

# **STRANDED**

by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

A lone fighter ship drifts powerless in the quiet vacuum of space.

INT. SPACESHIP

Fuzzy light and colors slowly come into focus. A muted female COMPUTER VOICE increases in volume.

COMPUTER VOICE  
60 seconds to life support failure.

The spaceship PILOT (30) lays in his small cockpit unconscious.

Warning lights flash all around him.

COMPUTER VOICE  
50 seconds to life support failure.

Slowly the Pilot opens his eyes. He's disoriented. His face cringes in pain as he gets his bearings: still not sure where he is or what's going on.

COMPUTER VOICE  
40 seconds to life support failure.

The Pilot suddenly realizes he's in a lot of trouble. He springs to life the best he can. Pressing buttons. Flipping switches. Nothing's responding.

COMPUTER VOICE  
30 seconds to life support failure.

The Pilot hits the console in frustration. Nothing.

PILOT  
Come on. Come on.

Suddenly, a BLAST outside rocks the ship.

EXT. SPACE

A WINGED fighter ship strafes the Pilot's ship.

INT. SPACESHIP

The pilot instinctively ducks as the winged ship flies past him.

COMPUTER VOICE  
20 seconds to life support failure.

PILOT  
I know, I know! That's the least of  
my worries now.

The Pilot rips off a control panel and hot-wires it. Still nothing.

EXT. SPACE

The winged ship comes around for another shot. He's coming in fast.

PILOT  
Shit!

He punches the console in frustration. The ship powers up.

PILOT (CONT'D)  
Yah!

He hits the thrusters and his ship barely avoids another shot from the winged ship.

COMPUTER VOICE  
Life support operational. Estimated  
oxygen replenishment in 60 seconds.

PILOT  
You're so kind.

EXT. SPACE

The Pilot's ship maneuvers deftly through space as he makes a daring spin. He comes around squarely behind the winged ship.

INT. SPACESHIP

PILOT  
Not your lucky day, Criven.

He fires a shot.

EXT. SPACE

Bull's-eye. The winged ship crackles with electricity and small explosions ignite the rear section.

An LIFEPOD ejects out of the winged ship just before the whole ship blows.

INT. SPACESHIP

The pilot comes around for the final blow. He lines up the helpless lifepod in his sights.

At the last minute he eases off the trigger and passes by.

PILOT

I guess it is your lucky day today.  
So long, sucker. Hope you freeze to  
death.

EXT. SPACE

The pilot steers his ship away leaving the lifepod behind him.

INT. SPACESHIP

The pilot hits some buttons on his console. The screen flashes and dies.

PILOT

Oh, come on.

COMPUTER VOICE

Oxygen recycler operational. Life  
support stable.

PILOT

Well, that's something at least.  
(beat)  
Computer. Display star charts.

COMPUTER VOICE

Unable to comply. Star charts are  
non-operational.

PILOT

Computer. Repair star charts.

COMPUTER VOICE  
 Unable to comply. Star charts are  
 non-operational.

PILOT  
 Great.  
 (beat)  
 Computer. Open channel 116.

COMPUTER VOICE  
 Unable to comply. Communication  
 channel 116 is non-operational.

PILOT  
 117.

COMPUTER VOICE  
 Unable to comply. Comm --

PILOT  
 118. 119. Any channel. Open any  
 channel.

COMPUTER VOICE  
 Unable to comply. Communica --

The Pilot punches the button turning the voice off.

The Pilot looks around at the stars outside.

He hits the button turning the computer voice back on.

PILOT  
 Computer. Scan for local systems.

COMPUTER VOICE  
 Scanning.  
 (beat)  
 Scanning complete. Unable to  
 recognize star configuration.  
 Recommend navigation to known star  
 configuration.

PILOT  
 Yeah, that's what I'm trying to do!

He punches the off button again in frustration.

He thinks for a minute. Grabs the controls and fires up the  
 thrusters.

EXT. SPACE

The spaceship circles back in the direction he came.

He brings his ship to a halt.

INT. SPACESHIP

He looks out the window to see the lifepod he left behind.

PILOT

Computer. Can you establish a short range communication line?

COMPUTER VOICE

Unable to comply. Communication channels are not operational.

PILOT

I know, but this is only a few meters. Connect the lower band of 116 through 168, bridge them through the relays, then crank up the juice. That should connect right to the lifepod.

COMPUTER VOICE

Please restate the question.

PILOT

(under his breath)  
Figures.

He taps something into the console.

PILOT

Put this here. Transfer that there. See? It's easy.

Some STATIC comes on the speakers.

He tweaks the settings until it clears up.

PILOT

(into the air)  
Attention lifepod. Do you copy?

Nothing.

PILOT (CONT'D)  
Lifepod off my starboard bow. Do  
you read me?

After a long silence.

ALIEN (O.C.)  
Val-chu-na ich ose frei-lar!

PILOT  
Do you speak English?

INT. LIFEPOD

An alien with a thick neck and strange facial markings  
answers.

INTERCUT PILOT/ALIEN

ALIEN  
Yes, of course. You have to learn  
English when slaving for Human scum  
like you.

PILOT  
That's no way to speak to the Human  
who saved your life. I could've  
blown you out of the stars back  
there.

