATAKI.** Reardon was a jerk. It's not your fault.

**PIERCE.** I think- I- I liked him. He was smart and...kind to me. I thought you liked him. I didn't realize how you all were about him. You never showed it. Not once.

**NATAKI.** Poker face, kid. Always a poker face around rank climbers. No matter who it is.

**PIERCE.** Right.

**NATAKI.** There are many paths to authority. And the most honest routes are rarely successful. That's all you need to know about him.

**PIERCE.** You want Stark in charge, don't you.

**NATAKI.** Stark is in charge.

**PIERCE.** But you prefer it. I get it now. You're all here because you respected Stark. Not him.

**NATAKI.** Captains can't exist in a vacuum. The sails don't control the ship. The sails simply harness the wind and a captain directs the sails where they need to go.

**PIERCE.** I never thought of myself as a sail.

**NATAKI.** Well, you're not. Hand me that charger. You're not the sail, you're the wind. There are no sails without a good wind. Sails on their own are useless. Like power is useless unless it takes us somewhere. And that's what a good captain understands. Stark understands that.

**PIERCE.** Reardon didn't?

**NATAKI.** He thought all wind was created equal. He thought of individuals as expendable little chess pieces to be used up. But if you respect it, the wind will work harder than you thought possible and maybe sail you around the world.

**PIERCE.** *(Wistfully.)* Or to Mars and back.

**NATAKI.** Oh, god... *(Nataki works.)* We don't just respect Stark. She respects us. Even you. Or you wouldn't be here.

**PIERCE.** Do you think we really would've been famous?

**NATAKI.** Don't know, don't care. Ratchet. *(Pierce hands her the tool.)*

## WOMEN OF 4G

**PIERCE.** Did you know about the satellite? What it could really do? He was sure you all knew.

**NATAKI.** Wasn't my place to know. *(Baston approaches with a small device.)*

**BASTON.** The binary re-set is corrupted. I might have to re-work it by hand.

**NATAKI.** Oh. Guess your work is flawed...again. What a surprise.

**BASTON.** Fuck you, Nataki.

**PIERCE.** Hey. I'm supposed to keep the peace-

**NATAKI.** I didn't say it up there but next time you're gonna take a swipe at my performance record I suggest you get your own house in order.

**BASTON.** When's the last time an integrated Boyle System failed in-flight? They don't anymore and you know it. I'll be sure to mention that in my deposition.

**NATAKI.** You do that. Since you were the last one to see him alive. My record of activity is captured in the log. Even if it wasn't you, it will look like you did it.

**BASTON.** Are you setting me up? Is that what this is?

**PIERCE.** Hey. Respect, right-

**NATAKI.** Yeah, Baston. I would risk my rank to set you up as a captain killer.

**PIERCE.** I think we should continue with the- Here- *(Pierce takes the device from Baston and works on it.)*

**BASTON.** I told Stark I didn't want this assignment because I knew you'd be here. Did she tell you that? I can't stand your ass-kissing. Why is she so weak when it comes to you?

**NATAKI.** It's sad you're a petty bitch. You'll never understand higher rank. Which is why you'll never reach it.

**BASTON.** And be Stark's little lap dog? I know a dozen officers more deserving of your position and this whole situation makes me sick. We're turning back because of you and Stark's power-hungry scheming. And the world now suffers for that piece of selfishness.

**NATAKI.** Nope. I won't bite. I won't.

**BASTON.** No wonder Stark can't get her own ship. Not with you hanging on like a tiny little piece of trash- *(Nataki attacks Baston full on. They fight.)*

**PIERCE.** HEY! *(Pierce sets the device aside and intervenes. Nataki overwhelms Baston but Pierce fights her off and pins Nataki to the floor.)* Keep! The Peace!

