

HYPERNAUTS: Cold Comfort

written by

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based on characters created by Ron Thornton
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Spec Commission
Second Draft

HYPERNAUTS
COLD COMFORT

CAST

Main

ACE
MAX
SHARKEY
KULAI
ICE MASTER

Non-Speaking

GLOOSE
*ICE CRAB(S)
*BABY ICE CRAB
*WARRIOR ICE CRAB

SETS

Interior

STAR ROVER
FIRE-BIRD(S)
FLAPJACK
MECH-SUIT(S)
*HANGAR BAY
ICE CAVE(S)
*ICE CAVERN
*ICE CITY
ICE CHAMBER

Exterior

*STAR ROVER
*TRIAD SCOUTSHIP
FIRE-BIRD(S)
*FLAPJACK
*ICE PLANET
*ICE PLANET SURFACE
*MECH-SUIT(S)

* virtual character/set

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE

Hurtling through stars, a distant dot quickly grows to become the STAR ROVER -- on collision course!

INT. STAR ROVER

SHARKEY has his feet up, asleep at the comm deck, then -- CRASH! -- a blinding flash spills him from his chair. He comes nose to nose with GLOOSE. Both look up to see

THROUGH THE WINDOW

A ship with Triiad markings zips past.

AFT

the door to Ace's cabin opens, as do Max's and Kulai's.

KULAI

What in space was that?

MAX

Who's on duty?

ACE

(furious)

Sharkey?!

Sharkey regains his feet, out of breath.

SHARKEY

Triiad! Surprise attack! They came out of nowhere! Don't look at me like that! It's not my fault!

CRASH! Another blast rocks the ship. Sharkey falls (O.S.) and lands on top of Gloose (hear a YELP).

ACE

Power up the Fire-Birds.

EXT. STAR ROVER

The TRIIAD SCOUT opens fire, strafing the Rover. POW! A direct hit amidships.

THREE FIRE-BIRDS

swoop up through the explosion. The Triiad Scout swings around for a second attack. One Fire-Bird heads right at the ship, lasers blazing, and scores a HIT, clipping the Triiad's wing.

INT. SHARKEY'S FIRE-BIRD

SHARKEY

Ya-hoo!

INT. ACE'S FIRE-BIRD

ACE

Who in Netter's name is firing?

SHARKEY (V.O.)

It was me -- But, Ace! I got him!

EXT. STAR ROVER

The Fire-Birds loop back and regroup. They pass low over a jagged scorch mark on the Rover's side, where CLEAR LIQUID is venting. The three ships then continue to pursue the Triiad scout into space. (OVER THIS:)

ACE (V.O.)

Kulai, is our hull breeched?

KULAI (V.O.)

Negative, we're still intact.

ACE (V.O.)

It looks like Captain Quickdraw scared off the bad guy. Max, go back and start repairs. Sharkey, you're with me. Stay close.

SHARKEY (V.O.)

Don't all thank me at once.

MAX (V.O.)

Aye, sir.

Max's ship peels away. Ace and Sharkey go after the scout.

INT. STAR ROVER - LATER

Regrouped on the comm deck, Sharkey fusses with his flight helmet, as Max gives her report.

MAX

The hydrogen processor was blown to pieces. I can patch up with help, but--

ACE

Sharkey, pay attention. You're on maintenance with Max.

SHARKEY

You're all blaming this on me.

KULAI

Ladies and gentlemen, let's not argue -- How long do we have, Max, before we run out of oxygen?

MAX

There's a little water in the reserve tanks, but that will be gone in three days. After that, we'll be out of air in four.

ACE

Get to work.

Max exits with Sharkey. Kulai keys up a HOLO STAR CHART. A red dot indicates the Rover. Blue dots appear, all far off.

ACE

Anything, Kulai. Just find us somewhere we can breathe.

KULAI

We're so far out, it's dangerous territory -- Wait: I've heard of this place. Nothing sentient, but it's tropical and wet.

The hologram zooms in to plot a course to one blue dot.

KULAI

Three light days.

ACE

Let's eat space!

EXT. SPACE

The Rover appears from hyperspace.

The FLAPJACK blasts from the Rover, toward a PALE BLUE PLANET.

EXT. ICE PLANET - DAY

The Flapjack skims the completely frozen world. The ship lands on a vast expanse of ice, glaciers in the distance.

THE HYPERNAUTS

wear breathing masks as they descend the Flapjack ramp. Ace scoops up a handful of snow. Kulai looks mystified.

ACE

What do you make of this, Kulai?

KULAI

This was all rainforest a hundred years ago. This could not have happened in so short a time.

