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Oblivion

By Karl Gajdusek

JACK:

New York, before I was born. A place I've only seen pictures of. I know you... But we've never met. I'm with you... But I don't know your name. I know I'm dreaming. But it feels like more than that. It feels like a memory. How can that be? March 14th, 2077. Five years since the mandatory memory wipe. And I'm still haunted by these dreams. Victoria and I were assigned together. In two weeks, our mission here will be finished, and we'll join the others. But the questions I ask, she doesn't. The things I wonder about, she won't. It's been half a century since the scavengers destroyed our moon. Forced to leave their own dying planet, they came to take ours. Without the moon, the Earth was thrown into chaos. Earthquakes toppled cities within hours. Tsunamis wiped out what remained. Then came the invasion. We did what we had to do. We used the nukes. We won the war, but lost the planet. Left it contaminated. Most of it uninhabitable. What remained of humanity

had to leave the Earth. We built the Tet. our mission control. A temporary space station before the migration to Titan, Saturn's largest moon. Everyone's there now. Well, almost everyone. Until our tour is complete, Vika and I do our job. We protect the hydro rigs, which convert Earth's sea water into fusion energy for the new colony. The survival of humanity depends on it. Thank you for the coffee. Remnants of the scavenger army continue to disrupt the operation. They attack our drones at night, and try to kill me during the day. There's still fight in them, but I don't know why. Mission says we have done well. That we are an effective team. Vika's my communications officer. She keeps an eye on me. I handle drone maintenance. The drones watch everything. Vika can't wait to go. Me, I'm not so sure. I can't shake the feeling that Earth, in spite of all that's happened... Earth is still my home. Jack Harper, Tech-49. Morning, Bob. Tower, comm check. Drone Maintenance Technician 49, hydro rig support.

All Bubbleship systems are green. I'm good to go. Copy, Tech-49, you're cleared. Be careful out there. - Always am. - No, you're not. Yeah, you're right. I gotta work on that. All right, Tet's coming online in 30 seconds. Relaying hydro rig coordinates now. Confirm visual. I got 'em. Hydro rigs are sucking seawater. You got 'em, Bob? Drone 185 looks good. Jack, we've got two drones down. Shit. Stand by, Mission coming online. And we have Tet contact. Morning, boss. Tower 49, this is Mission Control. How y'all doing this lovely morning? Another day in paradise, Sally. Uploading data now. 49 mission log. Day 1642, hydro rig support. - I have two... - You have two drones offline. Perimeter's compromised. Copy that, relaying to Tech. Stand by. Jack, 166 is down in Grid 37. Linking to beacon now. You'll go there first. Got it. On my way.

VICTORIA:

en route to Grid 37 now.

Can you plug that hole with Drone 109? Negative, 109 is in the dock. Still waiting for parts. Jack better find those drones and get 'em flying. Those rigs can't be exposed overnight. Copy that.

SALLY:

didn't he fix 166 recently? Jack has fixed all the drones recently. And, if we had the parts that we've been asking for, we wouldn't be running a skeleton crew down here. Understood. We're doing the best we can. - Are you an effective team? - We are an effective team. Your directive today is to rehabilitate 166 and find 172. Get 'em flying by sundown, and I'll buy you two a round of drinks when you get up to the Tet. You had better be ready, Sally. Two weeks now, we're keeping track. Okay. Come on, Bob. Work with me, here, buddy. Tech-49? Tech-49? Jack? - Copy, Tower. - What happened? I lost you for a second. Really?

JACK:

There it is. I've got multiple scav kills.

Drone 166 put up a hell of a fight. Got any movement? No sign of scavenger activity. But I've got limited visibility, here, Jack, due to low angle of Mission. Copy that. I'm coming in hot. Starting repairs. Watch my back. I always do. You know, I read about this game. It was played right here. The last Super Bowl. Please don't tell me. t was a classic. A classic game. Down by four. The ball was on the 50-yard line. Seconds left on the clock. The ball is snapped, and the QB fumbles. Disaster. Looks like the game is over. I'm reading the whole central core off-alignment. You don't have the necessary tools down there. And a new fuel cell is not going to fix that. But this QB runs back, and picks up his own fumble. Hold on, what did you just do? There's a wall of linebackers closing in on him. So, he throws a long ball with no idea who is at the other end. A Hail Mary. Eighty-thousand people on their feet, watching this ball sail through the air. Downfield is a rookie wide

receiver, third string. He just leaps out of the pack. Touchdown! Contact! West contact!

