

Storyteller
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FADE IN ON:

EXT. HIGH TECH CHAMBER - DAY?

Butter-smooth engines HUM overhead.

PRIVATE FARRELL (late 20s) sits cross-legged on a pristine, white floor.

He raises his hands dramatically: revealing a three orb INSIGNIA on his lycra uniform.

FARRELL

At that very moment, the air rippled, and the Blue Genie appeared!

Around Farrell, an unseen audience GASPS.

Building on the tension, Farrell adds a sound effect:

FARRELL

Poof. Then: Boom!!

A TENTACLE reaches out, taps Farrell's arm. A gravelly, electronic voice interrupts.

ELECTRONIC VOICE

Storyteller? One question, please.

What a rude interruption. Farrell squints into the crowd...

At a multitude of ALIENS! A menagerie of different species, clad in the same uniform as himself.

TRANSLATION MEDALLIONS glimmer on throats of every shape.

Blinking consoles behind them tell the rest of this tale. This ain't no theater group - it's a spaceship!

The tentacle wraps around Farrell's arm, tugs. The private frowns at the intrusion.

Chastened, the alien recoils.

TENTACLED ALIEN

My apologies. I just wish to query. What is this Genie species you speak of?

FARRELL

It's, uh, a special creature that lives inside a bottle.

If anyone rubs the outside, the Genie's released into the world...

The crowd explodes with extra questions. Among the group:

A sentient INSECTOID, one gelatinous BLOB. And a spiny BALL covered with a thousand eyes.

INSECTOID

Like when a Trach-teres emerges from its shell?

BLOB

What historical period of Earth did Genie's exist in? Do they still roam the planet now?

SPINY BALL

Blaaaarrrrb?

Farrell rolls his eyes. He's explained this detail before.

FARRELL

I don't know what a Trach-teres looks like. But a bottle-shell analogy works.

He points towards the spiny ball.

FARRELL

Your translator isn't functioning. Text me your question. I'll answer after I check the mail.

(to the Blob)

As for Genies; well, they never existed on Earth.

Tentacle alien scratches its head with a suction cup.

TENTACLED ALIEN

But you said -

FARRELL

Fairy tales are make believe. And have no limits. That's what makes them fun!

A collective Oooooooh rumbles through the crowd. Spiny eye-ball chirps at Insectoid.

SPINY BALL

Eggggggg-hyppp?

INSECTOID

Yes, that's what makes humans valuable.
They warp truth to their will!

HIIIISS. A sliding door whispers open. Revealing an alien that resembles a TREE. And next to that:

The very human PRIVATE ALYSE (20s). Beautiful and blonde, she fills out her uniform just right.

Farrell leaps to his feet.

FARRELL

Is this another hologram prank? I know interspecies humor is difficult, but... this is pushing the joke too far!

Tree Alien leads Alyse towards Farrell. The alien crowd parts for them like the Red Sea.

TREE ALIEN

I fail to see how this could be interpreted as "amusing". Private Farrell, please Private Alyse. As you can see, one of your own species.

FARRELL

(gasps)
No shit. That she is.

TREE ALIEN

Private Alyse has just joined the ship's crew. Due to limited space and environmental considerations, you two will bunk mate, of course.

FARRELL

But, she's a sh-

ALYSE

I tried to explain that very dynamic to command this morning. But they viewed it as a luxury request. For now, we'll just have to... make do.

Farrell's eyes drift to Alyse's form.

FARRELL

I haven't even seen another human in the flesh for years. Especially not one... well, like you.

ALYSE

You take the floor. I get the bed.

FARRELL
But I have seniority.

ALYSE
Then we rotate. Fair by you?

The tree alien waves "leaves" at the rest of the crew.

TREE ALIEN
Ensigns, entertainment break is complete.
Return to stations and resume work.
(to the humans)
Private Farrell, kindly introduce our new
recruit to your quarters. Do your best to
make her feel - at home.

Still in shock, Farrell shuffles towards the door. Alyse
marches military sharp in his wake.

The Tentacle alien waves frantically to Farrell...

TENTACLED ALIEN
Before you go, please inform us. What
happened with the Genie?

FARRELL
The usual happy ending? The Genie
vaporizes the Bad Guy. Then grants three
wishes to the Good Guy? I was making it
up on the fly. You got me.

TENTACLED ALIEN
But how does he vaporize the "Bad Guy"?

INSECTOID
A laser?

TENTACLED ALIEN
Or quantum vibrations, perhaps?

The door HISSES shut behind Farrell and Alyse, leaving
the alien crew alone to their thoughts.

Insectoid turns to Spiny Eyes.

INSECTOID
Human delusions are so complex. That's
what makes their smell worthwhile. I
wonder what new "stories" the new one
will tell?

