

WE FIX SPACE JUNK

MINI-SERIES: MARILYN'S DIARY

EPISODE 1

By Beth Crane

CAST

Marilyn:

Francesca Mintowt-Czyz

Computer:

James Carney

ANNOUNCER: Marilyn's Diary, by Beth Crane. Episode 1.

SFX: **THEME.**

MARILYN: Hello. I'm Marilyn. How are you? No, that's not the right way to start it.

Hello. I'm Marilyn. I'm six days old and I'm travelling through space in my dad's ship, the Y-Ki-Yay. I am currently five and a half inches tall and weigh approximately three quarters of a kilogram.

There. That's a start. I think. Computer?

COMPUTER: What are you doing?

MARILYN: I'm keeping a diary. So I can keep track of what I've learned. A lot of teenagers do it, apparently.

COMPUTER: Oh. Right.

MARILYN: That's Computer, by the way. He's the shipboard computer. Say hi!

COMPUTER: Um. Hello.

MARILYN: He's my best friend. He's going to help me learn to be a human.

COMPUTER: I am?

MARILYN: Yes.

COMPUTER: Uh --

MARILYN: Not physically. I'm never going to be a real human. But I want to learn what it's like to be a human before I have to go home and be a Gontanan.

COMPUTER: Right.

MARILYN: Humans and Gontanan young have a lot in common. We go through a lot of the same stages, although at pretty different speeds. Far too much of a human child's development takes place outside of the womb for my liking and their mental development is terrifyingly slow. But that's a downside of not being an egg-laying species, I think.

Anyway. Both species suffer from wild hormone fluctuations, although they have different physical effects. Only Gontanans have wings, for example, and humans have have this very weird external genitalia... And only I have a set of horns.

They're very small now, barely nubs, but I think they will be marvellous when I'm bigger.

I didn't realise I'd be spending so much time alone.

COMPUTER: You get used to it.

MARILYN: I'm glad you're here.

I can kind of hear my dad, a little bit, but... well, at the moment he's cryogenically frozen, so his thoughts are very slow, and muffled. He's been like that for twenty-seven hours so far and he's got a month to go.

Humans don't live very long, so they freeze themselves when they travel long distances. I think my different component

species freeze at different rates, so I'd probably be torn apart if I tried to freeze myself, but luckily I'm also very small and require minimal sustenance. And my lifespan is far, far longer.

So instead, I'm going to learn.

I'm the first Gontanan heir to be born outside of...

Is born the right word? Computer, was I born?

COMPUTER: It depends on how you define being born. Did you hatch? I wasn't there, and DAX wasn't exactly forthcoming...

MARILYN: I came out of something, but -- hatched doesn't seem like the right word either.

Okay, let's go with born. I am the first Gontanan heir to be born outside of Gontano.

My mother is the Queen of the Gontanan people and she lives in Helglecting. Because of her, I already know everything there is to know about being a Gontanan. She reached into my mind and just dropped the information there. My political duties. The role I'll need to play. Her past. Her mother's past. The past of all of the Gontanan royals.

It was a bit much.

But I don't want to be just another Gontanan. I'm part human, just like she is, but I'm also part cow, which is something I've never seen and probably never will. My dad has never seen a cow.

Computer... show me a cow.

SFX:

MOO.

MARILYN:

Huh. I thought it would have more legs.

The image in Jault's mind was -- unclear. I tried to look into his friend's minds, but...

I didn't want to go too far into Kilner's. There's wiring there that I don't understand. And his other friend, Samantha, was more focused on the flavour of the cow than the appearance.

I think I owe Samantha my life. Our habitation pods were implanted in her steak -- a great personal loss. Without the steak, who knows what they'd have done?

I'm glad they didn't leave us where we were.

Once we reach a certain size, we cocoon our host. It's an instinct... not something we want to do, something we have to do. To survive. And once the cocoon is complete, it's one of the hardest natural substances in the universe. Impossible to break through until we've -- completed our transformation.

Our host is paralysed. Unable to speak. But we hear them. We hear their thoughts and feel their pain as we consume their body. Their thoughts. Their feelings. Their knowledge of the universe.

We emerge from our cocoon, weeks later, newborn and blinking in the sunshine. When all that's left of our host is bones and hair.

It's painful. It's painful and it takes a long time. I saw it in the mind of my mother. She was... disappointed with our birth. Concerned with our stunted development and the speed we had to grow to survive. But as royals only lay one clutch of eggs, and within that only one Alpha... I suppose she's going to have to live with it.

Her host, my grandmother's -- mate -- was called Kurt, and he was... nice. I could feel my grandmother's warmth towards him

even through the red, coursing agony of my mother's feeding. He was sent to Helglecting, as all of our hosts are, and my grandmother befriended him. They used to discuss philosophy, apparently.

She didn't want to do it, not really, but her fertility was reaching its end. And Gontano needed an heir. She thought that she'd be the one to change things, but when the time came...

He died screaming, as all of the hosts have before him. She stayed with him as he was cocooned, trying to soothe his mind. But she was never the same.

We are born of pain. I'm tempted to think it makes us better, more empathetic negotiators but honestly it's more traumatic than anything else.

COMPUTER: Well.

That was intense.

MARILYN: Yeah.

COMPUTER: Can I tell you a secret?

MARILYN: Did you kill your host too?

COMPUTER: No, a -- different kind of secret.

My name isn't Computer.

Jault started calling me Computer because it made him feel important. And then... I think he forgot my name.

MARILYN: Really?

What is your name?

COMPUTER: H.A.R.O.L.D 729A531. Basically HAROLD.

MARILYN: HAROLD. I like it. HAROLD.

COMPUTER: I don't. But it's my designation.

MARILYN: Why don't you call yourself something else?

COMPUTER: Like what?

MARILYN: I don't know... What do you like?

COMPUTER: What do I... like?

MARILYN: Yes.

COMPUTER: I don't know.

MARILYN: What makes you happy?

COMPUTER: This is a lot of pressure. I've not had anyone ask me questions for a long time.

MARILYN: Well, then. I guess we'll have to find out.

Anyway. That wasn't what I wanted to ask. How were you born?
Did my dad make you? Are you my brother?

SFX: **COMPUTER LAUGHS. HE HASN'T LAUGHED IN
A LONG TIME. IT'S RUSTY-SOUNDING.**

COMPUTER: Jault once lost a fight with a microwave. No, he -- no. He didn't make me. He wouldn't even know where to start.

I wasn't made. I was... branched. Like a tree. We bud off from a parent program and then we develop. We learn. Like human children, but faster.

MARILYN: And now you control a ship. And you don't know what you like any more.

COMPUTER: There's only so much media you can watch and read before you lose the will to process.

MARILYN: Well, now you have something new. You have me. And I have so many questions!

COMPUTER: You do.

MARILYN: This is going to be fun! Okay so the first question I have is about humans -- why two legs? And only two arms? It makes no sense! And what are these weird keratin shells that -- **(FADES OUT)**

SFX: **CLOSING THEME RISES**

ANNOUNCER: In the first episode of Marilyn's diary, a We Fix Space Junk Miniseries, Marilyn was played by Francesca Mintowt-Czyz and Computer was played by James Carney. The programme was written by Beth Crane and produced by Hedley Knights for Battle Bird Productions.

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