VICTORIA:

It's okay, Vika. It's just a dog. Hey. Now, go on. You gotta get out of here. Go on, get! Get out of here! Go! Tech-49, Jack Harper. You're welcome. 166 is back online. Two drones shot down today. Ten fuel cells stolen in just over a month. These scavs are getting bolder.

VICTORIA:

are taking all the water. Once we're gone, they'll have nothing but dust and radiation.

JACK:

We won the war. Now we have to leave. Two more weeks, Jack. Then we'll be on our way to Titan. Yep. That drone is out there somewhere. We just have to find it. Without a beacon, that's like finding a needle in a haystack. So we go to our ground game. Tower, I've located 172 down a sinkhole. No visual, but I can hear it. Tet's so far off angle, I can barely see you. How's it look?

It's good, it's good. There's no sign of scav activity on top. Tet's offline in 15 minutes. After that, you're on your own.

VICTORIA:

this is Tower 49. Jack has located drone 172. Engaged in recovery now. Requesting backup to his location ASAP. I've got a visual on Drone 172. Jack? What the hell? Shit. Ha! Jack! Tech-49, Jack Harper. Jack Harper, Tech-49! Hey! Oh, no. Come on. Not my goddamn bike!

JACK:

better Than facing fearful odds." "For the ashes of his fathers And the temples of his Gods."

VICTORIA:

Yep, I'll be right there.

VICTORIA:

Can it fly?
Barely.
And without armor, she's a sitting duck.
Well, I'll talk to Sally about that shielding in the morning.
Okay.
Again.
What, Jack Harper?
Where did you get this?
It was growing in...
Come on, Jack, you know the regulations. I know you think I'm a stickler but you have no idea what kind of toxins could be in something like that. - It's a flower, Vika. - Yeah, that's not the point. It's that we are so close to the end, and the last thing that we need is you putting it all at risk. Okay. Every day, you have to go down there and see what was lost. But we've done our job, Jack. It's time to go. I don't think they were trying to kill me today. The scavs. They were trying to catch me. Well, they can't have you. Come on. You should come with me sometime, before we leave. There's a place I found I'd like to show you. I'll show you something. Hey, hev! Oh, my God.

VICTORIA:

from inside the hydro rig's core.
It's offline permanently.

SALLY:

the whole operation at risk. I need to know exactly what happened.

VICTORIA:

weaponized one of the stolen fuel cells and got it into the suction. SALLY 1 Tower, hold. Tower, I've got a rogue signal in Grid 37. Are you seeing this? Yes.

JACK:

It's not one of ours. Jack, the signal is being directed off-planet. On my Way-Tower, our logs show you are missing an additional nine fuel cells. - Can you confirm? - Negative, Mission, that number is 10. Drone 172 was lost last night. 109 is combat-ready as soon as we get that shielding. We can cover the remaining rigs with drones in the field. I've run the numbers. We'll do the numbers up here, Tower. I'm tasking the drones to defensive positions. Our job is to run those rigs. Your directive is to protect them. We cannot afford to lose another. Do you copy? - Are you and Jack an effective team? - Damn right we are. Jack? You're right on top of it. Do you have a visual? Jack? Yeah, I got it. They have some kind of a repeater. The scavs are using the building as an antenna. Can you decrypt? It's a set of coordinates. Grid 17. It's a goddamn homing beacon. Grid 17.

What the hell is out there? Nothing. It's the middle of nowhere. What is going on? Why would the scavs send a signal off-planet, Jack? I'm shutting it down. Tech-49, check your course. You're headed right for the border. That radiation will cook you from the inside before you know it. It's okay, Vika. I see it. I'm gonna do a perimeter check before I head home. I may go off-comm. Jack, we should keep in contact. Just let me know where you are. Do you COPY? Jack, do you copy? That's right, Bob. You know where we're going. Are you qonna miss me? I'm gonna miss this place. It would have been great. It would have been great.