SPINY BALL
(vibrates in agreement)
Blarrrrggggh!

INT. SPACESHIP CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Farrell guides an eager Alyse through the hall. More blinking consoles light their way.

And the path of other alien CREW-MATES, too. Alyse stares at each as they go by.

ALYSE

I'm really aboard the *Aurora*? This is such an honor. Pinch me... is it all a dream?

Farrell leers. Alyse backtracks - quick.

ALYSE

That's a phrase, not an offer. *Aurora's* not Noah's Intergalactic Ark.

FARRELL

But -

ALYSE

Don't read into the term Crew-mates, either. Just because you're the only human male for lightyears doesn't mean we'll ever have anything "going on."

FARRELL

Cool with me. But space does get lonely. Trust me: I've been here three whole years.

ALYSE

(beat)

Remind me what your title is?

FARRELL

Storyteller. What else could I be?

An ELEPHANT SHAPED alien trots by with a BIRDLIKE pal. It slaps Farrell on the shoulder with a friendly trunk.

ELEPHANT ALIEN

Private Human, hello! Tell me another untruth: quick!

FARRELL

Uhhhh... your trunk is purple?

The Elephant alien raises his brown trunk to his eyes, laughs loudly to his companion.

ELEPHANT ALIEN

Humans. I told you - they're an endless source of curiosity.

BIRDLIKE ALIEN

Who cares if they can't do Differential Equations? Their creativity never ends!

Farrell enters a LIFT, beckons Alyse in.

INT. SPACESHIP LIFT - CONTINUOUS

The doors slide close. A COMPUTER VOICE springs to life.

COMPUTER VOICE

Human life signs detected. Welcome,
Private Farrell.

(pause as data compiles)

And Private Alyse. Deck 15 clearance
authorized.

The lift rises. Farrell fidgets. Shoots a side-eye at
Alyse.

FARRELL

Okay, if you weren't recruited as my...

(cough)

"Companion", what did they hire you for?
Are you some sort of engineering whiz?

ALYSE

(laughs)

Don't be ridiculous! I don't even
understand the *concept* of the
Entanglement Engine. Let alone have the
ability to give it tweaks.

FARRELL

Then: are my stories getting old? Are you
my replacement? Or is this a species
quota thing?

ALYSE

I'm not a diversity hire! Humans other
than you have a use in the Fleet.

FARRELL

Gimme a galactic break. It's not like
we're faster. Stronger. Smarter. Most of
'em think we're ugly, too. That
disqualifies us even as pets.

Three years on *Aurora* have given my species superiority complex the reality check it really needs. Except for a few um, character quirks, humans have no reason to exist at all.

ALYSE

That's not true! Being human's still special.

FARRELL

How?

ALYSE

For instance: I sing.

FARRELL

(beat)

That's the "talent" that won you a slot on the *Aurora*? Singing?

ALYSE

Yes! And don't put singing down. Give it a chance. I'm really good.

FARRELL

What genre? Rock? Country? Opera?

ALYSE

(grins)

All three. I'm versatile. Turns out, HQ is *fascinated* by the human ability to manipulate sound waves in harmonic frequencies. Other species can't. With that skill, we're unique.

FARRELL

Huh. So you can sing. And I can-

ALYSE

Tell pretty lies.

FARRELL

(grins)

Whatever works. So what if we're the primitive laughing stocks of the universe? At least our little magic tricks amuse them. That lets us in the door.

Almost on cue, the lift HISSES open.

A sign on the wall with an arrow reads:

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT QUARTERS, TURN LEFT. Alien text and a human stick figure illustrate the point underneath.

INT. SPACESHIP CORRIDOR

Farrell exits the lift, guides Alyse where the arrow points.

ALYSE

Alright, "master storyteller". Since we're going to be stuck with each other, how's about you tell me a tall tale to start our friendship off right?

FARRELL

Any particular genre?

ALYSE

No more Genies. Been there, done that. But since you're good at "fantasy" - go to town. Make something up.

Farrell chokes. Alyse realizes she's stepped in it.

ALYSE

G-rated only.

FARRELL

Okay. Then...imagine there's a spaceship. We'll call it *The Faraday*, after the box.

ALYSE

A spaceship? That's mundane.

FARRELL

But here's the twist. Actual *humans* command it. They're the leading species of the Fleet, in fact. Aliens just pass through as exotic curiosities, now and then.

ALYSE

Now, *that's* fantasy! Storyteller, tell me more!

They step into a "Human Quarters" corridor, "Caution - primitive life-form" posters on the walls.

The doors HISS shut behind them.

Alysa's laugh echoes off smooth, hi-tech walls.

FINAL FADE OUT: