

TARTARUS

Written by

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EXT. DESERT PLANET - DAY

A red planet with a large red sun. Dark, barren mountains break up the horizon. In the foreground, large piles of mechanical garbage form mountains of their own.

A steampunk style spaceship carries cargo. It enters the atmosphere. A door on the ship opens, revealing three men.

ALEXANDER, 28, is held by CREWMATE 1 and CREWMATE 2.

CREWMATE 1

This'll teach ya to stowaway on our ship, Alexander.

CREWMATE 2

Ha. Second times the charm, right? You're never getting to Elysium at this rate.

Alexander is tossed out of the spaceship, into a pile of garbage. The two crewmates retreat into the ship as the door closes. The ship flies into the upper atmosphere.

Alexander looks at his reflection in the cracked, dirty screen of an old TV. A shadow passes over his face and the junk around him clatters.

Over him, stands BRETOMART, 47.

BRETOMART

I don't reckon you're supposed to be here.

ALEXANDER

Suppose not.

EXT. ALIEN TOWN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Alexander exits a bar. Neon lights advertise drinks and women. The street is lined with shops and STREET MERCHANTS. He passes a group of four MEN talking. He pickpockets one.

Two ALIEN WOMEN, 18-25, prostitutes, smile and wave him over.

ALEXANDER

You ladies were fantastic. I'll be back soon.

Alexander kisses ALIEN WOMAN 1 on the hand. She giggles.

ALIEN WOMAN 1

Promise?

ALEXANDER
Promise, Love.

Alexander continues down the street.

At the far end of the town is a spaceport. Alexander looks around, making sure the coast is clear, then slips into the same ship from before.

EXT. DESERT MAZE - DAY - PRESENT

Alexander follows Bretomart through a maze of piled garbage. He stares around.

ALEXANDER
So, what should I call you, friend?

BRETOMART
Bretomart is fine. And you?

ALEXANDER
Alexander. Say, how far away is Elysium from here?

Bretomart gives Alexander a sideways glance.

BRETOMART
You realize you're on Tartarus, right? Those boys in the ship went out of their way to strand you here.

ALEXANDER
You don't know of a way off this rock, do you?

BRETOMART
No one gets off Tartarus.

They arrive in front of a small shack made with rusted scrap metal. Lights and gauges operate weakly. The pair enter.

INT. RUST SHACK - DUSK

The shack is cluttered with torn apart machinery. A workbench is covered in colorful wires and pizza boxes. Two mattresses sit on either side of the room.

Bretomart walks to the far side of the shack and flops down onto a dirty mattress. He pulls out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. He smokes.

ALEXANDER
Cozy place you've got here.

BRETOMART
It works. You can sleep over there
for now.

Bretomart gestures towards another mattress.

Alexander sits down on the mattress, but a large amount of
water seeps from it.

BRETOMART (CONT'D)
Oh, yeah. That there's the mattress
I use to soak up the leak.

Alexander sees a hole in the ceiling, right above him.

ALEXANDER
And how long has it been leaking?

BRETOMART
If I had to guess, 15 years or so.

ALEXANDER
Thanks Bretomart.

Alexander lays down on his side. Wide awake.

INT. RUST SHACK - MORNING

Alexander is awoken by Bretomart, who sits at his desk,
muttering madly. Bretomart waves a SCREWDRIVER around.

Alexander sits up. The movement is noticed by Bretomart, who
waves the screwdriver threateningly at Alexander.

ALEXANDER
Whoa, there, friend.

BRETOMART
You can't fool me. Who sent you? My
old man probably.

Bretomart's eyes lose focus. He lowers the screwdriver.

BRETOMART (CONT'D)
Probably another one of his
schemes, trying to set me
straight...

Alexander stands up while Bretomart contemplates.

ALEXANDER

I'm just gonna peek outside, long
enough for the crazy to wear off.

Bretomart focuses on Alexander. He stands. Drops the
screwdriver. Grabs Alexander by his shirt collar. He cries. *

BRETOMART

Dad? Why would you do this to me?

