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Subject: Re: Learning The Ropes

Posted by [Tikatu](#) on Tue, 24 Jul 2012 20:45:42 GMT

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Monday, March 5, 2068, 3:40 p.m., Highland Gas Rig5

Alan was getting very antsy. He tapped his foot and rapped his fingernails on Mobile Control, then looked at his watch for the umpteenth time. The oil rig workers kept at their business, though once in a while one or two would stop to glance at him and speak in soft tones together. It had been thirty minutes since they had felt the first vibrations of the Saucy Lady being slammed against a joist by the savage waves. Two men had been sent out to keep an eye on the ship and reported in every five minutes. To Alan, it was a miracle that the ship had as of yet neither capsized due to ice on the superstructure nor had gone down from the battering it was taking.

Just a little more miracle, just a little more, Alan prayed silently. He didn't dare contact Virgil again; he knew that his brother was getting as much speed out of his Thunderbird as he could and that the stress of Alan's repeated messages was getting to him. Getting to him? He nearly bit my head off last time!

But Alan himself was feeling stressed. John kept passing along messages, not from base, but from "remote base" which meant Scott and... his father. He knew that his Dad needed to know how things were going and in particular, how Dianne was doing. Well, Dad, Mom is fine. She's warm and dry and probably going just as crazy as I am over there on Rig 5.

At last, the message he was waiting for came.

"Thunderbird Two to Mobile Control. Come in, Ay."

Alan jumped to it. "Mobile Control to Thunderbird Two. Go ahead."

"We are approaching your position with an ETA of seven minutes. Where do you want us and what do you want us to do? This sea is too rough to drop the pod."

"F-A-B, Thunderbird Two. You are to proceed to NGRig5. I am uploading coordinates. They have enough helipad to support you and Doc is waiting there. As far as the pod is concerned," here Alan took a deep breath, "this is what I want you to do. I want you to land so that the hydraulic lifts in front are as close as possible to the edge of the pad. Then lift up, and open the pod. Doc will be able to join you at that point. Telescope the rails out to their farthest extent and launch Four from there."

There was silence on the other end, and then Gordon's incredulous voice cut in. "Are you crazy, Ay? Do you know what kind of drop that will be, even with the rails full extended?"

"I do, Gee. Not much worse than the pod itself takes when it's dropped from Two. And I've already checked with R & D. He says that Four can take it without damage," Alan explained. There was a pause. "Do you have any better ideas?"

Silence again, then Gordon's voice came back. "No," he barked. "But if Four gets so much as a

scratch on her...."

"Right, Gee, right," Alan cut in.

Virgil's voice now sounded off. "Placing Two like that is going to take some pretty pinpoint accurate flying, Ay."

"I know, Vee. But you can do it, can't you?" Alan said in exasperation. "Or perhaps if you can't, Tee can. Or maybe CJ?"

There had been some discussion over what initials to use for the two "C" named operatives, and Christopher had suggested that he use CJ, an old nickname of his.

"I can do it," Virgil growled. "ETA Rig5 now five minutes. I am over your position. After Four launches, what then?"

"Then you pick up the pod again and head over here to use the rescue cage to take up the men from the boat. They've got one very badly injured man, so Doc and one of the medics need to go down with the cage to triage and treat. The people in Four can look out for anyone washed overboard and can work on getting the mine cut clear. Captain Bowers tells me that they are taking on water, so you'd better step on it."

"F-A-B. I'm at Rig 5 now. Setting down in two minutes."

"F-A-B, Thunderbird Two. Let me know when Four is away."

"F-A-B, Mobile Control. Here comes Doc now. I'll let you know when Four is launched."

A beeping in his ear signalled that John wanted to speak with him. "Thunderbird Two, I'll get back to you. Thunderbird Five, this is Mobile Control. What is it, Jay?"

"Another update requested by remote base, Ay," John said tiredly. Dad must be really on his case, Alan thought.

"Good news, Thunderbird Five. Two has arrived at Rig5 and picked up Doc. Four is getting ready to launch."

"F-A-B, I'll pass the word along, Ay, and thanks."

Alan took his earbud out momentarily and dug around in his ear with a pinky. Then he looked at the rig men who had gathered around. He smiled. "Thunderbird Two will be here momentarily to start pulling the men off of the Saucy Lady. Speaking of which," he put the earbud back in and flicked a switch, "I'd better tell them the good news. International Rescue to Saucy Lady. Prepare to be boarded."

Post by Tikatu on 16/08/2004

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