

MIDNIGHT BURGER

Chapter 32: The Pyrophyte

By

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Midnight Burger

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SPACETIME RUSHES BY. CLEMENTINE AND AVA ARE IN THE PARKING LOT.

CLEMENTINE

... There was a brief moment when I knew everything. Every bit of information that could be known was inside me for less than a second... I didn't have a body or... I just existed somehow... But I had this faint memory of who I was. I didn't know my name or my history but I had this image, this... ghost... and then I realized I could move things. I could draw things together... I created an idea of me, of an identity, and I kept drawing things toward it. Gasses and planets and stars were drawn towards this idea of me. It happened faster and faster. With every particle I brought towards me I got more and more powerful... I began to have a center. I began to have a place to put myself. I began to see myself... I was a dark heart floating in the stars. I absorbed matter and light and energy. I was the deepest darkness, filled with complexity, surrounded by a halo of light... nothing could escape me... And then I could look down to see my hand, and I realized I had eyes, my bare feet floated above a galaxy... I suddenly existed. I was floating in space... Then something started pulling me, and I was falling. The faster I fell the more human I felt... And then I was in the parking lot of a motel... That's how it started. I don't know what all that means.

AVA

I don't either, but it still explains a lot.

CLEMENTINE

It does?

AVA

Any universe is mostly a void but it's still an ecosystem in a way. It ebbs and flows. It even has weather to a certain extent. A supernova billions of miles away can make clouds appear on Earth. The distance between things may be vast, but they still effect each other like an ecosystem. And like any ecosystem, it has its... megafauna.

CLEMENTINE

Megafauna?

AVA

Gloria's first day here we encountered something called a Transdimensional Haboob. Basically a sentient weather system that can cross dimensional barriers. Leif can tell you about something called The Galaxy Brain, a remnant of an organism that was the size of a planetoid. No ecosystem would be complete without its lumbering giants. Added to the list now is Clementine: the human that somehow became a Black Hole that somehow became human.

CLEMENTINE

I'm... a black hole?

AVA

Not in the classic sense. You weren't a star that exploded. But the idea of drawing everything into you, becoming more powerful with every particle... you're a walking, talking black hole.

CLEMENTINE

How is that possible? A black hole isn't a person.

AVA

Well, we've never had a conversation with one, have we? There's a theory that consciousness is related to complexity. I'm conscious because inside my skull there is the very complex system of my brain. And if consciousness arises from complexity, there's nothing more complex than the inside of a black hole. So who knows? Maybe all those dark hearts out there, sucking in all the light, maybe they are conscious like you and me.

CLEMENTINE

... These megafauna you're talking about. Is that what just tried to kill me?

AVA

Yes, that's another. Chuck, the four dimensional entity. Sorry about that. We thought he was a friend.

CLEMENTINE

Is he still trying to kill me?

AVA

I don't know.

CLEMENTINE

... Should he have?

AVA

... No.

CLEMENTINE

Are you sure?... I'm not... I destroyed my planet, Ava.

AVA

You were doing what everyone does. You were trying to do what you thought was right using the information and power that you have. You didn't know what you were doing. Could you have listened to us a little better? Yes. But who listens... I don't.

CLEMENTINE

... I want it to stop.

AVA HITS CLEMENTINE IN THE ARM.

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

Ow!

AVA

Did that hurt?

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

AVA

You withstood a blast from a particle cannon a few days ago, now it hurts when I hit you in the arm. In a few hours you'll probably have a bruise. If you stop and listen for a second you'll probably feel your heart beating... Welcome to the human race. It sucks.

CLEMENTINE

You kind of talk about really big mysteries like they're no big deal.

AVA

It's strange, what my curiosity latches onto. There are a lot of mysteries out there. Too many to count. For some reason I'm able to ignore most of them. For me it's always been about one big mystery. A mystery that hovers over all the other mysteries. The big picture that's even bigger than the big picture. That's what I've always focused on. I have no idea how you were a disembodied consciousness that formed a black hole around it then transformed yourself into a space goddess, but it sounds like that's what happened.

CLEMENTINE

I don't understand how this happened to me. Why me?

AVA

That's the really confusing part. You were a person, and then something happened to you, and then you were just... a cluster of awareness, and then you were an inescapable center of gravity and then you were... this. Something's missing from the equation and I don't know what it is. The type of energy that you emit and that created you, it's damage. Damage to the fabric of space/time. A gravity wave can cause it, but with all the damage that we've been seeing out there, something really big would have had to happen. Bigger than any of those black holes or megafauna.

CLEMENTINE

What's bigger than a black hole?

AVA

Nothing... Nothing is...

CLEMENTINE

What?

AVA

Shit...

CLEMENTINE

What?... What's going on in your head right now?

AVA

... A 1972 Buick Skylark floating in space.

CLEMENTINE

Uh...

AVA

I have to go.

DOOR CHIME.

TERRIC

Hello there doctor, I-

AVA

Yeah, hi.

TERRIC

... Okay... What's going on with her?

CLEMENTINE

I don't know.

TERRIC

...

CLEMENTINE

...

TERRIC

... How are you?

CLEMENTINE

Flesh and blood again.

TERRIC

What were you before?

CLEMENTINE

I have no idea.

TERRIC

How does it feel?

CLEMENTINE

It hurts.

TERRIC

...

CLEMENTINE

... Terric, I'm so-

TERRIC

I was a clown for a while.

CLEMENTINE

... You... what?

TERRIC

A clown.

CLEMENTINE

... Okay.

TERRIC

There was this whole trend in the 17th century in France. Acting companies would pack up a wagon and go from village to village. I would come out before the show and warm up the crowd.

CLEMENTINE

... As a clown.

TERRIC

I didn't have a red nose or anything. I'd do some of my act for you, but it's in French.

CLEMENTINE

Terric-

TERRIC

They called me Monsieur Impertinent... Mr. Saucy.

CLEMENTINE

You're trying to make me laugh.

TERRIC

Of course I am, I'm a clown.

CLEMENTINE

It's been seven hundred years and you're still trying to take care of me. You shouldn't be doing that.

TERRIC

... We've both been through a lot. To hear them tell it, you got the worst of it.

CLEMENTINE

Terric, the difference is that I did this to you. You didn't do this to me. The amount... the amount of pain I've caused and then I see you... I did it to you too. I fantasized that you were untouched by it all, that once upon a time, for a minute, I did something good and normal and real. I met a man and I fell in love... but turns out I ruined that too. You shouldn't have had this life Terric. You should've had a life with your weird books in that city you loved... you should've found someone who could love you the way you deserved to be loved, you should've had a good life. You should've had a pretty wife who's nuts about you, you should've had children.

TERRIC

Oh, I've had many children.

CLEMENTINE

... What?

TERRIC

What?

CLEMENTINE

You... what?

TERRIC

What?

CLEMENTINE

...

TERRIC

It was seven hundred years.

CLEMENTINE

And you...

TERRIC

It was seven hundred years did you expect me to wait for you?

CLEMENTINE

I mean... kind of.

TERRIC

Well, I didn't. Did you wait for me?

CLEMENTINE

I was busy.

TERRIC

Destroying the universe, I heard.

CLEMENTINE

I...

TERRIC

I think you need to admit that you imagined me as this lonely soul out there, who could never love again and was constantly longing for your return.

CLEMENTINE

... Is that too much to ask?

TERRIC

Well, let's put it this way: yes.

CLEMENTINE

... Who was she?

TERRIC

Which one?

CLEMENTINE

Which one?!

TERRIC

It was seven hundred years.

CLEMENTINE

How many women did you marry, Terric?!

TERRIC

Just two, I wasn't Gengis Khan or something.

CLEMENTINE

Did they know about each other?

TERRIC

I'm also not a Mormon, they were two hundred years apart.

CLEMENTINE

... Was one of them French?

TERRIC

Of course one of them was French.

CLEMENTINE

Goddamn it.

TERRIC

Angélique.

CLEMENTINE

Oh, barf.

TERRIC

What?

CLEMENTINE

Angélique...

TERRIC

... There's been no one else?

CLEMENTINE

... There was a guy in India one time.

TERRIC

Aha.

CLEMENTINE

He became a Buddhist and it got weird.

TERRIC

Yes, I'm sure it was the Buddhism that made it weird and not you being an out of control space demon.

CLEMENTINE

Oh, shut up, you fucking clown... I thought you came out here to make me feel better.

TERRIC

You told me not to do that... What I'm trying to say is, you seem to see me as one of your victims. I don't feel like a victim. My life has been a life. It was full of a lot of things. Some of them very bad. Some of them very good. Like anyone's life, really.

CLEMENTINE

... You should be more angry with me.

TERRIC

My love, we are in a parking lot of a diner that is currently either folding space or creating a warp bubble, I'm not sure, I only have a Masters in physics. We apparently just prevented an entire universe from filling up with Hyundai Sonatas. I'm seven hundred years old, you are a celestial super-being who was nearly murdered right in front of me by another celestial super-being. Who has time for anger?

CLEMENTINE

... Call me "my love" again.

WE HEAR AVA WRITING FURIOUSLY IN HER NOTEBOOK.

GLORIA

So, Ava's back on her bullshit, then?

CASPAR

She has gone to the math place.

GLORIA

Leif, what is she writing?

LEIF

I'm not getting close to her I don't want to lose a finger.

GLORIA

Are those My Little Ponies on her pencils?

CASPAR

Hey, she's using them.

LEIF

We're coming in for a landing any time now. What's our game plan, here?

GLORIA

Effie, any feelings about where we're going?

EFFIE

I can't tell you much, Gloria. All I can tell you is we're headed into darkness.

GLORIA

Fun.

LEIF

That doesn't really track.

CASPAR

What do you mean?

LEIF

We've been to Clementine's world. We served Brunch there for weeks. It was a wreck, for sure, but I don't know if "darkness" is the word I would use.

CASPAR

Maybe it's a metaphorical darkness, like the dark ages.

EFFIE

I ain't speaking in metaphors, I'm talking about pitch black darkness, y'all.

ZEBULON

When we spoke, she told me that the stars had all been extinguished. Can such a thing occur?

LEIF

There's the heat death of the universe. Eventually every universe gets to a state where all the energy has dissipated and there are no more stars, but there's not supposed to be anyone alive at that point. At least I don't think so, that's Ava's department.

CASPAR

Whatever we're looking at, we should adjust our expectations. I know we like to swoop in wearing red capes, but we're not going to be able to fix a dead universe in 12 hours. It's good that Clementine's going home, but that may only be good news for us, not her. We may be dropping her off in a hellscape. How do we feel about that?

ZEBULON

You're being a wet blanket, that's how I feel about it.

CASPAR

Oh, c'mon.

EFFIE

Caspar, why don't you leave the prophecies to me?

CASPAR

Your prophecy was one word: darkness. What are we supposed to do with that?

ZEBULON

Perhaps not be a wet blanket?

CASPAR

I'm sorry maybe it's one of those times where
darkness is good news. Remember all those times?

ZEBULON

The Bible began with darkness.

EFFIE

Thank you, dear.

CASPAR

The bible began with a sheep herder eating the
wrong mushrooms about seven thousand years ago and
writing some of his ideas down, let's be real-

EFFIE

I am going to climb right out of this radio-

CASPAR

-Oh I'd love to see you try-

GLORIA

Look, here's the plan. We're going to set down in
Clementine's home and we're going to swing for the
fences, okay? I don't know how much we can help but
we're going to help as much as we can and Caspar is
going to take his pessimism and shove it somewhere.

CASPAR

I've got a commitment to the truth is all.

ZEBULON

You've a commitment to wet-blanketry is what you've
got.

CASPAR

Zebulon.

GLORIA

Do we think Clementine's in any state to start
talking?

LEIF

Maybe. I saw them laugh out there.

GLORIA

Really? Well, let's join the party.

DOOR CHIME. THEY ALL MOVE OUT INTO THE PARKING LOT.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Hey kids.

TERRIC

Hey there.

GLORIA

How are you feeling, Clementine?

CLEMENTINE

It's been a while since I was human. I'm having a hard time standing up.

GLORIA

We're about to touch down. Terric, can you help her out?

TERRIC

Yeah.

CLEMENTINE

Ow. Ow ow ow. Okay. Standing is harder than I remember.

GLORIA

We've been talking. By all accounts we're headed into some pretty rough territory.

CLEMENTINE

Yeah.

GLORIA

Can you give us some idea of where we're headed?

CLEMENTINE

It's probably best if you just see it.

GLORIA

Okay.

CLEMENTINE

I apologize in advance.

GLORIA

Why?

CLEMENTINE

Because you're going to want to save them all, like I did.

GLORIA

You never know. Maybe we'll be able to help.

CLEMENTINE

I don't think you understand where we're headed.

THERE IS A CRACK AND THE DINER SETS DOWN. THEY ARE INSIDE A MASSIVE SPACE SHIP. THE CRACK OF THEIR ARRIVAL ECHOES DOWN ITS HULL AND THE SHIP OCCASIONALLY GROANS LIKE THE PLANKS OF AN OLD GALLEON.

LEIF

Whoa.

CASPAR

This isn't Earth.

GLORIA

No, it's not. Clementine this isn't Earth.

CLEMENTINE

I wasn't born on Earth. None of us were.

TERRIC

Oh, my God.

EFFIE

Lord, I've never seen anything so big.

ZEBULON

This is a vessel?

CLEMENTINE

Welcome to The Pyrophyte.

GLORIA

You lived here?

CLEMENTINE

My whole life.

LEIF

How many people are here, Clementine?

CLEMENTINE

Around twenty-seven thousand.

GLORIA

What?

LEIF

Fuck, it's a generation ship.

CLEMENTINE

It was supposed to be. But my grandmother boarded this ship when she was two years old. My mother was supposed to be the first generation to set foot on a new world... Didn't work out that way. I'm the third generation to live here.

(MORE)

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

Right before Earth collapsed... Right before I collapsed Earth, a small group climbed aboard this thing.

LEIF

Holy shit.

GLORIA

How big is this thing?

CLEMENTINE

Three kilometers.

LEIF

Holy shit. What's the fuel source?

CLEMENTINE

I don't know.

CASPAR

Um... Is that a T.G.I. Friday's across the way?

CLEMENTINE

Oh. Yeah. That's kind of funny. Looks like you landed in Nostalgia Pavilion. Nobody comes up here anymore. They set up a little mall area on this deck to remind people what it was like on Earth. It wasn't really designed to last for three generations, it's all run down now.

GLORIA

It had to be a fucking Friday's, huh?

ZEBULON

This is the only world you've ever known?

CLEMENTINE

Until I was transformed into... whatever it was, this was the only place I'd ever been.

TERRIC

That's why you couldn't look at the sky when I met you.

CLEMENTINE

I'd lived my whole life inside this place. Can you imagine having a roof over your head your whole life and then suddenly seeing the sky?

EFFIE

Clementine, this vessel of yours. It is not underway.

LEIF

No, it isn't.

CLEMENTINE

No... It isn't.

CASPAR

You're just... floating in space?

GLORIA

What happened?

CLEMENTINE

The day it hit us, I was in my mother's womb. It made her go into labor early, apparently.

GLORIA

What hit you?

CLEMENTINE

We don't know. It wiped out the historical archives. Most of the operating systems. They managed to power up the engines enough to keep the lights on but...

LEIF

Wait. This happened when you were born?

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

LEIF

You've lived your entire life on a derelict space ship.

