

Beyond the Crash Site
A short play by Harrison Zacher

CHARACTERS:

BORIS: He is a decorated soldier, the Chief Petty Officer of his military vessel, the SPIRE-242.

MASON: A lower-level researcher on board the SPIRE-242 who studies the ecosystems of alien life forms.

RUBEL: A small, green alien from Omega Venturi III. Can only speak in sentence fragments.

ANI: Rubel's mother. Also an alien.

SETTING:

TIME: The future

PLACE: The jungle covered planet Omega Venturi III.

SCENE 1

(Radio static cuts in and out over a dark stage.)

(Muffled radio chatter turns into a single voice.)

BORIS Mayday! This is Chief Petty Officer Boris Masterson reporting a hull containment breach—

(Radio static cuts in.)

BORIS This is SPIRE-242 Research and Containment Vessel. We have been struck by an unexpected debris storm on the starboard side—

(Loud explosion.)

BORIS Mayday! We have been struck and—

(Static.)

BORIS The ship is going down! I repeat, the ship is going down!

(Another explosion, followed by silence.)

SCENE 2

(Lights up on BORIS, injured and wearing a tarnished space suit, a ripped parachute is attached to him.)

(A jungle landscape is projected behind him, the crashed space vessel plumes out smoke in the distance.)

(Boris sits on a stump and reads over a large, paper map and fiddles with a radio.)

BORIS S.O.S. This is Officer Masterson reporting a crashed space vessel, planetside Omega Venturi III. This is a message to any survivors. Report to the designated triage location at the North Water Basin. Be on HIGH alert for dangerous wildlife. Over.

(MASON enters, limping and carrying a bag of fruits.)

MASON Any luck with that radio?

BORIS Well, I just sent out another S.O.S message, lost count at 30. Hopefully some more survivors will show up here soon.
What did you find?

MASON Just a couple of these odd-looking fruits from a nearby tree.

(He tosses the bag to Boris.)

BORIS You sure these aren't poisonous? They're...glowing.

MASON That's just some typical phosphorescence. Once the sun goes down, this whole jungle will likely light up. They should be safe to eat. Only side effect would be the "glowing feces" phenomenon.

BORIS You know your plants. Were you a botanist aboard the ship?

(A loud crunch as Boris takes a bite out of one of the fruits.)

MASON Technically I am...I mean I *was* an Ecological Analysis Specialist. On the ship I used to study the ecosystems and the diets of alien lifeforms. So yeah, I guess you could say I'm a botanist.

BORIS I tried my best to visit every department on board but I don't think I was able to meet you before the crash. Pretty big ship. But I'm glad I'm with you now. What better person to be stuck in a foreign jungle with, right?

MASON Sure we have a lot of brain power, but with injuries like these there's no way we'll be able survive even one night. We're the perfect prey.

BORIS C'mon Mason. I'm not just a scientist, I'm a top-ranked soldier. I can handle a little survival situation like this.

MASON You'd be surprised what kind of creatures lurk out here. We're not safe.

BORIS If it's safety you're worried about, check this out.

(Boris shows Mason a gun.)

BORIS That right there is cutting edge technology. It uses unstable plasma, the galaxy's first self-regenerative form of ammunition. So no need to worry about reloading.

MASON Guess I got pretty lucky to be stuck out here with you too.

BORIS You handle the flora and fauna, and I'll handle our personal defense. I'm not just all talk, I wouldn't be your senior officer if I didn't know what I was doing. Have you ever used a firearm, Mason?

MASON Well yeah, there was the mandatory weapons training right before we were shipped off. You just point and shoot right?

(Mason aims the weapon around, finger on the trigger.)

(Boris grabs him by the wrist.)

BORIS Stop. You clearly know nothing about weapons safety.

MASON I did say I was a botanist. I don't know jack shit about plasma weaponry or whatever you called it.

BORIS It's *unstable plasma*. And nobody does. Except me and the 13 other researchers who died experimenting with it. This stuff is dangerous, but dammit if it's not effective. Watch.

(Boris carefully aims the pistol and fires off in the distance.)

BORIS You have to be steady, just charge up your shot and release it. Make each shot meaningful. If you hit it perfectly, the target will be instantly vaporized.

MASON Got it.

(Mason imitates Boris' technique and fires off a shot.)

BORIS That's better, you'll get the hang of it.

MASON Look at us. Maybe we will survive the night after all.

BORIS We'll at least stand a fighting chance.

(Lights down.)

SCENE 3

(Night time. A blue-tinted light fills up the scene, mimicking the jungle's phosphorescent glow.)

(Boris sits on the stump, inspecting the plasma gun. Mason lays asleep next to him.)

(RUBEL enters SL.)

(He sneaks to the bag of glowing fruit and tries to take one)

BORIS Stop right there!

RUBEL AHHH!

BORIS Identify yourself!

RUBEL I...am...Rubel.

BORIS Hello Rubel. I am Boris.

RUBEL I...am...Rubel.

BORIS Ok. Rubel, I got it.

RUBEL I...am...Rubel.

(Boris points the plasma gun at Rubel.)

BORIS Start making sense or I shoot you.

RUBEL No! No...shoot!

BORIS Where did you come from?

RUBEL Rubel...from...here!.

BORIS Mason, wake up.

(Mason stirs awake.)

