

X Minus One

Narrator (SFX) Countdown for blastoff X minus Five (*beep*) Four (*beep*) Three (*beep*) two (*beep*) X minus one (*beep*) Fire (SFX rocket takes off)

From the far horizons of the unknown come tales of new dimensions in time and space. These are stories of the future, adventures in which you'll live in a million could be years on a thousand maybe worlds. The National Broadcasting Company in cooperation with Galaxy Science Fiction Magazine presents X (*echo*) Minus (*echo*) One (*echo*). (SFX music) Tonight, the time 150 years from now, the place, a luxury spaceship en route to Venus. The story, Venus Is a Man's World by William Tenn. (music)

Ferdinand Some fellows are lucky. They have brothers. But not me. I have nothing but sisters. Two of them. Carrie and Evelyn. Sometimes Carrie isn't too bad, for a girl I mean. But Evelyn, boy, she's hopeless. But when Evelyn put me on that spaceship, she unpacked with 300 females and all of them aching to get themselves husbands on the one place that's still to be had, the planet Venus. Well anyway, twenty minutes after we took off from the space port, I was bored stiff.

Evelyn Ferdinand, do stop fidgeting and sit down.

Ferdinand But I don't have anything to do.

Evelyn I'll read to you and Carrie. Would you like that?

Ferdinand No. I wanna do something.

Carrie What's the name of the book, sis?

Evelyn Well it's titled "Family Problems of the Frontier Woman". Doesn't it sound intriguing?

Ferdinand Peachy keen.

Evelyn That's enough out of you, young man! Why don't you take a walk around the ship?

Carrie Can I go with Ferdinand, sis?

Evelyn Well, wouldn't you rather we start the book?

Ferdinand You should, Carrie. Every girl should read about the family problems of the frontier woman.

Carrie Keep quiet, you ... boy.

X Minus One

Evelyn Oh children, that's enough of that. Now go ahead, run along you two, and Carrie look after Ferdinand, see that he keeps out of mischief. (Transition music)

Ferdinand Gee, this is one big ship isn't it?

Carrie Uh huh.

Ferdinand I sorta wish we were on a cargo ship instead of this liner.

Carrie Why? This is super!

Ferdinand On a cargo ship we could go climbing from deck to deck on a ladder. We could even go to the bridge and talk with the crew.

Carrie That's silly. Why would anyone want to do that?

Ferdinand Because ship's crews are men!

Carrie Only because we women are too busy with important things like government to run a ship.

Ferdinand Says you. Hey, what are you lookin' at?

Carrie This sign. **"In the event of disaster affecting the oxygen content of the companionway, break glass with hammer upon wall. Remove spacesuit and proceed to don it."**

Ferdinand Boy, I hope we have that kind of a disaster. I sure would like to get into one of those.

Carrie Oh you're silly.

Ferdinand Hey, let's go exploring down this way. I see some portholes.

Carrie And I see a sign that says **"NOTICE: Passengers are not permitted past this point."**

Ferdinand Come on, there's no one around. And besides, I'm not really a passenger.

Carrie Ferdinand, you say you're not really a passenger, well what do you mean?

Ferdinand You have to be a citizen of a planet in order to get a passport, right?

Carrie I'm not sure.

X Minus One

Ferdinand Well I'm telling you. Ever since they passed that Male Desuffrage Act, only women can be earth citizens. You and Evelyn are passengers all right, but me, I'm just a male dependent. So when a sign says "off limits for passengers", doesn't mean me, I'm not a passenger ya see.

Carrie Keep away from that door Ferdinand, can't you see the sign?

Ferdinand You and your ol' sign.

Carrie Ferdinand let's go back to the cabin.

Ferdinand I wanna see what's behind this door.

Carrie If you don't come back with me this very minute I'll tell Evelyn.

Ferdinand So what. Hey, this looks like a sonic lock. I wonder if it works by knock or voice. (SFX knock, knock, knock)

Carrie Ferdinand I'm going.