Enough! *(Nataki calms down. Baston rubs a sore spot. Pierce stands over them.)*

What's wrong with you? Both of you? *(Nataki and Baston laugh.)*

**BASTON.** We're only lettin' off steam, kid. We're fine.

## WOMEN OF 4G

**NATAKI.** You're tougher than you look, Pierce.

**PIERCE.** I'll report you both- (*Baston is lightning quick with a hand on Pierce's neck, pressing her up against the wall and dead serious. Nataki joins her.*)

**BASTON.** Oh, no you won't.

**NATAKI.** You say a word about any of this to anyone, we'll deny it.

**BASTON.** Deny it.

**NATAKI.** You got it?

**BASTON.** So keep your mouth shut, you little rat.

**PIERCE.** I won't say anything. I promise. (*Baston releases Pierce. Nataki and Baston nod and get back to work. Pierce hands the device to Baston.*) There. It's ready. (*Baston looks at the device then shows it to Nataki.*)

**BASTON.** Did you do this?

**NATAKI.** Just now? Impressive.

**PIERCE.** It's a binary overlap.

**BASTON.** That's...very good. Good work, Ensign.

**PIERCE.** Thank you.

**BASTON.** Okay then. If you're ready we can cut the current for the re-set.

**NATAKI.** Pierce, go to the control box. Baston, you call it from the end. (*Baston goes back to her original place and positions herself. Pierce goes off-stage. Nataki climbs back under the console with her tools.*) Ready?

**PIERCE.** (*Off stage.*) Panel ready.

**NATAKI.** Bas?

**BASTON.** Ready for re-set.

**NATAKI.** And on my three....one, two, three- (*A hum and buzz to blackout. The area becomes bathed in a cool blue light. A low hum continues.*) Aw, dammit! (*Pierce re-enters.*)

**PIERCE.** What happened?

**BASTON.** Hang on-

**NATAKI.** It's a short. The circuit shorted. It's gone to auxiliary power. Baston?

**BASTON.** Yeah. Dammit. The circuit shorted.

**PIERCE.** Couldn't we pull it from the hard-line?

**NATAKI.** Wow. Maybe Pierce should be in charge down here?

**BASTON.** Hey, shut up! I'm truly so sick of you, Nataki-

**NATAKI.** Just sayin'-

**BASTON.** Yeah, shut up! Good idea, Pierce. Give me a sec-

## WOMEN OF 4G

**PIERCE.** No, wait, shouldn't we check the- *(Baston works, the hum intensifies.)*

**BASTON.** AGH! AGH! *(Nataki springs out from under her console and heads for Baston who is trapped as she is electrocuted.)*

**NATAKI.** It's a surge! Release the hard-line! Bas! *(Nataki finds a rubber mat and rushes to Baston.)* Pierce! Cut the feed! Cut the feed! *(Pierce runs off stage. Nataki pulls up her sleeve to reach Baston but recoils in pain.)* AGH! *(Nataki uses the rubber mat to wrench Baston from the grid. The lights return to normal. Nataki leans over Baston's body. She listens and looks for signs of breathing. She feels for a pulse. Pierce re-enters.)*

**PIERCE.** What happened? Oh god-

**NATAKI.** The rotator! The rotator! *(Pierce retrieves the rotator. Nataki yanks a live wire from the grid. She opens Baston's shirt and jimmy-rigs the tool with the wire.)* Get back! *(Pierce backs away. Nataki touches the tool near Baston's heart. A jolt as she is revived. Nataki waits and listens.)* Bas.

**PIERCE.** Is she okay?

**NATAKI.** She's breathing. Shit. Oh, shit...

**PIERCE.** What happened?

**NATAKI.** The system overloaded. She's gonna be okay. We need to re-boot before we try again. *(Realizing the pain in her own arm.)* Ahh...

**PIERCE.** Your arm. It's-

**NATAKI.** It's fine. Get me the medical kit. Over there. *(Baston moves. Nataki holds her head and speaks directly to her. Pierce watches.)* You're okay, Bas.

Pierce. Get the medical kit. *(Pierce exits for the kit. Blackout.)*

## SCENE 6

*The con of the 4G. All the women are gathered. Baston is bandaged and seated as Cava takes her vitals. Toulle assists with a scanning device. Nataki holds a medical wrap around her arm. Stark runs the meeting. The mood is grim.*

**NATAKI.** I pulled her off as quickly as I could.

**STARK.** Pierce. Is that what happened?

**PIERCE.** It's exactly as she said. We heard the current a split second before it surged. She couldn't let go. Baston couldn't let go. She was stuck.

## WOMEN OF 4G

**STARK.** The primary conduit should have been turned off before the work started. Nataki, do you want to clarify your statement?

**NATAKI.** I thought it was off. She fell. That triggered it. She was pinned.

**STARK.** Did you verify it was off?

**BASTON.** I thought it was off.

**STARK.** Nataki?

**NATAKI.** I didn't verify. No.

**BASTON.** It was my responsibility to verify.

**NATAKI.** It's my fault. We were both...distracted. Pierce cut the power and I got Baston out. Her heart stopped so I improvised with live cable and a metal rotator.

