

M.A.R.S. PROJECT

Written by

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INT. SPACESHIP CORRIDOR - DAY

The emergency lights flicker, illuminating the corridor a bright blood red. OBIS, the on-board AI, speaks over the comms system.

O.B.I.S.

Attention crew members. A weapon has been taken from the defence locker.

HUGH, a bold, middle-aged war veteran and leader of the M.A.R.S. mission, stands over the corpse of SARA, a blonde, young woman and sole scientist of the mission. Tightly gripped in his hand is a laser pistol of some sort. It's basic but clearly effective.

Sara stares, lifelessly, at the ceiling with a smoking hole in her chest. Hugh steps over her and continues his path.

His footsteps echo as he walks slowly along the metal floor, in the dead silent corridor.

HUGH

Come on out, Jackson... You can't hide forever. It's a small ship.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACESHIP BRIDGE - DAY

JACKSON, a young tech whiz, is tucked away under a desk. He's breathing rapidly, scared out of his mind. He's curled up and is closing his eyes as tight as possible.

JACKSON

(whisper, to self)  
Calm it, Jackson. Calm down.  
Everything's fine. Everything's perfectly fine. You don't know what you saw. You don't-

Jackson pauses, opens his eyes wide and holds his breath as he hears Hugh calling for him.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

(whisper, nervously)  
Dammit.

Jackson looks down at something in his hand, then gets up - almost reluctantly - and dashes to the door.

He pauses there, listening for Hugh's footsteps. He can't hear any so he continues out into the corridor.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACESHIP CORRIDOR - DAY

Hugh chuckles to himself as he stalks the corridors, looking for Jackson.

HUGH

(slowly and menacingly)

Two volunteers, now the ship is red. Two volunteers, now the ship is red. And if I can find Jackson, he will soon be dead. There'll be one volunteer, and some bloodshed.

Hugh's eyes are bloodshot and slightly yellow. His face looks like that of a corpse, and he seems to have completely lost it.

HUGH (CONT'D)

Come out Jackson! I don't want to hurt you...

HUGH (CONT'D)

(whispers, to self)

No... I want to kill you.

Hugh continues his path down the hallway and his search for Jackson. He smiles as he hears some faint footsteps in the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACESHIP CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Jackson checks both left and right down the crossroads he's at and, after seeing it's clear, he darts across the open space as quick and quietly as possible towards the next turn.

Hugh slowly walks down the corridor with a manic smile carved into his ill-looking face.

Jackson stands motionless at the bend of the next corner. He takes a deep breath, and closes his eyes.

Hugh raises up his gun and his smile grows even bigger. He starts to quietly chuckle to himself as he believes he's got Jackson cornered.

Jackson opens his eyes and turns the corner: Hugh isn't there. Hugh turns his corner and finds that Jackson isn't around his either. He let's out a deafening cry that slowly turns into a sick laughter.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACESHIP COMMS DECK ENTRANCE - DAY

Jackson sees his goal: the communications deck. He sprints towards it and as he reaches it, he taps the virtual lock-pad next to the door but it doesn't open. He taps it again and the doors open slightly.

O.B.I.S.

Attention crew members. Entrance to the communications deck is now-Malfunction. Entrance unable to open.

Jackson looks up at the speakers with an aggrieved look in his eyes. OBIS has just given away his position.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SPACESHIP CORRIDOR - DAY

Hugh looks up at the speakers and smiles. He readies his gun then heads down the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACESHIP COMMS DECK ENTRANCE - DAY

Jackson begins to try and squeeze himself through the narrow gap that was opened between the blast doors before OBIS malfunctioned. He struggles immensely, having to contort his body into extremely uncomfortable positions to make it through, but he makes it.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACESHIP COMMS DECK - DAY

Jackson opens his hand and inside is a small hard drive with Sara's name on it. He takes a moment to himself, proud that he achieved his goal. He takes several deep breaths, and slows his breathing.

Then a laser hits him straight in the spine. He drops to the floor and cries out in agony. Hugh is stood at the end of the hallway with his pistol held high and aimed between the slit in the doors. He begins to walk closer with the same manic smile on his face as before.

HUGH

Jackson! Finally. Ugh, you have no idea how hard I've been trying to find you. You're good at hiding, I'll give you that, techie.

Jackson uses what mobility he has left in his upper body to drag himself towards the nearest desk.

Hugh stands on the other side of the door, and smiles as he watches Jackson crawl.

HUGH (CONT'D)  
What're you doing there, weasel?

Jackson continues to ignore Hugh and lifts himself high enough to use the communication controls.

HUGH (CONT'D)  
Seriously kid, what're you doing?

JACKSON  
(struggling through his  
pain)  
Saving humanity.

Jackson inserts the small hard drive into a slot on the desk. Hugh begins to try and squeeze himself through the narrow gap in the door, gun first.

HUGH  
(whilst struggling  
through  
the door)  
Kid! Stop it! They deserve to die.  
I've seen them at their worst. I've  
been through war to protect them  
and I got nothing in return.

Jackson gasps in pain as he turns the dial to the right frequency for the Earth base.

HUGH (CONT'D)  
They're doomed. Wherever humanity  
is, war follows! Don't you get  
that?! Death follows! We cause it.  
If you let them know that Mars is  
inhabitable, they'll kill it, just  
like they did Earth!

Jackson looks at Hugh, who's trapped between the doors now, and smiles through the immense pain he's in. He taps a button and four white LEDs surrounding the hard drive port light up. All of it's contents are being uploaded.

HUGH (CONT'D)  
(enraged)  
No! You idiot! You- You- No!

O.B.I.S.  
All data from chosen hard drive is  
ready to send. Just say the command  
words.

Jackson holds himself up on the desk and stares directly at Hugh.

JACKSON  
Obis, send all data to Eart-

Jackson's cut off just before he can finish and drops down grabbing his stomach. Hugh smiles and begins to laugh as the barrel of his laser pistol cools down after letting off a round.

JACKSON (CONT'D)  
Send it, Obis!

Hugh's face switches within a split-second as he hears Jackson yell the command to OBIS. He goes to shoot again but the gun's all out of charge. He tosses it to the floor and tries to push himself through the doors.

O.B.I.S.  
All data has been successfully  
broadcast to M.A.R.S. Project  
Homebase, is there anything else  
you'd like?

HUGH  
I hate you! You've screwed them  
all! You've restarted the cycle!

Jackson props himself up against the wall nearby and sighs in relief, accepting what he's about to do.

JACKSON  
Initiate Curtain Call.

Hugh looks at Jackson and yells at him. His cries are spiteful and full of pure rage. Jackson smiles and rests his head back against the steel plated wall. He closes his eyes.

FADE TO WHITE.