Ferdinand Say, I remember one voice key. I wonder if it'll work. "Twenty, Twenty-three, Open Sesame." (Sound of sliding metal door opening)

Carrie Ferdinand! (Transition Music)

Ferdinand Out of all the million possible combinations, I hit it just right. The door clicked open into a, a dimly lit hole. As the door closed, a hand closed around my throat. The lights came on and I found myself staring up the muzzle of a highly polished blaster. By the biggest man I've ever seen. We just stood there looking at each other for a while, until finally he said...

Bot Why, you're only a tadpole.

Ferdinand Sir...

Bot A little tadpole. I must be getting jumpy enough to splash.

Ferdinand My name is Ferdinand Sparling. I'm very pleased to meet you Mr. uh...

Bot I hope for your sake you aren't a tadpole brother to one of them husbandless Anura.

Ferdinand Husbandless what?

Bot Anura. A herd of females looking to nest. I come from flatway folks.

X Minus One

- Ferdinand You're a Venusian?
- Bot Yup. What part of Earth are you from? And what are you doing on a spaceship to Venus?
- Ferdinand Ya know, the three outta four.
- Bot How's that?
- Ferdinand The three outta four. No more than three women out of every four on Earth can expect to find husbands. Not enough men to go around you know with the third atomic war and all. Why back in the twentieth century some of our best men went to the planets. My sister Evelyn says that by now most of the men on Earth aren't even worth marrying.
- Bot That's for sure. Those busybody Anura took care of that. Earth, what a place. I had a bellyful.
- Ferdinand Why did you come in the first place?
- Bot I came looking for a wife. Women are pretty scarce on Venus. And I heard there was a surplus of them on Earth.
- Ferdinand I can't understand why any man would...would even want to marry a woman.
- Bot How old are you, tadpole?
- Ferdinand Thirteen, almost fourteen.
- Bot Well that explains a lot of things, tadpole.
- Ferdinand It doesn't explain why you're heading back to Venus.
- Bot Because I was in trouble the minute I landed on that woman's world. I didn't know I had to register at a government-operated hotel for transient males. Imagine, they told me a man couldn't say anything in court. All talking was done by female attorneys to a female judge, But I told 'em off. I told 'em where I come from a man spoke his piece when he had a mind to and his woman walked by his side.
- Ferdinand Well, what happened?
- Bot Oh, I was found guilty of this, and contempt of that, but I wasn't gonna serve all those fancy little prison sentences, so I broke out and stowed away.
- Ferdinand You, you mean that you're breaking the law right now?

X Minus One

Bot Sure, aren't you?

Ferdinand Uh, uh, I guess so. I'm also a man outside the law. We're in this together!

Bot Shake, Ferdinand. Ferdinand? That's not a right label for a sproutin' tadpole. I'll call you Ford. My name's Bot. Bot Lee Brown.

Ferdinand Is Bot a nickname like Ford?

Bot Yeah. It's short for Alberta. But I haven't found a man who can draw a blaster fast enough to call me that. Ya see, pop came over in the eighties with the first wave of immigrants from Ontario. Named all us boys after Canadian provinces. I was the youngest, so I got the name they were saving for a girl.

Ferdinand Golly Mr. Bot, you sure must've had a lot of brothers.

Bot Yeah, full nest. There's Sas, his real name is Saskatchewan, Manny after Manitoba, and Yuk is named for Yukon. I got one for ever province and territory in Canada.

Ferdinand Golly, all I have is two sisters.

Bot Oh, tell me about 'em.

Ferdinand Well there's Carrie, she's almost sixteen.

Bot How about your other sister, is she a little older?

Ferdinand She's old alright. Evelyn's almost twenty-one.

Bot Is she pretty?

Ferdinand Who?

Bot Your sister Evelyn!

Ferdinand Oh, I don't know. She's healthy. She's got very good teeth.

Bot If I know her breed she's bossy and opinionated.

Ferdinand Why, aren't all women? (Dinner bell rings)

Bot Oh, there goes the dinner gong. Ford, you better scat. Growing tadpoles need their vitamins.

X Minus One

Ferdinand (Dinner bell rings again)
Could I bring you some chow? I could stuff it in my pocket and sneak it back here.

Bot No thanks, I've stashed away enough provisions. I got plenty of kelp and Venusian mud grapes to last the trip. You better shove off, Ford, they'll start looking for ya.

Ferdinand Guess I'd better. Well, I'll see ya right after dinner Mr. Bot..