**BASTON.** I don't remember that. Once the current snapped everything went black.

**STARK.** Pierce? Is that what happened?

**PIERCE.** Yes. But- It happened so fast.

**STARK.** Doctor Cava?

**CAVA.** Baston suffered extreme cardiac stress consistent with high-voltage shock. Nataki has second degree burns on her arm. We're lucky. Had the timing been different we could have lost all three.

**BASTON.** I'll be fine. I'm tired is all.

**NATAKI.** I stabilized the conduit. The boomerang is online and ready.

**STARK.** You both have a verbal warning for crew endangerment. From now on everyone double checks, triple checks the work. No mistakes. No distractions.

*(Stark leaves the space a moment. A silence. Wollman scoffs.)*

**NATAKI.** You got something to say, Wollman?

**WOLLMAN.** How can anything that happens now be considered an accident?

**NATAKI.** You wanted to keep Baston from sending the boomerang. Not me.

**WOLLMAN.** You were there when she nearly died. Did you push her? *(Stark returns with a metal case.)*

**NATAKI.** Stark. Why do you have the-

**STARK.** Before we go further, I need to know if the crew is in danger. I will officially question each one of you.

**NATAKI.** What-

**WOLLMAN.** Interrogate us?

**STARK.** Yes. *(Stark opens the metal case and places it on a console.)*

**CAVA.** Holy shit. Is that-

**PIERCE.** What's that?

## WOMEN OF 4G

**WOLLMAN.** Enhanced interrogation techniques.

**TOULLE.** What? You plan to use those?

**STARK.** Yes. One of us is a killer. We know this now from the autopsy. I have to eliminate any potential threats. Are we clear?

**NATAKI.** You and Wollman discussed this.

**STARK.** This has nothing to do with Wollman. This is my decision and it's what we're doing.

**TOULLE.** That's a bit...unconventional.

**CAVA.** I'll say. And I refuse.

**WOLLMAN.** As do I.

**NATAKI.** Question me. I have nothing to hide.

**WOLLMAN.** Neither do we. I reject it on principle.

**TOULLE.** So do I.

**NATAKI.** None of you would speak this way to Reardon. But listen to you now. You are unfit for duty. There is a chain of command and we follow it.

**TOULLE.** It's quite unorthodox-

**NATAKI.** It's exactly what he would have done. And listen to you-

**BASTON.** Oh, I see what's happening.

**WOLLMAN.** I don't care what you say. Stark gained command of this ship and now two more people barely escape death. How are we to trust she isn't simply protecting her own alibi?

**STARK.** You're right. *(Stark opens the case and turns it around on the console. Offering it to the group. Then she pulls out a seat and sits center.)* You will question me first. As a group. Dr. Cava, I believe you're trained in this area.

**CAVA.** And I'll do no such barbaric thing, Stark.

**PIERCE.** Is this...allowed?

**STARK.** You will question me and create a report for the permanent record when you are satisfied my answers are truthful. It's an order. *(Nataki moves for the case and takes out a strap. She connects Stark to the device. Nataki makes adjustments on the dials inside the case.)*

**CAVA.** I won't be part of this.

**STARK.** YOU MAY NOT LEAVE. Question me about the events of the last twenty-four hours. You will put your findings in the permanent record. We are wasting time. *(Wollman comes forward with a recording device that looks like a pair of eyeglasses.)*

## WOMEN OF 4G

**WOLLMAN.** Pierce. It's customary the youngest present record the proceedings.

**PIERCE.** Right. *(Wollman positions Pierce to watch Stark and record.)*

**WOLLMAN.** Stark, did you poison Captain Donovan Reardon in order to gain control of this crew?

**STARK.** No.

**WOLLMAN.** Did you have sexual relations with Reardon?

**STARK.** ...yes.

**NATAKI.** What?

**PIERCE.** What?

**STARK.** Yes. I had a sexual relationship with him. In the past.

**NATAKI.** When was the last time you had sex with Captain Reardon?

**STARK.** Five...months ago.

**WOLLMAN.** But not during this mission?

**STARK.** No.

**WOLLMAN.** Did you know other women from this crew had sexual relationships-

**CAVA.** Knock it off! Ask a real question. She passed the first one.

**STARK.** He was also sleeping with Nataki.

**TOULLE.** What!?

**PIERCE.** What?

**CAVA.** This is disgusting. *(Pierce shifts. Nataki has no reaction.)*

**STARK.** I'm sorry, Nataki.

**WOLLMAN.** Stark, did you intend to take control of this ship part way through our mission to upload the satellite program?

