

MIDNIGHT BURGER

Chapter 4: What's the Frequency, Dearest?

SFX: MUSIC. SOUND OF THE COSMOS FLYING BY.

GLORIA

You're just going to sit there and watch me fill these ramekins?

AVA

I like manual labor, it helps me think.

GLORIA

Well then do some.

AVA

No, watching it helps me think. It's like watching a line of ants, it's very relaxing.

GLORIA

Fine. Hey. Speaking of relaxed, do you ever feel like Leif is almost TOO relaxed? He goes with the flow no matter what, it's weird.

AVA

Oh yeah? Watch this. Hey, Leif?

LEIF

(In the kitchen)
Yeah?

AVA

I've been thinking about it and, I don't know, I still feel like a hot dog is a sandwich.

SFX: POTS AND PANS CRASHING.

LEIF

(In the kitchen)
For fuck's sake!

GLORIA

Oh my God.

LEIF

I can't believe we have to go through this again.
AGAIN!

AVA

But it's in my hand and it's between two things.

LEIF

It is SURROUND by ONE THING on THREE SIDES. What are you not getting about this?

AVA

I don't see how that can't be a sandwich.

LEIF

You don't SEE? YOU don't see?

GLORIA

Leif, oh my God.

AVA

It seems like you have a very limited definition of a sandwich.

LEIF

That's the whole- how can-...

GLORIA

What is happening?

LEIF

What was that award you got? The gravity thing?

AVA

Well, I've received many accolades, Leif.

LEIF

You gave some sort of speech in Belgium.

AVA

The Society of European Physicists? My award winning paper on gravity waves?

LEIF

Exactly. You figured something out that literally no one on Earth had figured out and you can't WRAP your MIND around HAND FOOD TAXONOMY!

CASPAR

Leif, what are you yelling about?

GLORIA

Sandwiches apparently.

CASPAR

Again, Ava?

AVA

I'm a scientist, I have a commitment to the truth.

LEIF

I don't have time for this.

ZEBULON

No, you do not, for we are only two hours from our new destination and Leif has not cleaned the grill yet.

LEIF

Narc.

CASPAR

Gloria, are we ready up here?

GLORIA

Yeah, just let me put out these sugars. Hey Effie, where are we headed?

EFFIE

Well I'm certain that I don't know, Dear.

CASPAR

You're not doing it right, Gloria.

GLORIA

Right. Effie what does THE LORD tell you about where we're headed?

EFFIE

The lord tells me of a golden city surrounded by-

GLORIA

WHOA-

SFX: TRIP AND FALL. RADIO CRASHING TO THE GROUND. RADIO STATIC.

AVA

Uh-oh.

GLORIA

Oh no.

CASPAR

What happened?

GLORIA

I tripped and I accidentally... I knocked the radio over.

CASPAR

Zeb? Effie? Can you hear us?... Guys?

GLORIA

I think the dial might have moved a little bit.
What station was it on?

CASPAR

I don't know.

GLORIA

You don't know?

CASPAR

I've never changed the station before.

GLORIA

Ever?

CASPAR

They always told me not to.

GLORIA

Well, what do we do?

AVA

Guys. Why are you freaking out? Just search around
for the station.

SFX: DINER SLOWING DOWN AND STOPPING.

CASPAR

Why are we stopping? It's not time for us to stop.

GLORIA

Did I break the diner?

CASPAR

Ava, where are we?

AVA

Um... Space.

CASPAR

Can you narrow that down?

AVA

The bad part?

CASPAR

Ava.

AVA

Have a look.

CASPAR

What is that?

AVA
It's a gazebo, what do you think it is?

CASPAR
That thing you do? That I hate? Where you joke
around in a moment of crisis?

AVA
It's a supermassive black hole.

CASPAR
Are we heading towards it?

AVA
Technically everything is.

LEIF
Hey, what's going on, have we stopped already?
Whoa. Is that what I think it is?

CASPAR
That depends, do you think it's imminent doom?

LEIF
What the hell happened?

GLORIA
I broke the diner.