Sharkey scoops up snow in his hands, and aims at Max.

SHARKEY

Maybe someone forgot to pay the heating bill.

MAX

Throw that and you're dead.

ACE

Cut it out, you two. Mech up, and get digging -- Let's run some tests, but I don't see why we can't take ice instead of water.

INT. FLAPJACK

A MICROSCOPE VIEW

shows snow crystals magnified 100 times.

KULAI (V.O.)

Water. H-2-O. At freezing point, zero degrees centigrade, creates a six-sided crystal structure, no two ever alike. Right?

Ace views the scope with Kulai.

ACE

That's what they taught us in grade school.

KULAI

Take a look at this.

ON THE SCOPE

Several crystals are identical, some are seven- and eight-sided. One crystal scuttles over and pairs off with a twin.

ACE

What are they? Alive?

KULAI

No, chemically, it's water. After boiling, it returns to natural form -- It's strange.... I have a feeling I've seen this before.

MAX (V.O.)

(over comset)

Ace, can you come outside?

EXT. ICE PLANET - BLIZZARD

Kulai and Ace descend the ramp, bundled up against a storm.

In the blizzard, two MECH-SUITS are working: Max and Sharkey, excavating blocks of ice.

MAX (V.O.)

I don't think we're alone.

ACE

(into comset)

What do you mean?

MAX (V.O.)

We're picking up a signal, out to the east.

Max's Mech-Suit points a thumb over her shoulder.

Ace unholsters his blaster. He ventures out into the snow, approaches a snow-covered rise, halts. Wind abates. A RHYTHMIC CLICKING NOISE.

Ace spins and aims his pistol above him.

A GIANT CLICKING ICE CRAB

appears over the snow drift.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. FLAPJACK

Max slams Ace's blaster down on Kulai's table. She and Sharkey are both frosty from the snow.

MAX

This was all we found. No blast marks. No Ace. Whatever got him, he didn't even have time to shoot.

SHARKEY

There's tracks in the snow.

MAX

Claw marks. Something on six feet.

KULAI

Interesting. This is without a doubt the strangest ice anomaly I have ever seen.

SHARKEY

(emotional)

Anomaly? Ace is gone, Kulai! What are we going to do? Oh, this is all my fault.

MAX

No one is blaming you, Sharkey. I am ranking officer now, I'm taking command, okay?

All eyes on Sharkey, who meekly nods.

MAX

We will mech-up again and we will trace those tracks before another blizzard wipes them out. Kulai...

(re: Ace's blaster)

Guard the Flapjack. But keep us posted. I want to know whatever science can tell us about this ice. Something's not adding up.

INT. MECH-SUIT HANGAR

Max and Sharkey climb into their suits.

QUICK CUT - INSIDE SUIT

Sharkey slumps into his seat, muttering to himself, and straps himself in.

QUICK CUT - INSIDE SUIT

Max flips switches, puts on her comset, dials up controls.

THE MECH-TOOL ARRAY

Robotic hardware scrolls by and replaces Max's Mech-Suit ice-cutting tools for a net-thrower and razor claws. (OVER THIS:)

MAX (V.O.)

I'm programming the array for close-quarters hand-to-hand combat. Meet me outside.

The array fits tools to Max's Mech-Suit, and she marches out. Sharkey waits till she has gone, then he selects his own weaponry: grenade launcher, plasma blaster.

EXT. ICE PLANET - DAY

An eerie silence after the blizzard, which has left the Flapjack half-buried in snow. Sharkey's Mech-Suit leaves the ship and catches up with Max, who is examining Ace's footprints in the snow.

MAX (V.O.)

Looks like they headed east. Keep a track on us, Kulai.

INT. FLAPJACK

KULAI

(into comset)
Affirmative.

Kulai returns to her microscope, toggles a control.

KULAI

Horten, correlate the image in my scope. I'm looking for a visual match. Anything.

The computer beeps and buzzes. Holograms of ice worlds flicker past. Kulai takes notice as one image locks:

A GIANT SPACESHIP crystalline in form, which resembles a seven-sided snowflake.

EXT. ICE PLANET - DAY

The Mech-Suits trek across a glacier.

INT. MECH-SUITS (INTERCUT)

SHARKEY

Looks like a dead-end up ahead.
Three thousand meters high.

MAX

There's a cave.

SHARKEY

Where? -- Oh, my!

EXT. ICE PLANET

The two Mech-SUITS approach a massive wall of ice. Crab tracks trail toward a tall crevice in the wall. At the base of the crack:

A CAVE

wide enough for a man to squeeze through -- but not a Mech.

