

WOLF 359

"NO PRESSURE"

by

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WRITER'S NOTE: the following takes place on Day 655 of the
Hephaestus Mission.

START RECORDING.

BEGIN EPISODE 23.

INT. LOVELACE'S SHIP - MAIN CABIN - 1600 HOURS

Eiffel, Lovelace, and Minkowski (in spacesuits) are gathered around the ship's controls. The ship periodically GROANS and SHUDDERS.

LOVELACE
Let's run it again.

EIFFEL
Shouldn't we take five, Captain? I think the Good Ship Lollipop could use a bit of downtime.

MINKOWSKI
We all could. The heat and air -

LOVELACE
- will replenish themselves as soon as we're able to boot up life support. So let's run it again.

They all sound pretty exhausted. Eiffel and Minkowski SIGH.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
That's the spirit. Eiffel?

Eiffel TYPES some stuff on his console and FLIPS SWITCHES.

EIFFEL
Right-o.
(clears this throat, hits a button to give himself a PA chime)
Good evening, ladies and... ladies. This is Communications Officer Eiffel. We're delighted to have you on board this Ford Pinto-class shuttle service for our, uh, (papers rustle) 48th start-up sequence attempt.

LOVELACE
Is there a way to stop him doing this?

MINKOWSKI
There's no off-switch. I've checked.

EIFFEL

(louder)

As you can see, the Captain has turned on the fasten seatbelt sign, so please fold up your dining trays, extinguish all your contraband smoking material, and, if you go in for that sort of thing, pray this rust bucket doesn't blow us all up.

BEAT.

MINKOWSKI

You good?

EIFFEL

Yep. 12-step program, take 48.
(to Lovelace)
Call it, Captain.

LOVELACE

Engage aux power unit.

There's a CRANK followed by a DING!

MINKOWSKI

Auxiliary power unit engaged.

LOVELACE

Set hard primer to number one position.

The ship GROANS in protest as Eiffel TURNS A DIAL. But we hear the same DING! of success.

EIFFEL

Primer Set. Engine's responsive.

MINKOWSKI

(muttering)

Hopefully not too responsive.

LOVELACE

Close power bus breakers.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK. DING!

EIFFEL

Breakers are closed.

LOVELACE

Priming fuel mixers.

TYPE. A METALLIC BANG as the ship struggles to get its systems working. But... DING!

MINKOWSKI

Fuel mixers primed. A little below optimal levels, but still green.

LOVELACE

Excellent. Okay. Here's the fun one: main thruster ignition.

More BANGS and GROANS as Lovelace basically turns on the rocket part of the rocket.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)

C'mon...

Suddenly, there's a jet-like ROAR. The engine noise TAPERS OFF into a low THRUM. Just above that, we hear the DING!

EIFFEL

Phew.

LOVELACE

Great.

MINKOWSKI

(sarcastic)

Yeah. Great.

LOVELACE

I'm glad you're so enthusiastic, Commander. Let's engage the avionics system.

MINKOWSKI

You think the engine's stable enough for that?

EIFFEL

The power and the support systems on this boat do kinda have a rocky relationship...

LOVELACE

Avionics, Minkowski.

Minkowski FLIPS SWITCHES and we hear START UP NOISES. The ship SHAKES and there's ELECTRICAL FEEDBACK. Then, after a tense moment - DING!

MINKOWSKI

Okay. Avionics system engaged.

The energy in the room GETS TENSE. This is as far as the team's gotten in repairing the ship. Past the next step, they will have made real progress.

LOVELACE

Confirm?

TYPE, TYPE, TYPE.

MINKOWSKI

Yes. It's up.

(lower)

Barely.

EIFFEL

Now for the \$64,000 question...

MINKOWSKI

You know that even if we get life support up, there's still more to the startup sequence, right?

EIFFEL

Of course, I -

LOVELACE

One insurmountable step at a time. Eiffel, activate the life support systems.

EIFFEL

Hopefully activating the life support systems, aye.

The BOOT UP of life support and the HISS of oxygen contends with the GROANS and RUMBLES of the shuttle.

For a tense BEAT, everyone waits.

Then there's a distinct series of noises: the SPARK, SNAP, and BWOOMP of something shorting out and everything shutting off. Eiffel GROANS.

LOVELACE

Damnit.

MINKOWSKI

Must've overclocked the computer.

LOVELACE

(frustrated)

Life support...

EIFFEL

That teeny little detail.

MINKOWSKI

At least the breakers are holding.

LOVELACE

There's a fix for this. We just have to find it.

