

Timeline 2022 story

Stage 1

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 560.34 ALS

Our cargo ship, the ISS Millennium, has crash-landed on an unexplored planet, deep on the edge of the galaxy. All communications with mission control have been lost, leaving my crew and me isolated from the universe.

Using the freight and tools we brought with us, we have been able to construct rudimentary life support systems and a communications beacon. It should be enough to keep us alive for a few weeks. If we are unable to reach our colleagues back home, perhaps some other spacefaring race might come to our aid. A pipe dream, perhaps, but these are desperate times.

We have also set to exploring the alien environment in our research buggy; the planet is able to support vegetation, but as of yet we have not found a source of water. Further research must be conducted...

Stage 2

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 564.12 ALS

Our crew has had a stroke of luck. Our research expeditions have discovered a source of surface water; we have been able to amend our life support system with a makeshift purification plant. The cargo we brought with us has been perfect for building a transport system to bring the water and other supplies from the source to the ship.

Meanwhile, since the ship itself is no longer able to fly, we have been busy converting it into a biodome of sorts where we can live more comfortably. Solar power has been easy to come by, but generating enough oxygen may prove problematic.

Still, morale is high; our communication systems have been picking up faint signals. We can only hope our SOS has been heard by someone out there who can rescue us. In the meantime, we can only hope the only life we encounter on this planet remains of the vegetative sort...

Stage 3

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 571.38 ALS

Our engineer's skill has come through for us. With the completion of an airtight enclosure around our ship's wreckage and efficient draw of solar power, we have been able to create a livable space. Seeing as we may still be here for some time, this is a relief to the crew. Our water filtration system has also been a success; combined with oxygen generation, we may be able to grow enough food to sustain us for the time being.

Meanwhile, we unpacked our portable mining machine. After taking it on its first expedition, we discovered nearby a rich vein of mysterious crystals. Perhaps some kind of alien power source? More testing is needed...

Stage 4

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 593.74 ALS

Construction of our small colony has been progressing well. The power crystals we have mined have not yet given up their mystery, but we have started to build a laboratory to study their enigmatic properties. And as we continue to dismantle our ship's cargo and hull, we have found more than enough materials to expand our current living space. Our technicians have even been able to build a convenient indoor transport between our main two living spaces, and we are still continuing to expand.

Communication with outside life forms has also become a reality, in two ways:

Firstly, a spacecraft has appeared over the crash site; its crew appears to be human, but we are approaching the situation with caution. An small exchange of crew has taken place, but so far the strangers have been unable or unwilling to tell us everything they know about the planet, including the luminescent crystals.

Secondly, the planet does seem to have native fauna—and quite large ones at that...

Stage 5

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 604.23 ALS

It has been a turbulent time for our colony. The hostile alien invaders have been sealed away, for now—thanks to the intervention of the humans who discovered us. We are not sure how they did it, but it definitely involves the crystals we have been discovering. As the materials transport system was damaged, we decided to repair it as a "ride" of sorts, to give our bored colonists something to entertain themselves with.

We have learned much about the other humans now; they also have a small but permanent colony in this same solar system, and they have been mining our planet for its crystal materials for some time now. We have even discovered and excavated one of their old dig sites.

Because of this mutual assistance, the other humans have been sending more of their own colonists to our planet to aid in the further expansion and development of our own facilities. Our greenhousing has been successful and we are continuing to expand our living space, and have been generating some food with the plants we've grown.

Even if we never leave this planet, the future is looking bright.

Stage 6

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 636.81 ALS

Relations between our colony and the other humans has been warming, and they have been teaching us much about our new solar system. They suspect, but cannot confirm, that we are in orbit around the star Kepler-90, some 2,800 light years-from Earth. If so, our planet is, funnily enough, Kepler-90i—the third from its sun, and their own colony is on the planet one further out, Kepler-90d. Fortunately for us, it is not as far as Mars is from Earth, and with their shorter orbital periods, it will be easier to travel between the two.

With the rapid increase in population, it has become impractical to shuttle civilians back to Kepler-90d. With the help and imported materials from our new friends, we have constructed some new housing. Also, in order to better train colonists for moving between planets when possible, we have built a gravity training facility, with systems for both high-G and zero-G training. Both new areas have so far been surprisingly popular with the public.

While our worry about the mysterious trapped aliens is still high, confidence in our scientific abilities is ever-growing. Hopefully these can remain fruitful times.

(For reference, [Kepler-90](#))

Stage 7

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 644.48 ALS

Expansion of the colony on Kepler-90i continues unabated. Improvements to our new space training simulation facilities have been received well by the public; I suspect many people see them as more of amusements than serious work, but as long as it keeps them informed and skilled, I'm happy with the results. Even our neighbors from Kepler-90d have been helping import new materials for more facilities; as we continue to expand our control of the land around us, there is plenty of room for new expansion. The less-fertile terrain that houses the training facilities has some interesting features—we've discovered an odd pillar that clearly did not form naturally, but even the other humans do not know anything about it.