INT. MECH-SUIT

MAX

I'm going in on foot.

EXT. ICE PLANET

Max's Mech-Suit lowers to the ground and she climbs out, wearing an oxygen mask.

SHARKEY

Max, are you crazy? You'll freeze to death! You're not going in there unarmed? -- Why do I get the feeling we've had this conversation before?

Max enters the cave using a handheld sensor to guide her.

Sharkey's Mech lowers and opens. He hops out, unloads a few grenades, stuffs them inside his jacket pockets and hurries after Max.

INT. ICE CAVES

Sharkey squeezes through the narrow opening in the ice and shines a light ahead. No Max. He emerges into darkness, hears CAVERNOUS DRIPPING noises. A hand touches his shoulder.

SHARKEY

Aaaah!

MAX

This way.

Two TINY LIGHTED FIGURES make their way through darkness.

SHARKEY

We should call Kulai.

MAX

I tried. No signal.

SHARKEY

Now she tells me.

Max aims her sensor behind her, above, all about.

MAX

I'm not getting any life-readings.
But something's coming this way.

The CLICKING NOISE begins. Sharkey takes out a grenade. Max glares at him.

MAX

You'll bring this whole place
down!

Sharkey pulls Max down behind a rock. Just as they take cover, the CLICKING NOISE GETS LOUDER.

TWO ICE CRABS scuttle out of the tunnel up ahead.

Max peers out, amazed, as the crabs go by. Sharkey pulls her back.

A third, nasty-looking BABY ICE CRAB scurries by.

SHARKEY

Let's go! Come on, Max! We've got
to keep moving!

MAX

Wait!

The baby crab pauses, wheels around, looks back towards the rock where Max and Sharkey are hiding.

BABY CRAB P.O.V.

a video image of the cave with heads-up display (viewed on a frosty, ice covered screen) approaches the rock. Suddenly, Sharkey pops up and stomps on the camera, destroying it.

Sharkey continues to bring his boot down on the Baby Ice Crab, shattering it.

SHARKEY

It's a robot, made of ice.

MAX

Great. And now, I suggest we run from the robot ice crabs.

MORE CRABS appear. Not babies this time.

SHARKEY

I agree!

Max and Sharkey flee down another tunnel.

The ICE CRABS give pursuit.

As Sharkey runs, he takes out a grenade. Max rolls her eyes, nothing to lose now. Sharkey pulls the pin and tosses the grenade behind them.

The ICE CRABS advance and then -- BLAM! -- the grenade shatters the ice machines to pieces.

Max and Sharkey keep running, Sharkey throwing grenades behind. CLICKING NOISES increase as more ICE CRABS swarm after them, scuttling over their exploded comrades.

MAX

Through here!

Max and Sharkey duck into a tunnel, and come to a teetering halt.

EXT. ICE RIDGE

The ice tunnel has led them out onto a ridge that drops away into a steep icy slope. Max pulls out a flare, and illuminates the cavern.

SHARKEY

Do you see that?

MAX

I see it.

A subterranean FROZEN ICE CITY glimmers in the glare of Max's flare, which sends reflections darting all around cavern and a forest of giant frozen stalactites above.

CLICKING NOISES return. Max and Sharkey look back. Max's eyes widen in fear. Sharkey pulls out another grenade.

SHARKEY

My last one.

MAX

Throw it!

Sharkey tosses the grenade back into the tunnel. Then he grabs Max's hand and they both jump, sliding down the ice.

A FIERY BOOM blasts ice fragments from the tunnel.

EXT. PLANET - DAY

Kulai walks the icy plain around the Flapjack, using a device resembling an electronic divining rod that BEEPS. Wind howls around her. The beep becomes a steady TONE. Kulai toggles her comset.

KULAI

Horten, any word from Max or
Kulai?

HORTEN (V.O.)

No reply.

Kulai looks skyward.

INT. ICE CITY

Two tiny figures of Max and Sharkey enter the Ice City, their VOICES ECHOING.

SHARKEY

Remind me never to slide down a
glacier again. At least not
without spare underwear.

Max and Sharkey enter a doorway into an atrium, where a single beam of sunlight illuminates a chamber of cathedral splendor.

MAX

Sharkey, you amaze me -- Come on,
I'm getting a new reading.

INT. ICE CHAMBER

A HUGE DOOR OF SOLID ICE shoots up, revealing Max and Sharkey standing with their sensor.

SHARKEY

Knock, knock?

They walk forward into a tall, circular room dominated by a towering machine resembling a giant ray gun made of ice. The gun overhangs a turntable of ice-encrusted sarcophagi, like deep freezers in bad need of defrosting.

