

# [ PuddleJumpers ]

[1/7]

"[Clear Skies]"

By

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## NOTES FOR THE ARTIST

### Setting Notes:

This is a setting with soft edges. It's post-sealevel rise, but far enough into the future that people have found a way to live fulfilling and satisfying lives. It's an optimistic look at a way of life that allows room for nature rather than looking to engineer it to our purpose. Think 'Outback Solar Punk' and new frontiers. (Ref: <https://pin.it/3BQWl1Cz9>)

The entire comic takes place at one location, a refuelling station on a small island in the middle of the ocean. There are some palm trees and bushes, all kept clear of the runway. The island itself is surrounded with floating solar panels which collect and send energy through thick cables to a large battery storage, like a futuristic grain silo. A slightly smaller cable runs out of the bottom of the battery storage and connects to the Attendant. It is long enough that they can go wherever they want on the island. The Attendant is permanently based there to help any jumpers who come through with their refuelling.

There are also some basic amenities on the island. Similar to the design of the Attendant, think kind of old/under-maintained Americana fuel stop vibes. None of these will be a focus of the story but give us a bit of a chance to world-build:

- A notice board
  - BAD WEATHER NOTICE - Ship Lanes Disrupted
  - POEM:  
Ships and their sailors have built paths through the  
blue  
But sailing takes time and the winds must stay true  
If the message is urgent, or your cargo won't last  
You can trust in us Jumpers, to get it there fast.
  - JUMPER BULLETIN: NEW ROUTE DISCOVERED FROM BIG ISLAND TO THE SMOKE RING. TWO REFUELS SHORTER.
  - Handwritten "Don't trust MillCo."
  - Handwritten "Lots of work around Greenreef"
- A vending machine or 2 full of snacks & energy drinks
  - 'High & Dry Snacks - dehydrated chow for the cloud-bound'
  - 'BuZZZrd - You can sleep when you're dead'
- A broom & pan
  - The pan is loaded with sand. I like the idea that Attendant gets bored sometimes and sweeps the sand about.

These don't have to be in every shot (or any shot) but can add a bit of interest/give a character something to look at/interact with). I love the way you slip little easter eggs and the like into your own backgrounds so feel free to have a play with this as well!

### Formatting Notes:

The panels for this comic are not intended to be the same size. Some of them are intended to be quite small to capture a sense of speed and momentum. Use your judgements on which those are but happy to discuss if you'd like!

### Main Characters:

Puddlejumper pilots are a mixed bag, drawn to their business from all sorts of backgrounds. Therefore their appearances often vary wildly as well but they always share a couple of features:

- Jumper's overalls. These can be worn in all manner of different styles and shapes, but you'll never catch a Jumper in shorts. (Ref: <https://pin.it/52m7TmJ2d>)

- Jumper's scarf. Each plane has it's own scarf worn by the crew. The complex geometric patterns are a way for Jumpers to quickly identify a pilot's history (and allegiance, if necessary). (Ref: <https://pin.it/lumQP7KBy>)

#### Byron

Probably the most tailored you'll ever see a Jumper. Always has at least one camera slung somewhere on his person. Wears a dark teal beret. Rounded features, still carrying some boyish looks in his cheeks. He's clean, probably smells good. Tan, olive skin and soft features. He wears his overalls close to the body, with a fur-collared jacket over the top. Everything he wears is good quality, but with signs of wear that have been skilfully repaired. It does come together like he bought it all from a catalogue though. His scarf, folded neatly, pokes out of his jacket pocket. His colour palette, aside from the beret, is greys, browns, desaturated blues. There are a couple of telltale oil stains on his outfit to signify the fact he's a mechanic and a tinkerer. (Ref: <https://pin.it/7w8IPergq>)

#### Melia

Her whole look is much more lived in, favouring comfort over any kind of style and making it all the more stylish as a result. She's got similar features to Byron, with the exception of a sharper nose and slightly darker skin. The sun has touched her more from work outside. Her hair is curly and

fighters to escape the control of a pilot's cap. She has shirt and goggle tan lines. She wears her overalls either open or folded around her waist. A loose collared shirt is strapped down by a flight harness. Everything she wears is oversized, but she's colourful. Oranges, Blues, light greens. Yellow glass on her goggles. Her Jumpers Scarf is bundled around her face to protect against the wind. (Ref: <https://pin.it/1zrRX0hFu>)