ALIEN  
Hach-al yied vulcar Iill-t --

PILOT  
Save the curse for your deathwalk,  
Criven. You'll need your god then.  
I only want to know one thing. You  
got any navigation on that flying  
trashcan?

ALIEN  
Perhaps.

PILOT  
Apparently, you gave me a good  
blast that knocked me out as we cut  
through the wormhole, but I can't  
seem to find the mouth anywhere. I  
don't recognize any of these stars.

ALIEN

That's because the wormhole shifted when I was chasing you through. We're stuck in some other part of the galaxy.

PILOT

Great. Can you scan for the wormhole mouth?

ALIEN

I already have.

PILOT

Give me the coordinates and if you're lucky I'll tell your people where you are when I get back.

ALIEN

(laughs)

Well, isn't this interesting? A Human needing the help of a lowly Criven. I take it your navigation is out?

PILOT

Look, buddy, you probably only have about a day's worth of oxygen and power in that thing. Give me the coordinates to the wormhole and I'll send someone back for you.

ALIEN

To take me prisoner? Ha! You should blast me right now. I've worked in your mines. That was prison enough for me.

PILOT

Do you really want to get into this right now? Just give me the goddamn coordinates or I'm gonna blast you just for spite!

ALIEN

Typical human. Always shooting first.

PILOT

Shoot first!? It was your raiding party that ambushed our convoy on the other side of the wormhole!

ALIEN

A convoy stealing the wealth of my homeworld.

PILOT

Those are our ancient lands, Criven. You know that.

ALIEN

I was born there. So was my mother, and my mother's mother times ten. We are the roots of that soil. Not you, Human. You already have a home. Go back to Earth.

PILOT

The ancient Human ruins prove our ancestors were there eons before any Criven set foot. You know this. Now come on, we don't have time for this. Give me the coordinates!

A long silence passes between them.

ALIEN

I will give them to you Human, but only because I want you to live and to face the horrors of what you've done to my people.

PILOT

Done to you? We have your bombs in our cities everyday, and raids on our convoys because of your rebellion. We live in fear because of you. You are the horror, not us.

ALIEN

We have no food. We have no freedom. We are slaves to you Humans.

PILOT

Save me the sob story. You have food, and you're not slaves.

ALIEN

Perhaps only in technicality, but we might as well be. We have no choice but to serve our oppressors.

The Pilot sits back in his chair and rubs his face.

PILOT

Look, I'm sorry about whatever it is you're so angry about. But I've got responsibilities too. We need Criven Prime. Earth hasn't exactly been good to us. We don't really have a home there either. We have no choice.

ALIEN

Well, it seems we both need the same planet. Then you understand why the rebellion must go on. We have no choice as well.

A long silence passes between them.

ALIEN

The coordinates are X-57.96, Y-987.356, Z-5483.5536. The base point is that star 2.6 light years over. Can your computer read it?

The Pilot types the coordinates into his computer.

PILOT

Yes. I think I've got it. Yes. The computer has a lock.

More silence.

ALIEN

What are you waiting for? Go home, Human.

The Pilot thinks for a moment.

PILOT

Computer. At full impulse, do we have enough power to get to the wormhole?

COMPUTER VOICE

Calculating.

(pause)

At full impulse speed, this craft will arrive 2036.68 meters short of the destination.

PILOT

Close enough. We'll have to drift in.

(beat)

You still with me, buddy?

ALIEN

Does it look like I went somewhere?

PILOT

I think I can tow you back to the wormhole.

ALIEN

I heard your computer. You'll barely make it yourself. Towing me will severely drain your power.

PILOT

I think we can build up enough momentum to drift in.

ALIEN

You would have to calculate that precisely. There's no room for error. Don't be a fool.

PILOT

Hey, I'm trying to do something nice for you here. You want a tow or not?

ALIEN

I would rather fly into a star than be taken prisoner by a Human.

PILOT

Do you have any family back on Criven Prime?

ALIEN

Yes. Two sisters. My wives, and four sons.

PILOT

Don't you want to get home to them?

ALIEN

Of course. Don't you wish to return to your family?

PILOT

Yeah. My brothers are probably getting drunk right now at my funeral. It'd be a shame to waste all that good beer without me.

ALIEN

If I return with you, I won't stop fighting. The rebellion will continue.

PILOT

(sigh)

I know, and we won't stop mining Criven Prime.

ALIEN

But at least we'll have one more day with our families.

PILOT

That counts for something, right?

More silence between them.

ALIEN

I think my release clamp can connect to your docking clamps.

PILOT

You might be right. Let's try it.

EXT. SPACE

A small protrusion pops out the back of the lifepod.

The Pilot eases into position with his docking clamps exposed.

INT. SPACESHIP

The Pilot maneuvers his ship with careful precision.

COMPUTER VOICE

Proximity alert. Proximity alert.

PILOT

I know! Shut up!

EXT. SPACE

The docking clamps seal over the lifepod clamp successfully.

PILOT

Gotcha!

(beat)

Ok, buddy, Hold on tight. I'm going to program in the trajectory. The thrusters should fire for 30 seconds, then go to impulse. We should be able to drift in the rest of the way to the wormhole... assuming it hasn't shifted again.

ALIEN

Let us pray it hasn't.

PILOT

Amen to that brother.

The Pilot carefully steers the ship into the trajectory path.

The thrusters fire and the two crafts coast out into the stars.

FADE OUT.

THE END