EIFFEL

Something to ponder over tea on our nice, warm space station. The one with all the super breathable air? Shall we, ladies?

LOVELACE

Not so fast, Jeeves. We've still got about an hour on our suits, and I have a hunch the main bus inputs might be our culprit.

MINKOWSKI

(clicking on a flashlight)
Even if it is, it looks like the power failure zapped some of these wires. We'll need replacements from the Hephaestus' stores.

LOVELACE

That's fair. Commander, you grab parts and oxygen reserves. Eiffel and I will clean up the wiring as best we can in the meantime.

A BUZZER as Minkowski's Comms connect to the Hephaestus.

MINKOWSKI

Hera, can you initiate the pressure exchange? I'm going into the docking corridor.

HERA

Roger, Commander. Starting docking procedure now.

Minkowski OPENS the main door, exits, and SHUTS it again.

MINKOWSKI

(over comm)
Door secure. Awaiting pressure exchange.

HERA

Sixty seconds, Commander.

Lovelace examines the panel where Minkowski was working.

LOVELACE

Oh, yeah. All these wires are going to have to come out.

She starts working on them, which results in some ARCING from the the console. After a moment -

EIFFEL

Umm, why don't you let me take care of those?

LOVELACE

Feeling gentlemanly, Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL

Umm, well, in a sense, yes. But in another, more accurate, more cowardly sense, no. I don't want you getting shocked and damaging your mega death switch.

LOVELACE

Oh. Right.

Eiffel gets in and starts UNPLUGGING bad cables.

EIFFEL

You know... you could've given us a chance to come around. We would've. And then the only tension would be the ship blowing up *on accident*.

LOVELACE

I don't have that kind of time.

EIFFEL

What do you -

There's a ZZZZT of electricity inside the console.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Ow!

As Eiffel jumps back from the console, the ship SHUDDERS. A PULSE runs through it. Eiffel and Lovelace hear a set of POPS coming from outside, followed by a violent BANG.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Um, what the -

LOVELACE

Commander! Commander Minkowski,
come in!

MINKOWSKI

(over comm)

Owww. Just. Owwwww.

HERA

So... I'm guessing you all noticed
the huge electrical surge?

MINKOWSKI

I repeat my last: Oww.

LOVELACE

Gonna need a little bit more detail
from you, Commander.

MINKOWSKI

(still oww)

I'm okay. I guess I'm lucky it
didn't fry the whole corridor. I'm
just... damn, I'm gonna be left-
handed for a few days. What
happened?

LOVELACE

Circuit fault? Power fluctuation?
Not sure yet.

EIFFEL

Hera?

HERA

Hey, don't look at me. For once,
this is outside my jurisdiction.
But whatever happened disabled my
ability to connect with the
Hephaestus' docking mechanism.

EIFFEL

Which means...?

LOVELACE

We can't open the station door.

HERA

Commander Minkowski can do it
manually, but only if the
pressure's equalized.

(MORE)

HERA (CONT'D)

You'll have to manage that on your end. Somehow.

EIFFEL

With what, exactly? My raw animal magnetism?

MINKOWSKI

The life support system. The one we can't get to work.

EIFFEL

Oh.

LOVELACE

The pressure in there isn't enough already?

HERA

Nope.

Eiffel COUGHS.

EIFFEL

Well, let's at least get you back in here, Commander, and out of -

MINKOWSKI

No!

LOVELACE

No!

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

(backing away)

Or... Let's *not* do that.

LOVELACE

Open the door and the air in here will disperse back through the ship. We'd have to run the life support system for longer.

MINKOWSKI

And right now, we can't run it at all.

EIFFEL

Well, we can't just leave her out there between a space rock and a non-smoking place!

MINKOWSKI

I'll be fine. The important thing is for us to work through it. Did you see whatever you did that caused this mess?

EIFFEL

Hey, what makes you sure it's my fault and not Old Unfaithful here?

MINKOWSKI

You really want me to answer that?

LOVELACE

Commander -

EIFFEL

No, but it'd be nice if you cut me a little slack, since we're basically doing the aeronautical equivalent of herding cats.

LOVELACE

(settle down, kids)

Hey.

MINKOWSKI

I'd be more willing if you hadn't clearly blown off inspecting the wire casings. Or stranded me in an uninsulated metal tube!

EIFFEL

What?! I checked them yesterday!

MINKOWSKI

Eiffel.

EIFFEL

No, really, Commander. You think I want to ride the U.S.S. Terrible Idea with all its conductors showing?