SHARKEY

I don't like this, Max.

Max peers into one of the sarcophagi. Empty. She waves her sensor over others, until she finds what she is looking for.

Seemingly unconscious, ACE is frozen into one sarcophagus, next in line for rotation underneath the gun.

MAX

Help me get him out!

Sharkey assists Max as they attempt to pry their captain free.

SHARKEY

I don't think the ice crabs are behind this. I mean, they seem like dumb machines. But why did that big door just open for us?

MAX

Pull!

The ice around Ace snaps, and he topples forward from his icy coffin like Frankenstein's monster. Sharkey catches him.

A now-familiar CLICKING SOUND makes Max and Sharkey quickly turn back.

A DOZEN ICE CRABS march in through the door, ahead of their leader, a wizened blue-skinned humanoid:

THE ICE MASTER

claps his hands.

ICE CRABS scuttle into formation around him and arrange themselves into two opposing ranks, mandibles all CLICKING. The creatures raise their claws in salute. The Ice Master beckons toward Max.

Max appears to be mesmerized, captivated in a trance. She steps toward the Ice Master.

SHARKEY

Max! Hey, goofy! Snap out of it!

Max continues walking toward the Ice Master, who holds her in his gaze. She stops between the ranks of Ice Crabs. The creatures close a circle around her.

ICE MASTER

Perfect. Now I have a set! Load her into the machine.

Ice Crabs swarm around Max and carry her to the machine.

Sharkey sidesteps out of their way, dragging Ace with him.

SHARKEY

Ah... excuse me.

ICE MASTER

(to Sharkey, re: Ace)

Put that back where you found it, boy.

With nowhere else to put Ace, Sharkey lowers his captain back into a sarcophagus. He watches in dismay as Max is loaded into the next container. The Ice Master strides about, supervising.

SHARKEY

Look, I don't know who you think you are, but--

ICE MASTER

I am the Ice Master of Kelvin.

Sharkey stands, bemused. Ask a silly question.

The Ice Master addresses the Ice Crabs with peculiar clicks of his tongue, foot-stomps and rhythmic hand-clap gestures, ordering them around. Then he addresses Sharkey.

ICE MASTER

You will be my backup, if the transformation fails.

Sharkey jumps aside as Ice Crabs advance on him.

SHARKEY

Transformation? What in space is going on here?

ICE MASTER

Survival, young man! Since I am the last Ice Master of Kelvin, I have built this great machine to remedy that fact -- Forgive me for gloating, but you are quite a catch. 70-percent water! You will hardly miss the other 30-percent.

The Ice Master clicks and claps for Ice Crabs to grab Sharkey.

SHARKEY

Get your claws off me!

Sharkey boots an Ice Crab. It flips over and lands helpless on its back, legs flailing. Others go to its aid. Sharkey darts for the door.

The Ice Master, annoyed, slams his fist down on a control.

THE HUGE DOOR

starts to come down.

SHARKEY

dives toward it.

ICE CRABS

swarm after him.

Sharkey slides beneath the door and clears it just as it SLAMS DOWN, cracking a few Ice Crabs. He scrambles to his feet. The door starts to re-open, jams on crab parts. Other crabs squeeze through. Sharkey runs.

CRABS

in hot pursuit.

SHARKEY

runs into dead end. He spins about.

CRABS

pause, CLICKING. They know they have him now.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO.

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ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. ICE CAVES

ICE CRABS

advance, CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK.

SHARKEY

grabs a lump of ice as a weapon, backs up.

SHARKEY

Okay, guys, I am sorry that I blew
up your nice tunnels.

TWO SHOT

Crabs back Sharkey up against the ice, CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK.

SHARKEY

Look, I promise I will never eat
seafood again.

POW!

The tunnel wall blasts open just behind the crabs.

SHARKEY

cowers as ice fragments fly everywhere.

POW! POW! POW! POW! POW!

The Flapjack shoots through a hole in the ice wall. Ice Crabs
scatter, run for cover.

KULAI (V.O.)

Sharkey, is that you?

SHARKEY

Kulai! Am I pleased to see you!

Sharkey sees the Flapjack hovering in the cavern, the other
side of the ice wall. (OVER THIS:)

KULAI (V.O.)

I'll extend the ramp. Jump across.
Where are the others?

SHARKEY

It's a long story.

INT. ICE CITY

The Flapjack swoops in over the Ice City, flies toward a beam of sunlight pin-pointing the Ice Chamber, and descends.

The Flapjack lands in the atrium. An ALARM BEGINS.

INT. ICE CHAMBER

The Ice Master is distracted from his work. He sees the Flapjack on an ice-covered screen.