**STARK.** I was prepared to do so if needed. It's part of my training as first officer.

**WOLLMAN.** So, you intended this situation?

**STARK.** No.

**WOLLMAN.** Did you conspire with another crew member to kill or physically harm Chief Baston?

**STARK.** No.

**WOLLMAN.** Did you conspire with Nataki to take over command of this ship?

**STARK.** No.

**WOLLMAN.** Twenty volts, please.

**CAVA.** What!?

**WOLLMAN.** I don't believe her.

**CAVA.** I believe her!

WOMEN OF 4G

**WOLLMAN.** And I don't.

**STARK.** It's the truth.

**WOLLMAN.** Twenty volts, please.

**STARK.** It's okay, Nataki. Do it. *(Nataki works the device. Stark jerks from the electrical current.)* Ah...

**CAVA.** Jesus. We don't do this!

**NATAKI.** Did you conspire with me to take over command of this ship?

**STARK.** No.

**WOLLMAN.** Higher, please.

**CAVA.** Nataki, don't you do it.

**STARK.** Agh!

**WOLLMAN.** Did you conspire with Nataki to get rid of Reardon and gain control of this ship?

**STARK.** No. *(Wollman gestures to Nataki who runs up the voltage.)* Agh!

**WOLLMAN.** More, please.

**TOULLE.** Wollman, stop. She's telling the truth.

**WOLLMAN.** How do we know? We don't know.

**PIERCE.** I can't watch this.

**BASTON.** You have to watch. You're recording.

**NATAKI.** *(To Stark.)* Did you want to exact revenge on Reardon?

**STARK.** No!

**WOLLMAN.** Again. *(Nataki shocks her.)*

**STARK.** AGH!

**WOLLMAN.** Did you want revenge?

**STARK.** No!

**WOLLMAN.** Are you sure?

**STARK.** Yes! I am sure that I did not want revenge. It's been over for a very long time. We were no longer involved! *(Wollman signals to Nataki.)* AGH! AGH!

**PIERCE.** Stop! Stop! It was me! I did it! I killed him! I killed Reardon but it was an accident, I swear! Please! Please stop! *(The women all turn to Pierce. Stark calmly removes the straps from herself and stands. The women reposition slightly, trapping Pierce in a corner.)* Oh, shit. I- I-

**TOULLE.** Careful what you say, Pierce.

**PIERCE.** I- You all- What just happened? What was that?



## WOMEN OF 4G

**NATAKI.** This? (*Nataki holds the cups of the device to her breasts.*) Emergency breast pump.

**PIERCE.** It's not- Not enhanced interrogation...

**STARK.** Well done, everyone.

**TOULLE.** (*To Cava.*) You were brilliant.

**CAVA.** Thank you.

**WOLLMAN.** We're sorry, Pierce. We had to figure out what kind of monster we were dealing with.

**PIERCE.** Monster...

**CAVA.** She certainly has remorse and empathy.

**NATAKI.** It sure took her long enough.

**PIERCE.** I'm not- I'm not-

**STARK.** Pierce. Did you make an attempt on either Baston or Nataki's life?

**PIERCE.** I- I-

**CAVA.** Tell the truth, girl.

**STARK.** What did you do?

**PIERCE.** I didn't. It was an accident.

**NATAKI.** That looks like a poker face to me.

**PIERCE.** No- (*Nataki charges Pierce and holds her against the wall. Pierce tries a move to break free but Nataki is ready for it. Pierce is trapped.*) Help! Someone help! (*The other women watch, unalarmed.*)

**NATAKI.** Time to tell the truth.

**PIERCE.** Stark- Help-

**STARK.** First, tell the truth, Pierce. What are you up to?

**PIERCE.** I didn't want Baston to send the boomerang! I thought I could fry the system but it didn't work. I didn't mean to hurt Baston. Or Nataki. I tried to cut the current when I saw they forgot. They were fighting. That's why they forgot!