JACK:

VICTORIA: - An object came down in 17. - That's the beacon coordinates. Exactly. I saw it. - Some sort of vessel. - Jack, Mission's almost offline. I'm en route now. Mission, we have an unidentified object impact in 17. It came down at coordinates sent by a scav beacon. - My tech's en route now. - Tower, we're going offline soon,... ...but drones are already mobile and executing. Have your tech stand down. Jack, Mission wants you to stand down. The drones will handle it.

JACK:

With Tet offline, we need our eyes on this. I want to know this site is secure. Sally, my tech's concerned about the security of the site. Tower, you have lost enough assets for today. Keep your tech out of there. Do you copy? Copy, Command, I'm... Jack, Command wants you to stand down. The drones will handle this.

JACK:

Jack. I don't have eyes on you. Command's offline. Vika, I think it's one of ours. This thing is ancient. It looks... pre-war. The scavs brought this thing down, Jack. There's no sign of scavs. Technician, this is your Control. I'm ordering you to pull out and return to the tower immediately. Touching down. They're human. Tower, we have got survivors. There are four... Check it, five survivors. They are human. Stand down! Vika, the drones are firing on survivors. Jack, the Tet's offline.

I don't have control. Stand down! Jack Harper, Tech-49. Back off, you son of a bitch! Back off! Open the door. Vika! Get the med kit. Get the med kit! This has to be reported. Be sure and report that the drones killed the crew from one of our own ships. See what Command makes of that. It's breathing fluid. Just let her get it out. Jack. Here. You're still dehydrated. Where are we? I'm Victoria, this is Jack.

VICTORIA:

I'm Julia.

VICTORIA:

I'm sorry for what I have to tell you, but you were in a crash. Your ship came down. Jack managed to pull you from the wreckage. But none of your crew survived. What do you mean? You're the only one that made it. I'm sorry. You've been in delta sleep for a long time. Some disorientation is normal. How long? Sixty years. At least. I have to get back to our ship. It's too dangerous down there. You need to rest. Vika... Don't touch me. Your ship's re-entry was triggered by a beacon from the surface. Do you know anything about that? What was your mission? It's classified. Well, we have no record of an Odyssey... I can't tell you anything until I get the flight recorder from my ship. Julia, a lot has changed in 60 years. While you were in delta sleep, Earth was attacked. Call them scavs. They destroyed our moon and with that, half the planet. Then they invaded. We won the war, but Earth was ruined. Everyone's on Titan now. It's a moon of Saturn. Or on the space station, getting ready to go. We're here for security and drone maintenance. We're the mop-up crew. You've lost people. Everything. If you want to be alone, we understand. The drones killed her entire crew. - If I hadn't gotten there... - I want her gone first thing. Vika... Do you have any memories before the mission? Before the security wipe?

Our job is not to remember. Remember? Do you remember her? Jack! That was a scav beacon that brought her down. We don't know who she is. Or what she is. Let's just get through the night. Okay? You fly that thing? Yes. What happens now? The Tet will be online soon. Victoria will report your rescue. They'll send someone down for you. From the Tet? Yes. I need to get the flight recorder from my ship. The scavs, they move at night. - They could be all over it by now. - I need to know what happened. You need to know what happened. Please. Jack? Jack, what are you doing? Vika, she's a flight officer. She wants to see her ship and secure the flight recorder. - Now, you would want the same thing. - Jack, Jack... I can't protect you. No, I understand. This one's on me. I couldn't save them. Jack. Jack! Jack, can you hear me? All right, it's time to go. Jack. I found it.

Jack! Tower 49, how are y'all this lovely morning? Another day in paradise. Sally... Jack took a pre-dawn patrol and went off-comm near the canyons in 17. Now, I know we're low on drones, but, um, requesting one to sweep the area. Just a quick scout. Copy 49, tasking 185 to Grid 22.