Bretomart looks at the back of his hand, covered in needle
scars.

ALEXANDER

So, Your dad was a piece of work
too, huh.

Bretomart shakes Alexander. He shouts.

BRETOMART

You never loved me.

He lets go of Alexander. He looks back at the screwdriver on
the desk and walks to it.

BRETOMART (CONT'D)

I'll finish this. Live the rest of
my exile in peace.

Alexander restrains Bretomart from behind. Bretomart
struggles. The pair fall to the ground. Bretomart hits his
head on the leg of the desk.

Alexander chokes Bretomart unconscious.

EXT. RUST SHACK - DAY

Alexander sits at a makeshift work bench in front of
Bretomart's shack. He tinkers with a steampunk style box
radio.

The radio lets out sparks. Wisps of smoke rise.

ALEXANDER

Damn it. Where, in all of Tartarus,
can I find a manual for this thing.

Bretomart walks out of the shack. He clutches his head.

BRETOMART

What're you trying to do with that?

ALEXANDER
Crazy worn off now, huh?

BRETOMART
Don't know what you're talking
about.

Alexander is flabbergasted.

ALEXANDER
Well, you weren't in your right
mind this morning. Tried to kill
me.

BRETOMART
Sorry. All I remember is waking up
with this blasted headache.

Bretomart gestures at the Radio.

BRETOMART (CONT'D)
So, what's that for?

ALEXANDER
Well, I'm trying--

Alexander pulls a tangle of charred wires from the back of
the radio.

ALEXANDER (CONT'D)
To fix this radio. I'm used to a
more lively environment. Figure I
could at least listen to sports if
I get it working.

Bretomart comes to Alexander's side. Looks at the exposed
radio. Turns a few knobs, which elicit no response.

BRETOMART
Well, I don't know how it looked
before you started fixing it, but
half the circuitry is fried now.

ALEXANDER
What do you know about machines?

BRETOMART
Living in a junk yard, you pick up
some things.

MONTAGE:

EXT. RUST SHACK - DAY

Alexander collects wires and circuit boards from a microwave in a nearby junk pile.

EXT. RUST SHACK - DAY

Alexander fiddles with the back of the radio, screwdriver in hand. Bretomart stands behind him, anxious.

EXT. RUST SHACK - DUSK

Sparks fly from the radio as Alexander uses a makeshift welder, powered by a car battery.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. RUST SHACK - NIGHT

Alexander and Bretomart sit around a campfire. Behind them is Alexander's workbench. The radio lights up. An alien language speaks through it.

BRETOMART

I haven't had this much excitement
in years.

Bretomart opens a cooler and throws Alexander a beer. He takes one and pops it open on the chair's arm rest.

Alexander opens his beer, takes a swig, then grimaces.

ALEXANDER

This might have outlived its shelf
life Bretomart.

BRETOMART

You take what you can get and get
used to it.

ALEXANDER

I don't plan on getting used to it.
In the morning I'm going to see if
I can get the radio to transmit
outbound. Send a distress signal.

Bretomart sits up straight. Glares at Alexander.

BRETOMART

Signals can't breach the atmosphere. Too much interference from the junk. It's best to just get used to living here.

Alexander kicks back the beer.

ALEXANDER

There's enough junk here. I'm sure I can build a strong enough radio.

Bretomart stands. He shakes his head.

BRETOMART

No one is leaving this rock. No one can find out where I am. You aren't leaving, Alexander.

Alexander falls backwards in his chair, then scrambles to stand. He backs up, towards his work bench.

ALEXANDER

Hey, Bretomart, you okay? You don't have to get so worked up.

Bretomart charges Alexander, fists raised.

BRETOMART

They're looking for me. Can't let them find my home.

Alexander ducks out of the way. Bretomart's fists crash down on the radio. It shatters.

Alexander backs away. He looks at Bretomart in fear.

Bretomart squares up to Alexander. He glares. With screwdriver in hand, he advances.

BRETOMART (CONT'D)

Mental illness this, mental illness that. I'm sure they were glad to see me gone. Caused a lot of damage before I left. Bet they're looking for me now.

