

STARSAILOR

Written by

Daniel N. Millen

&

J. D. Compton

Story by

Daniel N. Millen

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM

CLOSE on a dusty, faded GLOBE. A low rumbling sound fills the room. A well-loved leather JOURNAL sits above. In the background, out of focus objects move mechanically. Panels on a wall rotate and flip.

A framed PHOTO comes into view - the back of a man carrying a PIGTAILED GIRL on his shoulders toward a beautiful mountain home.

Behind, another photo shows 3 astronauts - 2 men & 1 woman - looking nervous but hopeful. A banner above them: OPERATION HOMELAND.

This room seems cold, modern, and efficient - like a tiny home.

A high-tech TEA KETTLE steams while a man stands in the background, shoulders slumped, gazing at a SQUARE PHOTO. The kettle beeps, lights up green. He tucks the photo away, and pours the water into a china tea cup. He steeps an ornate infuser then lifts the cup to his face, past a name tag on his jumpsuit:

SIR J. WALDO (40s), distinguished but mournful, sips his tea when-

A red button on a control panel lights. Panels flip to hide a bed and bath area, revealing more monitors & controls. The interior of the room flashes red. Pull back to reveal...

INT. ROCKETSHIP - MAIN CABIN

Waldo rushes to the panel and sees a proximity alert for a MINERAL on a nearby planet. The display then shows his fuel level at 4%. He clears the alert, and engages the landing autopilot. The room continues to change over from homey to tactical as he rushes to the only window and presses his face to the glass, panning to reveal...

TITLE: STARSAILOR

EXT. SPACE - LUSH PLANET

A dozen craters scatter the landscape dotted with gorgeous trees, long grasses, canyons, and rivers. Peaceful & serene-

-until thrusters enter frame and the rocket violently lands sending debris flying. The rocket is enormous relative to the tiny planet, standing nearly 1/3 it's diameter.

Low on the rocket, a ramp rolls down to the surface and a door slides open revealing Waldo, suited up in his astronaut gear.

Waldo descends the ramp, but the gravity is very mild and he instantly propels himself into low orbit around the planet. He grasps for anything in reach to pull himself back onto the planet - plants, rocks, the rocket. He rips a plant and boulder off the planet, sending them into orbit with him.

In 8 seconds, he's orbited the entire planet, and grabs hold of a handle on his rocket. He climbs to the nose of the ship, flips it open, and rifles through the contents searching for something. He discards random items - used food containers, punctured hoses, scrap metal, until - voila! A DEVICE he clasps around his boots that allow him to walk on the surface.

He strides onto the planet, cautiously at first. A screen on his right arm beeps with varying intensity, showing the distance to the mineral he needs. He searches with increasing confidence until the beeps indicate he's found something. He punches a button on his screen and points a laser at the ground.

One of TWO PANELS near the thrusters of his ship detaches and a DRONE with a compact but heavy-duty drill flies over his location, hovering. From it's four corners, harpoon-like wires shoot into the ground.

Vibrations from the impact jostle the planet and, from a nearby crater, a LITTLE ALIEN - dog-like & spotted - pops its head up. It studies the astronaut curiously, then cautiously scurries toward him to investigate.

Waldo notices the Alien watching the drill being winched down to the ground by the guide wires. Waldo isn't surprised by the harmless creature, patting its head, and brushing it away. But the Alien doesn't leave, and reaches for the drill.

Waldo takes a half-eaten chocolate bar from a pouch on his suit, distracting the Alien with it. He holds it out to the Alien, and just as the Alien is about to take it, Waldo tosses it into a crater. The Alien jumps in after it.

Alone, Waldo starts the drill, making quick work of the planet's crust and stirring up dirt and rocks into the atmosphere. It spits waste into a nearby river.

The Alien pops out of a different crater close by. He dips back down without Waldo noticing and a moment later the drill shakes, sputters, and stops. Waldo's screen shows an error. He punches buttons, confused, and restarts the drill.

The Alien pops up from the same crater, annoyed, and dips back down. Suddenly, the drill spasms chaotically, smashing itself into the ground until the stakes shake loose and the contraption drifts into deep space. Waldo watches helplessly.

The Alien pops out of the drill hole, chittering angrily. Waldo considers his options, then throws another candy bar - launching it into orbit. The Alien scurries off, climbs a tree on the opposite side of the planet, and snags the treat.

Waldo activates the SECOND DRONE attached to the ship, repeating the previous steps until it's drilling. Across the planet - the Alien feels vibrations and goes back to investigate...

...as Waldo expected! He intercepts the Alien, mirroring it's motions, blocking it from reaching the drill. Waldo points to his ship, then the drill, the ship, the mineral photo on his screen, the drill, the ship - poorly miming that he needs fuel. The Alien stares blankly, then erupts in a threatening bark.

Waldo offers another candy bar. The Aliens flings it into Waldo's helmet, and it bounces into orbit with a smattering of other debris Waldo stirred up. The atmosphere is getting clogged.

The Alien jumps onto Waldo's leg gnawing on his suit as Waldo awkwardly kicks his leg to shake the animal loose. The Alien unclasps and drops a gravity device as Waldo grabs the critter, and suddenly Waldo is only attached to the planet by one leg - holding an odd-looking Yoga position.