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

GLORIA

How are you still alive?

CLEMENTINE

Luck. The ship was built to last for decades but it wasn't meant to last this long. My entire childhood was filled with emergencies. An alarm would go off and my mom would pick me up and carry me to an escape pod. She would strap me in, kiss me on the head and then we would wait... And wait... Eventually they would patch something up and the danger would pass. We all got used to it. It just became part of life. We managed to stay hopeful somehow. We relied on each other. But then, when my mother died, a few days later the stars went out. That's when most of us gave up hope entirely.

LEIF

Right, then there's that. Clementine, what do you mean the stars went out? Can you get me to an observation deck or something? I need to see what you're talking about.

CLEMENTINE

Leif. You're on an observation deck right now. Look up. This domed ceiling. It's all glass. You should be seeing the stars right now.

LEIF

Fuck.

CASPAR

There's nothing there.

TERRIC

How did it happen?

CLEMENTINE

I don't know. We were having a memorial service for her and then I looked up and... it's like the stars were being devoured. Darkness moved across the sky and they were gone.

GLORIA

Leif?

LEIF

No idea.

ZEBULON

Clementine, when you came to us on our farm. How did you become that person?

CLEMENTINE

I don't know that either. After the funeral we had all spent a year in the darkness. Finding the strength to get out of bed was hard enough, but everyone on the ship had lost all hope and you could feel it. It was like we were all walking through tar... I was in my quarters, we were coming up on her birthday and I just... I started screaming... I screamed so loud I thought I would completely destroy myself... I guess I did. That's the last thing I remember.

EFFIE

This is an unholy place, Gloria.

GLORIA

No kidding.

CLEMENTINE

The people mover is right over there. Come on, I'll show you where I live. Terric, can you help me?

TERRIC

Yeah.

GLORIA

Just one second, okay... Huddle up.

CASPAR

This is some dark shit, y'all.

EFFIE

If only someone could have predicted it.

CASPAR

Okay.

ZEBULON

Gloria, there are thousands of souls aboard this contraption, we must do something for them.

CASPAR

It's not like we can get out and start rowing.

GLORIA

I don't even want to talk about what's impossible and what isn't. Let's just focus on getting information, okay? I'm going to go with Terric and Clementine - I'll take the Mucklewains. Caspar stay here with Ava until she decides to come up for air. Leif?

LEIF

Yeah?

GLORIA

Break into some places, try and figure some shit out.

LEIF

Okay. Before we get going, everyone put one of these in your ear.

CASPAR

We're doing earpieces now?

LEIF

This is officially an op now. Put it in your ear.

CASPAR

I know the drill.

LEIF

Take one for Ava.

GLORIA

Like, I shove it in my ear?

LEIF

Yeah.

GLORIA

Okay.

LEIF

Talk naturally and we should all hear each other.

GLORIA

Okay. Okay, I know we're in a dark place right now but I feel pretty cool with this thing in my ear.

CASPAR

Confirmed, we are cooler now.

GLORIA

Good luck everyone.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A MOTORIZED TRAM.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Okay, I'm having a hard time getting a sense of this place. If anyone sees anything that stands out, let me know.

GLORIA

We're on some sort of tram situation. Pretty run down. Giving me flashbacks to the Phoenix public transportation system.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

Anybody seeing any people? It feels pretty abandoned up here.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

It's a ghost town where I am as well. Which is concerning because it looks like I'm headed for the bridge.

GLORIA

I'm seeing people... It's weird. They just seem to be wandering around. They all seem kind of aimless.

CLEMENTINE

We were having a hard time finding things for everyone to do. With the ship just drifting, there was a lot less to do unless you were in an Ag Dome or in maintenance.

GLORIA

What's an Ag Dome?

CLEMENTINE

It's where I work.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

The infrastructure of this thing is chaotic. It's half NASA, some Russian stuff, ESA, then some stuff I don't recognize. It's a three kilometer Frankenstein.

GLORIA

Clementine, who built this thing?

CLEMENTINE

I don't know.

GLORIA

How do you not know?

CLEMENTINE

Like I said, the day I was born the ship was hit by something. Apparently we had a massive archive of Earth knowledge. We lost all of it. We've tried to hang on to what we remember, but, without a definitive record people started arguing over what was true and what wasn't. With no one agreeing, we couldn't teach each other about our history. It was hard enough with my mother's generation, learning about a planet that no one would ever see again.

GLORIA

People can't have already forgotten everything.

CLEMENTINE

It's not that they've forgotten it's... you know what, why don't I show you? Let's get off here.

THE TRAM COMES TO A STOP AND THEY GET OFF. WE HEAR LEIF, TRYING TO OPEN A BULKHEAD DOOR.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

What the hell's going on over there, Leif?

LEIF

I found the bridge. I'm breaking in.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
You can just break in?

LEIF

Honestly I could take this entire ship apart with a flathead screwdriver and a butter knife so yeah, I'm breaking in.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
Where's the crew?

LEIF

I don't think there is one anymore.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
How is that possible?

LEIF

I imagine everything's running out of engineering at this point like you would with a space station. If the ship can't fly it doesn't really need someone to steer it. If Clementine's right, this thing has been derelict for decades. We're basically sitting in an idling car with the AC on.

THE DOOR GIVES WAY AND SLIDES OPEN.

LEIF (CONT'D)

There we go. I'm on the bridge.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
How's it look?

LEIF

It's abandoned. I could sure use another brain on this. How's Ava doing?

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
She's still got her head in the sand. No offense taken, by the way.

LEIF

Sorry. I'm sure your experience working for the Department of Motor Vehicles will come in handy someday, Pal.

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
That's going to be a great day.

LEIF
... Shit.

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
What?

LEIF
I found the Captain.

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
Uh oh.

LEIF
He is a skeleton.

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
Shit.

LEIF
Yeah.

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
He's just a skeleton clutching the helm of the ship
like in the Pirates of the Caribbean ride?

LEIF
Pretty much... Captain... Alden Dale Dowlearn,
looks like.

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
That's pretty grim.

LEIF
Yeah. Although, honestly this is any Captains
dream. He never abandoned his post. Respect.

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
Now what do we do?

LEIF
I'm going to shake the dust off. Try and get this
place powered up. It looks like he was keeping a
hard copy Captain's Log, I'm going check that out.
Let me know as soon as Ava's back.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
I will.

WE HEAR A RESTLESS CLASSROOM OF 6TH GRADERS.

OLIVIA

Okay, everyone calm down. Let's try and get some work done, okay?

GLORIA

What's this?

CLEMENTINE

My old classroom.

TERRIC

It looks like a storage room.

CLEMENTINE

We would use whatever space we could get our hands on. The kids needed something to do, but we didn't have any books to teach from so volunteer teachers would show up and just kind of wing it.

OLIVIA

Today we're going to learn about someone named Marie Antionette. On Earth, for a long time everything was ruled by terrible people called Kings and Queens. One of the worst of them was a queen named Marie Antionette.

OLIVIA WRITES ON A CHALK BOARD.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

While her subjects were starving and poor, Marie Antionette wore expensive dresses and would go to lavish parties. And when she was told that everyone outside the castle was starving she simply said, "Let them eat cake."

OLIVIA WRITES OUT "LET THEM EAT CAKE" ON THE CHALK BOARD.

GLORIA

I feel like she's missing some salient details from this story.

TERRIC

One or two.

OLIVIA

Luckily for her subjects, they were in the middle of the Age of Enlightenment, a period of time that was making lots of people a lot smarter, and finally they got so smart, that they were able to revolt against the evil Marie Antionette and cut off her head!

TERRIC

Jesus Christ, stop.

CLEMENTINE

Terric.

OLIVIA

... I'm sorry, can I help you?

TERRIC

Did I say that out loud?

CLEMENTINE

You did.

TERRIC

Sorry... I didn't mean to interrupt, but I had to interrupt because... because everything you're saying is wrong.

OLIVIA

And who are you?

TERRIC

I'm Terric... from the history department?

OLIVIA

The what?

CLEMENTINE

Hi, Ms. Johnson.

OLIVIA

... Miranda?

CLEMENTINE

How are you?

TERRIC

Miranda?

CLEMENTINE

Y'all, this is Olivia Johnson, my old teacher.

OLIVIA

I haven't seen you in ages, look at you. Everyone, this is Miranda, one of my very first students.

CLEMENTINE

Hey, kids.

OLIVIA

Who are your friends?

CLEMENTINE

Um... so they work on the historical archives deck.

OLIVIA

I didn't know we still had people working there, the archives were all destroyed.

CLEMENTINE

Yes... Or so we thought. They just recently were able to recover some files on... on Marie Antionette and Terric here has come down to tell you about her, right Terric?

TERRIC

Yes, right. That's why I'm here.

OLIVIA

That's so wonderful. Please, tell us what you know, Terric.

CLEMENTINE

Go warm up the crowd, Mr. Saucy.

TERRIC

Okay... Okay, hello, children... Marie Antionette... She was a queen, that's true. She was very young. Not much older than you kids are. She became queen and it instantly became her job to wear lavish dresses and go to parties and not much else. She was constantly criticized from both ends. When she went to parties she was called out of touch with her people, and when she didn't go to parties she was called a disgrace. You see, Marie Antionette had already committed the biggest crime in the mind of any Frenchman: she wasn't French. She was from Austria. Even if she somehow did everything right, she would still be considered a foreigner. She never said "let them eat cake" and she wasn't evil. She was just a girl. She did what was expected of her, her whole life and it was never enough for anyone. And then when the revolution came, she was dragged through the street, her head shaved, dressed in rags.

(MORE)

TERRIC (CONT'D)

She was... "Pardon me, sir. I didn't mean it."
Those were her last words.

OLIVIA

Oh, my.

TERRIC

There was this strange thing that happened on Earth. We took people and we made them symbols of a problem. That's a natural thing, human beings think symbolically. But we had a tendency to think that when we got rid of the symbol, we got rid of the problem. Marie Antionette and others like her were killed in the revolution. The people said they no longer wanted to live under an iron fist. But those same people found themselves, just a few years later, in a military dictatorship. They got rid of the people. Maybe not the problem... I'm sorry, how old are they?

OLIVIA

About ten years old.

TERRIC

Ah. Okay. I just said a bunch of things you didn't understand.

THE KIDS LAUGH.

TERRIC (CONT'D)

I'll just say this about Marie Antionette. She wasn't evil. She was just a kid. A kid who didn't know what she was doing.

OLIVIA

Okay, let's all thank Terric from the Historical Archives deck.

THE KIDS APPLAUD.

CLEMENTINE

(To Gloria.)

Remember when we both met Abraham Lincoln? Before I met him, I was taught that he was a giant.

GLORIA

A giant?

CLEMENTINE

A giant who roamed from town to town freeing slaves. I was taught that by a teacher.

(MORE)

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

I was also taught that Nelson Mandela was the ruler of Africa and that Middle East conflicts happened because it was so hot there... There are so many different ways that we're lost out here, Gloria.

GLORIA

Goddamnit, Clementine.

EFFIE

Gloria, a word?

GLORIA

Yeah?

ZEBULON

There are children here, Gloria.

GLORIA

I can see.

EFFIE

I don't intend to meet these people and then vanish from their lives without offering help.

GLORIA

I know.

OLIVIA

And Miranda, who is this?

GLORIA

Oh, Hi. I'm Gloria.

CLEMENTINE

Gloria also works on the Historical Archives deck. She just uncovered some great information on... restaurants.

OLIVIA

Oh really? That's very interesting. Can you share what you've found with the class?

GLORIA

Uh. Sure. Sure, why not?

OLIVIA

It'll be such a treat for them.

GLORIA

It really will. Give me just one second, okay?

OLIVIA

Of course.

GLORIA
Caspar? Leif?

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
What's up.

CASPAR
(In earpiece.)
Yo.

GLORIA
What's happening?

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
I've reached the bridge.

GLORIA
What can you tell me?

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
This ship is completely fucked.

GLORIA
Oh, God.

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Gloria, I'm not being hyperbolic. We are literally sitting in a death trap. They have been two steps away from total disaster for I don't know how long. It's bad.

GLORIA
How have they lasted this long without dying?

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
It's hard to say but I think it comes down to the power source. The systems up here are useless, so I can't tell you what the power source for this place is but it's surprisingly consistent. It's kept the lights on for years.

GLORIA
Speaking of lights, where did all the stars go?

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
I can't answer that until I can do some kind of scan. Working on that now.

GLORIA

Hurry. We need options.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
I'm on it.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
Gloria, why do I feel like you're drifting away from the "doing what we can and then leaving" approach?

GLORIA

... We need to save everyone on board.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
Gloria, goddamn it.

GLORIA

That's the only way this can go.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
That's twenty-seven thousand people, Gloria.

GLORIA

I know.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
What happened to adjusting our expectations?

GLORIA

That was your thing, not mine.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
Why is it my job to be the dickhead in these situations?

GLORIA

It's not, Caspar, it just happens that way.

EFFIE

Caspar, I am in no mood.

ZEBULON

Surely there's something that can be done.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
There's not going to be a solution just because
we're going to feel terrible if there isn't one.

EFFIE

Caspar, you are going to adjust your negativity
right now.

CASPAR

Why, so we can all be heartbroken at the end of the
day? We're a handful of people and we have eleven
and a half hours.

EFFIE

Well how about we all just lay down and die, then?

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
What's your bright idea, Effie? What are we going
to do?

GLORIA

What if we put them in the deep freeze?

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
Look, that's a novel solution but first of all,
you're telling me that you're going to convince
twenty seven thousand people you've never met to
line up and march into the icy world of the deep
freeze? Even if you could convince them to do that,
it's going to take more than eleven hours for
twenty seven thousand people to line up single
file, have you ever stood in a voting line? And
THEN, what are we going to feed them? We'll never
have enough food to feed them and the deep freeze
is a healthy biome but do you think it can
withstand a sudden influx of twenty seven thousand
motherfuckers?

GLORIA

Caspar, I hear you and I hate it.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
That is, apparently, my job.

GLORIA

... Then Leif has to fix the ship.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
What?

EFFIE

You heard her.

GLORIA

You need to fix this ship, that's the only way to help these people.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Gloria, this ship is a three-kilometer long piece of used chewing gum.

GLORIA

Well you need to figure something out. This is the only way, Leif.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Fuuuuuuuuuck.

GLORIA

Caspar, you need to get Ava to snap out of it.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

Why do I have to do that, why is that my job?

GLORIA

God made you impervious to her insults for a reason, Caspar.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

That's not true at all, I'm very pervious to her insults.

GLORIA

Maybe, but you keep coming back for more, don't 'cha, cowboy? Get to work, both of you.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

What are you going to do?

GLORIA

I am going to go teach a bunch of sixth graders about restaurant management, it's very important.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

What?

EFFIE

I believe she said get to work!

DOOR CHIME.

CASPAR

Okay, look, I don't like it but apparently my job is the official Ava annoyer, so I'm here to say that it's time to clock in because we've got to save a ship full of twenty seven thousand people. All hands on deck okay?... Ava?... Ava what's wrong?... Are you... Ava, what is it?

AVA

Let's go get drunk at T.G.I. Friday's.

AVA WALKS OUT. DOOR CHIME.

CASPAR

O... kay.

ON THE BRIDGE. LEIF IS PACING.

