

WE FIX SPACE JUNK

EPISODE 3: THE POPCORN MEN OF ENTERTAINIA III

By Beth Crane

For Battle Bird Productions

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ANNOUNCEMENT/INTRO

ANNOUNCER: We Fix Space Junk, by Beth Crane. Episode 3: The Popcorn Men of Entertainia III.

SFX: **THEME MUSIC**

SCENE 1: INT. YELLOW SUBMARINE -- MORNING

SFX: **A DOOR WHOOSHES OPEN.**
SAMANTHA MUNCHES CRISPS.

KILNER: Feeling better?

SAMANTHA: A bit.

KILNER: We're nearly at the planet's surface.

SAMANTHA: I didn't really expect my first day of work to be quite like this.

KILNER: I'm guessing you've not really worked before?

SAMANTHA: I had a lemonade stand when I was little. My father made all of our staff buy drinks from me. He was really happy with my profit margins.

KILNER: That sounds...

SAMANTHA: It sounds like my father.

KILNER: I thought I should probably give you a bit of a lesson. So you understand what we're doing.

SAMANTHA: Just to warn you, I'm kind of useless.

KILNER: Have you tried?

SAMANTHA: Tried what?

KILNER: Well, anything.

SAMANTHA: "Pay someone else to do it" is pretty much my family motto.

KILNER: Then how do you know you're useless?

SAMANTHA: Because I've...

KILNER: Well then.

So first, a quick lesson in consequences.

SAMANTHA: Are you going to go all quantum on me? Because I probably won't rget it.

KILNER: Some of the repairs we carry out -- or operations we do or cargo we move -- may not make sense, initially. On the surface.

SAMANTHA: Right.

KILNER: It's only later on that you realise that Automnicon has a plan. There are always consequences. Even for the little things.

SAMANTHA: How does Automnicon know what's going to happen?

KILNER: Statisticians. They have thousands of them, human and... otherwise. Some of the best minds in the galaxy are number-crunchers for Automnicon.

They decide what the end result they want is and then their stats department pore over the potential causes and refine them until they have a course of action that is almost certain.

SAMANTHA: Almost?

KILNER: Well, there's always a little human error.

SAMANTHA: Kilner?

KILNER: Yes?

SAMANTHA: Are Automnicon evil?

KILNER: Is anything evil? I don't know. I've been working for them so long I'm not sure I'd know the difference.

SAMANTHA: How did you wind up like this?

KILNER: It's what happens when you grow up in a small mining town on Pluto. You work in the mine or you take out an impossibly large loan to escape. I was always good with machines, so...I left. I studied, became a decent mechanic and then when I was finished Automnicon owned me. A few decades later -- quite a lot of decades later -- now I'm here.

SAMANTHA: That seems sad. Kind of a waste.

KILNER: A waste of what? The average lifespan on Pluto is 42. I'd have been long dead by now.

Dax, can you play the mission brief again?

AUTOMNIVOICE: Hello, valued employees! Here are the details for your next exciting mission. You will be [REPAIRING] a [PROJECTOR, MODEL UNKNOWN] in or at the [CENTRAL CINEMA, ENTERTANIA PLEASURE COMPLEX, PLANET 3]. We hope you enjoy your mission. Additional notes: [NONE][MESSAGE ENDS]

KILNER: Take us down, Dax. You know what to do.

SFX: **THE SPACESHIP DESCENDS AND LANDS.**

KILNER: Where's the -- ah, here it is.

AUTOMNIVOICE: Welcome, valued employees, to the Entertania Pleasure Complex. Once home to the galaxy's best, brightest and above all richest pleasure-seekers, after last century's unfortunate nuclear incident it has been rendered defunct.

SCENE 2: EXT. ENTERTAINIA -- DAY

SFX: **YELLOW SUB DOOR OPENS, KILNER AND SAMANTHA LEAVE.**

SAMANTHA: What a dump.

KILNER: It used to be beautiful. If you like that sort of thing. You see over there, by those festering pools of slime? They used to be glittering waters, giving health to all who bathed in them. There were lush green and purple plants everywhere, carefully maintained by a whole army of gardeners. And the grand cinema... that was the centrestone of the whole place.

I couldn't even afford a packet of peanuts here in the old days.

SAMANTHA: So what are we supposed to be doing?

KILNER: We're repairing a projector. I'm guessing it'll be a TOMNI Mk.II.
Nice bit of kit but it doesn't like grease.

SAMANTHA: A projector. We've travelled through space for three days to fix a projector.

KILNER: Remember what I said about consequences. There are a lot of reasons to keep the people of Entertainia...distracted.

SFX: **THEY WALK ACROSS A CRUNCHY, SLIGHTLY STICKY LANDSCAPE. THINK CINEMA CARPET AFTER A KIDS' MATINEE.**

KILNER: Try not to react too much.

