

## Character Lines: “No Man's Land”

**Rosario**

*(remembering an old memory, reciting history)* We had no time for irony. Within a week of the infection every power grid went down. Hospitals, schools – society just stopped and went dark while everyone was dying. I was just three, but my sister was seven, old enough to remember it. She remembers seeing candles in the windows of homes. Then one by one the candles went out, and were never lit again. We watched our parents die twenty minutes apart. My sister saved my life. She knew no help was coming, so she took me by the hand and together we walked to the highway heading toward Houston. By some miracle another survivor was heading the same way in her car – she took us to the Houston Colony.

~\*~

**Holly**

*(excited)* I heard the transmission. Talk to him – I'll contact President Mary. *(pause)* Rosario, I have the information on the U.S.S. Lewis and Clark. I'm transmitting it to you now. Still waiting on President Mary...but Major Dickson was right. Your observatory was supposed to be their backup docking station, but there's something else. That mission left with eight people aboard the ship. Where is everyone else?

~\*~

**Dickson**

Mission Control Houston, this is the Lewis and Clark. Do you copy? Over. *(beat)* Come on, where are you guys? ISS-2 this is the U.S.S. Lewis and Clark. Do you read me? Over. *(to self)* Where the heck is everyone? Sensors are picking up the ISS-2, and there's the John Glenn. Guess they finally finished it. *(aloud)* John Glenn Station, you're my backup port. This is Major Gordon Dickson, retruning from a thirty-five year deep space mission to the Proxima System, and as Nicholson liked to say, "Honey, I'm home!"

~\*~

**President Mary**

*(pressing, emphasizing importance)* Rosario, before The Burn the starvation rate was 30,000 people a day. 30,000 people died every single day from starvation, but now, in the last twenty-four years not one person has starved to death. Listen to me. Last month the Aswan Colony sent an expedition into the Serengeti. Do you know what they found? Rhinos, Rosario! Rhinos! We have been given a gift. A world at peace. Nine billion people died to give us this chance and I am not going to let you throw it away.