CASPAR
We don't know what happened. Gloria accidentally
moved the dial on the radio, we lost Zeb and Effie,
then everything stopped.

LEIF
We're not supposed to change the station.

GLORIA
It was an accident.

LEIF
Well let's get them back.

CASPAR
I don't know what the station is, do you?

LEIF
I don't know what the station is, I've never
changed it.

CASPAR
Well we're a finely-tuned Swiss watch again, aren't
we?

AVA

I don't want to add too much urgency to the situation, but a supermassive black hole has the mass of one million suns and we're basically swan diving into it right now.

CASPAR

That's too many suns. Someone should fix that.

GLORIA

We'll be okay, right? Isn't this place indestructible or something?

LEIF

It may be, we're sure as hell not.

AVA

I'd rather not die by being compressed into a ball of matter the size of a Boba, but I would get some great data right before that.

GLORIA

Okay, I'm just going to start cranking on the dial until I hear someone from Arkansas... Okay... Okay there are no numbers on the dial.

AVA

Would it matter if there were?

GLORIA

Guess not. Okay, here we go.

SFX: STATIC SNAPS INTO INTRO MUSIC FOR SPORTS BROADCAST.

EFFIE

Welcome back sports fans, I'm Kitty Caldwell here with Bram Frampton, the sun is shining, the grass is green, which could only mean it's time to put some blood on it.

CASPAR

Effie? Effie can you hear us?

EFFIE

Today we'll watch as the Indiana Colts attempt to stampede all over the Miami Dolphins, and though the visual of horses trampling dolphins is a disturbing one, none of that matters because it's football season!

SFX: ROTARY PHONE DIALING

EFFIE (CONT'D)

That's right it's once again time for the greatest athletes in the world to toss around a pig skin while you sit at home tossing around a bag of pig skins because you're too lazy to walk them across the room to your roommate. Bram?

CASPAR

Leif, what are you doing?

LEIF

Off-Planet Betting, this is going to be a good game.

GLORIA

We have a phone?

ZEBULON

Kitty the championship season is quickly approaching and teams are beginning to drop off the roster faster than you can say Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy. The Steelers lose to the Bills 23 to 57 and the Chiefs squeeze past the Ravens 11 to 13, but let's get to the real news of the day.

EFFIE

Let's do it!

LEIF

Yeah, Gork? It's Leif, give me 500 on the Colts.

GLORIA

But what is the phone connected to?

AVA

Guys.

ZEBULON

Teams win or lose but the real news from coast to coast is one name and one name only.

EFFIE

That's right.

ZEBULON

Mister Raynard Lewis.

EFFIE

Sweet number 17 himself.

AVA

Guys! Take it off the station!

ZEBULON

19 touchdowns in his rookie season, ready to go even further this season and very, very popular with the ladies.

EFFIE

Oh, I've got a brand new pair of roller skates, he's got a brand new KEY TO MY PANTS!

AVA

Take it off!

GLORIA

Okay!

SFX: RADIO STATIC.

CASPAR

What's the problem?

AVA

We're moving faster. We picked up speed as soon as the station came on.

GLORIA

Does the radio control the diner?

CASPAR

No. I mean, I don't think so.

LEIF

Since when is there a relationship between Zeb and Effie and the diner's navigation?

CASPAR

There probably always was, we just never changed the station before.

GLORIA

If only there was a scientist around to figure this out for us.

AVA

You want me to figure it out right now?

GLORIA

I feel like that's something you should know.

LEIF

This has definitely never happened before.

GLORIA

Guys, c'mon.

CASPAR

How were we supposed to know?

GLORIA

I have an excuse because I just got here. You mean to tell me it never occurred to anyone to say "Hey, there's a sentient old-timey radio in this diner. I wonder what that's all about."

CASPAR

Um... Ava?

AVA

I was getting around to it.

LEIF

Isn't this more of an after-we're-out-of-danger conversation?

CASPAR

Good point. Ava, how much time do we have?

AVA

I don't know, there's not a speedometer on the diner.

CASPAR

Let's try another station.

LEIF

That'll make us go faster won't it?

CASPAR

Will it?