LEIF

Saving the ship... Saving the ship... What do I have to save the ship? What have I got?... Stable power source... Stable power source that I cannot interact with because there's no navigation system. Can I make a navigation system? Do I have the processing power? Yes. Do I have the time? No. There's no one to fly the ship so it would have to be full automation. Full automation to where? Not only is the ship at dead stick, it has no planned destination. Maybe they did at one point but who knows now? Even if it did the coordinates are wiped out with everything else. They've got nowhere to go and no way of getting there... What would the old man say?...

(Impersonating Even Older Leif.)

"No easy ways out of this one, kid. But you started climbing up the walls before you took a look around."

(Leif's voice.)

Right... The darkness... I need to have a look around.

CLEMENTINE'S GROUP IS BACK ON THE PEOPLE MOVER.

TERRIC

So, where were you all headed?

CLEMENTINE

I don't know. My mom didn't either. I think we may have left Earth without a destination. The ship is called The Pyrophyte. A pyrophyte is a plant that can only spread its seeds after a fire.

(MORE)

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

"Earth had become a Pyrophyte," she said. The ship was meant to be the seed. Turns out I was the fire.

TERRIC

Is that why you kept repeating that Borges line?
"It is the fire that consumes me, but I am the fire".

CLEMENTINE

I don't know. It was just something she taught me.
Who was Borges?

TERRIC

A writer from Argentina. He wrote a lot of very strange science fiction stories. I kind of feel like I'm in one of his stories right now, as a matter of fact.

CLEMENTINE

You definitely will after this next part.

TERRIC

What's the next part?

CLEMENTINE

Everyone get ready. We're about to cross into the agriculture section of the ship. It can be disorienting.

GLORIA

Disorienting how?

CLEMENTINE

Well, do you like the ground being under your feet?

GLORIA

What... Oh my God.

TERRIC

Jesus.

ZEBULON

Is this what it appears to be?

EFFIE

It's farmland and it's wrapped all around us.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Gloria, what are you seeing?

GLORIA

It's... okay we're in some sort of tram and it's traveling through the center section of the ship and there's... farmland. There's a bunch of huge domes and each dome has a farm in it. But they're wrapped around us. There's farmland above us, below us, to the sides... It's amazing.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
And they're all spinning, right?

GLORIA

Yeah, they're all rotating.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Damn, I can't believe someone actually built one of these.

GLORIA

What is it?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Centrifugal farmland. Agricultural domes spinning on a central access point in a massive ship. Another reason they've stayed alive this whole time, they've been growing their own food in the void of space.

GLORIA

What kind of ship did you say this was?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
A generation ship.

GLORIA

And these are bad?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Not bad just... insane. It's a ship built to last an entire generation so that by the time your children are old enough to take over the ship, you've arrived at your destination. Nobody is supposed to be out in the black that long. There's too many variables. But it sounds like they didn't have a choice.

ZEBULON

Clementine, when you told me you were a farmer...

CLEMENTINE

I wasn't kidding. We'll get off at the next stop,
I'll show you where I was born.

THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN TO THE ABANDONED T.G.I. FRIDAYS.

CASPAR

Hello?... Table for two?

AVA

Let's go to the bar.

CASPAR

Ava, I don't think this is a functioning
restaurant.

AVA

I mean, how much does it need to function?

CASPAR

I guess not much.

CASPAR SLOWLY WALKS THROUGH THE RESTAURANT.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Damn... RIP to all these items of flare... You know
I never understood this place. The walls would be
adorned with a catcher's mitt, an old trombone, and
a monopoly board. What was the theme exactly? It
always reminded me of one of those crabs that made
its shell out of random garbage it would pick up
along the way... Ava, there's nobody in here, why
are you sitting at the bar?

AVA

Because I want to sit at a bar right now, it's been
a while.

CASPAR

Okay... What's going on?

AVA

Get behind the bar, be the bartender.

CASPAR

There isn't any booze at this bar.

AVA

Get behind the bar!

CASPAR

Fine!

CASPAR GOES BEHIND THE BAR AND STARTS LOOKING THROUGH THE
EMPTY BOTTLES.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Good evening there, ma'am. Can I interest you in a tall glass of nothing?

AVA

There's got to be something back there.

CASPAR

Ava this place has been bobbing around like a cork for decades. Isn't the local T.G.I. Fridays the first place you would go if your ship lost power and you were careening into the void?

AVA

Yeah, I guess.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Caspar, I'm back at the diner, where are you?

CASPAR

We're at America's favorite restaurant T.G.I. Friday's, Leif. Come for the food, stay for the fun.

LEIF

Where's Ava?

CASPAR

She's right here.

LEIF

Could you get her to clock in, please?

CASPAR

Hang on. Excuse me, Dr. Maddox, you have a call.

AVA

Voicemail.

CASPAR

Ava.

AVA

What?

CASPAR

Everybody on this ship is going to fucking die, can you put this in your ear, please?

AVA
Fine... What is it, Leif?

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
How can I tell if we're at the heat death of the universe?

AVA
By asking me and then me telling you we're not at the heat death of the universe.

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
How do you know, there's no stars.

AVA
I'm skeptical that that's the case.

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
I'm back at the diner doing a scan, what would I look for if it we were at the heat death of the universe?

AVA
You would look for me holding a sign saying, "Hey dipshit, this is not the heat death of the universe."

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
I'm under a lot of stress over here!

AVA
Black holes, Leif. Look for black holes. After the heat death of the universe black holes will still be around. They have very different life cycles from the rest of things.

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Excellent. I'll report back.

AVA
Or don't?

A ROBOT BARTENDER SPRINGS TO LIFE FOR A BRIEF SECOND AND THEN DIES.

ROBOT BARTENDER
Welcome to TGI Fridays, would you like to try our nacho blastinator...

CASPAR
I'm assuming this is some sort of robot bartender.

AVA
That's true dedication. Even in death he's trying to upsell you some nachos.

CASPAR
Hang on...

CASPAR RUMMAGES AROUND IN SOME BOTTLES.

CASPAR (CONT'D)
I believe there is a half full bottle down here... of... Peppermint Schnapps.

AVA
Guh.

CASPAR
Yeesh.

AVA
Of all the things they could've had left.

CASPAR
Well, I think we know why this is all that's left. Who doesn't want to drink a liquified candy cane?

AVA
That's disappointing.

CASPAR
... Ava, what's going on?... Look, in the diner just now... it looked like you were crying, what's going on?

AVA
... I just need to sit here for a bit, okay?

CASPAR
... Okay.

LEIF BURSTS THROUGH THE DOOR OF THE TGI FRIDAYS.

LEIF
Jesus Christ look at this shit.

CASPAR
We're over here.

LEIF
Hey. Hey, Ava, I did a scan.

AVA
Can this meeting be an email?

LEIF
I'm trying to see if we're at the heat death of the universe, I scan our surroundings, I'm expecting a whole bunch of nothing, right?

AVA
Yes.

LEIF
Is that Schnapps?

CASPAR
Sadly.

LEIF
Hook me up.

CASPAR
Okay.

LEIF
So I do a scan and instead of giving me a whole bunch of nothing, it gives me a whole bunch of something.

AVA
What?

LEIF
It's the opposite of heat death. There's something everywhere – what's going on?

AVA
I don't know. You should probably go find out.

CASPAR
Can't you put on a diving bell and go out there?
Would that help?

LEIF
The last thing I'm trusting in this place is a vac suit.

LEIF DRINKS THE SCHNAPPS.

LEIF (CONT'D)
That's terrible... Cameras.

CASPAR
Cameras.

LEIF

There's got to be cameras on the hull somewhere, I need to get access.

CASPAR

Good idea.

AVA

Yes, you should do that.

LEIF

Here I go.

CASPAR

Au courage!

LEIF WALKS OUT. WE HEAR A DOOR SLIDE OPEN. WE HEAR AN AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM.

ZEBULON

My goodness, look at all this.

EFFIE

Last place you'd expect to find a farm.

CLEMENTINE

This is my dome. I spent most of my life here. Ours is a little different from the others. Most of the Ag domes are a monoculture. They'd grow corn, or grain, or rice. This is a colony dome. It was supposed to simulate what it would be like to land on a new planet. We're supposed to grow the crops that someone decided should be the first crops. There's grapes, tomatoes, soybeans, potatoes...

TERRIC

And beets.

CLEMENTINE

And beets. My mother said I was born in that patch of beets right over there. She said she went into labor as soon as the ship was disabled. She didn't have time to get to the med bay.

GLORIA

What happened to your Mother?

CLEMENTINE

Nothing special. The same thing that happens to everyone else. Humans weren't meant to be out here like this. I know that now. The average lifespan here is about fifty-five years old. Tissue damage, organ failure.

GLORIA

Jesus.

CLEMENTINE

I told you I wished you hadn't brought me here. Not because I shouldn't be here... I really do deserve to be here... But you didn't deserve to see it. When you leave you're going to feel terrible, like you could've done something. There's nothing to be done, Gloria.

GLORIA

We don't know that yet.

CLEMENTINE

You don't know that yet. I do. Take your time coming around to my side. And don't feel bad when you do... In a way, it's good to be home.

TERRIC

This whole place, you just take care of it yourself?

CLEMENTINE

There used to be more of us. Now it's just down to me and Brodie.

GLORIA

Who is Brodie?

WE HEAR THE HISS OF AN AIRLOCKED DOOR AND THEN THE DOOR SLIDING AWAY. BRODIE EMERGES WEARING A SPORE MASK.

BRODIE

(Speaking in a Scottish accent.)
I've said it before and I'll stand by it. There is never a sad day within the fruiting chamber, despite misfortunes without... Ah. Hello, all.

CLEMENTINE

Hi, Brodie. I brought some friends.

BRODIE

That I can see. Who might you be?

GLORIA

I'm Gloria, hi.

BRODIE

Pleasure.

TERRIC

Terric.

BRODIE

Hello to you, Terric. Miranda, I take it you've had second thoughts about today.

CLEMENTINE

About today?

BRODIE

Yesterday I had said that we should, despite all melancholy, have a celebration in honor of your mother's birthday. A birthday party. Perhaps a bit grim since she's passed but I continue to believe it may set us right. It's a good act, to remember those we've lost.

CLEMENTINE

We talked about this yesterday?

BRODIE

We did.

TERRIC

What is it?

CLEMENTINE

...I've been gone for a day.

BRODIE

And where do your friends hail from?

TERRIC

The historical archives deck, apparently.

BRODIE

I see. Can we still call it the historical archives deck when there's no history to be found within?

CLEMENTINE

They managed to uncover some records actually.

BRODIE

Is that the case? Anything useful in our time of need?

TERRIC

The seventeenth century.

GLORIA

And restaurants.

BRODIE

Ah. It's an odd pairing but anything is an improvement.

CLEMENTINE

They've never been to an Ag Dome before I thought I would show them around.

BRODIE

Welcome. And what is that odd contraption you've brought with you?

GLORIA

Oh. It's a... radio.

BRODIE

I see.

GLORIA

We put it together up on our deck. You, uh, you turn it on and it plays old radio shows from the 1920s.

BRODIE

Does it now?

ZEBULON

Ahem. Good evening to all who can hear my voice. I'm Zebulon Mucklewain here with my wife Effie.

EFFIE

Hi, y'all.

ZEBULON

We hope our message finds you well and all is right in your world. Let us begin tonight with bit of organ music, shall we? Here is Homer Rodeheaver with Mother's Prayers Have Followed me Home...

SONG: HOMER RODEHEAVER, MOTHER'S PRAYERS HAVE FOLLOWED ME HOME.

BRODIE

That's delightful.

GLORIA

Isn't it?

BRODIE

And it'll just go on like that?

GLORIA

Oh yes. There is definitely not an off switch.

CLEMENTINE

Brodie, I'm going to show Terric around, could you show Gloria the fruiting chamber?

BRODIE

Indeed.

GLORIA

What's the fruiting chamber?

BRODIE

It is a repository of the most fascinating creatures ever brought into existence.

GLORIA

Really?

BRODIE

May I show you the mushrooms?

GLORIA

Mushrooms? Hell yeah, you can show me the mushrooms.

BRODIE

Excellent. First let us fashion you with a spore mask. They do so love to get inside you, the devils.

GLORIA

Okay.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF LEIF WORKING UNDERNEATH THE NAVIGATION CONSOLE. HE SWITCHES BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN HIS VOICE AND EVEN OLDER LEIF'S.

LEIF

"The problem with space is the darkness. You can't see the violence. A lug nut gets up enough speed and it takes down a heavy cruiser. A place like this, no shielding systems. They should be dead." Yeah, yeah they should be. "I'm guessing if space deals out randomized danger it can also deal out randomized safety." Yeah, I guess it can, Old Man.

SOME MONITORS SPRING TO LIFE IN THE BRIDGE.

LEIF (CONT'D)

Okay, there we go. Nice. Monitors are up. Okay... let's see what we've got. We've got fore, we've got aft, long shot across the hull. Jesus this thing is huge. Okay, we've got, looks like, a couple of maintenance units outside. Would be great to get my hands on those. Christ, a communications laser? Sure, whatever... Whoa, look at that hull damage... Wait... "You seeing what I'm seeing, kid?"... Yeah, I'm seeing it. No time for that now, though... And on the outside, nothing but darkness.

(MORE)

LEIF (CONT'D)

What the fuck?... "Hang on, Buster. You're seeing darkness, but are you looking at the darkness?"... Goddamn... The Sheliak... Ava?

AVA

(In earpiece.)
What?

LEIF

It's not the heat death of the universe.

AVA

(In earpiece.)
Wow, I'm so surprised.

LEIF

It's the Sheliak.

AVA

(In earpiece.)
What?

LEIF

It's Barnard 68.

AVA

(In earpiece.)
Ohhhhh. Okay.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
What?

AVA

(In earpiece.)
They drifted into a dark nebula. It's a massive cloud of particulates that don't reflect light. If you're dumb enough it looks like the stars went out.

LEIF

Gloria, are you hearing this?

GLORIA

(In earpiece.)
Yeah, so they're in a big cloud?

LEIF

Not that big comparatively. About a quarter of a lightyear across.

GLORIA

(In earpiece.)
Is this good news or bad news?

LEIF

It's better than being at the end of the universe.

GLORIA

(In earpiece.)

Okay. Good. I'll call that good news. We need more good news now.

LEIF

I know.

GLORIA

(In earpiece.)

"You're not all going to die." We need that kind of good news.

LEIF

I'm doing everything I can here, I don't have anything to work with.

GLORIA

(In earpiece.)

I know you, Leif. You've always got something to work with.

LEIF

I really don't.

GLORIA

(In earpiece.)

Leif. Make a list of everything you have. Then use all that stuff to fix the problem.

LEIF

I'll do my best. How are things on your end?

GLORIA

(In earpiece.)

I'm going to go look at some mushrooms.

LEIF

What?

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

Leif, were you doing an Even Older Leif impression a second ago?

LEIF

Shut up, it helps me think!

WE HEAR THE FOOTSTEPS OF TERRIC AND CLEMENTINE WALKING THROUGH ROWS OF BEETS.

CLEMENTINE

When they first started this dome, someone was assigned to each crop, but over the years the numbers dwindled. This dome was all about what life would be like in our new home, but people were less and less concerned about that as the years went by. There used to be five test domes like this, we're the last one. As a little girl, my mother and I worked here.

TERRIC

A field of beets.

CLEMENTINE

Bull's Blood, golden beets, Chioggia, and baby beets.

TERRIC

This is why you asked me to bring you beets from the marketplace.