LOVELACE

(I will turn this car around!)

HEY!

Silence. Well, almost. They've gotten Lovelace's blood pressure high enough that her deadman's sensor starts BEEPING. It dies down over the following:

LOVELACE (CONT'D)

Stop. Talking.

(beat)

The amount of time we have to argue about what happened or whose fault it is, is limited.

(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
 Even more limited than that,
 however, is the amount of time we
 still have air. So, let's all
 indulge in one nice, deep, BS-
 cleansing breath, okay?

BEAT.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
 Now: We will get the life support
 online and the doors open. Officer
 Eiffel, you and I will rewire this
 console, run the system, and
 equalize the pressure.

Commander Minkowski, you're going
 to do whatever you can to repair
 the door mechanism from the inside.
 And we are going to accomplish our
 respective tasks in a calm,
 composed, and levelheaded manner.

Understood?

Well. They just got told.

FADE TO:

INT. LOVELACE'S SHUTTLE - MAIN CABIN - 30 MINUTES LATER

TYPE, TYPE, TYPE. DING!

EIFFEL
 Avionics system engaged, Captain.

LOVELACE
 Great. Just give me one second.

Lovelace turns A MECHANICAL CRANK and then FLIPS SWITCHES.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)
 Okay. Try now.

EIFFEL
 Yes, sir. Going for cabin pressure.
 (more to himself)
 No pressure. Absolutely none.

We hear LIFE SUPPORT BOOT UP and OXYGEN FLOW. But after only
 a moment it SPUTTERS OUT.

LOVELACE
 Goddammit... Shut it down.

Eiffel GROANS and hits the "off" switch. The ship's engine shuts off.

MINKOWSKI
 (glum, over comm)
 That sounded marginally less catastrophic.

LOVELACE
 Yeah. Engine's holding, Commander, but still no dice on the life support. How are you doing?

MINKOWSKI
 Not much more I can do on my end.

LOVELACE
 And temperature-wise?

MINKOWSKI
 (is really quite cold)
 It's... bracing.

LOVELACE
 Just keep moving. We're gonna get this.

MINKOWSKI
 Right.

Lovelace and Eiffel CLICK ON their flashlights. Lovelace moves up to the main flight console.

EIFFEL
 So. What next?

Lovelace closes her eyes and thinks for a moment.

LOVELACE
 So, a moth walks into a doctor's office -

Minkowski GROANS.

EIFFEL
 Spaceship actual, please confirm the moth walks and doesn't fly.

LOVELACE
 Noted, Communications. The moth indeed walks into a doctor's office. And he says, "Doc, I feel terrible.

(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)

I've been out of work for a year,
I'm up to my compound eyes in debt-
"

MINKOWSKI

Please make this shorter than the
one about the bear.

LOVELACE

"- I feel like my life has been a
waste. I don't feel connected to
the people I'm supposed to love."

EIFFEL

Very common complaints among the
moth population.

LOVELACE

Right, yes. He says, "My daughter's
still not talking to me since she
shacked up with that high-school
dropout, and I can't even
transverse orient my son, because -
"

MINKOWSKI

How is this in any way useful?

LOVELACE

Because, Commander, if I don't keep
my heart rate under control, none
of us will be able to do anything
useful.

EIFFEL

Or help this poor moth.

LOVELACE

Precisely. Thank for keeping me on
task, Communications.

EIFFEL

My pleasure, Actual.

Minkowski GROANS again.

LOVELACE

So the moth says, "I feel like my
entire life is nothing more than a
fragile web of lies barely holding
me back from the howling abyss."

And the doc says, "You do seem to
have a lot of problems.

(MORE)

LOVELACE (CONT'D)

You need a therapist, a psychiatrist even. But I'm a dermatologist. Why did you come to me?" And..

(trailing)

The moth says...

But Lovelace doesn't land the punchline. She's had an idea.

EIFFEL

Captain? You okay?

LOVELACE

(to herself)

The light was on.

MINKOWSKI

What?

LOVELACE

(now all business)

Hera, if you disable the ship's safeguards, we could run life support directly off the engine, correct? We wouldn't keep tripping the aux power's fuse light?

HERA

(that's a horrible idea)

Correct, Captain, but I don't think the risk involved in -

LOVELACE

Never mind that. Eiffel, standby to run startup sequence. Hera, prepare to disengage security interlocks.

HERA

Captain, the VX3 is too unstable. The danger to the ship's struc-

LOVELACE

We're running out of options, Hera. And air.