GLORIA

Can we not "guestimate" our way into the supermassive black hole?

CASPAR

I'm trying another station, we can't just sit here. Okay... Here we go...

SFX: RADIO STATIC. NPR MUSIC.

EFFIE

Welcome back to All Things Considered, I'm Lakshmi Noguchi-Tutu. Twenty-three refugees from Syria have been stranded in a rickety boat off the coast of Sicily without any nation offering asylum. For more on this, here's Habib Westervelt-Fischel.

ZEBULON

For twenty-nine days now these Syrian refugees have been in a living hell right off the coast of paradise.

AVA

No. No no no. Off.

SFX: RADIO STATIC.

CASPAR

Shit.

AVA

We're going faster again.

LEIF

What the hell?

GLORIA

If we do nothing we get sucked in; if we do something we get sucked in faster; what the fuck are we supposed to do?

CASPAR

Let's start paddling.

AVA

Hang on, hang on... Oh balls.

LEIF

What is it?

AVA

The Steelers lose to the Bills 23 to 57... squeeze past the Ravens 11 to 13... Number 17... 19 touchdowns... 23 refugees 29 days... goddamnit.

GLORIA

Can we get an invite to the brain party?

AVA

2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29.

CASPAR

Are you playing Keno, or something?

AVA

Prime numbers. All in a row, that can't be a coincidence.

GLORIA

If it isn't a coincidence, what IS it?

AVA

Prime numbers are how you introduce yourself to an intelligent species. It's kind of a, y'know, "Hey, how are you, we both recognize prime numbers." They're getting our attention.

CASPAR

So they can communicate with us?

AVA

I'm guessing they can, but not directly.

LEIF

Great. Easy things are boring anyway.

AVA

I need more data.

GLORIA

Okay, I'm a Capricorn-

AVA

We need to turn the dial again.

CASPAR

I thought turning the dial sends us faster towards our big black friend.

AVA

Right now our options are a quick death or a slow death. We should probably get some more options.

CASPAR

Okay, fine. Leif, you do it this time, maybe you'll get lucky.

LEIF

Okay. Okay, yeah I'm feeling lucky. Here we go...

SFX: STATIC. "GARDEN TIME" MUSIC.

EFFIE

Welcome back to Garden Time everyone, Liz here. I'm sitting down with Marv Garvin of the North Forks Community Garden Center. Marv, what should we be looking out for in our gardens right now?

ZEBULON

Well, Liz, as you know it is time for everyone to pull up their turnips.

EFFIE

Yes.

ZEBULON

Things are getting very real out there.

EFFIE

So real.

ZEBULON

Since late summer, gardeners everywhere have been asking themselves one question "Is my soil loose enough?" and now they're about to find out.

EFFIE

Like nature's scratch-off lotto ticket.

ZEBULON

Oh my, that's a good one, Liz.

EFFIE

Thanks, Marv, we like to have fun. If you've got questions about your turnips, your beets, or whatever else you're pulling up. Give us a call at 459-018-0360.

SFX: ROTARY PHONE DIALING.

AVA

This is giving me nothing.

GLORIA

I've got an idea.

EFFIE

Let's jump right in. Our first caller is Gloria, oh my, all the way from Arizona. How are you today, Gloria.

GLORIA

Hey, Liz, long time first time, thanks so much for taking my call. I've got a really big black problem that I'm heading towards... in my garden, hope you can help.

EFFIE

We'll do our darndest, Gloria.

GLORIA

My problem is... What's a gardening problem?

CASPAR

Blight?

GLORIA

Blight? Is that a thing?

EFFIE

Hm.

ZEBULON

Hm.

AVA

Oh, shit! Shut it off!

SFX: RADIO STATIC.

LEIF

What could you have possibly gotten from that?

AVA

459-018-0360. We're going to use a Cartesian Coordinate System on the radio dial. 45 degrees, 90 degrees, 180, and 360, that's how we're going to find stations on the dial. The dial didn't have numbers now it has numbers.

CASPAR

So we're just going to keep doing this decoder-ring bullshit until the black hole squeezes us like a lemon?