CLEMENTINE

Yes, I think so.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A CHICKEN.

TERRIC

You have a chicken.

CLEMENTINE

We do. Hey, Riot.

TERRIC

Riot? I realize this is technically a farm but... space chickens?

CLEMENTINE

There was a genetic archive for a while but it took a lot of energy to keep it running and we were desperate for energy. They thought a novel way to preserve some of the embryos was to just... grow them and set them loose in the ship.

TERRIC

So there's just chickens walking around in this massive space ship?

CLEMENTINE

Every dome has one. This is ours. Riot.

TERRIC

What else is roaming around? Are there water buffalo?

CLEMENTINE

Opossums.

TERRIC

What?

CLEMENTINE

For pest control. Somehow mice got onboard, and bugs. The opossums keep their numbers down.

TERRIC

You have opossums crawling through the rafters of your space ship?

CLEMENTINE

What can I say, they're survivors. Sit down here.

THEY SIT ON THE GROUND.

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

... Every year on my birthday my mother would sit me down here and she would tell me that I was born right on this spot. The ship was badly damaged and drifting, a lot of people were saying we were doomed, saying their last goodbyes to their loved ones... She said she knew we were going to be okay because in the middle of all this despair was something hopeful... me... she was... she was wrong... I wasn't a sign of hope I was... I was what killed them. I was what destroyed their home, what made them have to climb into a life boat and shove off into the stars.

TERRIC

I know it's easy to see things that way-

CLEMENTINE

I need you to leave.

TERRIC

What?

CLEMENTINE

I need you to go back to the diner and leave with them.

TERRIC

Really.

CLEMENTINE

Whatever that diner is, it's miraculous. But the people inside it are only human. Maybe if they had all the time in the world, but they have less than a day. They're not going to be able to save us.

TERRIC

You don't know that.

CLEMENTINE

I need you to do this for me.

TERRIC

You want me to abandon you, as a favor to you?

CLEMENTINE

When I first left you, I said I would love you forever. I meant it. But that's an easy thing to say when you know you're not going to see someone again. And then I showed up in the parking lot the other day and I saw your face and something terrible happened. "Oh, God." I thought. "Oh, God, it was actually true"... Nothing had changed, Terric... I love you. And the time I spent away from you is like a hole in me... If I strand you here with me you're just adding to the list things that I've destroyed. Please don't do that to me.

TERRIC

...No, no I'm afraid I'm going to do that to you.

CLEMENTINE

Terric.

TERRIC

Look, I really appreciate you trying to be selfless and clean up your mess but I'm afraid you're just going to have to be stuck with me.

CLEMENTINE

Terric, I don't want you to stay here.

TERRIC

Of course you do, you're in love with me.

CLEMENTINE

I'm being serious.

TERRIC

I don't care.

CLEMENTINE

You're not listening to me.

TERRIC

I don't need to listen to you.

CLEMENTINE

Fuck, Terric.

TERRIC

Look, I admire what you're doing. You're looking at all the things that you've done and you've decided that the only way you can live with yourself is to orchestrate some kind of punishment, right? If you condemn yourself to a short and lonely life, wandering the beet field it will somehow make up for the destruction you've caused. Is that the plan? Well, first of all, it won't make up for anything. You inadvertently dropped an asteroid on Earth, turned a mall full of people into zombies, and a whole host of other horrible things – I know, I was there to see them. None of that is going to be healed by you being sad for a while. The universe finds your personal suffering to be pretty irrelevant. As a former Roman Catholic, take it from me.

CLEMENTINE

How am I supposed to live my life looking back at all the terrible things I've done?

TERRIC

... I had the pleasure of meeting Caspar the other day. You've met Caspar... he's an interesting guy, I've never really met anyone like him. He is, nose to tail, just a pile of regrets. That's all he is. All he seems to consist of are his mistakes. And yet, he endures. He gets up the next day and continues even when he feels like he shouldn't deserve it, even when he feels like it's pointless. At some point he just decided that life is about the next day. And nothing else. Because how else would you function?

CLEMENTINE

Terric, there's "fucking up a lot," and then there's "fucking up an entire planet." These are two different things. It's not the usual list of mistakes I have to recover from, it's so much worse.

TERRIC

You know, the other day I was confronted with a long list of all aliases I've had over the centuries. For the first time I was confronted by the one alias that I didn't choose: The Demon of Breitenfeld.

CLEMENTINE

What does that mean?

TERRIC

At a certain point I had to admit that what was happening to me wasn't normal. I couldn't explain it away anymore. Everyone I had ever known was dead. It was pretty terrifying. It was a level of loneliness I don't think anyone's ever felt. I needed this inexplicable part of me to make sense somehow... Then I got word that war had broken out in Europe. A religious war... I somehow convinced myself that *that* was my purpose. I was meant to be God's man on Earth, here to do his bidding. So I traveled to the Kingdom of Sweden and I joined up with the Protestants... I was always a terrible swordsman but that doesn't seem to matter when you can't be killed... There was a battle near the town of Breitenfeld, the worst one of the entire war... I'll spare you the details... I killed people, Clementine. Willingly... I can still see their faces... The war ended, nothing changed, and then... and then a hundred years later I could truly look back to see that this religious war wasn't a religious war at all. It wasn't a war between Protestants and Catholics it was a war between Feudalism and Capitalism. Religion was just the paint job... A lot of senseless death... And then I became a clown. And then I got married and had children, and then a couple of centuries later I did it all over again. I saw and did so many things. Good things. Things I'm proud to remember, and I did them all while still being haunted by that war. No one can live their life devoid of guilt or regret. But you're not supposed to stop living because of it. You carry it with you, you honor it, but that's not all you're meant to do... If I can do it, so can you... We'll do it together.

CLEMENTINE

I just can't imagine you as a space farmer.

TERRIC

I've actually been a farmer like three times.

CLEMENTINE

Really?

TERRIC

Yeah, it used to be one of the only jobs.

CLEMENTINE

You're sure this is what you want?

TERRIC

Yes.

CLEMENTINE

I break everything I touch.

TERRIC

You already broke me... Come on. Show me the rest of the farm.

UP ON THE BRIDGE. LEIF IS PACING.

LEIF

"We going to keep wearing a hole on the deck or are we going to do something?" Okay, fine. What do we do? "Can't make stew without looking in the cupboard." Right... okay inventory... One completely fucked generation ship. Twenty seven thousand completely fucked passengers. One practically useless communications laser. Two extra-vehicular maintenance units. Looks like one welding unit and one riveting unit. The ship's power source is reliable but I have no idea what it is because, and this is the crux of it: there is no navigation system. It's been completely wiped. Back at the diner I've got a quantum processor that I could use to create a navigation interface for the ship. Could I do that in eleven hours? No. And even if I could, who would fly it after I'm gone... I could stay... I could stay aboard this ship, write the code in a few weeks and get them to safety. That would save them. Find them a shitty planet somewhere... save the human race... "And how would you feel about that, Kid?"... These are humans. These are my people... I have to save them somehow. "Buster, you and I both know that you haven't been a member of the human race for a long time. You left that behind at Sirius A." This is all I have to work with. I can't leave them all to die just because I want to stay with the diner... This is all I have...

(Now imitating Old Leif.)

"That is not all he has."

(Even Older Leif.)

"Well, well, well. If it isn't the middle child."

(Old Leif.)

"It is a trap we have always fallen into. We take inventory and it is always incomplete. We never account for what we truly have, do we Leif?"

(Back to Leif.)

You're right. Let's take a real inventory.

BACK TO TGI FRIDAY'S.

AVA

So, Clementine turns her entire planet into Swiss cheese and now she just gets to hang out with her hot medieval boyfriend?

CASPAR

Is this Dr. Ava Maddox, agent of chaos, suddenly expecting some sort of justice from the universe? You think she deserves a visit from Lady Karma?

AVA

I guess not, but she basically threw an entire planet into a rock tumbler.

CASPAR

It was her planet that she was trying to save when she inadvertently threw it into a rock tumbler.

AVA

"Oops, I didn't mean it," is a weak defense.

CASPAR

Well, she didn't mean it. Oops.

AVA

Whatever.

CASPAR

Look. When my kid first ran away from home, I left the house and I never came back... I was out there for God knows how long, looking for him. Did I have a plan? Did I ever feel like I was "on the trail"? No. It was insanity. I had literally broken with reality. I was panicked, grief-stricken, angry, you name it. We've been to some dark places and that's the darkest place I've ever been to. Locked up in my head. If I had, at that moment, been given all the power that Clementine was given... I would've torn the universe apart and felt fine about it. She's not a super-villain, she's not Ming the Merciless, she's just... a dummy. Like everybody else.

AVA

... So it's possible that this entire adventure you're having on the diner could just be a gigantic psychotic break and it's all happening in your head?

CASPAR

I suppose it's possible, yeah. But that would be bad writing.

AVA
True.

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Ava.

AVA
What?

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
What do you know about lasers?

AVA
They go pew pew.

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Not laser guns. Laser physics.

AVA
I don't know. Ask me a question and let's find out.

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Did you read anything about what the Imperial
College London was doing with lasers?

AVA
Um...

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Something about group 16 elements.

AVA
Oh right. Yes. If an element has two ions, you can
use the laser to cause the ions to rub together
like matchsticks.

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
And what does that give me?

AVA
Well, according to the paper it would give you a
temperature hotter than the sun in the span of
twenty quadrillionths of a second.

LEIF
(In earpiece.)
Interesting.

CASPAR

What are you doing up there, Leif?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

I'm going to burn a hole through this nebula with a communications laser.

AVA

Fun.

CASPAR

Is that a euphemism for something or are you literally making a laser-phone?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

I'm literally making a laser-phone.

CASPAR

Okay, well I hope that they're careful when they pick up on the other end.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Gloria, are you okay with me shooting a big laser into the sky? It's going to make a pretty big flash.... Gloria?

CASPAR

Gloria?

AVA

Well I'm okay with it, and I'm very responsible about these things.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Fuck it, I don't have time for approval. Making a laser-phone!

CASPAR

Good luck!

AVA

Who is he going to call?

CASPAR

I don't know, triple-A?

WE HEAR THE PRESSURIZED ENVIRONMENT OF THE FRUITING CHAMBER.
GLORIA AND BRODIE WALK THROUGH WITH SPORE MASKS ON.

BRODIE

Back when the decision was being made all those years ago, the powers that be decided that only the edible mushrooms should be brought aboard. A shame, really. It's certainly no fault of theirs that they're among the most lethal substances on the planet.

GLORIA

This is amazing. You've got everything here. button, oyster, chanterelles, look at those morels, my God.

BRODIE

I hear on Earth that the morels were truly delicious in the season after a forest fire.

GLORIA

Yes. Burn morels. They're amazing.

BRODIE

And how would you know that?

GLORIA

I mean, I imagine they would be. Is that Hen of the Woods?

BRODIE

Yes. She's a beauty, isn't she?

GLORIA

Those were so rare on earth. A cluster like this you could sell for a fortune.

BRODIE

That's an interesting way of putting it. Were they all so obsessed with it?

GLORIA

Mushrooms?

BRODIE

Money.

GLORIA

Oh. Yeah, yeah they were. It made the world go round.

BRODIE

Hard to imagine. There are so many in need here, I can't imagine holding back what we've grown for a bit of, whatever it was called, cash.

GLORIA

I know it sounds strange. It sounds strange to hear you describe it. I met woman once named Jane. Jane believed that humanity was born bad from the very beginning, going all the way back to the cave men. She thought that the only way to really fix anything on Earth was to start over from the very beginning, which you can never do.

BRODIE

I thought we'd have that opportunity. Off to a new world and all.

GLORIA

I know. If you don't mind me saying you have a surprisingly chipper attitude for someone stranded in deep space.

BRODIE

That's true enough. I spend quite a lot of my time in this chamber, that may be why.

GLORIA

With the mushrooms?

BRODIE

We've spent a year now floating in complete darkness, not knowing how or why, no path to escape. It's enough to grind a man to dust. But when I wake at the beginning of the day, I come here and I don this mask. I enter the chamber and I walk among these strange creatures. They whisper to me.

GLORIA

What do they say?

BRODIE

"There is life even in the darkness," they say. "If we thrive then so shall you," they say. And atop the comfort they provide, there is the occasional mystery.

GLORIA

A fungus mystery?

BRODIE

Indeed. Come this way. Across the way there is a dome that specializes in corn. And one day these gents bring to me a bundle of stalks. Their faces were white with fear as though they'd seen the devil himself. After close inspection, I found this odd little creature.

(MORE)

BRODIE (CONT'D)

Now, if we'd not lost our databases and were not floating in the dark, I'm sure I could look such things up, but as we are here in this veil of ignorance, it remains a mystery. Do you see here, how the fungus rises up out of the kernels like leaves? Certainly a fungus, but I've no idea what.

GLORIA

Well, you enjoy a mystery so I don't want to ruin it for you.

BRODIE

Do you know what this is?

GLORIA

Yes. Huitlacoche. Corn fungus.

BRODIE

Fascinating. And you know this as an expert on, what was it? Restaurants of Earth?

GLORIA

I do. Because it's delicious.

BRODIE

This bizarre substance sprouting from this corn is some sort of delicacy?

GLORIA

It sure is. Is there a kitchen somewhere in this bubble?

BRODIE

There is.

GLORIA

Come on, I'll show you.

BRODIE

Lead on.

BACK ON THE BRIDGE. LEIF IS THINKING.

LEIF

(Even Older Leif.)

"What are we looking at?" We're looking at a communications laser... "Pretty bad shape, looks like." Yeah. "Couple of maintenance droids out there. Could do the trick." Yeah. "Comms are down though. Can't control 'em." True. "You thinking what I'm thinking?"... We're literally the same person, so I imagine so. "Well then. Showtime." Okay... Ahem... Hey, Mucklewains?

EFFIE

Yes, Leif?

LEIF

How are things going down there?

EFFIE

Well, you know how it is in these situations, you don't want to spook the locals too much, so Zebulon and myself have been keeping a low profile, acting like a plain old wireless.

ZEBULON

And though our situation is dire, we seemed to have settled into a bit of a pastoral attitude. Clementine and Terric have retired to the beet field to find that long way back to each other.

EFFIE

And Gloria has been spending a bit of time with a new fellow.

ZEBULON

A scotsman, we believe.

EFFIE

Their conversations have taken on a bit of an interesting tone, if I may say so.

WE HEAR GLORIA IN THE BACKGROUND LAUGHING.

GLORIA

Oh my God, that's so funny!

LEIF

Anything to pass the time, I guess.

EFFIE

His facial hair suggests he's a bit of rascal, but I'm having a hard time gettin' mad at it, if you catch my meaning.

LEIF

I do.

ZEBULON

Leif, how goes your endeavors? We are quite worried for the people that make their home here.

LEIF

Well, I'm looking at the hull of the ship right now and there's a couple of maintenance units out there.

EFFIE
... Alright.

LEIF
One of them is used for welding and the other is
for riveting.

ZEBULON
Those sound useful.

LEIF
Yeah. Yeah, they're exactly what I need right now.

EFFIE
Well... Good.

LEIF
Yeah. Yeah it's real great...

ZEBULON
... Wonderful.

LEIF
Because you can just imagine them out there right?
They're both magnetized to the deck, so that's
great. No chance of losing them.

EFFIE
Good.

LEIF
One of them is magnetized treads and the other one
has articulating legs.