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 648.11 ALS

Disaster has struck the colony. To our surprise and horror, the force field keeping the alien invaders at bay has failed, and the monstrous beasts are quickly moving to attack the area. Some sort of wormhole appearing over the area has appeared, from which more aliens are appearing. The water treatment facility, a vital part of our ecosystem, has been irreparably damaged.

There is no time for further notes. I must lead my crew into keeping the terrors at bay...

Stage 8

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 649.75 ALS

The aliens' attack is in full force. The offworlders' containment field has been destroyed, but we have combined forces to defend our colony. Air and ground forces have been deployed—on loan from our neighbors—but who knows how long we can keep the invaders from destroying the rest of our colony, especially with the mysterious wormhole still open?

Technician James Stafford's log, mission date 649.82 ALS

While a battle rages on one side of the colony, we have been hard at work building distractions on the other. The conversion of the materials transport shuttle into an amusement ride has proven popular; so, using ancient plans dug up from archives millennia past, we have built another structure as part of our training facility to keep our colonists entertained.

This area of the colony has a slightly different biome, with softer soil and new species of flora. We've found another interesting structure in that direction—possibly another clue to the mystery of the energizing crystals? Maybe we'll never know.

Stage 9

Technician James Stafford's log, mission date 661.24 ALS

Things are calm again. Our assault on the monstrous aliens was successful, although I'm not exactly sure what drove them away, as our cobbled-together assault weaponry was pretty slapdash—of course I'm not going to complain. Although that freaky wormhole is still looming over their old lair, it seems to be inactive for now. And we've been destroying what we can of the cave that they've been hiding in.

The area where the water treatment facility used to stand is now a weapons hangar; hopefully it will remain a memorial to those who were lost in the fight, and we won't have to actually use these weapons again. A new facility was built at a newly-discovered source of water as far from the aliens as we're comfortable getting.

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 661.22 ALS

As I reached the top of the temple steps, it seemed that a human figure was standing between the ruined pillars, backlit with the familiar green glow of the crystals. It did not appear to speak, but I heard a ringing, ethereal voice.

I greet you, Commander. Long have us few been sleeping beneath this planet's surface, but your disturbances of the geology here have stirred us. Your people are safe from the native creatures here now—they drove us underground many years ago. I am glad we may work together to make this world a place of peace.

When I awoke, I found myself in an impossibly dark cave. If there are more of these people here, I hope one of them can find me...

Stage 10

Commander Edwin Collins' log, mission date 663.15 ALS

Though the cave was pitch black, the soft green glow of the strangers' bodies illuminated the area around me. In the periphery, I caught glimpses of technology that was not entirely alien to me—echoes of humans generations passed, that perhaps resembled art more than tools to my eyes.

Again, a silent voice scratched into my mind, explaining to me who these people were—humans, yes, but for years stranded here on Kepler-90i after being mistakenly separated from the colonists to Kepler-90d. The toxic atmosphere and native lifeforms drove them deep underground, to the source of the planet's crystals, into which some still-unknown energy is naturally ingrained. Combining this with their own technology, into their very bodies, was enough to let them survive here, but only just. Resources—food, water, even air—are hard to come by, and they have struggled; the crystals' power elongating their lifespans and protecting them from the elements. But it is not truly living, and their population has dwindled.

It was the second accidental crash-landing on this planet that ultimately seems to have saved them—our own. Maybe now, all three groups of humans can combine our knowledge and efforts to provide a safe and livable environment. It seems that, after fighting off the planet's monsters, they already trust us enough. Perhaps they will share their crystal secrets; with the right tech and expertise, maybe we can create something truly magical.

Stage 11

Commander Edwin Collins' final log, mission date 675.82 ALS

As I walk the corridors of our colony's many science centers, or gaze at the biodomes that enclose the green spaces we've created, I feel an overwhelming sense of pride. Not for myself; my role as mission commander feels like something that happened so long ago, in another life.

It is the colonists themselves who have built something special here—but no, not just colonists. All the humans: colonists, neighbors, and refugees alike.

And our habitat continues to evolve. Growing sustainable, edible food was one of the last challenges we faced. But the humans who lived underground knew the right plants, the right growing and harvesting cycles; they simply lacked the tools and strength to be productive. The soil here is fertile, and we shouldn't have any issue feeding the generations that are to come after us. Hopefully our meager amusement will be enough to entertain them. Should they wish to eventually leave Kepler-90i, we have built even more state-of-the-art spaceflight training facilities to prepare anyone for a long journey.

As for me, though, I think I will remain here with my feet on the ground. What was once a hostile foreign land has now become my home, and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. Now, we just have to hope those pesky monster alien things don't manage to find their way back here...

End transmission