### Side Characters

#### Attendant

Attendant is an animated, semi-humanoid power station. With a sort of 'Americana' flavour to them. (Ref: <https://pin.it/4jV5fGm1P>) The design is a little whimsical. One of their 'arms' is a thick, heavy power cable similar to the hoses you would see used to fuel jet planes. (Ref: <https://www.shutterstock.com/video/search/refueling-airplane>). The other 'arm' holds out a keyboard that is used by anyone fuelling their PJ. They have a 'head' of sorts that perches above where the pump numbers show. They can mostly emote through their eyes and by tilting left and right slightly. Above the head there is a holo projector that can put out simple emojis and graphics to supplement their expression.

#### 'PuddleJumpers' (Planes)

These look like conventional small aircraft (Ref can be found here: <https://pin.it/hFmzxRvFX>) but they operate using electricity. Therefore some modifications have been made including solar panels on the wings/roof of the plane. All of them are small, only capable of a few hours flight at a time.

Each PuddleJumper has its own character and has been customised by each generation of pilot that owned it. They are often a reflection of the character of their pilot. Many of them have been painted with some kind of motif or design (Ref: <https://pin.it/RvKXJoHxx>) erring on the side of whimsy and fun, rather than threat.

Byron's PJ is relatively old, but impeccably maintained. Parts have clearly been replaced but with care and skill. The plane is shiny, tending to catch the light. Think a Cafe-Racer motorbike. Intended to be looked at as much as ridden. Clearly maintained by someone who knows and cares about mechanics (Ref: <https://pin.it/25sdI8qnN>)

Melia's PJ is more ramshackle. Open cockpit, mismatched wheels. Similar to early WW2 planes and bush planes. The owner is clearly happy with 'good enough'. This is a workhorse,

reliable. Webbing on the sides makes up for the limited interior and is fully loaded with boxes, mailbags, and packages. (Ref: <https://pin.it/GogKCPOzu>). One of the packages should be a juvenile orange and lemon trees. This will be a callback to a future issue.

FRONTMATTER PAGE WILL GO HERE

## **PAGE 1**

### PANEL 1

Birds-eye: A tiny island, 0.5km long and narrow, with an even more narrow runway right down the middle. Like a strip of electrical tape on some yellow sand. The runway is short, too short for anything but the smallest of planes to land and take off from. (Ref: <https://pin.it/RGmkeDuCa>)

The weather is clear, Mediterranean. A few wispy clouds over clear azure waters that catch the sunlight. A couple of clusters of solar panels float in the water around the island, with cables snaking in out of the sea towards where Attendant and the power station is. He's only a tiny dot from this height

Two 'PuddleJumpers' approach from opposite directions. One (Byron's) closer than the other.

Inset: We see the power gauges of both planes beneath them. (Ref: a horizontal version of this <https://pin.it/rjd60ou88>) They're running on empty.

SFX - Byron's Puddlejumper:

VRRR

SFX Melia's Puddlejumper:

puTutuTutuTut

### PANEL 2

Byron's 'Jumper touches down on the runway. It looks expensive. Relatively new. The landing is one smooth motion.

SFX: SKKRT

Attendant stands in the background. They're humanoid looking, with one 'arm' raised to hold a keyboard and the other 'arm' the heavy power cable, The width of a gutter downspout.

### PANEL 3

We don't see Byron's face yet. Just his refined, practical clothes as he jumps down to the tarmac.

SFX - Boot touching down lightly:

tak

PANEL 4

SFX - Pulling on gloves:

Shf

PANEL 5

Byron's hand fiddles with the charging cap of his plane to reveal a power socket.

SFX - opening the charger port:

Click

PANEL 6

SFX - taking the charging cable off ATTENDANT

Tck

The sound of the Melia's Puddlejumper intrudes at the bottom of frame.

SFX - Melia's Puddlejumper:

pututututut

PANEL 7

Byron's gloved (expensive, maroon, like fancy driving gloves) hand hesitates to plug in the power as the sound gets louder.

SFX - Melia's Puddlejumper:

tuTUTUT

PANEL 8

Byron looks up into the clear sky, still holding the charging cable as Melia's puddlejumper comes swooping towards the runway.