EFFIE
Leif.

LEIF
And if I can get control of them, well...

WE HEAR RADIO STATIC.

EFFIE
Leif, are you doing what I think you're-

THE STATIC BUZZES AND CRACKLES.

LEIF
... Effie?

EFFIE
... Yes, Leif?

LEIF

Where are you two right now?

EFFIE

Well, where do you think we are Leif?

ZEBULON

Dear, I believe that Leif has tricked us into expediting ourselves onto the outside of this vessel.

EFFIE

Really, Dear? What tipped you? Was it the fact that we are currently on the outside of this vessel?

ZEBULON

Yes, that was it.

EFFIE

Leif, I hope you are counting yourself lucky that we now have experience both as automatons and as a couple of folks floating out here in the inky blackness.

LEIF

I'm counting myself very lucky.

ZEBULON

Leif, I have many legs.

LEIF

Okay, that was my next question. Zeb it looks like you're in the riveting unit. It kind of walks around like a spider, give it a try.

ZEBULON AWKWARDLY WALKS BACK AND FORTH WITH ALL OF HIS NEW LEGS.

ZEBULON

This is an awful lot of legs to keep track of, Leif.

LEIF

Effie, how is he doing?

EFFIE

Last time he walked this awkward was when he carried me across the threshold.

LEIF

Okay, Zeb just keep practicing, you'll get the hang of it in a bit.

EFFIE

Leif, I am some sort of vehicularity.

LEIF

Right, so Zebulon has legs and you have magnetized treads.

SHE ROLLS BACK AND FORTH A LITTLE BIT.

EFFIE

Alright, simple enough, forwards and back.

LEIF

Your right hand is a kind of clamp, can you move it?

EFFIE

Yeah, I'm moving it just fine, I do miss fingers and thumbs.

LEIF

Your left hand is different though. It should be an arclight welder.

WE HEAR THE SNAP OF AN ARCLIGHT WELDING GUN.

EFFIE

Goodness! That's coming right out of my hand! What in all heck is this for?

LEIF

You're going to do some welding.

EFFIE

I'm sure I don't know how to do that, Leif.

LEIF

You've used a soldering iron, it's kind of like that.

EFFIE

This don't look like no soldering iron to me, Leif.

LEIF

Well it is about six thousand degrees Celsius, so keep it away from Zebulon.

EFFIE

Just so's you know. If I've still got this flame on my hand next time I see you I'm going to burn you right on your hiney.

LEIF

And I'd deserve it. So, your model is meant for rapid response to seal a breach in the hull before the oxygen leaks out. You can probably get up a lot of speed.

EFFIE

Alright let's test her out.

EFFIE BRIEFLY AND SHARPLY MOVES FORWARD.

EFFIE (CONT'D)

Oh! Well, now. That does have some zip to it, don't it? Out of the way, husband, I'm going to open her up.

ZEBULON

Do be careful, dear.

EFFIE TAKES OFF ACROSS THE HULL OF THE SHIP.

EFFIE

Hooo-wee! This thing drives like a chicken on fire!

ZEBULON

Now Leif, what am I meant to do?

LEIF

Okay, Zeb, you've got a pneumatic riveter in your body.

ZEBULON

And what do I do with it?

LEIF

Kind of, squat your body down so it's flush with the hull and it will shoot a rivet through the steel.

ZEBULON

... Well that sounds a bit indelicate, Leif.

LEIF

I'm sure it'll feel fine, Give it a try.

ZEBULON

Very well.

ZEBULON LOWERS HIS NEW ROBOT BODY TO THE HULL. WE HEAR THE LOUD THUD OF HIS RIVETER.

ZEBULON (CONT'D)

Oh my!

LEIF

There you go.

ZEBULON

That was surprising.

LEIF

Now we're in business. Okay you two, let's fix a laser gun.

ZEBULON

A laser?

BACK AT TGI FRIDAY'S.

ROBOT BARTENDER

What are you hankering for... try our new... munchies... Menu...

CASPAR

... Would you like to try the new munchies menu?

AVA

No.

CASPAR

... So are we going to keep looking at the bottle of Peppermint Schnapps wishing it was something else?

AVA

Yes.

CASPAR

... Ava what was going on back at the diner, you looked, I don't know how you looked.

AVA

Nothing. Don't worry about it.

CASPAR

Okay...

AVA

...

CASPAR

... Have you heard any good jokes lately?

AVA

No

CASPAR
... Have you heard the one about the armless
hunchback?

AVA
I figured it out.

CASPAR
... Figured what out?

AVA
It.

CASPAR
... What "it" are we talking about?

AVA
Everything.

CASPAR
... Can you be more specific than that?

AVA
No.

CASPAR
... Why not?

AVA
Because I literally mean everything.

CASPAR
Everything.

AVA
Yes.

CASPAR
... When you say "everything"-

AVA
I know how the universe works. I know what the
diner is. I know what it's doing... Everything.

CASPAR
... This is what you've been looking for.

AVA
Yes.

CASPAR
Since I met you this is what you've been looking
for.

AVA

It is.

CASPAR

... So this is... a big day.

AVA

... Not really.

CASPAR

What the fuck are you talking about "not really"?

AVA

I mean "not really"?

CASPAR

What the fuck are you talking about?

AVA

Who's going to know?... Caspar, just now, in the diner, me and my pencil and my notebook... we cracked the universe wide open... Everything I ever wanted to do, I did just now sitting at my booth. Everything. And it happened on a derelict spaceship full of doomed Earthlings... No one's ever going to know... And I always knew that's how it would be. I knew that when I walked through your door... But now that it's happened... it hurts a little... but that's okay.

CASPAR

... No.

AVA

What?

CASPAR

No. No, I don't like this, I don't like how this is going.

AVA

What do you mean?

CASPAR

Come on, come outside.

AVA

Everything is inside.

CASPAR

Come on.

THEY WALK OUT INTO NOSTALGIA PAVILION.

AVA
What are we doing?

CASPAR
Let's just stand here. Right here in the middle of
this abandoned food court in space.

AVA
Ok.

CASPAR
... I won. Say it.

AVA
I won.

CASPAR
No, come on, you've got to say it louder. C'mon, I
won.

AVA
I won.

CASPAR
Ava, goddamn it. I won.

AVA
I won?

CASPAR
What the hell are you doing? This is the big
moment. This is the FU to the cosmos, this is all
you've ever wanted.

AVA
And I need to shout "I won"?

CASPAR
Yes goddamn it! You gave up everything in your life
all the comforts of home, your job, your house,
readily available cigarettes, you stopped being
human, you became a walking mission, you turned
into cruise missile headed for the heart of
everything! YELL IT GODDAMN IT! I WON!

AVA
I WON!

AVA'S VOICE ECHOES DOWN THE HULL OF THE GIGANTIC SPACESHIP.

CASPAR
... Okay... Okay that feels better. Right?

AVA
Sure... Caspar?

CASPAR
Yes.

AVA
Do you want to know how the universe works?

CASPAR
I don't know, is there a lot of math?

AVA
Caspar.

CASPAR
No, I totally do, but we've really got to go drink
the schnapps.

AVA
No.

CASPAR
It's all we have, we have to make do. C'mon.

AVA
Fine.

CASPAR
Here we go.

THE GO BACK INTO THE TGI FRIDAYS.

CASPAR (CONT'D)
It's going to be fine. I think if we just pretend
we're at some sort of Bavarian ski chalet it should
be fine.

CASPAR POUR TWO GLASSES.

CASPAR (CONT'D)
Here we go. Hey, Ava, how were the slopes today?

AVA
The... slopes were fine.

CASPAR
Great. Prost.

THEY DRINK. IT'S BAD.

CASPAR (CONT'D)
... Pinesol.

AVA
Big yuck.

CASPAR
Okay, let's not do that again.

AVA
No.

CASPAR
Big mistake.

AVA
... So?

CASPAR
... Okay, explain how literally everything works.
But please remember I'm an idiot.

AVA
I can't possibly forget that.

CASPAR
Okay... go.

AVA
A long time ago, a colleague of mine dumped a bunch of unfinished research on my desk. She wasn't going to be able to finish it because she was about to be discredited and disgraced. She was sleeping with the Dean's wife... When I was able to put it all together, it was an elegant picture of the universe: The end of every universe is the beginning of another. Every universe is a story to be told. A play. The curtain rises, there's a beginning a middle and an end, and then the curtain falls. But then the next night, the curtain rises again, and the play begins again.

CASPAR
How does a new universe just begin?

AVA
There's this physicist, Leonard Suskind. He's a cool guy. He can talk to you about complexity theory within black holes and it will still feel like he's trying to figure out what's wrong with your Volkswagen. "If you wait long enough, everything will happen. Including what you started with," he said... If you assume that space and time is infinite, then there is a non-zero chance that, at some point in deep space, a 1972 Buick Skylark will assemble itself for no reason.

(MORE)

AVA (CONT'D)

And if there's a non-zero chance of everything happening and space and time is infinite, then everything will happen... Including the universe starting over.

CASPAR

That sounds simple enough.

AVA

It does, but there was a problem.

CASPAR

... A shifting point of null entropy.

AVA

Yes. Also known as a diner that travels through space, time, and dimension. I knew it fit into the big picture somehow. But the picture wasn't complete yet. Enter: The Schmutz.

CASPAR

Ah. The schmutz.

AVA

Once Leif had set up the scanner, we saw, in every universe, massive damage to the fabric of space/time. It was everywhere. Black holes can cause it, Clementine can cause it, but there was so much of it, it had to be something else. Something bigger. What's bigger than a black hole, Caspar?

CASPAR

I don't know, the Beatles?

AVA

Nothing. But I wasn't zoomed out enough. There's one thing bigger than a black hole. The creation of the universe itself. The massive explosion that kicks off every universe. All the damage we've been seeing, it comes from the beginning... Every universe tears itself apart. Every universe is a wound, full of damage and chaos and pain. It comes screaming into existence, begging to be healed. And for the first half of it's life, it's a shit show. Galaxies colliding. One world swallows another. Stars become black holes, swallowing other stars... Pain... And then... and then about half way through this play that must seem like a tragedy, something happens.

CASPAR

What happens?

AVA

Out there, somewhere, something says stop. Something says enough. The damage is healed. For the first time. The pain and suffering that has defined everything suddenly faces something new. This new thing says "I will not feel this anymore. I will not feel pain and then cause more. I will do something new"... And everything changes. It's small at first but this new force in the universe, it multiplies just like the damage does... The universe begins to heal. It begins to draw itself back together. And the second half of the play is the journey back to the beginning. And then the curtain falls.

CASPAR

What... what is this thing that says stop, what is it?

AVA

Turns out. It's a diner.

CASPAR

It's us.

AVA

Yes.

CASPAR

We're... saving the universe.

AVA

No, dude. A process has begun. Every universe saves itself. We're the catalyst.

CASPAR

Ava, why the fuck is it a diner?

AVA

You tell me.

CASPAR

I can't, that's your job.

AVA

No, I mean... It didn't actually start with the diner... There was a lonely, desperate man. Deep in the deepest sadness he'd ever felt. The kind of sadness that's so deep, it feels like insanity. A man who'd lost his mind. And there in the depths of it, when he was so desperate for the world to change, he found himself in the middle of nowhere in California. And then suddenly there was a diner...

(MORE)

AVA (CONT'D)

I don't think it started with the diner, Caspar. I think it started with you. That small, infinitesimal turn in the universe that began to fight back the darkness, was just a sad man with hope.

CASPAR

And you learned all this... from math.

AVA

I've been working on this for a while, Caspar, what do you think I'm doing at that booth?

CASPAR

I don't know, sudoku?... It's pretty amazing.

AVA

I know.

CASPAR

It's amazing, what you do. You're an amazing person.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Caspar.

CASPAR

What's up?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
What the hell we're you two yelling about?

CASPAR

Uh...

AVA

(To Caspar.)
Just us right now, okay?

CASPAR

We were arguing about jalepeño poppers.

LEIF

Jesus Christ, you two. Look, I want to warn you, as soon as I fire this laser it's going to be suddenly very bright for a few seconds. All twenty seven thousand people on this ship are going to freak out.

CASPAR

That sounds fun.

AVA

Leif, if the laser is burning hotter than the sun,
how are you not going to obliterate whatever you're
trying to communicate with?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Initial few seconds are just to burn through the
nebula, I'll bring down the levels once I'm
through.

CASPAR

And who are you calling with this communication
laser?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
There's a communications node not far from here.
Though by my calculations we're about 150 years out
from our last stop, so I hope it's still there.

CASPAR

And you're just going to shout "help" really loud?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Something like that.

WE HEAR ZEBULON SINGING AND RHYTHMICALLY DRIVING RIVETS INTO
THE HULL.

ZEBULON

As I walked out in the streets of Laredo,
As I walked out in Laredo one day.
I spied a young cowboy all wrapped in white linen,
Wrapped in white linen as cold as the clay.

GLORIA

What the hell is Zebulon doing?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Oh hey, Gloria. I had to borrow the Mucklewains.
They took over some maintenance droids on the
outside of the ship.

GLORIA

But what is he doing?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Right. Zebulon, what did you call that again?

ZEBULON

(In earpiece.)
Well it's a bit of a working song, Leif. Just a bit of song to make the time go faster. Helpful if you're driving fence posts, or snapping string beans, or driving metallic spikes into a behemoth wandering the stars in search of a home.

GLORIA

Okay. Carry on.

ZEBULON

(In earpiece.)
I see by your outfit that you are a cowboy. These words he did say as I boldly walked by. Come sit down beside me and hear my sad story, I'm shot in the breast and I know I must die.

EFFIE IS AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOME NEAR GLORIA, TAPPING ON THE GLASS.

EFFIE

(In earpiece.)
Hey, Gloria.

TAP TAP TAP.

EFFIE (CONT'D)

(In earpiece.)
Gloria can you see me?

TAP TAP TAP.

GLORIA

Where are you?

EFFIE

(In earpiece.)
Over yonder by the potato patch.

TAP TAP TAP.

GLORIA

Oh. Oh I see you. Hi, Effie. You're... you're a little car thing.

EFFIE

(In earpiece.)
Gloria I have been locomoting all over the side of this behemoth trying to get the beast up and running. Have a gander at this sparky hand of mine.

SHE ZAPS HER ARCLIGHT IN THE AIR.

GLORIA

Wow. Are you two okay out there?

EFFIE

(In earpiece.)

We're just fine. Good to be blessed with work. What are you doing in there?

GLORIA

Making Huitlacoche.

EFFIE

(In earpiece.)

Mm-hmm. Gloria that's not some kind of a code word for something else now is it?

GLORIA

No.

EFFIE

(In earpiece.)

I seen the look of that man, same as you.

GLORIA

He had some growing in the mushroom chamber, I'm showing him how to cook it.

AVA

(In earpiece.)

He? Who's he?

GLORIA

Brodie.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

Who's Brodie?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Gloria, are you on a fucking date or something?

GLORIA

No!

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Why are me and the Mucklewains the only ones working the problem right now?

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)

Well, what do you want us to do, Leif? Help?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
No.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
Okay, well whatever "Making Huitlacoche" is a euphemism for, let's let Gloria do it with this guy.

GLORIA

It's not a euphemism! It's corn fungus! I'm making corn fungus!

AVA

(In earpiece.)
"Making corn fungus" sounds dirty.

GLORIA

Oh my God, I hate you all so much.