EIFFEL

So Hera does a thing and either we get the life support on, or...?

LOVELACE

Or the ship explodes. But I won't let that happen.

EIFFEL

Yeah, but -

LOVELACE

(slow and steady)

But I **won't** let that happen...
okay?

She smiles at him wolfishly. Then back to business:

LOVELACE (CONT'D)

Hera, please disengage security
interlocks now.

Hera SIGHS.

HERA

Five seconds, Captain.
(don't fuck this up)
Good luck.

BEEP... BEEP... BEEP... DING! Off goes the safety. The ship
immediately starts SHAKING BADLY.

LOVELACE

Let's go! Setting primer.

A DIAL TURNS. DING! From depths of engine comes a RUMBLE.

EIFFEL

Captain...

LOVELACE

Not now, Eiffel. Closing power bus
breakers.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK. DING!

EIFFEL

Uh, priming fuel mixers?

TYPEDY-TYPE-TYPE. DING! Followed by a Really Big BANG!

Around this point we begin to hear Lovelace's deadman sensor
BEEPING.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Captain, none of these are happy
sounds. Should we be -

LOVELACE

Shut. Up. Initiating main thruster
and engaging avionics.

CRANK! DING! TYPE, TYPE, TYPE! DING! RUMBLE, GROAN, SHAKE, BOOM! It seems like the ship is reaching a crisis point.

EIFFEL

Uh, Captain... The electrical system's going into the red and -

LOVELACE

Eiffel! Life support! Now!

EIFFEL

Aaahokay, okay! Engaging it!

We hear LIFE SUPPORT BOOT UP but it SPUTTERS dangerously.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Cooome on... big money, no whammies, no whammies...

LOVELACE

(quiet)

Give it a moment...

VWWWOOOOM, something in the engine GROANS TO LIFE.

EIFFEL

Please don't blow up please don't blow up please don't blow up.

And suddenly... DING! OXYGEN FLOWS.

Lovelace allows herself a moment to let the relief soak in.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

Was... Was that it? Did we...?

LOVELACE

Hera, can we confirm that-

HERA

Sensors are detecting an increase in the O2 content of the air *and* pressure. The airlock should open in sixty seconds.

EIFFEL

The hills are alive with the sound of oxygen!

LOVELACE

Excellent.

HERA

As soon as that's done, I recommend
you re-engage security interlocks
and power down the ship's engine.

LOVELACE

Roger that, Hera. Thank you.

Lovelace turns away from the console to face Eiffel.

LOVELACE (CONT'D)

Communications... Who's the man?

EIFFEL

(chuckling)

Uh, you are, Actual.

LOVELACE

C'mon. You gotta say the whole
thing.

EIFFEL

All right, you're the man, Captain
Lovelace.

LOVELACE

I am. Thank you. Okay, Commander.

Lovelace OPENS the door. HEAT and AIR BLAST through the
corridor to defrost Minkowski.

MINKOWSKI

(still shivering)

Thanks, um, thank you. I guess you
were right... The ship really could
take it.

LOVELACE

Yep. And now we know that life
support will stay on if it gets
that extra kick of power.

Minkowski and Eiffel look at each other.

EIFFEL

Yeah. The more you know. Yay us.

LOVELACE

I know we've had a lot of setbacks.
I know this isn't ideal by any
definition of the word. But we've
made it this far. We're going to be
okay. I promise.

MINKOWSKI

Yes.

She lets out a DEEP BREATH.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)

But for now -

There's a HISS OF AIR as the AIRLOCKS OPENS.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)

- let's head back and regroup.

LOVELACE

Sounds like a plan.

And off of that, we -

CUT TO:

INT. HEPHAESTUS STATION - COMMS ROOM - 2100 HOURS

We hear a little RADIO STATIC of Eiffel futzing with comms.
The DOOR OPENS and Minkowski enters.

EIFFEL

Hey, Commander. Your arm okay?

MINKOWSKI

Sore. But, I'll be fine. You?

EIFFEL

Still pretty thrilled we got the
life support to fire up. And also
pretty... not thrilled.

MINKOWSKI

You sure this room's bug-free?

EIFFEL

The Dread Pirate Lovelace is pretty
resourceful, I'll admit. But I've
got instruments running
interference like I'm, uh...

(gradually slowing)

... some sort of... catcher at a...
political debate... thing?

MINKOWSKI

Not your best.

EIFFEL
(leave me alone)
It's been a long day.

MINKOWSKI
Okay. Hera, you're still with
Lovelace on the bridge?

