



JULY 3, 2179. 9:15 AM, EARTH CENTRAL TIME. LV-426, AKA "ACHERON," ONE OF THREE KNOWN MOONS OF THE CALPAMOS PLANETOID IN THE ZETA 2 RETICULI SYSTEM.

FOR A TIME, IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE *ANYONE* WAS GOING TO MAKE IT OUT OF HADLEY'S HOPE ALIVE...

NO, PLEASE, NO!

SHHH

STHLUNK

SKRFEEL



I'D BEEN RUNNING THE TERRAFORMING OPERATION ON ACHERON FOR FOUR YEARS, BY THAT POINT. HELPING TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD--OR SO THEY TOLD ME.

COME ON, COME ON! THIS WAY! DON'T STOP!



YAAAAA!



OH, GOD! THEY'RE CLOSE!

AND GETTING CLOSER, WHICH IS WHY WE NEED TO MOVE!



=ULP=



OH, THANK GOD, RUSSELL!  
I THOUGHT FOR SURE YOU  
WERE MORE OF *THEM*.



GENEVIEVE DIONE WAS A GREENHOUSE  
SUPERVISOR WHO MOONLIGHTED AS A  
TEACHER FOR THE COLONISTS' CHILDREN.

*~HFF~*  
THEY'RE NOT FAR  
BEHIND US.

THEN  
LET'S GO,  
ALREADY!



NO, NOT THAT WAY!  
THE CORRIDORS ARE  
**OVERRUN** WITH  
THE DAMNED  
THINGS.

THEN  
WHERE?



I'VE GOT  
A **PLAN**. WE'RE  
GETTING **OFF**  
THIS ROCK.

THERE WASN'T A SHIP ON ACHERON THAT COULD REACH FASTER-THAN-LIGHT SPEEDS. BUT WE DID HAVE ONE OPTION.

THE *ONAGER* WAS DESIGNED FOR DRILLING ORE AND FERRYING CARGO TO LOW ORBIT AND BACK--AND NOT MUCH ELSE. BUT IT COULD GET OFF THE SURFACE, WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE ENOUGH.

NOLAN CALE WAS A SURVEYOR AND PROSPECTOR--ONE OF OUR SO-CALLED "WILDCATTERS"--DOING COMPANY JOBS WHILE ALSO SEEKING PROFITABLE NEW MINING OPPORTUNITIES WITH WHAT LITTLE FREE TIME HE HAD.



MOVE IT!  
MOVE IT!



SHIFT THAT STUFF--  
*PRONTO!*  
WE DON'T KNOW HOW LONG WE'LL BE WAITING FOR A PICKUP.



YOU SURE THIS THING WILL *MAKE* IT THAT FAR, BOSS?

IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAVE A CHOICE, J.R., NOW DO WE? SO *MOVE!*

OH, GOD!  
*NO!*



WHEN WE GOT TO THE HANGAR, THINGS LOOKED PRETTY BLEAK.



NO! THEY MUST'VE COME FROM THE EAST CORRIDOR!



WE'VE GOT TO GET *OUT* OF HERE BEFORE THEY FINISH WITH THOSE POOR BASTARDS AND NOTICE *US*!

NO--THERE'S NO OTHER WAY OUT.

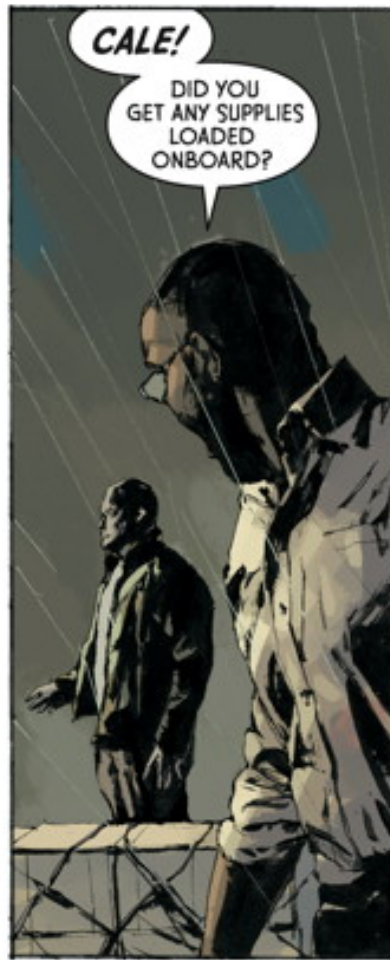


EVERYBODY ONBOARD THE *ONAGER*! WE'RE LEAVING! *NOW*!





COME ON,  
COME ON!  
MOVE IT!



**CALE!**

DID YOU  
GET ANY SUPPLIES  
LOADED  
ONBOARD?



ER...UH...  
WHAT...?



NOT EVERYTHING  
WE WANTED, NO. BUT  
WE'VE GOT THE TRANSCIVER  
AND SOME EMERGENCY  
RATIONS, AND--

THEN CLOSE  
UP THE CARGO  
HATCHES!



WE CAN *DO*  
THIS, WE CAN  
*DO* THIS, IT'LL  
WORK...





I'M NOT REALLY **RATED** ON THIS EQUIPMENT, GENE.

RAMONA, I PROMISE I WON'T TELL THE COMPANY IF **YOU** DON'T.



**BEEP**

OKAY, CALE, ARE WE GOOD TO GO? WE CAN'T HIT VACUUM WITH THOSE HATCHES OPEN, OR WE'LL IMplode.



I'M IN THE UMBILICUS NOW.



LOOKS LIKE MY MEN WERE ABLE TO GET THE HATCHES CLOSED BEFORE--