**STARK.** So you did it on purpose.

**BASTON.** That sounds familiar.

**STARK.** Did you mean to hurt Reardon?

**PIERCE.** Make him sick, yes. Not hurt him. Or kill him. But... He lied to me. He said you would hold me back. He said you were all jealous. He said you talked about me. He said- I didn't mean to hurt him- (*A silence.*)

**STARK.** Okay, Taki. (*Nataki releases Pierce.*)

**PIERCE.** We can't turn around! We have to complete the upload!

## WOMEN OF 4G

**STARK.** Sit down, Pierce. *(Pierce sits. Stark produces the metal pipe.)*

**PIERCE.** Oh, god-

**STARK.** Cava, I'm guessing you found a wound on Reardon's head consistent with blunt force trauma.

**CAVA.** Affirmative. And trace diphinalin. It's a synthetic. She stole the base ingredients and made it in the bathroom. It was administered through his coffee.

**PIERCE.** Holy shit...

**CAVA.** I also don't think she meant to kill him. I think she got the dose wrong.

**PIERCE.** I was putting it in his food. It was supposed to make him sick, that's all. But then he wouldn't eat anything.

**TOULLE.** So you had to put it in his coffee.

**PIERCE.** He looked at me the minute it started to burn. He knew. He grabbed me-

**TOULLE.** And you whacked him.

**PIERCE.** ...Yes.

**STARK.** Thousands of capable cadets, several more with experience. But you were so intelligent. No job was too small, you said. And this is how you repay me?

**PIERCE.** He told me about the second team.

**CAVA.** What?

**PIERCE.** He told me they were only two days behind us.

**NATAKI.** There's a shadow team?

**BASTON.** WHAT?

**TOULLE.** I knew it. I knew it! Fuck them!

**BASTON.** Are you kidding?

**NATAKI.** Stark?

**BASTON.** Is it true?

**CAVA.** Of course, it is. Well, shit.

**PIERCE.** He said they made a deal with him. He would pull us from the upload and give it to them at the last minute. That's why he asked Wollman for reports he didn't need. He was building a case in his log that something was wrong with Wollman's field work. That her miscalculations were putting us all in danger and risking corruption of the satellite. But he knew her work was flawless.

**WOLLMAN.** Of course, he did.

**PIERCE.** But if you were ever debriefed, you'd have to say he requested reports. We'd all have to say it. And none of us could reasonably accuse him after the fact that he took us out. In the end, it would look like a judgment call.

## WOMEN OF 4G

**NATAKI.** Stark, did you know about this?

**STARK.** What kind of deal did they make? Money?

**TOULLE.** Reardon was already rich.

**PIERCE.** He said he'd soon become Admiral if we left the upload for the second team to complete.

**NATAKI.** Holy shit.

**PIERCE.** He said if I- He said he'd marry me and then I'd be an Admiral's wife. *(The women slowly start laughing one by one.)* No. It wasn't like that. He said he loved me. *(The women howl.)* I know! Look, I know! Please stop laughing! I'm sorry! I thought I was using him but- He was using all of us. Like chess pieces. It was just like you said, Nataki. He said we'd fail anyway because we're ALL WOMEN! *(They stop laughing.)* You weren't sleeping with him, were you?

**NATAKI.** Hell, no.

**PIERCE.** Stark, you warned me about him, but I thought-

**CAVA.** You thought you'd fuck your way upstairs?

**TOULLE.** It's a tried-and-true formula.

**STARK.** Why wouldn't you come to me? Have we not provided avenues for you to come to one of us? Any one of us? We are never solo in this. Not even Reardon. But you became his judge, jury and executioner rather than tell someone.

**PIERCE.** We have to upload!

**STARK.** And we would find a way! The self-importance to think you know better. To be reckless with a life—any human life—when our greatest asset as a race is to preserve it. It's what we've been sent here to do! Save lives! You think any one of us hasn't been in your position? Burdened with important knowledge? To think for a moment that another life is yours to manipulate- The disappointment I feel for you right now-