SFX - Melia's Puddlejumper:

TUTUTUTUTUTUT

## **PAGE 2**

### **PANEL 1**

This 'Jumper is much more ramshackle. Open cockpit, World War 2 style. Mismatched wheels. The owner clearly happy with 'good enough'

A mirroring of Byron's own landing sequence from page 1. Except Melia's landing is much rougher. Rushed. Kicking up sand.

SFX - Plane Landing:

CLUNK

Screech

### **PANEL 2**

Melia's bare hand is flung up above her windscreen.

MELIA

Wait!

SFX: Cockpit canopy slamming open:

THUNK

### **PANEL 3**

Melia jumps out of the cockpit

SFX - Melia's clothes as she hops out:

shuff

### **PANEL 4**

MELIA

I need to be in Broadspur by nightfall.

SFX - Melia's boot on the wing:

Tunk

### **PANEL 5**

Melia stands on the wing. Pulling her Jumpers scarf down with one hand and pulling at her goggles, which are covered in dust and limiting her view.

MELIA

(Small) Stupid goggles. Can't see a thing.

MELIA

Do you mind if I fill up fi--

PANEL 6

Melia sees who it is. She looks surprised

PANEL 7

Her expression transitions to displeasure

MELIA

Oh.

## **PAGE 3**

### PANEL 1

We get our first look at Byron's face. He's smiling awkwardly, but his body-language shouts he doesn't want to be there.

### PANEL 2

MELIA  
(Balanced between panel 1 and 2) It's  
you.

### PANEL 3

Melia has her back to Byron as she climbs down from her plane. Byron does his best to look welcoming. Fires off a casual salute with the hand not holding the cable.

Attendant is stood in the background. Inanimate. 'Eyes' closed.

BYRON  
Jumper Melia.

### PANEL 4

The two pilots face off against each other. Byron holding the bulky charging cable in two hands, attempting to look friendly. Melia's goggles hanging from her crossed arms.

Attendant opens one eye.

MELIA  
(With some stank on it)  
*Byron.*

### PANEL 5

Shot of ATTENDANT, dormant.

### PANEL 6

ATTENDANT wakes up

SFX:  
Be-boop!

### PANEL 7

Melia holds her pose, Byron returns her glare now. Attendant looks between Melia and Byron with both eyes open.

SFX - Glaring at each other (optional if it works)

*GLARE*

PANEL 8

Same frame again. Only this time the head of the robot Attendant on the pump looks at Byron. Throughout the rest of the scene their head should swing back and forth, following the conversation.

ATTENDANT

I take it you know each other?

## PAGE 4

### PANEL 1

MELIA

I need to fill up first. I've--

BYRON

--Not left enough time in your flight  
schedule.

(pause)

As **usual**.

### PANEL 2

Melia glares

### PANEL 3

She's angry at him, but mostly at the fact he's right.

MELIA

Don't you--

### PANEL 4

She takes a breath, her temper swirling around behind slightly  
puffed cheeks.

SFX - A calming breath:

Breathe

### PANEL 5

MELIA

(cont)

--We both know you can **afford** to wait.

### PANEL 6

Byron's more smug than vindictive. Like a sibling who has  
something the other one wants.

BYRON

Ah. But you see, I was **first**.

MELIA

That's--

### PANEL 7

BYRON

--Attendant! What are the **rules**?

Attendant is just pleased as punch to be involved. Their holo imulates a barrister's wig (Ref: [https://evess.co/cdn/shop/files/Grey\\_Wig.jpg?v=1723640824](https://evess.co/cdn/shop/files/Grey_Wig.jpg?v=1723640824) - maybe just a gavel would be easier?)

ATTENDANT

First to land. First to charge.  
'Jumpers Law #6.

PANEL 8

MELIA

Come **on**.

ATTENDANT

I just tell it like it is.

## PAGE 5

### PANEL 1

Byron helicopters the cable in front of him. Attendant probably has an alarmed response to that. An exclamation mark above the head

BYRON

If I were **open** to bartering...

### PANEL 2

MELIA

Which you are.

BYRON

I **could** be convinced to give up...

...**my** spot.

### PANEL 3

Hold on Melia processing that she's going to have to bargain.

### PANEL 4

Melia looks frustrated, but resigned.

MELIA

What do you want.

Byron halts the cable with a snap in his hands

### PANEL 5

Byron's serious now, almost earnest.

BYRON

(Smaller, said quietly) An apology.

## PAGE 6

### PANEL 1

The two of them stare at one another.

### PANEL 2

Inset bottom right of panel

There's an involuntary twitch in Melia's eye.

