

THE PKDCAST: THE GUN
By Philip K. Dick
Radio adaptation by Jake Lewis

Characters (in order of appearance)

Tance
Captain
Dorle
Fomar
Nasha
Loupe
Robot Voice

SCENE ONE

1 TANCE: So? What do you see in the telescope, Captain?

2 CAPTAIN: You're welcome to take a look, Tance, but I assure you, that planet down there is not a pretty sight.

3 TANCE: Still, I'd like to see for myself.

SFX of TANCE adjusting the telescope.

4 TANCE: My God.

5 DORLE: What do you see, Tance?

6 TANCE: Cap is right. There's nothing down there.....just endless gray.

7 FOMAR: Gray?

8 TANCE: Rocks, mountains, slag....not even water, so far as I can see. Nothing even moving.

9 NASHA: The computer readings indicate that the atmosphere is poisonous too.

10 FOMAR: So much for being able to grow any legumes there.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 DORLE: Then why did we even come? We've been stuck on this ship for weeks now, and when we finally get where we need to go, you say there's no point in landing? Let's just turn around right now and go home.

2 LOUPE: Maybe they've gone underground. The people of this world, that is.

3 NASHA: Look! There!

4 CAPTAIN: What do you see, Nasha?

5 NASHA: I'm not sure, but it looks like some kind of structure. Several of them!

6 DORLE: Probably just some accidental rock formations.

7 NASHA: I don't think so! They're white, and round...

8 TANCE: They look like broken teeth.

9 LOUPE: Maybe some buildings? Quick, turn the ship so I can see better!

SFX of engines whirring as ship turns.

8. CAPTAIN: Coming up on it, now...

9 LOUPE: Are those...piers?

10 FOMAR: You need water for piers.

11 DORLE: Looks like the remains of a city...

12 CAPTAIN: I think we have our answer. There's no way that any life could still exist on that planet. I think DORLE is right. Let's go home. Tance, get the GRS on the sender. Tell them what we've found and we're headed—

SFX of the ship getting hit with something.

SFX of the crew reacting, and parts of the ship falling, breaking, etc.

13 CAPTAIN: Is everyone alright?!

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

SFX of crew acknowledging they're mostly ok.

1 NASHA: What was that??

SFX of the ship getting hit once again and further destruction.

SFX of alarms going off.

2 LOUPE: We've been hit!

4 NASHA: By what? By *who*? There's no life on that planet!

5 TANCE: The Captain! He's injured! Get help!

6 DORLE: Got my hands full with a little fire over here!

7 FOMAR: So there is life on this planet after all...

8 DORLE: Worry about that later! Give me a hand!

9 LOUPE: We've got to land this ship before we get hit again!

SFX of ship landing, eventually alarms ceasing.

SCENE TWO

SFX of a drill or welding torch.

10 TANCE (on the mic): How's it going down there, Fomar?

11 FOMAR (in a safety suit): Whatever it was that hit us took a good chunk out of the hull. It's going to take me awhile to make this bird able to fly again.

12 TANCE: What a miserable place to be stuck.

13 DORLE: Tance?

14 TANCE: Go ahead, DORLE.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 DORLE: We're low on carbohydrates here in the galley.

2 TANCE: So what can we do about it, since it looks like we'll be here for a bit?

3 DORLE: Well, we could break down the stored fats, but that would mean—

4 LOUPE: We could go outside.

5 DORLE: Maybe you missed the part about *poisonous air*...

6 NASHA: What do you expect we'd find, Fomar?

7 LOUPE: We have more protective suits. Who knows, we might find something that is resistant to this environment...

8 TANCE: I just don't understand it. There's no possible way that life exists on this planet. That atmosphere would fry someone like a yam. But then who fired on us?

9 CAPTAIN (groggily): They made a decision.

10 ALL (ad-lib): Captain! You're awake! Thank God!

11 TANCE: What do you mean, they made a decision?

12 CAPTAIN: Someone chose to shoot us down. The first shell put us out of commission, the second almost destroyed us. They were well aimed, perfectly aimed. We're not such an easy target.

13 LOUPE: Well, perhaps we'll know the answer before we leave here. What a strange situation! All our reasoning tells us that no life could exist; the whole planet burned dry, the atmosphere itself gone, completely poisoned.

14 NASHA: The gun that fired on us survived. Why not people?

15 DORLE: Because, Nasha, guns are not alive. They are metal. Metal doesn't need air, or food, or water to survive. Metal doesn't develop leukemia from extreme radiation.