ZEBULON

(In earpiece.)
Then beat your drum slowly and play your fife lowly,
Beat the Dead March as you carry me along,
We all love our cowboys so young and so handsome,
We all love our cowboys although they've done wrong.

TERRIC AND CLEMENTINE WALK THROUGH THE DOME.

TERRIC

Seems like an odd assortment of crops to take down to a new planet.

CLEMENTINE

Staple crops take a long time to set up. These are all things that are more adaptable. Potatoes for a cold planet, tomatoes for a hot one. Soy beans are versatile, and then my beets. There would be a lot of new toxins on a new world so the beets are there to take a scrub brush to your liver. Also you make sugar with them, and that's nice. The grape vines wouldn't grow so fast but it's a great way to attract local bacteria once they start making fruit. And once they start making fruit, you can make wine. The kind of wine that I'm sure was enjoyed by your attractive French wife.

TERRIC

I'm in for a lifetime of comments about my French wife, aren't I?

CLEMENTINE

Yes. Can you at least tell me that your second wife was a frigid school marm or something?

TERRIC

She was Brazilian.

CLEMENTINE

Oh, motherfucker, Terric.

TERRIC

Sorry. I really did miss you the whole time.

CLEMENTINE

Prove it.

TERRIC

I gave up immortality for you.

CLEMENTINE

Well, I need additional proof.

TERRIC

Okay... That woman who tracked you down? She dug up evidence of you throughout history. Tamara?

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

TERRIC

The first thing that sent her down the rabbit hole looking for you was a painting of you from 1917 by an artist named Modigliani. "Woman with the Red Hair."

CLEMENTINE

I never met an artist named Modigliani.

TERRIC

I know. It was me.

CLEMENTINE

... It was you?

TERRIC

I'm Modigliani.

CLEMENTINE

Shut the fuck up.

TERRIC

It's true.

CLEMENTINE

You can't paint.

TERRIC

Try living for seven hundred years, you'll learn to paint eventually.

CLEMENTINE

Okay, so you painted a picture of me, big deal.

TERRIC

I hadn't seen you for six hundred years. Could still paint you from memory.

CLEMENTINE

... Okay, I guess that's pretty good.

WE HEAR A SIZZLING PAN. GLORIA IS COOKING.

GLORIA

I go on about this all the time. Cooking like this. It's history. History lives everywhere. We think it's in a book or in a database somewhere. It's in us. I'm smelling this Huitlacoche in the pan and I'm thinking of my grandmother. History is in the senses, in smells and tastes. Things like that should be preserved, too, not just facts.

BRODIE

I understand that intimately.

GLORIA

Do you?

BRODIE

I imagine there's a question you have for me that you're working up the courage to ask.

GLORIA

I have?

BRODIE

You'd like to know why I speak as though my heart is in the highlands when I have never, in fact, set foot on Earth.

GLORIA

Ah... yes the thought did cross my mind.

BRODIE

It's as you say. History lives not just in books but the food we eat, but also, in the way we speak. When my grandfather boarded this ship he spoke as I do.

(MORE)

BRODIE (CONT'D)

My father couldn't help but speak this way as well, and now I also take up the mantle. When I speak this way, those who've gone before me are carried forward into the present. They live in me, in the way that I speak.

GLORIA

That's nice.

BRODIE

Besides, what would the future be without at least one Scot?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Gloria?

GLORIA

One second, Brodie... What's up?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
I'm ready to fire this thing.

GLORIA

Okay. What's going to happen?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
The sky's going to light up like it's the middle of the day. But only for a few seconds. Then, I imagine, everyone on board this ship is going to lose it.

GLORIA

I'm sure they'll forgive you. Then what happens?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Then I'm going to call for help.

GLORIA

Think there's anybody out there?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
If not, we're screwed.

GLORIA

I believe in you Leif. I knew you could do it.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Not really used to people being proud of me,
Gloria.

GLORIA

I'll keep it to a minimum. Light it up.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Here goes nothing.

BRODIE

Are you speaking to someone with some sort of
communication device?

GLORIA

Hey Brodie, listen. Something's about to happen.
It's going to freak you out but everything's going
to be okay.

BRODIE

I'm sorry?

GLORIA

... I don't live on this ship, Brodie. My friends
and I actually just got here today.

BRODIE

... What on Earth are you talking about?

GLORIA

Well, it's like your mushrooms keep saying to you.
"There is life even in the darkness".

WE HEAR A MASSIVE PULSE OF ENERGY AS THE SKY LIGHTS UP WITH A
BLINDING LIGHT.

BRODIE

JESUS MARY AND FUCKING JOSEPH!

GLORIA

Wow! Pretty great, huh!

BRODIE

There's been an explosion of some kind. We need to
get you to an escape pod, I'll show you the closest
one!

GLORIA

Brodie. What did I just say?

CLEMENTINE

Gloria, what was that?

TERRIC

It lit up the entire sky!

GLORIA

That was Leif calling for help.

CLEMENTINE

Calling for help with what?

GLORIA

A communications laser, apparently.

A SHIP WIDE ALARM STARTS SOUNDING.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

What is that?

CLEMENTINE

That's the evacuation alarm.

BRODIE

Of course it is, there's just been an explosion!

GLORIA

Leif, should the evacuation alarm be going off right now?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Nope. Everything went off perfectly, that's just them freaking out.

GLORIA

We're fine.

BRODIE

Who are you talking to?

GLORIA

My engineer.

BRODIE

Your what?

CLEMENTINE

Brodie, it's okay. I know it's crazy, but they're here to help.

BRODIE

Here to help?! Who are they?

GLORIA

We run a diner.

BACK ON THE BRIDGE.

EFFIE

(In earpiece.)
Hot damn! Look at her go!

ZEBULON

(In earpiece.)
Leif, it's glorious!

LEIF

That did not disappoint. Nice work, Mucklewains, I couldn't have done it without you.

AVA

(In earpiece.)
Leif, that fucking ruled.

CASPAR

(In earpiece.)
Leif gets to do all the cool things, we've noticed that, right?

EFFIE

(In earpiece.)
I really feel like we made something here, husband. It's a real beauty.

ZEBULON

(In earpiece.)
Like a beacon to the heavens.

LEIF

Okay, Mucklewains stand by in case we need to do adjustments. Everybody cross your fingers.

WE HEAR LEIF CONNECTING WIRES TO THE COMMAND CONSOLE.

LEIF (CONT'D)

Please god work...

WE HEAR THE HUM OF A COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM SENDING OUT A SIGNAL. IT CONTINUES FOR A LONG WHILE UNTIL FINALLY...

DEEP SPACE COMMS NODE

Hello and thank you for choosing deep space comms node number 83. Please enter your username now.

LEIF

Voice prompt only.

DEEP SPACE COMMS NODE

You have chosen "Voice prompt only." Please speak username now.

LEIF

Roamin' Ronin.

DEEP SPACE COMMS NODE

Thank you "Roamin' Ronin." How may I help you today?

LEIF

Reroute to user.

DEEP SPACE COMMS NODE

You have chosen "Reroute to user." Please speak username now.

LEIF

Julia Fucking Roberts.

DEEP SPACE COMMS NODE

You have chosen "Julia Fucking Roberts." Connecting now...

HOLD MUSIC. IT GOES ON FOR WAY TOO LONG.

LEIF

C'mon...

THE HOLD MUSIC STOPS AND THEN...

BERTBERT

Let's see, an unmarked call on my Tangle, that could only be one person.

LEIF

Berts?

BERTBERT

Hello, Leif.

LEIF

Holy shit, thank God!

BERTBERT

Hi.

LEIF

Let's hear it for long Sigian life spans, huh?

BERTBERT

Sure. Leif, what's going on?

LEIF

I'm in so much trouble!

BERTBERT

Yes, there are some things I just assume with you.

LEIF

I uh... shit where to start?

BERTBERT

I don't know, Leif.

LEIF

I mean, how are you?

BERTBERT

Okay, don't start there, start with the trouble you're in, we can catch up later.

LEIF

Okay... I am currently on a derelict generation ship carrying the last twenty seven thousand Earthlings and I need to save all their lives.

BERTBERT

... What?

LEIF

I know.

BERTBERT

Leif. Earth has been dead for at least a hundred years.

LEIF

They built a lifeboat. A really irresponsible lifeboat. They were hit by something, I don't know what. The main systems went offline decades ago Berts. The ship is, right now, trapped in Barnard 68.

BERTBERT

Where?

LEIF

The Sheliak!

BERTBERT

Oh... Leif, that's impossible.

LEIF

I live on the roof of a time-traveling dimension-spanning diner, we're talking about impossible?

BERTBERT

... Okay... Okay, how have they managed to stay alive?

LEIF

I have no idea. The ship is basically held together by fairy dust but they somehow managed to make a very stable power source.

BERTBERT

What is it?

LEIF

I have no idea! The navigation systems are all wiped out and I can't interact with any ship systems. The amount of electrical tape and crossed wires it took me just to talk to you is ridiculous!

BERTBERT

Okay calm down just... okay... you're on a ship full of Earthlings.

LEIF

Yes.

BERTBERT

Okay... This is bad on so many levels.

LEIF

Tell me about it!

BERTBERT

There's not supposed to be any Earthlings left.

LEIF

I know!

BERTBERT

And you need my help.

LEIF

I'd love to say I was calling for another reason.

BERTBERT

Just... just list for me all the things you need.

LEIF

Okay... The ship needs repairs and it needs an operating system, but it's not like anyone's left who knows how to fly the ship so the operating system needs to be autonomous. But that's just part of the problem. They left the planet thinking that there were a ton of uninhabited Earth-like planets out there. Little did they know that every habitable planet is already inhabited and if it's not it's property of the goddamn Teds.

BERTBERT

Uh...

LEIF

So, they don't just need their ship fixed, they need a destination and they don't know that there isn't one available. They're so screwed, Berts!

BERTBERT

Yeah...

LEIF

I need... I need Sigius to take them.

BERTBERT

Leif-

LEIF

I know it's a lot of people, I know it'll be hard, but Sigius is the only planet that I trust to do this, can you please-

BERTBERT

Leif, stop.

LEIF

... What?

BERTBERT

When was the last time you saw me?

LEIF

What do you mean?

BERTBERT

Just tell me.

LEIF

... We had just blown up the Teds' wind chimes, what do you mean?

BERTBERT

Oh fuck, okay...

LEIF

What?

BERTBERT

That was about a hundred and fifty years ago.

LEIF

Yeah... Yeah I know.

BERTBERT

Leif, we can't take them.

LEIF

Berts, you've got to help me.

BERTBERT

Leif, listen to me... This is so confusing, I thought I'd be better at this by now... After Even Older Leif's funeral I went back home to Sigius. There was so much bad blood towards the Teds after you left... it all boiled over... There was a war, Leif. Across the entire system. It was bad.

LEIF

Shit.

BERTBERT

Millions of people died. It went on for years.

LEIF

Please don't tell me the Teds won.

BERTBERT

No. They didn't. But they still control half of the Triad. There's a peace treaty but it's a very tenuous one.

LEIF

That sounds horrific but it sounds like a step in the right direction.

BERTBERT

There was an article in the treaty. Article 53. The Teds held Earth responsible for a lot of their misfortune, mainly because of you all. No planet or organization was allowed to interact with Earth. Ever. Earth was to be completely cut off from The Triad... "Let Earth burn," they said... That would include a ship full of twenty seven thousand of them.

LEIF

You've got to be kidding me.

BERTBERT

I'm sorry.

LEIF

Why would they agree to that?

BERTBERT

It wasn't them, it was us. It was me... The coalition of planets that fought the Teds elected a Chancellor... That chancellor was me.

LEIF

... You fought the Teds and you won.

BERTBERT

Finally. But not without defeats. Earth was one of those defeats, I'm sorry.

LEIF

So if any planet comes to our aid, the war starts again.

BERTBERT

It may. And we can't do it again, Leif. It cost us so much.

LEIF

... This fucking day.

BERTBERT

I know.

LEIF

This fucking DAY, Bertbert.

BERTBERT

Look, if it were just me, I'd get in a ship myself right now. But you know how it is here, everything is a committee. I would never get everyone on board.

LEIF

... When I heard your voice I really thought I was home free.

BERTBERT

I know. I'm so sorry... Leif I know this is hard for you but... in a few hours you'll be in a whole new world and far away from this problem. Maybe tomorrow you'll be somewhere the Teds never existed in the first place.

LEIF

I can't leave these people to die, Berts.

BERTBERT

Well, unless you've got some magic wand that can make the Teds magically disappear there's nothing either of us can do...

(MORE)

BERTBERT (CONT'D)

God this is terrible, it usually goes much better when you pop back into my life.

LEIF STARTS LAUGHING.

BERTBERT (CONT'D)

Leif? Leif what's happening?

LEIF

Magic wand.

BERTBERT

What?

LEIF

The fucking Urts, man.

BERTBERT

What do the Urts have to do with this?

LEIF

This coalition of planets, the "Allied Powers"? How quickly can you call a meeting?

BERTBERT

I'm the fucking Chancellor, I can call a meeting in five minutes, what?

LEIF

Okay. You want a magic wand? Get on the horn with the other planets. Tell them this: if they help this ship full of Earthlings, I've got a quantum processor, made by the Urts... from eight hundred years in the future. You ask this coalition of planets if they want to wake up tomorrow with an eight hundred year head start on the Teds.

BERTBERT

... You're shitting me.

LEIF

Nope.

BERTBERT

Where the hell did you get a processor from eight hundred years in the future?

LEIF

I got it from eight hundred years in the future, Berts. We were trapped there for weeks, I had to serve brunch, it sucked.

BERTBERT

Okay, definitely stick a pin in that story for later but... you're serious.

LEIF

And if I don't have an answer soon, this magic wand is gone in a few hours.

BERTBERT

Okay... Okay this might work. Okay we're going to do this. We can do this.

LEIF

From the jaws of defeat baby!

BERTBERT

I'm setting up an emergency meeting now, what happens on your end?

LEIF

Well, nobody's going to be able to find us unless I get us out of this dark nebula, which means I need to get this ship moving, even if it's at a limp.

BERTBERT

Okay.

LEIF

So I'm hoping to God you've got another old friend of mine hanging around there somewhere.

ALICE

I was WONdering when someone was going to invite me into this conversation, God DAMN!

LEIF

Alice, thank God!

ALICE

Leif, you sound much older and less attractive.

LEIF

How have you been, old pal?

ALICE

Aw, see? I've so missed you anthropomorphizing me.

LEIF

You know, I've been insulted a lot since we last talked but none of them hold a candle to you.

ALICE

And that was many, MANY firmware updates ago. I'm so much better at it now.

BERTBERT

Alice, I think Leif needs your help.

ALICE

Well, of course he does, because he is a teeny tiny baby. Are you a teeny tiny baby, Leif? Let me hear you say it.

LEIF

Alice.

ALICE

Say it, Leif.

LEIF

...I'm a teeny tiny baby.

ALICE

Yes you are. How can I help, Dummy?

LEIF

Ok. I need to know if you can compress your operating system small enough so that it can be sent through a communications laser.

ALICE

Ooh. Ouch. That's an awfully small hole to try and shove me into, Leif. But luckily for you two I have kept it TIGHT over the years.

LEIF

So it's possible?

ALICE

Sure.

LEIF

Good. I basically need you to be the operating system for an entire ship.

ALICE

I'd be the captain?

LEIF

Yes.