Bot Just plain Bot to you Ford.

Ferdinand Uh ok, I'll be seein' ya. "Twenty, Twenty-three, Open Sesame." (Sound of sliding metal door opening) (Transition music)

Evelyn Ferdinand, please be seated. I want to talk with you.

Ferdinand Now? They just rang the dinner bell.

Evelyn I am aware of that. Now, where have you been?

Ferdinand Around...

Evelyn I demand a straight answer. Where have you been Ferdinand?!

Ferdinand I told you, sis, around. And don't call me Ferdinand, call me Ford. That's what Bot calls me.

Evelyn Bot! Who is Bot?

Ferdinand Oh nobody, I just made it up.

Evelyn Ferdinand...

Ferdinand I can't tell you, I can't!

Evelyn You must!

Ferdinand You promise you won't turn him in? Well, Bot's my friend. He's a Venusian. He's going home.

Evelyn Aboard our ship, the "Eleanor Roosevelt"? Ferdinand don't you realize you've been consorting with a stowaway, a criminal? What sort of anti-social ideas does this warmongering masculinist been putting in your head?!

Ferdinand Bot's a nice guy. He asked about you.

X Minus One

Evelyn Oh indeed.

Ferdinand I told him you had really good teeth.

Evelyn Oh really. Well take, take me to this man.

Ferdinand I will if you promise not to turn him in.

Evelyn Oh .. I promise. (Transition music)

Ferdinand He's in there. The door has a sonic lock. I know the combination. Watch.
"Twenty, Twenty-three, Open Sesame." (Sound of sliding metal door opening)

Evelyn Oh it's so dark in there.

Ferdinand Bot. Hey Bot. I brought along my sister Evelyn. She'd like to meet ya. It's alright, put on the lights. (Click of lights coming on)

Evelyn Oh!

Bot An honor, Miss Sparling. Please come right in. (Sound of sliding metal door closing)

Evelyn First Mr. Bot I want...

Bot It's Brown. Bot Lee Brown.

Evelyn First Mr. Brown, you realize that you are committing two crimes. One, the political crime of traveling without a visa, and two, the criminal act of stowing away without paying your fare.

Ferdinand Golly sis, that's...that's no way to talk to Bot.

Evelyn I take it you either have no defense or care to make none.

Bot Wonder if all the Anyua talk like that and you want to foul up Venus.

Evelyn We haven't done so badly on Earth after the mess you men made of politics.

Bot Here, here!

Ferdinand Yeah, here here!

X Minus One

Evelyn Oh you keep quiet Ferdinand. And another point, Mr. Bot Lee Brown, I don't suppose you know that under space regulations you've made this poor child an accessory.

Ferdinand Bot didn't make me anything.

Bot Let's not talk law female, let's talk sense. I'm in trouble because I went to Earth to look for a wife. You're standing right here now because you're on your way to Venus for a husband. So let's...

Evelyn Let's...let's what? (Gasp) Are, you, daring to suggest that...

Bot Now Miss Sparling, no hoopla, I'm saying, let's get married and you know it.

Ferdinand Gee sis, say yes.

Evelyn And what makes you think that I consider you a desirable husband?

Bot Figure it this way. If you wanted a poodle you're pretty enough to pick one up on Earth. When you go charging off to Venus you don't want a poodle you want a man, and I'm one. I own three islands in the Galartian Archipelagos. Good farm land when they're cleared. I got no bad habits, outside of havin' my own way. I'm passable good-looking, my teeth are good too, besides, if you marry me you'll be the first mate on this ship and that's a splash most nestin' females like to make.

Evelyn You know there's more to marriage than just doing...

Bot Oh there is. Well we can try each other for taste. (KISS) Now me, I'd vote yes.

Ferdinand Me too. I'd vote yes.

Evelyn Now I'll cast my vote. (SLAP) (Music)

Ferdinand Well you guessed it. She broke her promise. I suppose the kiss did it. She reported a stowaway to the captain and he sent the detail from the ship's crew to haul Bot off to the brig. Well, later that afternoon all the passengers, 300 females and me, gathered in the lounge for the hearing. (Large group all talking in background)

Ferdinand All right, you better...

Evelyn Shush.