16 NASHA: Right. I know that. Of course. All I meant was—

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 CAPTAIN: It doesn't matter. In the morning, we will send out a search party.

SFX of the crew in shock/in disbelief over this decision.

2 CAPTAIN: Listen to me! We will be here for a few days, at least. The blow to the hull took out much of our stores of food. We will not survive if we stay on the ship.

3 LOUPE: We won't survive if we leave the ship, either.

4 CAPTAIN: We need to try to find...something out there. What was it you said you were looking for, Fomar?

5 FOMAR: Legumes. *Edible* legumes.

6 CAPTAIN: Right. Legumes. You will go look for some.

7 NASHA: Be careful. They fired on us once without even knowing who we are or what we came for.

8 DORLE: Do you think...never mind.

9 TANCE: What is it, DORLE?

10 DORLE: Do you suppose that they fought with each other? Perhaps they couldn't imagine anyone being friendly, under any circumstances.

11 LOUPE: What a strange evolutionary trait, inter-species warfare. Fighting within their own race!

12 TANCE: We'll know in the morning. Let's get some sleep.

SCENE THREE

SFX of the ship's hatch opening and several footsteps walking down a ramp. All voices are filtered through a spacesuit microphone.

13 DORLE: What a day. I thought I'd be happy to be on solid ground again.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 FOMAR: C'mon. Let's get this over with.

SFX of walking on gravel, dirt.

2 TANCE (in a lowered voice, as though telling something private) The captain is dying.

3 NASHA: But he was talking last night! He was—

4 TANCE: Ssh! Keep it down! Only you and I know this. By the end of the day, he will be dead.

5 NASHA: That's awful. But that means you'll be the captain, doesn't it?

6 TANCE: No. I prefer to see someone else lead, perhaps you or Fomar. I've been thinking over the situation and it seems to me that I should declare myself in favor of one of you, whichever of you wants to be captain. Then I could remove myself from the responsibility. I'd rather it be you...I'm...partial to you.

7 NASHA: Well...I...I am too...

8 FOMAR (from a distance): Take a look at this!

SFX of walking closer.

9 DORLE: Wow.

10 FOMAR: Check this out. The whole valley is like a big bowl.

11 NASHA: It's a crater.

12 TANCE: Do you think this is from The Great Blast?

13 DORLE: This looks like it used to be a windmill. And this...a barn? Was this a farm?

14 NASHA: We should go. We don't have much time.

SFX of music to indicate passing time.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 TANCE: There they are!

2 NASHA: What?

3 TANCE: What we saw from the ship. What I called "broken teeth."

4 DORLE: They're...guns. Enormous guns...

5 FOMAR: That must have been where they shot us out of the sky from.

6 NASHA: I didn't think we landed so close.

7 LOUPE: Where are they now? The people who shot us down?

7 TANCE: Only one way to find out.

SFX of TANCE walking away.

8 NASHA: Where are you going?

9 TANCE: The city. What's left of it. They couldn't have gone too far. They must be holed up there.

10 NASHA: Wait. We don't know what we would be getting into. They must have patrols. They probably have seen us already, for that matter.

11 TANCE: They probably have seen where the ship landed. They probably know right now where they can find it, where they can blow it up. Hell, they can see us right now, I bet. So what difference does it make whether we go closer or not?

12 NASHA: That's true. And we're not even armed.

13 LOUPE: I have a gun. *(Beat.)* I took it from the ship's hold.

14 DORLE: Another gun.

15 TANCE: Let's go. Stay close.

SFX of them walking off.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

SCENE FOUR

SFX of walking, slowing, stopping. The group is tired, hot.

1 TANCE: Well, here we are. The city. More like a rubble pit.

2 DORLE: (spits) More wasted time.

3 NASHA: It's spooky. I've seen ruined cities before but they died of old age, old age and fatigue. This was killed, seared to death. This city didn't die—it was murdered.

4 FOMAR: I found something.

SFX of sand being wiped away, footsteps nearing.

5 NASHA: It's a sign.

6 DORLE: (reading) "Frank..."

7 FOMAR: "Franklin Apartments."

8 DORLE: Something isn't right here. It's like we're being...watched.

9 TANCE: Did you see someone?

10 FOMAR: No, but I sense it. Can't you?

11 DORLE: No, but perhaps I'm more acquainted with being stared at.

12 TANCE: Has anyone seen Loupe?

They all start calling for LOUPE.