ICE MASTER
Nuisance!

He angrily clicks and claps at the Ice Crabs, who scurry out at his bidding. The ice door SLAMS SHUT behind them.

Max blinks out of her daze. She sees herself iced into a sarcophagus. Ace, beside her, also comes around. The Ice Master has his back to them at his controls. Max grits her teeth, breaks free one hand, and then a foot.

The Ice Master deactivates the alarm, returns to the sarcophagi, and starts up the ice gun mechanism.

Max plays possum. The Ice Master turns away. Max kicks him in the butt, socks him over the head, breaks free of the ice and runs for the controls.

ICE MASTER
Get away from there!

The Ice Master grabs hold of Max. They struggle, he throws her off. Max jumps at him again. He grabs her by the throat.

KABOOM!

The ice door implodes. A Mech-Suit enters, guns smoking.

SHARKEY (V.O.)
Freeze!

The Ice Master tosses Max aside, and ferociously click/claps.

A gang of vicious RED WARRIOR ICE CRABS pour out of every corner of the room and set upon the Mech-Suit.

INT. MECH-SUIT

SHARKEY
Holy hyperbubbles!

SHARKEY'S MECH-SUIT

staggers back, overwhelmed by Warrior Crabs. They are all over him, snapping with their claws.

One warrior climbs over the others onto the Mech's back. It extends a drill and bores into the helmet.

SHARKEY (V.O.)

Aaaah! Get off!

Sharkey's Mech-Suit stomps and twists, falls back, crushes the crab beneath it, and then opens fire, blasting other Warriors away.

THE ICE MASTER

returns to his controls, looks up.

THE ICE GUN

lights up, HUMMING LOUDLY.

KULAI (O.S.)

That's enough, Madrassi!

The Ice Master turns.

Max looks up, in amazement.

Kulai is standing in the shattered doorway.

KULAI

You don't need to do that.

Sharkey's Mech-Suit bats aside a few more Warriors, climbs back to its feet. More Warriors are waiting, apparently intimidated at the sight of Kulai.

ICE MASTER

Who are you? How do you know my given name?

Kulai walks in and glowers as Ice Crabs move in. The creatures keep their distance.

KULAI

I am Kulai of Pyrus, last of the Cholim. I know of your world. My friends and I were stranded here, like you. We mean you no harm.

ICE MASTER

If you know so much about me, you know why I need your friends. One of them, at least. All this will be gone if I perish here alone.

KULAI

You are not alone. Your species has survived -- I know because I communicated with them. They colonized a new world, and now they are coming back for you.

The Ice Master appears greatly confused.

ICE MASTER

You lie.
(to Ice Crabs)
Kill her!

MAX

No!

ICE CRABS

converge on Kulai.

KULAI

reaches into her robe and pulls out a GLOWING CRYSTAL.

ICE CRABS

all immediately halt and bow down around Kulai. They scuttle aside as she walks toward the Ice Master.

KULAI

holds out the crystal.

THE ICE MASTER

falls to his knees. Tears roll down his face, and freeze.

ICE MASTER

You found my homing beacon. How can I ever... thank you?

KULAI

smiles.

EXT. ICE PLANET - DAY

The Flapjack flies out of a crevasse in the glacier, and heads off into the sky.

ATOP A FROZEN SPIRE

that protrudes from the glacier, the Ice Master watches them go. Then he sets his glowing crystal into a receptacle behind him, and he looks back up toward the sky.

EXT. STAR ROVER

The Flapjack returns.

INT. STAR ROVER

The Goose leaps about and makes SILLY NOISES, excited, as Max gives it a bowl a water. Sharkey makes pre-flight checks.

Ace is seated, wrapped in blankets, newly defrosted and taking it all in, while Kulai fixes him a hot beverage.

ACE

Is this absolutely necessary? I'd just like to know what went on down there. I feel like I've been in cryo for a year.

KULAI

It is absolutely necessary. You were nearly assimilated into your biochemical components. And this little pick-me-up came recommended by the Ice Master of Kelvin.

ACE

Who?

SHARKEY

Don't worry, you didn't miss anything, Ace.

KULAI

A new friend whose life we saved, thanks to Max -- and Sharkey.

ACE

Sharkey saved somebody's life?

MAX

Yeah, just yours.

Kulai brings Ace his drink. He sniffs it with suspicion.

SHARKEY

Hey, Ace! Can I get you some ice?

ACE

Very funny.

Everybody laughs.

EXT. ICE PLANET

The Rover forms a hyperbubble and zips away.

FADE OUT.

THE END.

JOE FORDHAM