Waldo drops the Alien, who scurries off toward the drill. Waldo uses his hands to pull his leg down to the ground. And tries to reattach the device, but his leg floats back up.

The Alien studies the drill. He presses buttons and moves levers.

Waldo reattaches the device and rushes to the sputtering machine. He startles the Alien away, who circles like a tiger. Waldo frantically tweaks controls to fix the drill. More smoke gushes out as it shakes worse, then suddenly stops.

And resumes drilling normally. Waldo wipes sweat from his visor and sighs but-

-the Alien is right beside him holding a big important-looking PART of the machine. Waldo spasms, taking the part and swinging it wildly at the creature. The Alien darts into a crater.

The Alien pop us from another crater, but Waldo is already there - SWIPE!

Another crater - SWIPE!

The Alien scurries out of another crater across the planet, but Waldo is already on his way to it - SWIPE!

Exhausted, Waldo pulls a high-tech EXPLOSIVE out of his backpack. He activates it, drops it in a crater, steps back and comically prepares for the blast.

The Alien exits a crater across the planet just before the bomb ignites, blasting off a huge chunk of the planet...

...and cracking the planet under the drill.

FIRE EXPLODES straight up, splitting the drill in half.

They both watch the destruction, horrified.

Waldo clutches desperately for parts flinging into space, but it's no use. He's STRANDED with no way to mine for fuel.

He steps into a canyon and slumps down.

The Alien stops crying, notices Waldo's posture and approaches carefully. Waldo looks miserable.

The Alien hesitantly reaches for Waldo and touches his shoulder. The spots on the Alien's arms and ears emit a soft neon yellow-green glow. It's eyes dilate, filling frame, leading to-

#### MEMORIES MONTAGE

(Each scene is a highly-stylized still-life proscenium - but with depth - like a diorama. The camera moves through the frozen scenes to convey the important information. Certain key elements may be in motion or change, but characters are frozen.)

#### INT. WALDO'S MOUNTAIN HOME

Waldo, younger & energetic, looks at a NEWSPAPER headline: "Environmental Crisis"

#### INT. GROCERY STORE

Waldo and the pigtailed girl browse a sparse selection of canned goods.

## INT. MISSION CONTROL - BRIEFING ROOM

A NASA-like classroom where dozens of astronauts watch a screen banked by images of wars, mega-tornadoes, and people of all colors starving. The center of the display shows rockets like Waldo's all around Earth with lines pointing away from Earth toward outer space & other planets.

Waldo sits between the two other astronauts from the framed photo. His expression is grave. He grasps the woman's hand.

## I/E. ROAD TO LAUNCHPAD

Waldo rides in a driverless car toward a field of smoking rockets, about to take off. Out the window are fields of endless dust where crops used to grow.

## INT. ROCKETSHIP - MAIN CABIN

Waldo is strapped in. He grips the controls as a countdown begins on his screen... 10... 9... 8...

He looks out the window, tears in his eyes.

## EXT. LAUNCHPAD

The Pigtailed Girl sits beside the Woman Astronaut, who hugs her. The girl salutes him.

## INT. ROCKETSHIP - MAIN CABIN

Waldo salutes - 3... 2... the ship shakes and light fills the cabin.

## EXT. EARTH - SPACE

Hundreds of rockets depart a brown, dying Earth, spreading in all directions.

The planet's color fades as it hangs in a lonely expanse.

## END MONTAGE

## EXT. SPACE - LUSH PLANET

The Alien's eyelid wipes frame - space becomes a pupil.

Waldo shakes his head, looking at the Alien, understanding what just happened.

Then the Alien ducks into a crater, returning a moment later with arms filled with crystals - the minerals Waldo needs. He offers them to Waldo.

Waldo lights up, taking the crystals, and runs to the ship. He opens a panel at the base of the Rocket, loads the minerals, shuts the door and watches the display on his suit show the fuel filling back up.

He walks up the ramp to the Rocket, then looks back at the Alien. A drifting clod of dirt brushes Waldo's face, bringing his attention to the planet. He sees the destruction he's caused, tears welling in his eyes.

The planet is ruined. Garbage and dirt surround the planet. Vegetation suffers. The rivers are muck.

But Waldo reaches out and grabs the dirt, then shoves it back into the ground. He grabs a rock and presses it back into the ground. Then a plant. Another rock.

The Alien cocks his head, understanding, then joins the clean-up effort.

Waldo uses a space-age vacuum to sweep dust and dirt from the air.

Waldo pulls a hose from the ship, dropping it into a river and filters the filthy stream through the ship's water purifier. Clean water comes back out.

He pulls a broken piece of the drilling machine out of orbit, using the still-functioning harpoons to connect the piece of the planet he blew off back to the mainland. The winch pulls the planet back together.

The Alien pats a plant into the dirt, then Waldo sprinkles fresh water over the ground. Waldo holds a giant trash bag and the atmosphere is totally clean.

They give each other a look: Mission Accomplished.

Waldo walks up the ramp to the ship, tosses the garbage into the rocket, then turns and salutes the Alien. He goes into the ship, retracting the ramp.

A short blast from the thruster stirs up just a little dust, then, once clear from the planet, the jets fully ignite and take off.

The planet floats peacefully in space once again.

But the Alien is nowhere to be seen.

FADE TO BLACK.