13 LOUPE: (from a distance away) Over here!

14 DORLE: What is that idiot doing with the gun?

15 NASHA: More like a cannon.

SFX of them running to him.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 LOUPE: Look at the size of this thing! This is definitely what blew us out of the sky!

2 DORLE: You sound almost impressed by this machine that could have killed us!

3 LOUPE: Well, I mean...it's awesome.

SFX of gun swiveling.

SFX of group reacting.

4 NASHA: (whispering) It's alive. It's listening to us.

5 FOMAR: But who's controlling it?

SFX of gun swiveling.

6 LOUPE: Don't you get it? No one is operating it. The gun. Is. Aware.

7 DORLE: That doesn't make sense. It's a gun. A person fires a gun. A gun does not choose to fire or not.

8 LOUPE: No? Then take a look at this.

SFX of scrabbling in the dirt.

9 NASHA: What are you going to do with that rock, Loupe?

10 LOUPE: Proving a point to Dorle.

SFX of rock being thrown.

SFX of gun swiveling and firing.

SFX of rock being blasted apart.

SFX of the gun swiveling back to its resting position.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 LOUPE: See? It noticed the rock as soon as I threw it up in the air. It's alert to anything that flies or moves above the ground level. Probably it detected us as soon as we entered the gravitational field of the planet. It probably had a bead on us from the start.

2 NASHA: We don't have a chance.

3 TANCE: Stop talking like that. You have no reason to believe that.

4 NASHA: Don't you get it? The gun knows all about the ship. It's just waiting for us to take off again, and then...bang.

5 FOMAR: Wait a moment. All is not lost. The gun noticed the ship, yes, but not us, since we're on the ground, not above. It's only designed to combat objects in the sky.

TANCE begins laughing.

7 NASHA: I cannot see the humor in this.

8 TANCE: We're safe until we take off. But we can't stay here. We're trapped either way. The end will come. (Laughs to himself.)

9 DORLE: But why? What is this gun's purpose? Everyone here is dead!

10 LOUPE: A gun is a machine. It was built for a purpose. In this case, it was to attack the invaders who came from above. I'm not sure how it survived The Great Blast, but on it goes, waiting for the enemy.

11 NASHA: But...we're not the enemy. (*Beat.*) Are we?

12 TANCE: Of course not! We came here in peace! To help!

13 FOMAR: Too late for that.

14 LOUPE: It's quite intricate, isn't it? Why, look at these tubes and vanes. Must have some telescopic sight—

SFX of gun swiveling.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 TANCE: Everyone! Down!

SFX of everyone dropping.

SFX of gun cycling down.

2 DORLE: What the hell was that??

3 LOUPE: My fault. I must have put my hand over the lens. Remind me not to do that again!

SFX of LOUPE walking off.

4 TANCE: Where are you going, Loupe?

5 FOMAR: Get back here before you get us killed!

6 LOUPE: I've found something!

7 NASHA: I have a bad feeling about this.

8 TANCE: What is it, Loupe?

9 LOUPE: You know the legend that all races have? The one about a serpent or dragon that buries a secret treasure?

10 FOMAR: What about it?

11 LOUPE: That gun? That's your dragon.

SCENE FIVE

SFX of a heavy metal grate or lid being dragged open.

12 TANCE: (Out of breath) What...what's in there?

13 FOMAR: (Out of breath too) Looks like it's a hatch.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 LOUPE: Who's got a flashlight?

2 DORLE: Here.

SFX of flashlight clicking on.

3 DORLE: I can't see anything.

4 LOUPE: Then we need to go down and find out.

5 NASHA: Do you see those steps? They're coated in rust. I'm not risking it.

6 LOUPE: Fine by me. If I'm not back in 10 minutes...wait longer.

SFX of him descending stairs, followed by other footsteps.

9 NASHA: Where do you think you're going?

10 TANCE: To see what's down there.

11 NASHA: This is not smart!

12 TANCE: It will be fine. We will be back before you know it.

SFX of TANCE descending.

SFX of footsteps with echoes to indicate a small tunnel.

13 LOUPE: A door.

14 FOMAR: There's some inscription on the door.

15 LOUPE: Give me a hand with this bolt.

SFX of grunting as the pull the bolt.

SFX of bolt snapping back.

16 DORLE: I guess we go in now?

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

SFX of door opening.