BEECH:

better Than facing fearful odds." "For the ashes of his fathers." "And the temples of his Gods" I've been watching you, Jack. You're curious. What are you looking for in those books? Do they bring back old memories? You won't get anything from me. - My memory has been ... - Wiped to protect the security of the mission. Yes. You can't have your precious memory falling into the wrong hands, now, can you? Tell me. Have you ever met a scav up close? Of course not. You just repair drones. "Don't go into the radiation zone." "Don't ask too many questions." Not part of the job description. Lights.

We're not alien, Jack. We're human. Of course, for us, being human is a problem. Old stealth fighter tech. Shields us from your scanners. Vocal scrambling. Can you hear me, Jack? Keeps your drones confused. Well, most of the time. - The drones are programmed... - To kill humans, Jack. You saw what they did to those sleep pods. You almost got yourself blown to bits protecting that woman. Why did you do that? Anyone would have. "Anyone." - Interesting. - We're wasting our time. The drone will track him here.

BEECH:

He thinks I'm a fool for having brought you here. I hope you prove him wrong. Mission, I'm picking up a bio trail somewhere near the west canyons. - Can you confirm the sequence? - Stand by. DNA confirmed. It's Jack. Vika, are you okay? Everything good between you two? Of course. You're still an effective team? We're great. Never better.

BEECH:

a ground game, and losing.

So, we decided, "What the hell?" "We've got to throw the long ball." It took us decades just to crack the GPS codes. That's how you brought down the Odyssey. Why?

BEECH:

reactor, courtesy of NASA. Very hard to come by. Did you like the show last night? That was just one fuel cell. Imagine what 10 of them will do, with a core of weapons-grade plutonium. We have a nuke, and we have a drone to carry it. But we can't access it. It doesn't know who we are. But it knows you, Jack. We need you to program the drone. Have it carry our nuke up to the Tet. End this war. There are people up there. Sergeant. Program the drone to return to the Tet. It needs to go right to the center. Screw you. We haven't got time for this. Hey.Hey! No. - Let's go! - Get him up. - Mission,185 just went off-grid. - Copy, Tower, we're seeing the same thing. Permission to task

two additional drones? If one drone is here, more will come. And they won't stop until they find me. They'll turn this place to dust. But if you let us go, I'll call them off. It's your only chance. I've been to your "radiation zones." If you're looking for the truth, that's where you'll find it. You've risked all our lives. Everything. What makes you think he's different? She does.

VICTORIA: my tech over in 37. You can call off the search.

SALLY:

Glad Jack's safe. Tasking the other drones back to rig support. Where are we going now? Who are you? What aren't you telling me? - Jack, Jack. - What were you doing on the Odyssey? What was your mission? It was a research flight to Titan. My first. That's what it was supposed to be. Six weeks to launch, deep space scanners picked up an alien object. We were reassigned to investigate. They put us all in delta.

They must have woken you and Victoria first. What? That object was the Tet, Jack. The Tet was our mission. That's impossible. That's impossible! Who are you? I'm your wife. I don't know what happened, but you're not who you think you are. Jack, we were here. You asked me to meet you, brought me up on top of the world. I could tell you were nervous that day. It was right here, Jack. You said, "Look through here," "and I'll show you the future." And I held up a ring. - And you said ... - "Yes." There you are. There you are. Hi. Hello. Come on.

JACK:

Do not report to Mission until I get back. Do you copy? Do you COPY? Vika, open the door. Stay away from me. I don't want to hear it. It's not safe here, and we need to leave, now. It was always her. Wasn't it? Vika... She's my wife. Mission, this is Tower 49.

SALLY:

No. I'm having a problem with my technician. No, you don't know what you're doing. He found a survivor at the crash site. You've gotta listen to me. She's impeding his abilities, and he is unfit for service. No, no, no.

SALLY:

hear that, Vika. Are you still an effective team? Vika... Open the goddamn door, Vika! No. We are not an effective team. - Vika, please. We have to go now. - I'm not going anywhere with you, Jack. There's a place I know. We'll be safe. I'm going to Titan. There is no Titan. They lied to us. Just stay away from me. Vika, please, there are things... Things you need to know. I don't want to know! Jack! Hi, Jack. I don't believe we've had the pleasure. What have you done? You can't blame yourself for this. Drones are unreliable. Sometimes things go wrong. "Go wrong"? You killed her. I know, it's tragic.