Bretomart slashes with the screwdriver. Alexander raises his arm in defense, which gets gashed by the weapon.

Bretomart punches Alexander in the gut. He laughs. Alexander is knocked down.

Alexander scrambles to his feet. He runs into the maze.

BRETOMART (CONT'D)
You're a damned spy, aren't you,
Alexander?

Bretomart gets a handful of Alexanders shirt. It tears away.

EXT. DESERT MAZE - NIGHT

Alexander runs through the maze of garbage. He looks back.
Bretomart pursues him, far behind.

BRETOMART
I'm gonna get you, spy.

Bretomart gets closer around every turn.

Alexander's side gets caught by metal. It tears his shirt and
slices across his ribs.

BRETOMART (CONT'D)
Dad and his Psych friends are never
gonna find me.

Alexander loses Bretomart in the maze. The chase is halted.

BRETOMART (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Where are you?

Alexander catches his breath, then he jogs further through
the maze. Bretomart's shouts grow distant.

EXT. DESERT CLEARING - NIGHT

Alexander exits the maze, into an open area. At it's center
sits a large object covered in drapes. He sits down, resting
his back against the structure.

ALEXANDER
God damn. Psycho's gonna kill me.

He clutches his side, now bleeding profusely. His head leans
against the structure, which elicits a hollow metallic thud.

Alexander turns around, curious.

Alexander sees a control panel near the structure, where
lights glow softly. They barely illuminate his surroundings.

Alexander gingerly stands up and walks to the panel.

The panel is covered in buttons. A display scrolls alien
text.

Alexander is excited.

Alexander pushes a lever and a few buttons. The clearing is flooded with light and the drapes fall off of the object, revealing a single person star cruiser.

The space ship is brilliantly crafted, like it was built with wealth.

Bretomart runs into the clearing. Murderous. Screwdriver in hand.

BRETOMART

That ship isn't going anywhere,
spy.

ALEXANDER

You had a way off this whole time?

Bretomart rushes Alexander, who dodges around the panel. Alexander presses another button. The ship's engines roar.

BRETOMART

So, you're a thief too?

ALEXANDER

I'm getting off this hell hole.

Red and blue flames idle from the rocket's rear. Bretomart makes another unsuccessful swipe at Alexander.

BRETOMART

You'll destroy my home.

Alexander darts towards the ship, but Bretomart stabs his side with the screwdriver.

Alexander falls, crying out. He turns on his back, towards Bretomart.

ALEXANDER

Come on. You let me leave and I
won't tell a soul.

Alexander looks back at the ship. He crawls backwards.

Bretomart follows at a slow pace, eyes only on Alexander.

BRETOMART

I've got no reason to trust you,
Alexander.

Bretomart tests Alexander with a slash of his screwdriver. Alexander kicks out, deflecting the weapon.

The ships engine roars.

Alexander turns onto all fours and sprints under the flame. Bretomart does not see the flames and rushes Alexander. He gets caught in the blast.

Alexander stands and looks at Bretomart's charred remains.

ALEXANDER
Sorry, friend. I wish it hadn't
come to this.

He limps towards the panel and presses a final launch button. Tethers leading from the ground to the ship retract.

INT. SPACESHIP CABIN - NIGHT

Alexander, a bloody mess, boards the lavish spaceship and flies into the atmosphere. He looks back at the red planet.

EXT. ALIEN TOWN - DAY

Alexander hops out of the spaceship, docked at the port. He is still bloody, with torn clothes.

A PORT AUTHORITY walks up the Alexander, but Alexander slips him a pouch of money and walks past.

PORT AUTHORITY
Have a good day, sir.

Alexander walks past the group of Men. He pickpockets the same one.

Alexander walks up to the bar. The Women stand outside of it.

Alexander nods at them and they smile.

ALEXANDER
Want to step inside?

ALIEN WOMAN 2
What happened on Elysium?

ALEXANDER
I'm afraid Elysium will have to
wait.

The Women eye his bloody form. They all walk into the bar.

THE END.