Ferdinand Don't shush me. You promised me we wouldn't get Bot into trouble! (Banging of gavel)

Evelyn Shush. Captain is wrapping for quiet. (Banging of gavel)

X Minus One

Captain By authority vested in me under the Promona College Treaty, the stowaway, a Venusian, Bot Lee Brown, will be tried for violation of article sixteen to twenty-one inclusive of the space transport code. Purser, bring in the prisoner.

Lady I want him! He's mine! (Shouts from crowd "Me Too" "I'll take him")

Captain (Banging of gavel) Ladies! Ladies!

Evelyn They call themselves ladies...?

Captain (Banging of gavel) Ladies! Dear ladies! Thank you ladies. Bot Lee Brown, I order your person and belongings impounded for the duration of this voyage as set forth in sections forty-one and forty-five...

Evelyn Captain, the sections are forty-three and forty-five.

Captain Uh, you're, you're quite right Miss Sparling. Sections forty-three and forty-five of the Mother Anita Law Emergency Inter-Planetary Directive.

Bot Aren't you even gonna give me a fair trial before you hang me? (Shouts from the crowd of ladies)

Captain (Bangs gavel) Ladies! I beg of you, ladies.

Bot Captain, what exactly are the charges against me?

Captain You're a stowaway.

Bot I can pay for my passage.

Captain You can? Well then I guess we can dismiss the charges. (Shouts from crowd) (Bangs gavel) Ladies! Gentle ladies.

Evelyn Just a moment Captain.

Captain Uh, yes, Miss Sparling?

Evelyn I demand justice. You can't let him off that lightly. Besides there's the other charge.

Bot What other charge?

Evelyn Assault. That comes under section eighteen through thirty-five of the McDonald Law.

X Minus One

- Bot It does? Well then would you tell the court in your own words exactly what happened?
- Evelyn Well, when I first laid eyes on Mr. Brown he seemed to be a fundamentally decent chap. Despite his barbaric notions on equality between the sexes, or worse. I was positive I could shame him into a more rational social behavior and make him give himself up.
- Bot Go on Miss Sparling.
- Evelyn Just as I was getting over the colossal impudence involved in his proposing marriage, and was considering the offer seriously, on his merits, as one should consider all suggestions, he deliberately dropped the pretence of reason.
- Ferdinand Get her.
- Evelyn Ferdinand!
- Ferdinand My name is Ford and you're nothing but a big snitch. You promised not to get Bot in trouble. (Shouts from the crowd)
- Evelyn Your name is Ferdinand and stop trying to act forcefully like a girl, it doesn't become you.
- Captain Miss Sparling, did I understand you to say that you were considering Mr. Brown's proposal of marriage?
- Evelyn That is true. I will not deny that he appealed to me. He appealed to me as, as most savage ancient's appeal to their women. As an emotional machine. Huh, throw the proper switches says his theory, and the females surrender their self ecstatically, to the doubtful and bloody murk of masculine plans.
- Captain I'm afraid I still don't understand. What exactly did Mr. Brown do?
- Evelyn He, kissed me. (Shouts from the crowd)
- Captain (Bangs gavel) Ladies. Again ladies. Please ladies. Uh, Mr. Brown, do you deny kissing Miss Sparling?
- Bot No. Miss Sparling do you deny enjoying the kiss?
- Evelyn Your question is irrelevant and immaterial.
- Ferdinand Oh she enjoyed it.
- Captain How would you know?

X Minus One

Ferdinand Well I was right there. I could tell the way she acted. She sort of held the back of his neck, closed her eyes, and just hung on.

Captain And what were you doing there?

Ferdinand I introduced them. I met Bot first, then I took sis over there to meet him.

Captain I see. Ferdinand Sparling, I hereby order your detention for the duration of this voyage for aiding and abetting a stowaway as set forth in sections forty-one..

Evelyn Forty-three..and forty-five.

Captain Forty-three and forty-five.

Evelyn And you can't arrest Ferdinand he's only a child, you gave me your word no charges would be lodged against the boy.