SFX - Melia's eye:

TWITCH

### PANEL 3

MELIA

For what?

### PANEL 4

BYRON

Oh, I think you know.

MELIA

That was over **a year** ago!

### PANEL 5

BYRON

Funny thing about time. Sometimes it doesn't matter at all...

(pause)

Sometimes it matters **very much**.

### PANEL 6

Melia looks at her watch with concern.

BYRON

Sometimes it doesn't matter at all...

### PANEL 7

Inset panel: A visualisation of remaining flight time (2 hours, 13 minutes) and delivery deadline (2 hours, 25 minutes).

### PANEL 8

BYRON

Sometimes it matters **very much**.

MELIA

*\*Sigh\**

Fine. I'm s--

Byron shoots up a hand, index finger raised in interruption

BYRON

Hold on!

## PAGE 7

### PANEL 1

Byron stepping out of frame back to his 'Jumper, leaving a frustrated Melia behind.

BYRON  
Just a second.

### PANEL 2

MELIA  
Just a se-- **Hold on?!**  
(break)  
I've got places to be!

### PANEL 3

Byron's voice comes in from off frame. As Melia throws her hands up with clear impatience.

BYRON  
It's in here somewhere...---

### PANEL 4

MELIA  
Argh!

### PANEL 5

Inset images of him digging around inside the different compartments of his 'Jumper.

Turning over boxes

Pulling back covers

### PANEL 6

Opening compartments

BYRON  
(cont)  
---Aha!

### PANEL 7

Byron stands in front of Melia. Holding his camcorder up in front of him with a shit-eating grin.

PANEL 8

The exact same pose as the last frame. Only Byron holds the camcorder up a little higher.

PANEL 9

The exact same pose as the last frame.

MELIA`

You cannot be serious.

BYRON

Who'd believe me otherwise?

## **PAGE 8**

### PANEL 1

MELIA  
I'm not doing that.

### PANEL 2

Byron is already turning away from her, camcorder in hand.

BYRON  
Ok. Want to help me fill up?

### PANEL 3

Melia throws her arms up in frustration.

MELIA  
Oh *Rising Tides*, I--

### PANEL 4

We see Byron's face, eyes turned back towards Melia, looking smug because he knows he has her. Melia's voice comes from off panel.

MELIA  
--I am **sorry!**

### PANEL 5

Byron tastes sweet, sweet victory. Allows himself a tiny fist-pump while his back is turned on her.

### PANEL 6

Byron turns back to look at Melia. Her hands still up in the air, his still holding the camcorder.

BYRON  
I wasn't actually recording ye--

MELIA  
--I am going maim you.

### PANEL 7

BYRON  
Third time's a charm?

MELIA

**Attendant?**

PANEL 8

The barrister's wig is back over Attendant's head.

ATTENDANT

Bargain met.

PANEL 9

BYRON

You plug. I'll power.

## **PAGE 9**

### PANEL 1

Melia takes the hose from Byron.

SFX - Melia taking it from Byron:

GRAB

### PANEL 2

Melia flips open the energy port on her PJ.

SFX - port:

Tok

### PANEL 3

Melia's hands fit ATTENDANT's charger into the port

SFX:

Click

### PANEL 4

Byron types at Attendant's keyboard

SFX - typing

Tap tap

### PANEL 5

Attendant's eyes show lightning bolts as he powers up

SFX - ATTEBDANT charging:

hummm

### PANEL 6

The energy port on Melia's PJ lights up.

SFX- charging at the port:

thumm

### PANEL 7

A contented scene as the two pilots wait together. Byron leans against the wall next to the notice board while Melia examines the vending machine. Attendant stands humming in the background. There's a bin next to the vending machines.

SFX - ATTENDANT CHARGING (really small)

Hummmmmmm

## PAGE 10

### PANEL 1

Melia's tapping her choice into the vending machine. Facing away from Byron. Byron's looking away from Melia when he speaks, it's easier that way.

BYRON  
I **was** hurt, you know?

MELIA  
Hmm?

BYRON  
By what you said.

### PANEL 2

Melia bending down to get her snack. Maybe an inset showing the drink she's chosen? 'BZZZard: sleep when you're dead'.

MELIA  
That was the point, at the time.

### PANEL 3

Melia cracks open the can of bZZZard.

SFX - opening can

Kssk

### PANEL 4

BYRON  
Buying the deed. Taking your slot. I know people don't approve.