**CAVA.** We all do.

**PIERCE.** He was preparing to betray all of us.

**STARK.** That is not the conversation we're having.

**PIERCE.** I want to complete the upload.

**NATAKI.** I do, too.

**BASTON.** Fuck him. Me, too.

**CAVA.** Me, too.

**TOULLE.** I'm in.

**WOLLMAN.** You know how I feel.

## WOMEN OF 4G

**NATAKI.** I believe her. He was selling us out. *(To Stark.)* Especially you.

**CAVA.** I believe she didn't mean to harm him.

**STARK.** She hit him!

**CAVA.** In self-defense.

**PIERCE.** Yes, it was.

**WOLLMAN.** The upload is all that matters. He was making a selfish decision.

**STARK.** And if we continue in our own arrogance, we're no better than he was!

**NATAKI.** Stark, you tell me we're going home and I'll get us home. You tell me we're saving the one thing I've given my life to preserve—I know it will happen. If you're the one pointing the way, I have no doubt. We are the first team. There's a reason we're first. *(A silence.)*

**STARK.** Wollman, what's the current status? *(Wollman pulls up a device and makes calculations.)*

**WOLLMAN.** Engineering is back online, thanks to Nataki and Baston. We're on course with plenty of time to prep.

**CAVA.** But we do have a problem. I'm sorry, Stark. Baston can't go out there now. No way.

**BASTON.** I'm fine.

**CAVA.** If it weren't for the miracle of modern drugs, you'd be dead. I can't allow the strain on her system. She needs at least forty-eight hours. Her risk for hypoxia is through the roof.

**BASTON.** I'll risk it.

**CAVA.** You'll collapse in the middle of the upload.

**TOULLE.** Then all this is for nothing.

**WOLLMAN.** And the second team comes in anyway.

**STARK.** We'll use the robotic arm.

**NATAKI.** The arm can't do it.

**WOLLMAN.** We've tested a robotic device for the upload and it doesn't work. This requires a manual upload.

**NATAKI.** I'll go out.

**STARK.** No. You and I are what's left on the navigation team. And you're the only one who can run point with Reardon gone. You can't go.

**WOLLMAN.** I'll go. It's my program. I should be willing to take the risk. *(Nataki and Baston snicker.)*

## WOMEN OF 4G

**BASTON.** No offence, Wollman, but it's gonna be rough out there. Have you worked in zero gravity against a magnetic array?

**STARK.** We need you in here if something goes wrong.

**CAVA.** I can go.

**TOULLE.** No, I'll go. I can do it. You have to keep the doctor on board.

**CAVA.** You're a doctor.

**TOULLE.** You're a better medical doctor. *(Cava nods in agreement.)*

**STARK.** There's only one choice. She has the highest percentage on overall physical fitness and equilibrium transfer. Strong cardiovascular and young reflexes. She also completed a simulation run for me at the academy before we left. *(They all turn to Pierce.)*

**PIERCE.** What?

**STARK.** Don't "what" me. Don't pretend this wasn't your plan all along.

**NATAKI.** Right. First you got rid of Reardon because he was going to pull the plug on the upload. And you didn't have to kill Baston, only injure her. Then you could be the one-

**PIERCE.** I only meant to stop the boomerang I swear! I needed more time to convince you-

**NATAKI.** It's the great shining moment outside Wollman.

**TOULLE.** The rest of us are merely the crew. You'll be Neil Fucking Armstrong.

**BASTON.** No way. I'll go. To hell if it kills me. *(A silence.)*

**PIERCE.** I know I was wrong. And if we came all this way and failed, I could have lived with that. But we deserve a chance. Don't we? I want the chance to try. The chance to fail. He was going to take that away. You have all played by the rules. But now we deserve a chance to cross the finish line.

**BASTON.** She's not fully trained. And no one's ever uploaded against an array this powerful under real world conditions. You can't send her out.

**STARK.** Can you train her? Walk her through it?

**BASTON.** ...Yes.

**STARK.** Cava?

**CAVA.** You said it. She has the strongest physical record.

**TOULLE.** Agreed.

**STARK.** Baston, help Pierce suit up and train her for the upload. Nataki, assign new positions across the board and get it in the log. Double up where needed. Everyone prep your new assignments. We go in five hours.

WOMEN OF 4G

**PIERCE.** I can do this. You have to trust me.

**STARK.** No. You'll have to trust us.

**BASTON.** 'Cause you'll be all alone out there. And it could kill you.

**NATAKI.** And we're all you've got if it goes wrong.

**WOLLMAN.** We're doing it! We're really doing it!

**STARK.** Yes. Let's see what we're made of. (*Blackout.*)

**END OF ACT 1**

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