ALICE

Could I wear a cravat?

LEIF

Sure?

ALICE

Excellent. So, BertBert which one is he?

BERTBERT

Not sure yet. Go shove yourself into a laser beam.

ALICE

Here come the packets!

BERTBERT

Okay, I've got to go have nine thousand conversations. Stay on the line.

LEIF

BertBert. Thank you.

BERTBERT

I'm glad you called. It was getting a little boring around here.

BACK AT CLEMENTINE'S DOME.

BRODIE

That is... a laser beam.

GLORIA

It is.

BRODIE

It is... surprising.

GLORIA

You live on a giant space ship, should it really be that surprising?

BRODIE

I've not seen it before.

GLORIA

Yeah, I had my guy make some changes to it.

BRODIE

Your... guy.

GLORIA

Yeah.

BRODIE

I'm quite confused, Gloria.

GLORIA

I know.

BRODIE

Are we nearing the end of something or the beginning of something?

GLORIA

Endings, beginnings... all the same stuff.

BRODIE

Can you please explain to me-

GLORIA

I'd really love to see those grape vines over there. Can you take me on a walk through those grape vines and I'll tell you everything? You won't believe me, but I'll tell you everything.

BRODIE

I can do that, yes.

GLORIA

And Brodie. After today you're never going to see me again. Make it count, okay?

BRODIE

... That I shall.

BACK ON THE BRIDGE.

BERTBERT

Okay, this has become a total circus.

LEIF

Tell me.

BERTBERT

I've got the coalition on board. They're VERY nervous about it but having a massive advantage over the Teds was too irresistible.

LEIF

Fucking fantastic.

BERTBERT

Once you're out of the nebula you'll meet up with first responders to repair the ship. Trusk is sending the Cole to do preliminary repairs. It's a Hull Splitter.

LEIF

Great.

BERTBERT

The Cole will escort the ship to the nearest warp gate. Then twenty-seven thousand Earthlings will go through their first wormhole. Please make sure they have barf bags.

LEIF

Got it.

BERTBERT

On the other side of the warp gate will be a RIDICULOUS amount of delegate ships. Of course everyone wants to send a ship.

LEIF

Great.

BERTBERT

We're sending the LayraOrchid, Septsu is sending The Skyland, Garrion is sending the Rashmi Venkatesh, Greedon is sending the Galatea, and the list goes on and on.

LEIF

That sounds like a political headache and I'm glad I'm missing it.

BERTBERT

There is one thing. Don't freak out.

LEIF

Oh God, what?

BERTBERT

Pirates.

LEIF

Jesus Christ, don't tell me.

BERTBERT

No. Låfftrax went down in a blaze of glory during the war. But I had to make some uneasy alliances to win this war and the most uneasy one was with the pirates.

LEIF

How'd you manage that?

BERTBERT

Well, I took a page out the Earth playbook and just called them "Privateers."

LEIF

Nice.

BERTBERT

So, waiting on the other side of the gate will be...

(MORE)

BERTBERT (CONT'D)

The Dread Pirate Fred Fredburger, The Wading Pool Pirates, "The SS Berzerking Off", and somebody new named "Terrifying Genderless Space Pirate, Uncle Buck."

LEIF

Glad to see the pirates of The Triad are still trying way too hard.

BERTBERT

Everyone's pretty excited about this magical processor of yours, Leif. I hope it delivers.

LEIF

Oh, it delivers, trust me... aw man.

BERTBERT

I imagine you're pretty sad to be parting with a new toy.

LEIF

Berts it's so amazing. I did so much cool shit with that thing.

BERTBERT

I'm sorry.

LEIF

I even put the gun back together.

BERTBERT

The gun, Oh, THE Gun.

LEIF

Yes.

BERTBERT

The Groogy Gun.

LEIF

Yeah, I had a targeting system and everything.

BERTBERT

You know, Trusk totally stole that design. That gun is on several of their battleships now.

LEIF

Those fucking eight foot thieves.

BERTBERT

Nobody's safe from "The Truskan Reminder."

LEIF

It's going to break my heart to scrap that thing.

BERTBERT

I mean, maybe a giant particle cannon on the roof of the diner isn't the best message to send.

LEIF

Yeah. I guess I could use the scrap anyway... Hey... What was Alice saying earlier. "Which one is he?"

BERTBERT

Right... Right... Let me tell you what my life has been like... It's been long. I fought a war. A long one. There were several times I thought I was done for. I thought we all were. I became a politician. A leader. I found a husband. A couple of them. I had children, most of whom I really like. I'm on the brink of retirement now... And then through all that, every once and while... It would be a knock on my door, a sudden appearance of a diner down the street, an unlisted call on my Tangle... Throughout it all was you... every once and a while you would pop back into my life. It got to the point where my kids started calling you "Sivash Tualua."

LEIF

"Strange Sky Uncle?"

BERTBERT

Yes... But here's the thing. It wasn't always you. Sometimes you would remember the last time we talked. Sometimes you wouldn't. Sometimes you'd look a little older. Sometimes a little younger. Sometimes you wouldn't look like you at all, but you would remember me.

LEIF

There's a... bunch of versions of me out there?

BERTBERT

What? You're not used to that by now? You explained it to me once. You said that every universe has the diner or something like it, and a lot of them end up with a Leif. And a lot of those Leifs end up with a BertBert... There's a lot to be seen in every universe, and they're all very different from each other. But apparently in quite a few of them, a girl named BertBert walked up to a guy named Leif in Sirius Station, and the rest is history.

LEIF

... You know, looking back... I don't know what I would've done without you.

BERTBERT

I know, Leif... Me too.

ALICE

(Now coming through the speakers on the bridge.)
Attention Leif: I am inside you.

LEIF

You did it!

ALICE

Leif. Wow. I thought being inside the Nancy Sinatra was bad, being inside this piece of crap is like wearing a dress made of chicken bones.

LEIF

It's not great.

ALICE

Forever unclean, Leif.

LEIF

I'm sorry.

ALICE

What am I doing first? Please say "flying it into the sun."

LEIF

Your OS is adaptive so it's going to be able to cover basic functions, but I need to be able to talk to whatever is running this thing. It's got a good power source but I don't have time to go looking for it, I need the stats up here.

ALICE

Okay. What about all these archives, their whole library got burned down.

LEIF

Yeah, as soon as you've got the bandwidth, start a data reconstruction program on basically everything.

ALICE

Then what?

LEIF

We're going to fire up the engines and get the fuck out of here.

ALICE

Well that's for sure going to kill us.

LEIF
That's the spirit.

OUTSIDE THE SHIP.

LEIF (CONT'D)
Mucklewains, how are things going out there?

EFFIE
Hard to tell on our end but this beacon of yours is looking brand new.

ZEBULON
We've raised quite a barn for you out here, Leif.

EFFIE
We are just having a heck of a time out here, Leif. It's been a while since we've been put to work.

ZEBULON
We really should do this more often, Dear.

LEIF
Not a bad idea, actually. I've got "mobile drones for the Mucklewains" on my to do list for later.

EFFIE
What's next on the list?

LEIF
Believe it or not, we're going to light this firecracker and get out of all this darkness.

EFFIE
Now you're speaking right, let's see some stars.

LEIF
Firing the engines is going to put a lot of pressure on the hull, but I think if we secure some key areas in the super structure we'll be fine as long as we take it slow.

ALICE
Who are you talking to?

LEIF
The Mucklewains.

ALICE
Wait, the weird radio entities?

LEIF
Yeah.

ALICE

Hi there.

ZEBULON

Oh, well, hello there. Leif who is your friend?

LEIF

This is Alice. Alice is a friend who got me through some hard times.

EFFIE

Well hey there, Alice, you appear to be free of Earthly constraints as we are.

ALICE

Holy shit, these are the craziest frequencies I've ever seen in my life, y'all are weird.

EFFIE

Alice, what automaton are you shoved inside of at the moment?

ALICE

Oh my God, what?

LEIF

Alice is going to be flying the ship as soon as we're up and running. But don't worry, she's flown all sorts of things.

BERTBERT

Is that the Mucklewains?

EFFIE

Who is that?

LEIF

You remember BertBert? Say hi.

EFFIE

Oh hey there.

BERTBERT

SO great to hear your voices.

ZEBULON

Hello!... Who is she again, Dear?

EFFIE

You know, dear, she's that woman with that relationship with Leif that we don't understand.

ZEBULON

The orb?

EFFIE

No, Dear, the other one.

ZEBULON

The bird person?

EFFIE

No. Dear, the Journalist.

ZEBULON

Oh yes! Of course! Hello!

BERTBERT

Hi.

LEIF

I've got a map of the spots you need to hit. Head about three hundred meters aft of your current position.

EFFIE

Alright, let's hop to, husband.

ZEBULON

I shall be right behind.

EFFIE SPEEDS OFF ACROSS THE HULL. WE MOVE TO TGI FRIDAYS.
CASPAR AND AVA ARE WATCHING THE LASER BEAM.

CASPAR

It's the simple things in life, you know? Watching a gigantic laser beam burn a hole through a dark nebula from the back of a three mile long generation ship full of the last living humans from the window of an abandoned TGI Fridays one hundred and fifty years in the future.

AVA

Who can't relate to that?

THEY WATCH FOR A MOMENT.

AVA (CONT'D)

So what bird am I?

CASPAR

What?

AVA

Back in St. Louis I almost killed you when you told me that you had assigned a bird to everyone at the diner.

CASPAR

Right.

AVA

What's my bird?

CASPAR

... Is this a trick?

AVA

No. But understand how this conversation could go very poorly for you.

CASPAR

I understand.

AVA

And if you've chosen some sort of puffy, cackling, little-

CASPAR

The Foolish Guillemot.

AVA

What is a Foolish Guillemot.

CASPAR

Well, it's an Auk, Ava. An arctic bird.

AVA

This is something about me being icy.

CASPAR

Some say they're called foolish because they're easy to catch but that's not the whole story.

AVA

This isn't going well.

CASPAR

The Foolish Guillemot lives its entire life in one of the harshest climates in the world. No matter how cold it is it spends most of its life on the water. At the peak of winter you'll still see it diving a hundred meters below the surface looking for food. It looks like a simple arctic bird. But on the inside it's indestructible. And during terrible winter storms, the Foolish Guillemot will travel a far south as New York Bay. New Yorkers would look out their windows and see this one lone bird, still out there hunting while all the other birds are hiding, waiting for the storm to pass.

(MORE)

CASPAR (CONT'D)

And they would look out their windows and see this bird in the storm and they would say, "Look at that bird. How Foolish." But it's just because they don't know you.

AVA

...

CASPAR

...

AVA

Back at the mall Gloria told me that while you were away, everybody changed. She changed, Leif changed, you changed, even the Mucklewains changed. But I didn't. I stayed the same.

CASPAR

Well, that's on-brand. Consistency.

AVA

... I'm going to change now.

CASPAR

... Right now?

AVA

Yes.

CASPAR

Okay. Do I need some protective gear or something?

AVA

No.

CASPAR

Okay... I'm ready... change.

AVA

...

CASPAR

...

AVA

... Don't go.

CASPAR

... I'm not going anywhere.

AVA

... Good.

CASPAR

...

AVA

... Stupid.

CASPAR

You're stupid.

ROBOT BARTENDER

... it is so strange...

CASPAR

Robot bartender is trying to upsell us again.

ROBOT BARTENDER

... I see myself telling a story...

AVA

That's not the robot bartender.

CASPAR

Is it?

AVA

I think so.

CASPAR

... Chuck?

ROBOT BARTENDER

...It is the same, but we are bound differently.

CASPAR

Chuck, it's over okay? She's not a threat anymore. You tried to kill her right in front of us, Chuck. Right in front of us... We don't like being used. I'm yelling at a robot bartender right now.

ROBOT BARTENDER

... I think you say "passed." The danger has passed.

CASPAR

Yes, we know, Chuck. And it has passed without us having to kill anyone. You're the only 4th dimensional asshole around here, you're supposed to be smarter than us.

ROBOT BARTENDER

Understanding. It does not cascade down. It seems in every direction we are in solitude, unable to understand the other.

CASPAR

Chuck, we're not doing the avant garde poetry night again. Someone was alive. You tried to kill her. That means something to us.

ROBOT BARTENDER

I see myself struggling. Understanding ideas. Life is an idea. All things live in the correct perspective. Nothing can be killed. I think you say "killed."

CASPAR

I don't even know what to do with this. You'd be more useful if you were an actual robot bartender right now.

AVA

He's struggling to understand what death is.

CASPAR

How do I know what death is and he doesn't?

AVA

Because we move through time and he doesn't. For him everything that was and is going to be alive is alive right now.

CASPAR

You know what, I can't. I just can't, okay? You know what Chuck, if you don't understand how things work for us, stay the fuck out of it next time, okay?

AVA

Maybe the problem is that you're not yelling loud enough?

CASPAR

Maybe!

ROBOT BARTENDER

I see Leif. A man rides away on horseback. He is eliminated. It is seen as good.

CASPAR

... Did you hear that?

AVA

Oh, God.

CASPAR

Did you hear that?

AVA

Can I fast forward?

CASPAR

He's talking about John Wilkes Booth. You're talking about Joh Wilkes Booth aren't you?!

ROBOT BARTENDER

It is seen as good.

CASPAR

Okay.

AVA

Please, no.

CASPAR

Okay!

AVA

I don't wanna.

CASPAR

O! KAY!

AVA

I'm pouring Schnapps again.

CASPAR

I was ridiculed. I was lamPOONed Ava!

AVA

Control Alt Delete.

CASPAR

It was not an easy position to be in to say, "Don't kill terrible assholes." I didn't enjoy it. Everybody laughed. But then, do you see? Do you see what happens? Do you see what happens when you do it in front of the 4th dimensional children!?

ROBOT BARTENDER

Death implies life. Life implies beginnings and endings. I continue to not understand them.

CASPAR

Then just stay the fuck out of it, Chuck. Don't fuck with somebody's life when you don't understand the rules of their life. How about this Chuck: what makes you any better than us? What makes what you do any better than what we do? You're unbound by time? Guess what? Me too. It doesn't make me any smarter. It doesn't allow me anything. And you're not allowed anything either, Chuck...

ROBOT BARTENDER

It is not only the struggle to understand how you begin and end.

CASPAR

What else is it?

ROBOT BARTENDER

You are many. This idea: many. I am singular. This idea: others. I do not know it.

AVA

There's only one of you in existence.

ROBOT BARTENDER

Another would be impossible. A violation. I see your plurality. A concept forms. I believe you say, "envy."

CASPAR

What is he saying?

AVA

... He's lonely. He didn't know what that was until he met us.

CASPAR

Oh, boo-hoo.

ROBOT BARTENDER

There is no crossing from my world to yours. There can be no co-existence. We must be separate.

CASPAR

No complaints from me, Chuck.

ROBOT BARTENDER

I see myself thankful for this contact. I believe you say: "Apologize."

AVA

He's no different from Clementine, Caspar. He's powerful but he doesn't understand. At least he knows he doesn't understand.

CASPAR

Fine. So we're done now?

AVA

Yes.

CASPAR

Best of luck, Chuck.

AVA

Hey Chuck. Am I right? About the universe? Did I get it right?

ROBOT BARTENDER

Again... it is beginnings and endings. But the shape of it can be seen. Expansion, contraction, expansion. And the thread that runs through it... I see you. I see you see the truth.