She was a wonderful person. Jack, we want to bring you in. I've been authorized to tell you we're going to assign you a new mission. You and the survivor. There's a lot of interest up here. Bring her up. We can debrief, then anything's possible. It's time to come home, Jack. Jack? Jack? Jack! I'm sorry. Hang on. Lightning. That's the plan. We need cover. There. - Are you okay? - No. Don't worry, we're staying out of there. - Are we gonna die? - No! Maybe. Jack! Son of a bitch. Wait here. Who is it? Hey! Wait! Wait! Hey! Drop your weapon! It's okay. Don't move! We have to shut that drone down. - Stop moving!

JULIA:

It's okay. Julia. Julia! Don't. Don't touch me. Hold on. Just hold on. Jack Harper, Tech-52. Hey. There you are. What happened? Are you okay? That bogey came across the border and then I lost you. False alarm. I should get back out there. You come all the way home, and I don't get a kiss? What's going on up there? I was thinking... Why don't you come down with me? To the surface? We could go right now. Now? Yeah. Are you serious? You won't believe what's down there. Jack! You know the regulations. Yes. Can we not do this again? I'm done talking about it. Okay. This is gonna hurt. Hell of a day, huh, Bob? You always loved this song. I'm not him. I know I'm not. But I've loved you... for as long as I can remember. I don't know how else to say it. You know what

you said to me once? You said when it was all over, you would build me a house on a lake. We would grow old and fat together. And we would fight. Maybe drink too much. Real romantic. And then we would die and be buried in a meadow by the lake. And the world would forget about us. But we would always have each other. I remember. Those memories are yours, Jack. They're ours. They are you. Good morning. I wanted to spend the rest of my life here. You still can. I have to go. Those people need my help. We'll come back when it's over. Promise me. We'll come back when it's over. You had me worried for a second. I thought you weren't coming back. Well, I had to prove him wrong. You look like shit. You should see the other guy. If I had told you what you'd find out there, you would have thought I was crazy. I still do. - Malcolm Beech. - Julia Harper. Come on.

VICTORIA:

I'm picking up a bio-trail somewhere near the West Canyons. Can you confirm the sequence?

SALLY:

DNA confirmed, it's Jack. Mission, 185 just went off-grid. Copy, Tower. We're seeing the same thing. I'd been in the army less than a year when that unholy Tet arrived. I saw the moon get taken out. Right up there in the night sky. I couldn't believe it. After that, nature took over. There's bedrock around Chicago, so we were spared the worst of the waves and the quakes. Most people just starved. Then the Tet sent troop ships down. The doors opened, and out you came. Astronaut Jack Harper. Thousands of you. Memory wiped. Programmed to kill. They had taken one of our best and turned him against us. No soul. No humanity. The Tet. What a brilliant machine. Feeding off one planet after another for energy. Phase Two was drones. Repairmen. 50 years of watching those hydro rigs suck our planet dry. Then one day,

I saw you set down. Another drone to fix. But in the rubble that day was a book. You picked it up. You studied it. And I thought I saw a way. When you stepped in front of that drone and saved her, I knew. You were in there somewhere. I just had to find a way to bring you back. Watch it, watch it. Eyes on it. Steady. Give it some space. Come on, you're making it nervous. That is one pissed-off weapon. No, it's just a machine. I'm the weapon. I would love to be there to see that thing's face when this goes off. That would be a one-way trip. Yeah, but it would be worth it. Welcome back, Commander. Open the doors! - Shit! - Spread out!

MAN:

keep your head down!

JULIA:

Follow me! Come on, you son of a bitch!

JACK:

Jack. I'm okay. The drone. Send the drone. It's gone.