Melia gives Byron a 'you think' kind of look. It's wry, not vicious. As he talks in the next three panels she should just be necking the can to finish it. A fun, slightly silly juxtaposition to Byron's openness.

### PANEL 5

MELIA  
*Understatement.*

### PANEL 6

Byron's turned his attention to a carved plane someone's left on the shelf of the notice board behind him.

BYRON

I just wanted this so **much**.

PANEL 7

He picks it up and examines it with a small smile on his face.

BYRON

I'd already spent so long learning how to fix them. To wait the same again to fly--

PANEL 8

He holds the plane up in front of him, from his POV it'll be flying in the sky.

BYRON

--I didn't want to.

## PAGE 11

### PANEL 1

Melia's stood in front of the bulletin board with Byron as well now. An opportunity to show more of the notices (See: Setting Notes)

Put some space between Melia's two bits here, she's taking her time over what she's saying.

MELIA

None of us **want** to wait. But there's a reason we do.

MELIA

The system keeps things **fair**, Byron. Buying your way to the front... It upsets the **balance**. People don't forget that quickly.

BYRON

That they don't. It--

### PANEL 2

Byron looks very sad here. It's hard for him to be this vulnerable.

BYRON

--It's been a lonely time.

### PANEL 3

BYRON

You were right to call me a cheat. I'm sorry.

Melia looks surprised, but also pleased.

### PANEL 4

Melia's turn to look smug, but also softening.

MELIA

Is that camcorder still running?

BYRON

(sheepish)

It's been out of battery for weeks.

## PAGE 12

### PANEL 1

Melia throws her now empty can at Byron's head. It's playful though. Bops off his head with no damage.

### PANEL 2

BYRON  
Hah! Hey! **Ow!**

### PANEL 3

MELIA  
Oh, you're **fine**.

### PANEL 4

The can has landed at Melia's feet. She bends down to pick up the can from the ground.

MELIA  
What you did **was** wrong. But I got my wings soon enough after you.

### PANEL 5

I'll have a word with folk once this run's over. See if there are any crews needing a good wrench-slinger.

BYRON looks surprised.

### PANEL 6

Hold on Byron's surprised expression. Melia drops the can into the nearby bin.

### PANEL 7

Byron looks conflicted. He wants this, but also doesn't want her to feel like it was the reason for his openness.

BYRON  
That wasn't why I apologised.

### PANEL 8

Smiling, understanding. Walking past Byron back towards the planes.

MELIA

I know.

You've done your time. Being a Jumper's  
lonely enough as it is.

Come on, I'm almost charged.

## PAGE 13

### PANEL 1

They stand in comfortable silence by Melia's plane, Byron smiling, looking down at the toy plane. Melia, leaning on her wing, looking up at the sky. Attendant continues to hum away.

SFX - Attendant

Humm

### PANEL 2

Attendant's eyes light up as the charge completes

SFX - Attendant:  
booOOP!

### PANEL 3

Inset: Power gauge shows as full.

SFX - Full Power:

Ding!

### PANEL 4

Melia climbing back into her cockpit. Pulling her goggles back down over her face. They're still covered in dust.

MELIA  
I might **actually** make it in time.

### PANEL 5

BYRON  
First time for everything.

### PANEL 6

BYRON  
Hey, wait a second.  
SFX - Byron's hand on the wing:  
Tunk

PANEL 7

Byron jumps up and uses his jumper's scarf to wipe her goggles for her.

There we go.

SFX - cleaning the glasses

shf shf

PANEL 8

Melia's blush is almost hidden by her pilot's scarf. Almost.

Byron hops down from the plane. Back turned to her, we see he's a little surprised by his boldness. Blushing too.

BYRON

Clear skies, Jumper.

PANEL 9

Melia's jumper speeds away, leaving Byron and the Attendant clothes whipping in her dust. Attendant is lost in the dust except for a little coughing emoji holo.

SFX - Melia's plane taking off

SHOOOOM

A speech bubble is left in Melia's wake

MELIA

...Clear skies.

Byron takes a photograph as he watches her go.

SFX - Byron taking a picture

Click!

PANEL 10

Attendant is revealed out of the swirling dust.

ATTENDANT

You're late for **your** drop, aren't you?

BRYON

**So** late.

END

THIS IS RESERVED FOR A THANK YOU PAGE