AVA

Said the guy who's not offering any solutions at all.

GLORIA

This is good, right? We know how to turn the dial now we need to know where. It's good to have a plan, I like plans.

CASPAR

Everything we do to escape sends us faster into the black hole, I hate this plan.

AVA

Tough titties.

CASPAR

Leif, what was that thing you did when we were stuck in that nebula?

LEIF

Vent the grease trap?

CASPAR

Yes, do that.

LEIF

Okay, hang on.

AVA

That's not going to slow us down at this point.

CASPAR

No, it's not, Dr. Smarty pants but if he vents the grease trap laterally it will give us spin around the black hole creating centrifugal force that will pull away from the center and slow us down at least a little bit. Who's the scientist now?!

AVA

Still not you.

LEIF

(From the kitchen)

Hang on to something. This is going to be bumpy.

SFX: GREASE VENTING INTO THE VOID. DINER RATTLES. RADIO STATIC. COMMERCIAL MUSIC.

GLORIA

The dial moved!

AVA

Everybody quiet.

EFFIE

In today's modern world, home cooking feels like a thing of the past. Here at Red Pantry, we give you the feeling of cooking for yourself without the burden of actually having to cook for yourself. We'll deliver a fully prepared meal right to your door, then using our proprietary technology, create digitally altered photos of you shopping for, preparing, and eating your meal at a perfectly set table when really you're eating it on your couch out of a styrofoam container and getting it on your shirt. We'll even post the pictures for you to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or whatever bullshit they come up with next.

ZEBULON

Hi. I'm Django Hume, founder and CEO of Red Pantry. Like you, when I think of home cooking I think of having someone do something for me and then bragging like I was the one that did it. At Red Pantry we harness the collective power of over 137 other gig worker apps to bring the miracle of bragging about the food you made, right to your door.

AVA

137 huh? Okay shut it off!

SFX: RADIO STATIC. DINER GOES QUIET.

LEIF

Okay, I vented all the grease. Hopefully that will bide us some time.

AVA

Turn the dial to 137 degrees.

GLORIA

Ava.

AVA

Pretend the dial has a clock face on it. Turn the dial to somewhere between 9 and 10 o'clock.

GLORIA

You can't be any more specific than that?

AVA

Just do it.

GLORIA

Okay, okay.

SFX: RADIO CHANNEL SURFING. 1040S RADIO SHOW MUSIC.

ZEBULON

The Willis and Cabbage program, Presented by Lucky Strike. Smoke a Lucky to feel your level best. That's just how you'll feel when you light up a Lucky. Because Lucky's fine tobacco will pick you up when you feel low, calms you down when you're tense. Lucky Strike means fine tobacco.

LEIF

Are you sure this is the right station?

GLORIA

Nobody knows.

AVA

Damn, now I want a cigarette.

CASPAR

I thought this was supposed to be the right station.

AVA

Shhh. Just listen.

ZEBULON

Well now, Mrs. Cabbage. What's with all this feminine nonsense laying around?

EFFIE

Oh, Willis, don't be a pill now. These are the clothes I'm donating to the women's shelter.

ZEBULON

Ah. Those poor ladies must admire an upper west side lady like yourself.

EFFIE

They did. Then they met my husband.

SFX: LAUGHTER.

ZEBULON

One more remark like that and I'll leave you on 80th avenue where I found you.

EFFIE

Don't threaten me with a good time, you know that's where Zabar's is.

SFX: LAUGHTER.

LEIF

80th!

AVA

Go to 5 o'clock.

SFX: CHANNEL SURFING.

GLORIA

C'mon c'mon c'mon.

SFX: STATIC. LATE NIGHT TALK SHOW MUSIC.

EFFIE

Welcome back to "Not Too Late", I'm Dr. Barbara.

CASPAR

What the fuck.

EFFIE

I hope everyone's holidays were nice, impecunious, and restful, and if they weren't restful, I hope you're glad they're over. Frank, how were your holidays?

ZEBULON

Y'know, Doctor, my step-mother hit us with the fruitcake again.

EFFIE

Oh no, the fruitcake.