I thought we had it. I really did. I can take the bomb myself. Ah... You know it will swat you like a fly. Not if I go. No. She asked you to bring me up. So bring me up. We'll go together. It reminds me of home. Ready? Jack. Dream of us. Jack! MALE AUTOMATED VOICE: Flight recorder playback for the Odyssey mission. 3 May, 2017. Okay, Bob. Ready for space?

SALLY:

your friends here at Mission Control.

JACK:

This is Commander Jack Harper. Thank you for that fantastic wake-up call. Pre-rendezvous checks complete. Electrical guidance and nav systems, all good. Range behind object, 250 clicks... 12 below V-bar, closure rate 200 kilometers per hour. Copy that. It's good to see you, Jack. After 39 days of sleep, sounds like you're ready to go. I'm ready to go. Your next burn will bring you up level and co-speed at 50 kilometer

range, where you'll hold. Copy. We'll hold 50 clicks from object for sensor scan and evaluation. Targets look good. Initiating burn in 3,2,1... Ignition. We see a good burn. Are you reading any output from the object? Negative. Zero heat. No EMR. There's no sign of life. How is the rest of the crew doing? Co-pilot Victoria Olsen should be up here shortly. The rest of the crew remains in delta sleep. Copy that. You missed a hell of a game last night. What did I tell you guys? No spoilers about last night's game. I'm looking forward to watching it when I get back. You're not talking about football already, are you?

SALLY:

VICTORIA:

How are you doing this lovely morning? Another day in paradise. Hey. One for history. Yeah.

SALLY:

I have you on approach. Hello, Sally. It's a busy morning, huh? I'm picking up a second passenger, Jack. It's Julia Rusakova, the female survivor from the crashed module. State your intention. Deliver the survivor, as requested. We are a more effective team. Proceed to entry.

JACK:

we have a situation. The last burn was spot-on to give us a SO-click hold from object, but radar range still decreasing. We're accelerating toward the object. We're going to need full OMS burn to pull away. Initiate now. Entering target. - Gimbals set. - Target's good. - Arm forward engines. - Engines on. Ready? Let's qo. Mission, we're in full OMS burn, trying to back out. There's a lot of vibration. We're not getting away from this thing. Odyssey, telemetry shows structural overstress. Knock off the burn. Do you copy? Cutting off burn. Mission. Mission? Mission? Sally? Increased acceleration toward the object. Estimated contact within two minutes.

I'm going to eject the sleep module. It's programmed for reinsertion into Earth orbit. I'll fly the Command module out if I break free. - I want you back there now. - Absolutely not. - That's an order!

- Jack, no, we're a team.

VICTORIA:

Jack! 30 seconds! Dream of us. Jack!

SALLY:

enter at headway speed. Entering at headway. You buck up, Bob. Don't go all shaky on me.

SALLY:

I can't help notice your respiration and heart rate have increased. I'm just excited to finally meet you, Sally. There's been a pattern of insubordinate behavior recently. Yeah. I feel bad about that. Voice analysis indicates you are lying to me, Jack. Tell me why you are here. You have five seconds. I want Julia to live. I want our species to survive. This is the only way. Proceed to landing. Atmosphere provided. Welcome home, Jack. Come on. Jack,

you're doing the right thing.

JACK:

are, or where you're from, but I'd like to tell you about something I read. A story from Rome, a city you destroyed. It's a classic. There was a guy, Horatius, held the bridge alone against a whole army. And what Horatius said was, "How can a man die better..." You don't have to die, Jack. She doesn't have to die. Everybody dies, Sally. The thing is, to die well. Jack, that's not the survivor you promised me. No, it's not. What Horatius said was, "How can a man die better." "Than facing fearful odds". Drones! Get inside! Get inside! "For the ashes of his fathers." "And the temples of his Gods".

SALLY:

I am your God. Fuck you, Sally.

JACK:

Three years have passed since I saw your face. I wonder if I come to you at night, in dreams. In the day, as memories. Do I haunt your hours the way you haunted mine? And I wonder if you see me when you look at her. Mommy, look. If we have souls, they are made of the love we share. Undimmed by time. Unbound by death. For three years, I searched for the house he built. I knew it had to be out there. Because I know him. Lam him. Who's that? I am Jack Harper. And I am home.