

Cinematic & banter script sample  
'Cavern exploration on 22 Kalliope'

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**Context:** Cavern exploration scene in scifi detective /investigation game.

Now: The player, investigator **CURIE**, has arrived at the site of a previous terraforming expedition and needs to find clues as to why the terraformers went rogue. Curie is forcibly paired with **ANSANG**, a combat-trained Achird who has recently been demoted.

Over comm, navigator **BAILLARD** offers helpful advice from their shuttle until the connection is lost due to unexpected geological disturbances...

*Thirty-five years ago:* Below the scorched surface of the **22 Kalliope asteroid**, a motley crew of Tellusian, Rigeli and Mirdan terraformers meet in secret. Two weeks later, professor Manchaca at the NHP (New Horizons Project) goes missing, and a series of efficient sabotage is carried out in colonies across the whole local cluster, ultimately bankrupting the NHP. One by one these **instigators** are caught and interrogated. None of them sing; and in the ensuing War of Blossoms, the planet Draugr-1138, along with its penal colony, mysteriously vanishes...

**World:** Scifi - Planetary romance / space opera with political tones, inspired by classic monster-of-the-week franchises, as well as more lighthearted comic and contemporary franchises.

1 EXT. ASTEROID SURFACE. DARK, STARLIT, DUSTY.

**ARRIVAL ON 22 KALLIOPE Cinematic:**

**Fade in.** From behind scraggly, large stalagmites we see the light of CURIE's and ANSANG's electric torches cut through the dusty darkness. Far above, the stars are obscured by an asteroid belt. The light twinkles on the more metallic patches of molten rock.

Half shot. We see our two investigators, both in breathing gear. CURIE draws her torch up a particularly sharp crystallized rock. ANSANG passes behind her, looking ahead.

CURIE  
22 Kalliope. Cozy.

ANSANG  
Not the word I'd use.

CURIE  
Cuddly, then? Makes you wonder  
about the other 21 Kalliopes.

In a tighter shot, we can see the beam of light brush over a dusty axle cover of tungsten metal with the text "Aspera 4921". The surface has boiled.

CURIE  
Baillard, remind me to thank you,  
again, for taking us here during  
this space rock's nightly hours.

BAILLARD  
(over comm)  
I always aim to please, Cee.  
Besides, you're not much good to  
the bureau vaporized.

CURIE  
Good to agree with them on  
something... for once.

ANSANG  
(under breath)  
Sunrise in eighty  
minutes...

BAILLARD  
(over comm)  
Uh, yeah, so Ansang's right,  
let's be quick this time. There  
should be -- (comm crackles) --  
kind of, uh, small opening in the  
cliff face, ten-fifteen feet, on  
your left. I guess it's where  
they bunked. They might've left  
something useful behind.

**VIEW to: CURIE's HELMET HUD**

A dark slit in the rock face marks the opening. ANSANG's torchlight reflects off mirror-like shards in the narrow cavern.

CURIE  
That it?

BAILLARD  
*(static)*- one way  
to find out. Keep  
me posted.

**>The Player gains control over  
Curie to explore the cavern>**

CURIE  
Let's take a look.

ANSANG  
Mind those sharp... things.

*In this section, the player needs to investigate **three areas of interest** and find **three items** left by the instigators.*

2 **INT. FIRST CHAMBER COMMENTS:**

**After entering, the radiation level warning goes off.**

CURIE  
Hmm. We'll be glowing if we stay  
here too long.

ANSANG  
Let's not put in too much time  
here then.

**The player investigates a wall with an open ore vein. A broken-hinged container stands under it.**

CURIE  
Interesting looking minerals  
here, Bay.

BAILLARD  
*(over comm)*  
Ooh! Igneous right?  
*(static)*-felsic? Plagioclase?  
Crystalline?

CURIE  
I'd say... Bubbly?

**Idle comment #1:**

CURIE  
This place gives me the  
heeby-jeebies.

BAILLARD  
(over comm)  
Times-a-wastin', Cee.

**Prompting Ansang #1:**

CURIE  
So, Ansang? Haven't seen you  
since forensics class. How have  
you been?

ANSANG  
Adequate.

CURIE  
Still not the chatty kind, I see.

**Prompting Ansang (#2 onward):**

ANSANG  
Let me know when you're done.

**Player breaks through rubble, revealing a tunnel down:**

CURIE  
Look at that. I thought these  
people only met here once?

3 INT. SECOND CHAMBER:

*In the second chamber of the cavern, the player comes across the old campsite: Three cots, an old oxygen tank, and a simple crate set as a table. On the table a solar-powered lantern stands, and next to it lie a pair of spacesuit gloves. Everything is covered in a layer of dark, glittering dust.*

**The player investigates the campsite of the Instigators:**

**If the player didn't read the mission brief:**

CURIE

How *old* are these things?

ANSANG

35 years. You'd know if you actually read the brief for once.

CURIE

*(nervous laughter)*  
Yeeeah. Good thing I've got you?