SAMANTHA: Don't worry, I've met a lot of aliens. I've done the full round of diplomatic balls.

POPCORN LEADER: Greetings, visitors.

SAMANTHA: (SQUEAKS) Is that...popcorn?

SFX: **THUD. KILNER KICKS HER.**

SAMANTHA: Ow!

KILNER: Hello, your excellency.

POPCORN LEADER: We welcome you to our planet, although I am afraid that with our current high levels of austerity we have little to offer you.
(SIGHS)

KILNER: We have been sent by head office to make alterations to your main cinema.

POPCORN LEADER: This is good news. Things just haven't been the same since the films stopped running.

SAMANTHA: So the cinema will fix all this?

POPCORN LEADER: Not really. But it's good to have a distraction. It stops the riots. When you're watching a classic romantic comedy, perhaps the Notebook or Sleepless in Seattle, it really takes you out of yourself. And then it's hard to remember that you're starving to death.

SAMANTHA: But wouldn't it be better to --

KILNER: If you could lead us to the projection room we'll get started.

SAMANTHA: But --

SFX: **THEY WALK ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE AND INTO THE GRAND CINEMA. DOOR CREAKS.**

SCENE 3: INT. CINEMA -- DAY

KILNER: Welcome to the Grand Cinema.

SAMANTHA: This place must have been beautiful once. The gold's peeling off of the arches and the velvet's faded on the seats but... imagine coming here.

KILNER: It was alright. A bit tacky. I only went inside once and that was

in its last days.

We want to go up those stairs and through there. That's the projection room. Look at them... they're all sitting in their seats, waiting for it to start...

SFX: **THEY GO UP SOME STAIRS, OPEN A DOOR**
AND CLOSE IT BEHIND THEM.

SCENE 4: INT PROJECTION ROOM -- DAY

KILNER: Can you put the toolkit down there?

Hmm...

SFX: **SAMANTHA PUTS THE TOOLKIT DOWN.**

CLANKING AND CLATTERING, FOLLOWED BY

A WHIZZ AND A SPINNING NOISE AS KILNER

ROTATES THE PROJECTOR WHEEL.

KILNER: Told you. TOMNO Mk II. It's always the grease.

SFX: **SOFT REPAIR SOUNDS START.**

SAMANTHA: So you fix these a lot?

KILNER: I fixed one before the catastrophe happened. And I've read a lot about them, as well as what little I could find out about what happened. There's a surprising amount of anthropology involved in what we do.

SAMANTHA: That's not the same as hands-on experience though, surely?

KILNER: Well, when you take a step back, everything pretty much works the same way. They're just a bunch of moving parts. Projectors, battle robots, ships, the human body.

SAMANTHA: We're different though.

KILNER: Well, I did base my knees on a hinging mechanism from a submarine.

SAMANTHA: Really?

KILNER: Moving parts.

SAMANTHA: So am I supposed to be doing something?

KILNER: Not yet. Just watch what I'm doing.

It's quite simple once you know the principles. You need to lubricate machines to keep them running but lubrication in the wrong place can be disastrous. The -- buttery atmosphere of Entertainia isn't great for these machines.

That little wheel with the teeth wore down and the grease made it tear through the film instead of moving it. And then because the film wasn't moving the projector jammed and overheated, which burnt through the cellulose.

SAMANTHA: So why don't they just get a new one?

KILNER: They don't have access to the outside world. It's Automnicon's job to keep it that way.

SAMANTHA: Why?

KILNER: Have you ever heard of Entertainia?

SAMANTHA: No.

KILNER: It was a massive artificial entertainment complex built to amuse the best and brightest of the universe. But as people stopped being interested in what it had to offer, it was abandoned. The nail in the coffin was the nuclear reactor that powered the place. There was a leak and it... did something strange.

Those creatures evolved from popcorn. If they were recognised as sentient the corporation that accidentally created them would have to take responsibility for them. It would upset too many people if they nuked the place, so... Well, it's one of the universe's little secrets.

SAMANTHA: The universe is a much weirder place than I thought.

KILNER: Little bit of advice... when they come round with refreshments, don't take them. Some things evolved and some things... devolved.

SAMANTHA: Like what?

KILNER: The ushers.

The films keep them distracted and relatively content until the universe can figure out what to do with them.

SFX: **CLANG, WHIRR. THE PROJECTOR STARTS UP AGAIN. SOFT MOVIE SFX.**

KILNER: Want to stay and watch this one? It's good.

SAMANTHA: Don't we have to go?

KILNER: Dax, any more jobs lined up?

DACHSHUND: (VIA INTERCOM) Nothing yet.