Captain That was the usual promise one makes to an informer. But I made it before I knew it was Bot Lee Brown you were talking about. I didn't want to arrest Bot Lee Brown, you forced me. So, I'm breaking my promise to you just as I understand you broke your promise to your brother. I'm afraid Both Ferdinand and Bot Lee Brown will be picked up at New Kalamazoo Space Port and sent to Teraword for trial.

Evelyn But I used all our money to buy passage.

Captain I'm sorry you'll have to return with your brother. Of course, there is a way out.

Evelyn There is? Well tell me please.

Captain Miss Sparling, if you'd marry Brown..

Evelyn Wha..

Captain Don't, don't, don't look at me like that. If you'd marry Brown, he'd go on your passport as a dependent male member of your family.

Evelyn Do you think I'd marry that..that..that desperado? Why he doesn't know enough to sit back and let a woman run things. Captain, you should be ashamed of yourself.

Woman (Screams) I'll marry him!

X Minus One

Captain Perhaps I should be, but that's what comes of putting men in responsible positions. See here Miss Sparling, I didn't want to arrest Brown. I'd still prefer not to. The officers and crew of my ship all go along with me.

Evelyn Why not. Men always think like men. They never use logic. They just rely on masculine intuition.

Captain Maybe so. This ship's crew members are all residents of Earth. But our work requires us to be on Venus several times a year. We wouldn't want to cross any member of the Brown clan. They're all men of influence on the polar continent.

Evelyn I wouldn't doubt that for a second. If any one gets in their way they merely oxidize them with a blaster.

Captain Take Bot. He's a big man in his own bailiwick. The Galartian Archipelagos. When he wants to put somebody in office, well, he just appoints them.

Evelyn Mr. Brown has that much influence you say.

Captain Uh, power, actually. The kind a strong man usually wields in a newly settled community.

Evelyn Oh ,Mr. Brown, if I marry you, would you promise to see that I'm appointed resident governor of the Galartian Archipelagos?

Bot No.

Ferdinand That a' boy, Bot. Don't give in.

Evelyn Ferdinand, this does not concern you. Uh, Mr. Brown I might even consider a county clerkship.

Bot Nope.

Ferdinand Stick by your blasters Bot. Show her you're a real man.

Captain Mr. Brown, it would seem to me that if you really want to marry this attractive young lady, a compromise could be worked out.

Bot Well I could make her sheriff.

Ferdinand Oh no.

Captain Would the position of sheriff of the Galartian Archipelago be acceptable, Miss Sparling?

X Minus One

Evelyn Yes.

Bot Good! I'll marry you here and now.

Woman I want to be a bridesmaid! (Shouts from the crowd "Me too!, etc.) Always a bridesmaid never a bride!

Ferdinand Bot, how come you sold out? Why did you do it? You don't have to marry her for my sake. I wouldn't care what they did to me.

Bot That's alright tadpole I'd do anything for my favorite brother-in-law.

Ferdinand Bot, you won't like to be a brother-in-law. But gosh, you don't have to marry sis. You can have any one of these 300 females. Why marry sis?

Bot I'm stubborn. What I like at first I keep on liking. When I want it first I keep on wanting til I get it.

Ferdinand Yeah, but makin' her sheriff. What's gonna happen to our man's world?

Bot Don't worry none about that ,Ford, my boy, wait 'til after we meet and go out to my islands. She'll find herself sheriff over exactly two Earth males, you and me. And I got a hunch that'll keep her pretty busy huh? (Ferdinand laughs) How about that, huh? (Both start laughing heartily) (Ending Music)

Narrator You have just heard X Minus One presented by the National Broadcasting Company in cooperation with Galaxy Science Fiction Magazine. Which this month features "An Eye for a What?". A story of the Earth men who thought they couldn't hurt a friendly alien if they're lives depended on it. While all the time, they're lives did depend on it. Galaxy Magazine on your newsstand today. Tonight, X Minus One has brought to you "Venus Is A Man's World", a story from the pages of (background music) Galaxy written by William Tenn, and adapted for radio by Arthur Small. Featured in our cast were Dennis Falavio as Ford, Bob Hauge as Bot, Jerrienne Rafael as Carrie, John Gibson as the Captain, and Fredrica Chandler as Evelyn. This is Fred Collins. X Minus One was directed by Daniel Sutter, and is an NBC radio network production. (Closing music)

END