

**Avery Bissel**

Year of birth: 4365



You are preparing for the biggest moment of your life, and possibly the most important moment in Emera's history. You are one of the two candidates for the lead astronaut position for this upcoming mission, and, to be frank, you're a little scared. But, as always, when dealing with a tough decision, you will face it rationally and with a clear head.

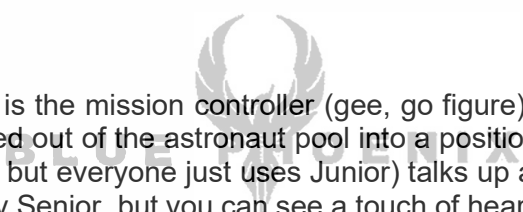
You have aspired to excellence, but a humble version of excellence. Your background is in tech, first as a general hobby, then specializing in flying craft. You started as a drone hobbyist, but liked flying so much you became a pilot on real planes. It's not what people expect from those with your background, but you learn quickly and methodically, work hard when you care about something, and apply yourself. This extends to your personal life, too. As a lover, you were tender and appreciative. As a parent you've been stern but fair. And when Lee died, leaving you a single parent... well, you made do as best you could. You still have your ring, and you've not had any serious relationships since, but you're probably ready to move on. And now, your hard work and stoicism have paid off. You've made it to the final pool of candidates for this mission. Either you will get picked or you won't, but either way, you're going to fly, as long as this mission is a success.

If only the other current candidate wasn't **Harper Aiken**. What an insufferable jerk! Aiken is possibly the most egregious example of a kiss-ass ever. Every day in training, Aiken used every insincere attempt at schmoozing you have ever heard, and quite probably invented a few new ones. To say nothing of Aiken's habit of taunting you, seemingly whenever possible. You tolerate it, as good-naturedly as you can manage it, but you did almost blow up at Aiken one day. Aiken was talking about how great it was to be married, and something kind of snapped. You didn't yell, but you did tell Aiken to go away. You don't think Aiken even remembers the incident.

It's a pity **Jamie Whitlow**, one of the original, final candidates dropped out of the running due to family issues. And yet, you were never comfortable interacting with Whitlow. Jamie's spouse also became ill, but while Lee died, Whitlow's spouse lived, after taking that leave of absence. Could you have done as much, and have had Lee live? No, that is not a rational way to look at it - your situations were particular and personal; not parallel. The doctors tell you there was nothing they, or you, could do, and you believe them. But that doesn't quite quiet the lingering regrets.

The tests are nearly done, and despite the differences in your circumstances and personality, you and Harper both have top marks. What's left is an examination by **Dr. Riley Eckhart**, who will screen you and Aiken and make the final decision on who is in the first live launch. The doctor is impressive. You've read some of the papers the doc has written, and they are solid pieces of science. You are ready to show you are in control and clear of mind. Aiken will probably try to charm the doctor, but from what you understand, the doctor has an independent point of view. Despite working for Blue Phoenix, the doctor does not toe the line just to please the CEO, **C. J. Orkney**. You respect that. It gives you hope the doctor has practice seeing with unbiased eyes.

You also would not toe the line for the CEO. For all of Orkney's posturing about how grand it will be to go to space, you know Orkney knows little about science or technology, and can't predict the possible mistakes in a mission like this. You will smile and shake hands, but you won't sing your boss's praises, and you will do what the mission, not C. J. Orkney, demands. You've worked for Orkney your entire life - after high school you went to work for Orkney's tech firm, Eastshore Software Technology Solutions, which is how you were selected to be a test pilot. You're not really interested in working for another firm, but you still think Orkney has some definite blind spots.



For one thing, Orkney's kid is the mission controller (gee, go figure) - just another sycophant in an important position, jumped out of the astronaut pool into a position of authority. Yeah, **Junior** (actual first name is **Taylor**, but everyone just uses Junior) talks up a good game about trying to be independent from Orkney Senior, but you can see a touch of heartfelt doubt every time Junior disagrees with Senior. Dr. Eckhart is really your best hope to get the mission, and clearly the most neutral party.

Well, time to start...

Short bio:

Born 4365 in Corton

Educated in private schools, finished Sylvania High School 4383 *summa cum laude*

Electronics Specialist, Eastshore Software and Technology Solutions, 4383-4385

Developer, ESTS, 4385-4386

Drone Developer, ESTS, 4386-

Test Pilot, Blue Phoenix, 4391-