ANSANG

*(under breath)*  
Good thing indeed.

CURIE

So was this really standard gear 35 years ago? These things look ancient.

ANSANG

*(laughs)*  
Ancient? It's standard gear now, if you're Achird.

**If the player did read the mission brief:**

CURIE

Looks like no one's been here for a while. Place could do with a good scrub.

CURIE

These things look ancient. Was this really standard gear 35 years ago?

ANSANG  
(laughs)  
Ancient? It's  
standard gear now,  
if you're Achird.

**>Branching ends.<**

4 INT. THIRD CHAMBER:

*The ceiling is lower, and the stalagmites sharper in this space. A horde of small beetles, glowing red, scurries across the floor when the player shines a light across them.*

CURIE  
Baillard, did you get visual on  
our new friends?

BAILLARD  
Still not a (static)  
xenoentologist, no clue what  
those are.

ANSANG  
Don't look at me.

*The player and Ansang find the slumped Instigator corpse at the end of the chamber. The layer of dust is thinner than in the previous chamber.*

*Mid-scene cinematic: Close up, camera tilts up slowly: There's a sooted gun entry wound on the chestplate, and someone has stripped the oxygen tank off the figure. We can see hints of more red-glowing beetles moving behind the cracked visor of the helmet.*

CURIE  
(whistles)

ANSANG  
That's... more than we came for.

CURIE  
Let's take samples. Bay, you  
getting this?

BAILLARD  
Yes- (static) - geologic inter-

CURIE  
Baillard?

CURIE  
Guess we're flying solo for a  
while.

**>Control back to player.<**

*Short cinematic: The player packing the samples away. Once the player has collected the clues, Ansang points the torch back the way they came.*

CURIE  
That wasn't too bad.  
Ansang?

ANSANG  
Yes, Curie?

- **Option A:** Ask about Achirds
- **Option B:** Ask about gear
- **Option C:** Ask about mission
- **Option D:** Nevermind (**exit dialogue**)

**Option A: Ask about Achirds**

CURIE  
You're an Achird, right?

ANSANG  
I have the horn stumps, let's  
leave it at that.

CURIE  
But I heard that-

ANSANG  
Leave. It. At. That.

**Option B: Ask about gear**

CURIE  
Were you serious about the bureau  
giving you old gear?

ANSANG  
Yes. Look- (sighs)  
Two hundred years of  
exploitation, and only  
<time\_left> before we're trapped  
in this radioactive hellhole for  
another daycycle. Ask me again  
later. If you care.

CURIE  
I... But why did you join the  
bureau?

ANSANG

You know, there's a one-in-thirteen chance I won't see my next birthday. I took those odds. That should say something.

CURIE

Where I'm from, thirteen's an unlucky number.

ANSANG

*(chuckles)*

You humans are indeed famously superstitious.

CURIE

Not all humans!

ANSANG

Ah, *bien sûr*. Remind me again why you put in that request to switch decks?

CURIE

Baillard... snores?

BAILLARD

*(static)*

- do not! Do I?

ANSANG

*(softly chuckles)*

CURIE

No but seriously, that's... messed up, if you're given worse gear just because you're Achird.

ANSANG

I guess I'm more expendable than you.

- **Nested Option A:** We're all expendable to them. (*empathy - Respect -5*)
- **Nested Option B:** Couldn't put it better myself. (*sarcasm - Respect +5*)
- **Nested Option C:** You're not expendable to me. (*romance - Respect unchanged*)

**All options:**

ANSANG

Just words, Curie.

**Option C: Ask about mission**

CURIE

So how did you land on this mission? I thought you were more about escort missions. The kind with hazard pay.

ANSANG

I was. Then I failed one.

CURIE

They put you back with us retrievers... Because of one failed mission?

ANSANG

Not everyone gets your free passes, Curie.

ANSANG

It was... a rather spectacular failure, if I may so say myself.

**Option D: Nevermind (exit dialogue)**

CURIE

I guess that's all, Ansang.

ANSANG

Finally. Let's head back before I get the 'heeby jeeby' too.

**>dialogue ends<**

**Cut to: Encounter cinematic**

*From behind Curie's and Ansang's feet, we can see another beetle rush past, and hear a rustling sound of its metal feet on the cavern floor.*

*Another beetle, this one a little larger, rushes in the opposite direction.*

*Close up of the comm, which sparks with static:*

BAILLARD

*(static)*

- hear me? The red  
things, they-

We see a multi-legged creature - a **NOCTILUCA** - the size of a small pony drop down from the ceiling, angrily clattering its glistening shell. Dozens of beetles scurry across the floor.

Zoom in on our two explorers, standing back to back. We see Ansang grab her staff. Curie nods and enters combat stance.

ANSANG

You handle the small ones, yes?

In the foreground, three more noctilucas drop past the frame onto the floor.

CURIE

... It brought backup, huh.

ANSANG

Cuddly indeed, Curie.

**>Fight begins<**