MASON Huh, what?

BORIS Mason, I've come across a strange alien life form. It says its name is Rubel.

(Mason puts on his glasses and looks toward Rubel.)

MASON Rubel, huh? Hello Rubel. My name is Mason.

RUBEL May-sun...Bo-rees...Hello.

MASON Wow! This guy seems pretty intelligent! Can you understand me, Rubel?

RUBEL I...am...understand

MASON Ok, we won't hurt you. Boris, put that gun down. It is obviously harmless and open to peaceful negotiation.

BORIS We don't know that. You said it yourself, it's dangerous out here.

MASON Yes I said that. But look at it, do you really think this would hurt you?

BORIS Well, now that you mention it, he is kinda cute.

MASON Look at it, it's shaking.

(Mason gets up and walks towards Rubel.)

MASON We are not going to hurt you, Rubel.

(Mason offers his hand cautiously to Rubel.)

RUBEL No...hurt...me?

MASON Yes, no hurt you. Boris, put it down.

(Boris hesitantly lowers the weapon.)

BORIS You're putting a lot of trust in this...creature.

MASON I think I remember studying a lifeform similar to this one. They're carbon-based and live in small nomadic communities. Honestly, very similar to humans. Are there more of you? Where is your family?

RUBEL Fire. Sky. Burn.

MASON No, Rubel. Your family. Where are they?

RUBEL I...all alone.

BORIS Wait, fire, sky, burn. Is it talking about the ship crash?

MASON The ship? That would make sense! The crash would have caused a significant amount of damage to their ecosystem depending on where it landed. Rubel, where is your home?

RUBEL Rubel home...there.

(Rubel points to the crashed ship.)

MASON Oh no. Boris, I think you were right. The ship must've destroyed its village. Poor thing. We have to help!

BORIS I don't know, Mason...

MASON We caused this! We have to do something!

BORIS We had no control over where the ship crashed. It was just a random chance. Let's just leave this thing alone. We don't wanna interfere with the natural order of things. Go away Rubel, we won't help you!

(Rubel starts crying.)

MASON Look what you did! Aww come here little guy!

(Rubel cries and hugs Mason's leg.)

RUBEL Rubel...need...help.

MASON How can we help you, Rubel?

RUBEL Need...find...family

BORIS I thought you said his village was destroyed. They're probably dead.

MASON You seemed pretty certain that there were other survivors from our ship, why not from the village?

BORIS I just think we should focus on finding our own people.

MASON Have some sympathy, Boris. We'll end up going towards the crash-site anyway, so maybe we'll find some of our own people on the way there.

BORIS Fine, but I'm gonna have a tight grip on my plasma gun.

MASON Rubel, can you take us to your village?

RUBEL This...way...come

(The three exit SL.)

(Lights down.)

SCENE 4

(Lights up. Day time.)

(Debris from the crash lies around a grassy field.)

(Rubel enters SL, leading Boris and Mason behind him.)

(Boris drinks from a water bottle, savoring the last few drops.)

BORIS There goes the last of my water. Mason, how about you?

MASON I'm almost out too. Rubel, how much further?

RUBEL We...are...arrive

BORIS Here? I don't see anything

(Rubel falls to his knees.)

RUBEL This...was...home

MASON His village was inside the impact zone. No wonder there's nothing left.

(ANI groans and limps out from behind some debris, clutching her wounded side.)

ANI Rubel...is that you?

(She collapses to the ground.)

(Rubel runs to her side.)

MASON There's a survivor, we gotta help her!

(Mason starts toward Ani but is held back by Boris.)

BORIS Wait.

ANI You have to get away from here...get away from those...humans

RUBEL They...are...friend

ANI They bring death...destruction from above...we cannot...trust them.

(She points to Mason and Boris.)

ANI They...killed...your family

MASON Rubel, it was an accident. The circumstances were out of our control, but we promise to help you now.

ANI Don't listen to them...my son...I will bring justice to our people.

(Ani pulls out a plasma gun and aims towards the humans.)

BORIS Where the hell did she get that!

MASON Wait! Don't shoot!

BORIS She must have stolen it off of all the humans she killed! Well you're not killing us!

(Boris pulls out his plasma gun.)

MASON Boris, no!

(Boris fires the gun, killing Ani.)

(Rubel cries over Ani's dead body.)

RUBEL No...mother...why

(Mason grabs Boris by the collar.)

MASON What have you done!

BORIS She was about to kill us, Mason! It was either her or us!

MASON You don't understand what you have done, do you? You just threw our chance for peace right out the window. You're just as selfish as the rest of them, when are you gonna get that through that thick skull of yours!

(Boris pushes Mason off of him.)

BORIS Get off of me, traitor.

MASON You're calling me a traitor just because I have a sense of morality and you don't.

BORIS No, I'm calling you a traitor because you care about these aliens more than your own people. Now stand down, that's an order.

MASON I'm fine with being a traitor if it means I don't have to take orders from you.

BORIS Mason, you are committing treason.

MASON If standing up for something is treason, then so be it.

BORIS So be it.

(Boris aims the plasma gun at Mason.)

(A shot is heard, but Boris didn't pull the trigger.)

(Rubel stands behind the smoking gun, and Boris falls to the ground.)

RUBEL Rubel...bring...justice.

END OF PLAY.