ZEBULON

Nobody eats it, we don't know what to do with it,
it's a problem.

EFFIE

Oh, you poor thing.

ZEBULON

Doctor, so much of our holidays are about handling
problems.

EFFIE

You know, Frank, It's funny you mention that
because that's what I want to talk about today with
our callers. Holiday problems. For some people the
holidays are a yearly crisis and they really
shouldn't be.

CASPAR

Okay, I'm done with this, give me the phone.

SFX: ROTARY PHONE DIALING.

EFFIE

So let's hear from you about your crisis. Give us a
call at 666-338-6570. Frank, who have we got on the
line?

ZEBULON

Up first we've got Caspar calling in from... this
is odd. It just says Supermassive Black Hole.

EFFIE

Well that's weird, we're going to have to talk to
the screeners about that one. Caspar, how are you
tonight?

CASPAR

I'm not good Dr. Barbara! I'm heading toward a
particular "holiday" right now and it's about to
crush me and all the people I care about.

EFFIE

Okay, Caspar, let's not overreact-

CASPAR

No, I literally mean it! No offense to Frank and
his fruitcake, but my particular fruitcake has the
gravitational pull of one-million suns! And the two
people who are supposed to prevent that are NOWHERE
to be found!

EFFIE

I know it's stressful-

CASPAR

Things are supposed to work, Barbara. They're supposed to work. You're supposed to be able to rely on them. Not everything. Not everything has to work. But some things. Some things you should be able to rely on. The world is too cruel to not have things to rely on, and when those things go away you end up hurtling toward a supermassive black hole without anything to protect you!

LEIF

Caspar-

CASPAR

Effie, I know that's you. Zebulon. Come on, you're not a late night radio shrink, you're two goddamn yokels in 1925 Arkansas! You know what? I don't even know if you're that! I don't know what you are but I know that I depend on you. One of the few things that I depend on and now you're gone as we're all floating towards our doom!

SFX: RADIO STATIC.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Hello?!

SFX: PHONE SLAMMING DOWN. FRONT DOOR OPENS.

GLORIA

Uh, can he go out there?

AVA

He's fine in the parking lot.

GLORIA

So, are we screwed?

LEIF

What does impecunious mean?

AVA

Leif.

GLORIA

It means poor.

LEIF

Really?

GLORIA

Yeah. Word-a-Day Calendar, I buy it every year.

LEIF

She used it wrong. She used it like it meant "relaxing." It kind of stood out, didn't it?

AVA

Hm.

LEIF

What could that mean?

AVA

Go back to the first station we tried.

GLORIA

We're really cutting it close here.

AVA

We don't have anything to lose at this point.

GLORIA

Okay.

SFX: CHANNEL SURFING. CROWD CHEERING.

ZEBULON

Kitty, the bench has cleared and we are looking at an all-out brawl on the fifty yard line! What started off as a friendly game of football is now just another night at Ike Turner's!

EFFIE

Bram, the crowd is noisome!

SFX: STATIC.

GLORIA

Noisome means smelly.

AVA

Huh. Try the next one.

SFX: CHANNEL SURFING. NPR MUSIC.

EFFIE

Later, while speaking from the epistolary in Brazil, the President was quoted as saying "I do what I want. I'm popping."

SFX: STATIC.

GLORIA

Epistolary isn't a place it means "written in a letter."

AVA

Oh, God. I think I know where this is going. Try another.

SFX: CHANNEL SURFING. GARDEN TIME MUSIC.

EFFIE

Marv, it's time to talk peppers.

ZEBULON

I thought things were getting a little spicy in here.

EFFIE

Oh, Marv. You're obstreperous.

SFX: STATIC.

GLORIA

Nope. Obstreperous means stubborn. What's happening?

AVA

One more.

SFX: CHANNEL SURFING. 1940S MUSIC.

EFFIE

Willis, can you help me with this?

ZEBULON

Mrs. Cabbage, what is it now?

EFFIE

I'm writing a thank you note to Mrs. Tate and I was wondering if you could take a look at it.

ZEBULON

Very well, then, let's see... Mrs. Cabbage there aren't any words on this page.