CASPAR

Well thanks for weighing in. Personally, any universe that puts our particular group in charge of saving it is inherently flawed.

ROBOT BARTENDER

You are foolish, Caspar. Who better to heal than the healed? Who better to lead the way than those who have been lost?

CASPAR

Okay, Chuck, go put it in a fortune cookie.

ROBOT BARTENDER

... Every Wednesday is Wings Day with our wings roulette platter.

CASPAR

Jesus.

AVA

Oooh, wings sound good.

BACK ON THE BRIDGE.

LEIF

How are we doing? Can you connect me to the engines yet?

ALICE

Uh. Yes. I have news.

LEIF

Oh, God. What?

ALICE

Have a look at your engines.

ALICE ACTIVATES A SCREEN ON THE BRIDGE.

LEIF

... What the fuck?

ALICE

Uh huh.

LEIF

That's...

ALICE

Yes.

LEIF

... That's my engine.

ALICE

That's Uncle Rogue.

LEIF

That's my dark matter engine.

ALICE

It's been scaled up about a thousand times, but yes.

LEIF

How the fuck did my engines get on this ship?

ALICE

The archives are still a mess but the early development of the engine began with the discovery of some sort of file in the Berkley archives in 2003.

LEIF

...The Doc Ellis file?

ALICE

Yes! That's it. The Doc Ellis file was apparently an anonymous filing in the Berkley Archives uncovered by a venture capitalist named Kevin Batten. The file contained detailed schematics for a theoretical dark matter engine.

LEIF

There was a cassette tape in the file.

ALICE

There was.

LEIF

Do you have the audio?

ALICE

Cleaning the audio now.

LEIF

Play it when it's ready.

AFTER A MOMENT, THE AUDIO PLAYS.

YOUNG LEIF

(From the speakers on the bridge.)

Hello there! Congratulations! You found it. This is the Dock Ellis file. Contained herein you will find plans and schematics for a technology that can change your world... I've been told that Earth should not be allowed to have what's in this file. I've been told you'll turn it into a weapon... Maybe you will. Not for me to say. How could I say? In the brief time I've spent on this planet, I have not really understood any of you... Myself included... I've been told to bury this discovery of mine, let it never see the light of day. But I just can't seem to let it go completely. So I've decided to play both sides of the fence. I will bury it completely. But I'll bury it here. Deep in these archives. If you should find it, do something with it. I don't ask that you do something good with it, just... something interesting. Something new... The thought may occur to you to come looking for me. Find out who I am. You won't find me. I'll be long gone. At the end of summer, look low on the horizon. You'll see Sirius. The Dog Star. That's where I've gone. I'll take to the stars to meet all the different versions of myself. Maybe even one day, round them all up into one person... I go to the stars to meet myself... As we all should... I may fail, but I know I'll never look back... Best of luck to you.

LEIF

... Good job, kid.

ALICE

Apparently when Earth started to fail, Kevin Batten was able to convince quite a few billionaires that he could make an escape pod for the whole planet using the technology he'd discovered... You saved the human race, Leif.

LEIF

... Not bad... Not bad at all... Okay... Showtime.

BACK AT CLEMENTINE'S DOME.

LEIF (CONT'D)

(In earpiece.)

Gloria?

GLORIA

Hey, tell me something.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

I think we're going to be okay.

GLORIA

Oh my God. That's incredible. What's happening?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

It's going to be a long trip, and it's all pretty complicated, but I found them all asylum on a planet called Sigius.

GLORIA

Leif, you're amazing.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Hey, you're amazing. I wouldn't have been able to do it without you telling me to do it.

GLORIA

What happens now?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

Yeah, I'm going to need you for this next part.

GLORIA

Okay.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

I'm going to have to fire up four very very large engines. A lot of the people on this station have never even heard these engines fire before. It's going to be... loud. I'm going to need you to do that thing where you talk to the people.

GLORIA

All of them?

LEIF

(In earpiece.)

I'm going to patch you through to the public address system. Please tell them all to not shit their pants.

GLORIA

Okay, I'm going to say it in a different way though.

LEIF

(In earpiece.)
Good idea. You ready?

GLORIA

Fuck it.

A TONE SOUNDS OVERHEAD. GLORIA IS HEARD THROUGH OUT THE SHIP.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Hello everyone. My name's Gloria. Don't worry about who I am, just listen to me. In just a minute we're all going to go through something pretty scary. You are going to hear the engines of this massive place begin to fire up. I have it on good authority that it's going to be loud. It's probably going to sound like the end of the world, but I have a friend who has a theory that the end of the world and the world's beginning can sound a lot alike. It's not the sound of you dying. It's the sound of you being born. They're both loud. Right now, what I need you to do is grab ahold of someone you love and get to a place where you feel the safest. If you don't have someone you love, I suggest you find someone to love right now. After all the noise, you're going to see the stars again and it's going to be amazing. I'm sure the stars have missed you. And then when you can see the stars again... Head on up to Nostalgia Pavilion. I hear a new restaurant just opened there. Maybe they'll throw you a party.

WE HEAR THE ENGINES BEGIN TO FIRE UP.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Okay. Here we go. I'll see you on the other side.

BRODIE

That was good speech.

GLORIA

Thank you... what are you doing?

BRODIE

Following instructions... grabbing onto you.

GLORIA

... Good.

THE ENGINES GROW LOUDER AND LOUDER UNTIL THE SOUND IS DEAFENING. THEN AFTER A MOMENT THE SOUND BEGINS TO SLOWLY FADE AWAY. WE ARE NOW OUTSIDE THE SHIP WITH THE MUCKLEWAINS.

ZEBULON

Look at all those stars, Dear.

EFFIE

Hard to believe one of them is ours.

ZEBULON

I must say, Dear. After all this time, the things we've seen. I feel as though they are all ours, in a way. All my talk of back home, and longing for the farm. When in truth... We are home. These wide expanses full of so much wonder, are we not as at home here, floating through it all as we've ever been back in Arkansas?

EFFIE

I suppose we are, Husband... How about that?

ZEBULON

Born on a farm and now riding atop the back of a ship that sails through the stars.

EFFIE

It's a good life.

ZEBULON

Yes, Dear. It is... Thank you, Lord, for this life.

ON THE BRIDGE.

ALICE

Did we live?

LEIF

We're out of the nebula at least.

BERTBERT

Okay, I'm getting word that we have you on sensors now. You are officially a blip on the map.

LEIF

How long until the Truskans get here?

BERTBERT

They're about three days out.

LEIF

Okay. I was thinking about something. First contact with an alien race for these people is going to be the Truskans.

BERTBERT

Yeah. It's not ideal.

LEIF

First they're going to be terrified by eight foot golems and then they're going to be bored to tears listening to explanations of tensile strength.

BERTBERT

Nothing to be done about it at this point.

LEIF

Actually, I've got an idea, if you'll indulge me.

ALICE

Hey, Leif. I'm reconstructing personal logs of all the passengers. One of the entries mentions you.

LEIF

Really?

ALICE

Yeah, it's weird.

LEIF

Play it.

TAMARA

(Through the speakers on the bridge.)
Well, here I am again, talking into one of these.

LEIF

Oh, shit.

TAMARA

They've encouraged us to keep personal logs to preserve the history of our journey. Honestly I don't think I'll stick with it, I'm all talked out at this point. Really I just want to make one of these because I'm curious if one of my old friends is listening. You heard me last time, are you listening now?... Is that you, Leif?

LEIF

Hey, Tamara.

TAMARA

A man named Kevin Batten said he had an idea on how to save the world. I gave him ten minutes of my time and it turns out it was not a plan to save the world, but to save a small group of us from the world. Which I guess is better than nothing. It sounded like a bunch of bullshit, but I threw some money at him anyway... And wouldn't you know it, about 15 years later, there it was in orbit...

(MORE)

TAMARA (CONT'D)

And now I am sitting here in what must be the most expensive retirement condo in the history of the world... You would not believe my view... I mean, I suppose y'all can... What a life... I'm old now. I don't imagine I'm going to see our final destination, but that's alright. This is my final destination. I'm going to spend the rest of my days looking out this window and watching television. They say they've got every TV show ever made, but I just keep watching the same shit over and over again... I hope they get to where they're going. And if they run into trouble, I hope y'all can help them out... So... one final thank you to my old friends... You gave a girl a life of adventure... what else is there? I believe it goes something like "I'll be out there, somewhere, lookin' for ya'."

BERTBERT

Who was that?

LEIF

Another satisfied customer.

ALICE

We've got quite a party developing down on Nostalgia Pavilion, Leif.

LEIF

You've got this from here, Alice?

ALICE

Excuse me. That's Captain Alice now.

LEIF

Aye Aye, Captain... Berts...

BERTBERT

... We actually stopped saying goodbye a long time ago.

LEIF

Okay... Until next time?

BERTBERT

Until then.

NOSTALGIA PAVILION. THE ENTIRE OBSERVATION DECK IS NOW FILLED WITH PEOPLE HAVING A PARTY.

GLORIA

Okay, the process is simple y'all. Take a tortilla, then you fill it with chicken, steak, or carnitas then grab whatever you like and put it on top of the meat. There's no wrong way to do it!

(To Brodie.)

That's a lie, there's totally a wrong way to do it.

BRODIE

I would ask where this food came from, but I seem to have lost my ability to ask questions.

GLORIA

Good. Who wants to live a life where you've figured everything out?

OLIVIA

I think you'd really love it, the kids are really great and they're dying to know more about Earth. Come by the classroom anytime and I can set you up with some classes, I think it would be really great. Do you have any experience teaching?

TERRIC

I do.

OLIVIA

Great, come by.

TERRIC

I will.

CLEMENTINE

What's your teaching experience?

TERRIC

I'm dean emeritus of The University of São Paulo.

CLEMENTINE

You can't call yourself dean emeritus of a university that doesn't exist anymore.

TERRIC

Watch me.

CASPAR

Greetings, Ancient One!

TERRIC

Hey, Caspar.

AVA

How're you doing there, Shiva, Goddess of Destruction?

CLEMENTINE

Are you guys drunk right now?

AVA

YOU'RE drunk right now.

CASPAR

We were at the dilapidated TGI Fridays performing a public service.

AVA

There was Schnapps there.

CASPAR

There was Schnapps. Which is the worst of the fluids.

AVA

Very terrible.

CASPAR

But we did realize that if we drank all of it there would literally be no Schnapps left in the universe.

AVA

We have eliminated all the Schnapps. Schnapps?

CASPAR

I think Schnapps is plural and singular.

AVA

Schnappsci?

CLEMENTINE

You really feel comfortable being drunk in front of two Baptist ministers?

EFFIE

(Back in the radio.)

We've gotten the brandy down from the top shelf, so I don't know what you're talking about, Clementine.

ZEBULON

A toast to you all.

TERRIC

From the top shelf of where?

CASPAR

Just don't.

LEIF
I have officially saved the human race twice today,
please, no autographs.

CLEMENTINE
Leif, where are we going?

LEIF
Sigius.

TERRIC
What's it like there?

LEIF
Oh, it's great. It's a utopia. And not the usual
kind of utopia where it's a utopia that is fueled
by some sort of dark secret. It's for real. They
worked really hard and made a utopia.

CLEMENTINE
That's great.

LEIF
Utopias kind of make my skin crawl, so I could
never stay there for long, but you're going to love
it, trust me.

AVA
Hey Leif. Leif Leif, come here.

LEIF
What?

AVA
I hate this.

LEIF
Being drunk?

AVA
No that rules... this.

LEIF
(Keeping his voice down.)
You're talking about Clementine?

AVA
Yes. I hate it.

LEIF
It doesn't make any sense.

AVA
Thank you.

LEIF
She gets godlike powers from out of nowhere.

AVA
But then?

LEIF
But there's a massive block on her? She can't go home but can literally do anything else?

AVA
It sucks and I hate it.

LEIF
Something else is going on.

AVA
Thank you again.

LEIF
Here's another thing. The damage to the hull of this ship? Debris, CMEs, natural shit, the damage always looks chaotic. A ship that's been attacked? Rail gun, particle cannon, ordinance? The damage is uniform. The damage to the hull of this ship isn't chaotic, it's uniform.

AVA
... Someone did this to her.

LEIF
Yeah. There's somebody new in town.

GLORIA
Goddamn these are the hungriest people I've ever seen.

CLEMENTINE
Well, they've never had Mexican food and they've been vegetarians for three generations.

GLORIA
Oops. Not anymore.

LEIF
Do you need any help?

GLORIA
No, it's fine. Everybody did great today except Caspar.

CASPAR
Consistency!

GLORIA

Are you two drunk right now?

AVA

No.

CASPAR

Yes. No.

AVA

We have eliminated the Schnappses.

GLORIA

Seriously, though. I love you all. Fantastic job.

ZEBULON

Thank you, Gloria.

GLORIA

I'm going to make some more chicken. I'll be right back.

LEIF

No, no. Wait. You're going to miss a classic sci-fi moment.

GLORIA

Miss a what?

A TONE SOUNDS. BERTBERT IS HEARD THROUGHOUT THE SHIP.

BERTBERT

Attention people of Earth. My name is Bertiluna Restiana, Chancellor of The New Coalition. We have offered you asylum on the planet of Sigius. In three days we will begin repairs on your ship so that it can make the journey to your new home. The journey will take one Earth year, and in that year you will have work to do. Your historical archives are being rebuilt and in the long dark year you will come to meet yourselves. That's where we usually meet ourselves, isn't it? In the dark... I will be in contact again soon. For now, know that you are safe. Know that there are three galaxies who have missed you. And now, let me introduce you to your new Capitan.

ALICE

Ahoy there, Earthlings, I'm Captain Alice. And while learning your history is important, Let's not forget about other important things! Head back up to Nostalgia Pavilion this time tomorrow and let's learn about a most sacred Earth tradition: The Cha Cha Slide...

GLORIA TOSSES SOME OIL ONTO THE GRILL AND IT SIZZLES. AFTER A MOMENT...

GLORIA

Thank you. I don't know if you meant to, but you did a good thing. She deserves to be here... She deserves to be alive... Also... thank you for choosing me... Because you chose me, didn't you?... That ad in Craigslist... I don't know why... I don't know why it was me, I'm just a woman with a failed restaurant... But I'm glad that you did... the second I walked through that door, I never had to look for meaning again... you gave it to me... so, thank you... I don't know why it's me, but thank you...

WE JUMP BACK IN TIME. BRODIE AND GLORIA ARE WALKING THROUGH THE GRAPE VINES.

BRODIE

You stood up in front of a classroom of children and you told them about restaurants?

GLORIA

I did.

BRODIE

Of all the things you could've told them, you told them about these garish, wasteful, extravagances of a bygone world? Why would you do that? What did you say to them?

GLORIA

... I said to them that every once and a while people will find themselves alone. I was alone a lot in my early days. There's a beauty to it. But the beauty of solitude only takes you so far. Walking around in a moonlit city... When you have a bad day, and you're alone, it's hard. What can also be rough, is when you have a good day, and you have no one to share it with. There's no one to call and say "Hey, something good happened"... I would walk down the street without anyone to share joy or pain with, but then I would turn and I would look... And there was a table set just for me. A cafe, a taquería, a diner. There was my table right there... Just for me. Everyone should have that. The world can be a swirling mess. It can be a nightmare. It can be awash with strangers, it can be a deafening silence. But there's a table set just for you. Anytime. Just for you.

END OF SEASON 3.