SFX of footsteps continuing.

1 TANCE: What is this place?

2 DORLE: Crates...boxes...packages...containers. It's...a vault.

3 FOMAR: But a vault for what?

SFX of a box lid being lifted and then something being pulled out.

SFX of a canister falling to the floor.

4 DORLE: Look at this! Pictures!

SFX of another crate opening and a canister lid being thrown aside.

5 LOUPE: More pictures!

SFX of another crate opening and a canister lid being thrown aside.

6 TANCE: Same here! It's a boy. One of...them. The Ruined Race.

7 DORLE: All these boxes...Pictures, probably literature, artwork, beliefs about the universe.

8 TANCE: Odd...Even at the end, even after they had begun to fight they still knew, someplace down inside them, that their real treasure was this, their books and pictures, their myths. Even after their big cities and buildings and industries were destroyed they probably hoped to come back and find this. After everything else was gone.

9 FOMAR: When we get this back home, we will be able to trace their development and find out what it was that made them become what they were.

10 DORLE: What are you talking about? We can't get this back home! This infernal gun will shoot us down again!

11 LOUPE: We won't have any problem with the gun. It's no menace to us.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

1 TANCE: What do you mean? Have you figured something out?

2 LOUPE: This poor, foolish gun! It's completely harmless! Even I could deal with it alone?

3 FOMAR: For God's sake, how, Loupe?

4 LOUPE: Of course we're at its mercy in the air: that's the way it was made. It can fire into the sky, shoot down anything that flies. But that's all! Against something on the ground it has no defenses. So we go back to the ship, and come back with a crowbar. With a hammer or a stick of wood.

5 TANCE: The soft underbelly of the dragon. In the legend, the dragon's armor doesn't cover its stomach. That's right. That's perfectly right.

6 LOUPE: Let's go.

SCENE SIX

7 TANCE: The captain...he's dead. Died in the night in his sleep.

8 FOMAR: But he was improving. When we got back last night, he was acting like his regular self.

9 NASHA: Old fool.

10 LOUPE: There was nothing we could do. But we can still do something to save ourselves.

11 DORLE: I hate to admit it, but Loupe is right.

12 FOMAR: You really think a few crowbars will take out that massive weapon?

13 LOUPE: Do you have a better idea?

Silence.

14 LOUPE: Then let's go. Load up, because we move out in an hour.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

SFX of walking.

SFX of metal and other implements on the gun.

SFX of pieces breaking.

SFX of ad-libs of the crew acting aggressively toward the gun.

LOUPE: (winded) I think...I think we've done it.

NASHA: We did it! We destroyed the gun!

DORLE: We can go home now!

FOMAR: Well, once the ship is repaired. Yes. We can go home.

TANCE: Then we know what to do next. With all of us working together, we should be able to leave this place in just a few days.

SCENE SEVEN

SFX of spaceship engine readying for liftoff.

TANCE: Nasha? Are you ok? You've been quiet the past five days since destroying the gun. What are you thinking?

NASHA: Me? Nothing.

TANCE: You never think nothing.

NASHA: Well...I was imagining what this place must have been like. Once. Before. Quite different, I suppose.

TANCE: It's too bad one of our ships didn't come out this far when they needed us. We wouldn't have come here now if it wasn't for the fission glow we spotted.

NASHA: And by then it was too late.

THE GUN

Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

TANCE: Not quite too late. After all, their possessions will survive. We'll take them home and study them, and they'll change us. We won't be the same afterwards. And you'll lead us back here, and this time, there won't be a gun.

NASHA: Me? But...I can't be the captain!

TANCE: Of anyone here, you have shown the most thought. More people like you should be in power. Maybe then society wouldn't need these guns.

NASHA: Then let's go. Let's go home.

SFX of ship taking off and shooting into the great expanse of space.

EPILOGUE

SFX of alarms going off.

ROBOT: Repair. Needed.

SFX of a machine starting up.

ROBOT: Mechanic 5RX-G coming online.

SFX of a large door opening.

ROBOT: Gun 23-12, critical condition.

SFX of a small vehicle trundling over rough terrain.

ROBOT: Mechanic 5RX-G, commence repairs of Gun 23-12.

SFX of mechanical tools at work.

ROBOT: Gun 23 repaired, ready for operation. Mechanic 5RX-G, return to service bay.

SFX of small vehicle trundling away. SFX of gun repositioning.

THE END