EFFIE

Well that's the first problem.

SFX: LAUGHTER

ZEBULON

What am I supposed to do with this, Mrs. Cabbage?

EFFIE

If you could just give me a starting place.

ZEBULON

How about starting with the first letter?

SFX: LAUGHTER. STATIC.

GLORIA
It's gone.

SFX: CHANNEL SURFING.

GLORIA (CONT'D)
They're all gone.

LEIF
What's happening?

AVA
"Try starting with the first letter" The first
letter of each wrong word. It spells "Ineo."

GLORIA
I don't know that one.

AVA
It's Latin. It means "go in."

LEIF
Go in where?

GLORIA
No way.

AVA
I think they mean our buddy out there.

LEIF
They want us to go into a supermassive black hole?

AVA
Unless you can think of something else.

GLORIA
Why would they tell us to do that?

AVA
I don't know.

LEIF
That's bad. I don't like that at all.

AVA
And I'm thrilled?

GLORIA
It's going to kill us.

AVA

Not necessarily. Honestly no one knows what happens inside one of those. It's not just a lot of gravity it's a complete breakdown of the basic forces of the universe. Who knows what happens when you decide to cruise right into it.

LEIF

Well I was going to lose that bet on the Colts anyway, so. Dodged that bullet.

GLORIA

So there's nothing to be done?

AVA

I could use a refill on my coffee. Y'know, since you're up.

LEIF

I'm going to go talk to Caspar.

SFX: DOOR CHIME. LOW HUM OF THE SUPERMASSIVE BLACK HOLE.

LEIF (CONT'D)

Hey.

CASPAR

Hey.

LEIF

So, we have a plan.

CASPAR

No, we don't.

LEIF

No, we really don't. Ava thinks the message Zeb and Effie are trying to send is to go into the black hole.

CASPAR

That's counter-intuitive.

LEIF

You're telling me.

CASPAR

Okay. Fine. Fuck it.

LEIF

Funny that they look like suns, huh? Black holes? Like a photo negative of a sun.

CASPAR

Yeah.

LEIF

You know what else is funny? That we're standing in a parking lot on the edge of a black hole and we're like "Sure, whatever."

CASPAR

Ha! Yeah.

LEIF

I knew this guy, he was a bartender on one of those pleasure cruisers on Neeso?

CASPAR

Oh yeah, those are nice.

LEIF

Neeso's just paradise right? Most beautiful place I've ever seen. Just cruising on clear, calm water all day and night. I said to him "Man, you've got the best job. You get the same view as the paying customers and you get paid to be here. And he leaned into me and he said "You know what, Leif? You'd be surprised what can become just another fuckin' job."

CASPAR

(Laughing)

Yeah, I see what you mean.

LEIF

You seemed pretty freaked out in there, man. Which is understandable. Y'know, supermassive black hole and all.

CASPAR

You know, for a while it was just me and them. Before you showed up, before Ava. A long time ago I walked into what I thought was a diner in... where was I? Bakersfield. I walked into an abandoned diner and suddenly the old-timey radio next to the cash register started talking to me. And I thought, "Okay the radio's talking to me, my psychotic break has arrived, this'll be fun." But then, 24 hours later, I was on Garrion.

LEIF

Oh yeah? Garrion was your first shift?

CASPAR

Yeah.

LEIF

Garrison 2 or 3?

CASPAR

Two.

LEIF

Two's way better.

CASPAR

Right?

LEIF

The Chopped Cheese?

CASPAR

It's the best.

LEIF

People don't know.

CASPAR

Anyway. I saw some weird shit before you guys showed up. And I was glad that they were there for me. I depended on them. When you literally don't have ground beneath your feet, other things become the ground. And when those things fail too, where does that leave you? Things are supposed to work. I like it when things work.

LEIF

Hey, for all we know, Ava is right and this is part of their plan. Maybe things keep working, they just don't work in the way we expect them to.

CASPAR

Yeah, let's hope. We're coming up on it, we should get inside.

LEIF

Here we go.

SFX: DOOR CHIME.

GLORIA

Last coffee before the supermassive black hole.