SAMANTHA: Okay then. I guess so. Keeps us out of the ship for a little while.

SFX: THEY WALK DOWNSTAIRS AND INTO THE THEATRE ITSELF.

KILNER: Shall we sit there?

SFX: CREAK: THEY SIT IN THEATRE SEATS. THE MOVIE SOUNDS LOUDER.

KILNER: You'll get used to it, I promise.

POPCORN: Hey, we're trying to watch a movie here!

SAMANTHA: Is it always like this?

POPCORN 2: Shh! Who's that talking?

KILNER: Not exactly. Sometimes they want to give you human snacks, sometimes they want to kill you. It keeps you on your toes.

SAMANTHA: You know I'll get out of my contract eventually, right?

POPCORN 2: There they are! Get them!

SFX: SHOTS FIRED.

SAMANTHA AND KILNER RUN AWAY.

KILNER: Ah yeah. I forgot. Speaking during films is punishable by death.

SAMANTHA: I guess they are a civilised society after all.

SFX: **THEY RUN INTO THE DISTANCE. MORE SHOTS.**

KILNER: There's the sub! Thank Bruce I didn't park further away!

SCENE 5: INT. YELLOW SUB

SFX: **THEY RUN INTO THE DISTANCE. MORE SHOTS.**

YELLOW SUB DOOR OPENS, THEY RUN IN. IT CLOSSES.

DACHSHUND: What happened to you?

KILNER: Long story. Take off. Now.

SFX: **THE SHIP SPUTTERS INTO LIFE AND TAKES OFF, SPEEDILY. A CROWD JEERS BELOW.**

SCENE 4: INT. YELLOW SUB

KILNER: So there we go. That's the job.

SAMANTHA: I need a drink.

SFX: **KILNER OPENS A FRIDGE.**

KILNER: I thought you'd say that.

SFX: **WHISKY IS OPENED AND POURED INTO TWO PLASTIC CUPS.**

KILNER: Cheers.

SFX: **THEY THUNK THE CUPS TOGETHER.**

SAMANTHA: I think I could get used to this. Temporarily.

KILNER: Yeah, temporarily.

SFX: **THEY SIP THE WHISKY. SAMANTHA
SPLUTTERS.**

SAMANTHA: What the hell is that?

KILNER: I make it out of fuel. You get used to the taste.

SFX: **THEY SIP AGAIN.**

SAMANTHA: I think there are a lot of things I'll have to get used to.

KILNER: It's better than being dead.

SAMANTHA: Or married to Fabio.

DACHSHUND: I don't want to get in the way of your bonding but there's another job coming in. Other side of Alpha Centauri.

KILNER: Looks like it's another three month stint in the pods.

SAMANTHA: Can we give it a couple of days? I need some time to think.

KILNER: Okay. But too long out of the pods and we'll be stuck eating recycled food.

SAMANTHA: Eating what?

KILNER: It's as exactly as unpleasant as it sounds.

SAMANTHA: Right.

KILNER: But it's better than starving to death. That's what happened to the guy who used to own this ship.

SAMANTHA: What happened?

KILNER: No one knows. They just found an empty, powered-down ship floating in space with a puddle of human remains on the carpet.

When no one claimed it, Automnicon acquired it at auction, fitted it up and sent us on our way.

Don't worry, they cleaned it. Mostly.

DACHSHUND: Actually, I wanted to talk to you about that.

KILNER: Don't freak her out, Dax. She's new.

And besides, there's no such thing as ghosts

ANNOUNCEMENT/OUTRO

SFX:

THEME MUSIC SLOWLY RISES

NARRATOR: Little do our team of adventurers know that there's more than one kind of ghost. As the Yellow Submarine drifts slowly through space, something is watching them...

ANNOUNCER: In that episode of We Fix Space Junk, Samantha Trapp was played by Rebecca Evans, Kilner was played by Beth Crane and Dachshund was played by Jack Carmichael. All other parts were played by Chris Montague, Rosie Alys, Vicki Barron, Luke

Booys and Hedley Knights

The programme was written by Beth Crane and produced by Hedley Knights for Battle Bird Productions.

SFX:

THEME MUSIC

POST CREDIT SCENE: MS LAMB'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

SFX:

INT. MS LAMB'S OFFICE

LIONEL: How do you wish to proceed, Ms Lamb? Do you want us to inform the Trapps?

MS LAMB: No. Not yet. Things are getting interesting. I didn't expect her to have that much character.

LIONEL: So just watch and wait?

MS LAMB: Yes, Lionel. Watch and wait.

SFX:

FINAL BEAT OF THEME.

COMPUTER VOICE: Rate. Review. Subscribe. Consume. Become one with us. Bring us your children, your loved ones and your dead. Automnicon. Because life is better together.