HERA
I'm walking her through the
shuttle's wiring configuration. It
should take at least half an hour.

MINKOWSKI
We'll keep it short. Life support.
That was the big one. As long as
that wasn't coming online, we knew
we had time. But now... Now we
might need to do something drastic
if we're going to stop her from
blowing up the Hephaestus.

EIFFEL
And Hera!

MINKOWSKI
And Hera.

HERA
She's pretty civil for a murderer,
I'll give her that.

EIFFEL
I think I know what we should do.

HERA
Oh?

EIFFEL
Watching her today? She could've
opened the rear hatch and stranded
you, Commander. She could've tried
blowing the airlock. She didn't.
Even in a crisis, she didn't cross
that line. So that's what we need.
A crisis.

MINKOWSKI
Eiffel, we have a crisis. It's a
good day when we only have *one*
crisis.

EIFFEL

Listen, the only way we know to get rid of Herr Trigger Von Bombenstein is for Lovelace to disarm it herself. Right? So we need to create a situation, a fake emergency, where it seems that's the only viable choice. Where having the bomb around is too much of a risk, even for the conspiracy theorist in chief.

MINKOWSKI

What have you got in mind?

EIFFEL

We keep pretending to help her. But we also start messing with the station to make it seem like something's about to go horribly wrong. Then, when we're ready, we spring our clever trap, and Captain Lovelace makes a command decision to stop being *crazy*.

MINKOWSKI

That sounds... complicated.

EIFFEL

Do you have an easy three-step solution?

MINKOWSKI

As a matter of fact.

Minkowski PULLS OUT and TAPS a small silver canister.

MINKOWSKI (CONT'D)

Hilbert's very own halothane knockout gas. Step 1: We deploy it. Step 2: We disarm the deadman's switch during Lovelace's 20-hour nap. Step 3: We lock her ass up and jettison that bomb into space.

EIFFEL

Commander, if *I* can survive a gas attack, I'm pretty sure Lovelace will find a way to Rambo it back at our sorry asses. Plus, what makes you so sure that you *can* disarm that thing on her arm? What if it's got a password? Or a failsafe?

HERA

He has a surprisingly valid point.

EIFFEL

Thank you?

MINKOWSKI

Hera, you're the one that's going to be the most affected by all of this. What do you think?

BEAT.

HERA

I think it's a bad idea to confront Captain Lovelace head on. There's no margin for error, and no way to know how she'll react. I like Officer Eiffel's idea.

MINKOWSKI

But is it feasible? What kind of emergency could we create?

BEAT.

EIFFEL

Uh... a bad one?

MINKOWSKI

It'll have to take her by surprise, whatever it is. But it has to be something concrete. Take away something she relies on, something she would never question. Like air.

HERA

Or intelligence.

EIFFEL

Come again?

HERA

Captain Lovelace has kept both of you on a short leash, but she just thinks of me as a tool. She only gives me the time of day when she needs tech support. And only barely. She wouldn't think I was lying if I told her that, say... a meteor storm was headed directly for the station.

EIFFEL

Hera, you diabolical fox in the machine! Can I vote for this plan?

MINKOWSKI

Hang on. Can you lie about something like that, Hera? Your programming -

HERA

Stops me from directly altering or fabricating information when I address station officers. Believe me, I know. But nothing in my databanks would prevent other crew members from, oh, adjusting my sensory systems, my interior station monitors, and my navigation controls to create a convincing simulation of an oncoming meteor storm.

EIFFEL

Okay, now I double-vote for this plan!

Despite herself, Minkowski's warming up to it, too.

MINKOWSKI

It *is* devious. And, assuming we make all those adjustments without detection, it has a chance. But the second it starts to fail, we go to Plan B.

HERA

What's plan B?

By way of answer, Minkowski TAPS the GAS CANISTER again.

EIFFEL

Great.

MINKOWSKI

Hera, we'll start making the adjustments to your systems. But I'd like you to start calculating release vectors for the halothane if we need it.

HERA

I'll work on that.

MINKOWSKI

Good. Okay. Well, I think we have
our mission.

A BEAT as our three contemplate the tasks ahead of them.

EIFFEL

Yeah! It'll be great.
(confidence fading)
This is the play. We're gonna -
this is gonna end well.

HERA

Officer Eiffel?

EIFFEL

Yes?

HERA

Shut up.

MINKOWSKI

Shut up.

Eiffel EXHALES.

EIFFEL

This is gonna end well.

FADE OUT.

STOP RECORDING.

END OF EPISODE 23.