LEIF

Cool.

CASPAR

Sure, I'll have some. Mind if I join you?

AVA

I don't normally receive gentleman callers at my booth.

CASPAR

I'm sitting down.

AVA

I have five theories about what awaits us inside the black hole, would you like to hear them?

CASPAR

I really wouldn't.

LEIF

Okay, seriously, what's your secret with the coffee, why is it so good?

GLORIA

It's complicated, Leif. I put the appropriate amount in the filter and then I don't let it sit too long on the burner.

LEIF

Interesting.

CASPAR

Did you really get some sort of award in Belgium?

AVA

I did. But it was bittersweet because I had to share the award with one other scientist.

CASPAR

Bummer.

AVA

One might say that in Belgium my ego was a bit...

CASPAR

Don't do it.

AVA

... Bruges-ed.

CASPAR

How dare you?

AVA

Here comes imminent doom. Anything to say before we're all erased?

CASPAR

I'm glad you're here.

AVA

I know.

SFX: THE DINER PLUNGING INTO THE BLACK HOLE, THEN SILENCE.
THEN...

SONG: ROCK ME IN MY SWANEE CRADLE BY VERNON DALHART.

GLORIA

... And we're back?

CASPAR

I guess so.

AVA

Well that's lame.

LEIF

Yeah, what the hell?

CASPAR

I guess when you go through a black hole you end up... on the other side of the black hole.

LEIF

It was way better in the movie.

GLORIA

Effie? Zebulon, are you guys there? This sounds like their music.

EFFIE

Well, hey there, Gloria.

ZEBULON

We thought we'd lost you for a moment.

GLORIA

Oh, thank God.

CASPAR

Guys, what happened?

EFFIE

Well, I'm sure we don't know.

ZEBULON

It's a bit stormy here and I suppose the inclement weather interfered with us reaching you.

AVA

Oh, come on.

CASPAR

Wait, we went through a whole thing over here, to you guys we just cut out for a second?

EFFIE

That's right, one moment you were there, the next you weren't, and then there you were again.

LEIF

No way.

CASPAR

Nothing about, you know, the Colts versus the Dolphins?

ZEBULON

Well, I've never owned a horse, Caspar, but I don't see what kind of ill will they might have towards a sea creature.

CASPAR

What the hell?

AVA

I want my money back.

LEIF

We went through a black hole!

EFFIE

I can't say we know anything about that, Leif. But I'm sure that no matter the instance, the Lord had a plan.

AVA

Tell the Lord his plan blows.

GLORIA

Ava!

CASPAR

You'd prefer we get squished by the black hole?

AVA

Kind of.

ZEBULON

Now, I wouldn't speak too harshly on the Lord's plans, Ava. For it appears that the Lord's plan for today involves a bit of rest and relaxation.

EFFIE

Have a look outside, y'all.

CASPAR

Oh. Hey.

SFX: DOOR CHIME. DINER FADES INTO THE BACKGROUND. SOUND OF A TRANQUIL OCEAN.

LEIF

Holy shit.

CASPAR

It's Neeso.

GLORIA

It's beautiful.

LEIF

This place is the best.

AVA

You've been here before?

CASPAR

Yeah. Been a long time.

LEIF

Not mad about the black hole anymore.

SFX: DISTANT SHIP'S HORN.

LEIF (CONT'D)

Oh hey, a pleasure cruiser's docking. We've got twelve hours, who's in the mood for a day cruise?

GLORIA

Oh, hell yeah.

LEIF

Follow me.

CASPAR

Sorry you didn't discover the secrets of the black hole.

AVA

There's always tomorrow. Show me around.

CASPAR

Okay.

AVA

Hang on, though.

SFX: DOOR CHIME.

AVA (CONT'D)

Hey. You two. I've got questions. Just wanted to let you know.

EFFIE

Only the Lord provides answers, Ava.

AVA

Yeah. Sure. See you in eleven hours and fifty-nine minutes.

SFX: DOOR CHIME

ZEBULON

Quite a storm we had, my dear.

EFFIE

Indeed, husband. Indeed.

THE END