

Solar Episode 10: Icarus

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SCENE 1.

ALI: Davis Personal Audio Packet 41 dash 1 2044

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

CHELSEA: ...And he doesn't. Schrodinger's Cat walks into a bar...*and he doesn't.*

It's a stupid joke. I had to get Hiroto to explain it to me. We ended up watching this weird old cartoon called 'Futurama' which didn't help explain it at all.

Anyway, happy day forty one! I was gonna send you a message every day...but the woman--Felicia Bryant--she asked if I could--not. They don't want to eat up all the memory with my stupid voice...so...I waited...6 days. Almost waited a week. But...something big happened last night.

...Hiroto proposed. I had told you we talked about it, so I knew the question was coming, but I didn't know when. And last night...

I came home from work and he asked to go for a walk. He told me he had finally finished. I asked him what it was he had 'finally' finished. And he said...the list that you gave him.

He told me about the first time you two went out for drinks--the first time without me. We had been dating like, six months, so you already knew each other--but you asked him to go out for an evening. Just to hang out and talk. Hiroto said he was terrified because you are, by all accounts, my brother and he didn't want to disappoint you. But...

He said you met up--started off with some light conversation and he asked you why you invited him out. And Hiroto explained that you thought he just wanted someone to talk to. As a friend. Because you saw that Hiroto didn't have that. His father is back in Japan. His mother is gone. And you knew that he needed a friend. And you were there for him.

...Hiroto laughed while he was telling me this because at that point--you both had had just a little too much and were being just--so honest with each other. He confided in you that he was terrified he'd lose me. That

he'd do or say something wrong. And you confided in him you were worried Hiroto would leave me. Because you knew I was falling for him. And you didn't want me to lose him.

....You know people too well sometimes...

So that night, you scrawled on a series of fifteen napkins--Hiroto showed them to me--a list of every book. Every movie. Every show. Every song. Every play. Every musical. Anything that had ever given me joy. Anything that you knew I loved. Any piece of creativity you ever saw me digest and comment on. And you told Hiroto, that if he read every book. Watched every movie. Listened to every piece of music on this list...that he would know who I was. That he would know how to love me.

And if he still loved me after all of that...He would know that we were meant to be together...

Well...He finished the list yesterday morning. The last book was 'One Hundred Years of Solitude.' He closed the book. Went out and bought the ring. Had the napkins framed...

...Thank you, Jamal. I love you so much. I'm so happy for you achieving your dreams. And I know you're happy for me. And it's sometimes hard for me to accept that people can sincerely be happy for each other. And I'm so lucky to have that in you.

We won't have the wedding until you come back. I promise. Because you have to be my maid of honor...I promise we'll wait.

Hiroto says hi. I'll let him talk next time. But I just wanted to...talk to you alone for this one...

...I'm crying again. I've been crying since last night. But it's happy tears. Sad tears because I miss you--but happy tears for everything else.

Alright--bye for now--oh wait! I almost forgot--um...

Why can you never trust atoms?

Okay--bye for real...and thank you...

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

END RECORDING.

END SCENE.

-TITLES-

MAIN TITLE MUSIC

ELECTRONIC "ERROR" BLIP.

ALI: (ELECTRONIC) Aethon Operating System Timer Failure has resulted in terminal error. Audio packets are unable to be compiled chronologically. Please reset A.O.S. internal clock. Manual Whiskey Foxtrot One fifty six Delta two.

ELECTRONIC "INTERNAL" BLIP.

Emergency audio packet 22 dash Juliett 2045.

ELECTRONIC "END TRANSMISSION BLIP.

NARRATOR: CurtCo Media presents...

SOLAR.

MAIN TITLE MUSIC ENDS

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FADE:

SCENE 2.

ALI: Post Solar Event. Approximate mission day: five hundred and fifty.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

WE ARE IN CAPSULE 1 WITH WREN AT THE END OF THE
PREVIOUS EPISODE--JAMAL IS ON SPEAKER.

JAMAL: Matryoshka.

THE SIGNAL GOES DEAD.

ALI: Messaging terminated.

WREN: Wait--What just happened?

ALI: Messaging was terminated.

WREN: No. Reconnect me with Jamal.

ALI: I am unable to fulfill that request. Would you like to re-listen to the message from Chelsea? It was initially intended for you.

WREN: Ali--What are you talking about?

ALI: I am unable to answer the question.

WREN: Crap...okay...um....Can you verify that Jamal is okay?

ALI: Jamal's vitals are still in the nominal range.

WREN: Is there something wrong with your communications system?

ALI: The camera system is no longer functioning--

WREN: Anything *new*. That I *don't* know about.

ALI: No.

WREN: Okay...then--

A BEAT.

ALI: Incoming message from Jamal.

WREN: Connect us.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

Jamal?

JAMAL: (EXCITED) Wren!

WREN: What happened?

JAMAL: You have to say the word. Russian nesting dolls.

WREN: Russian nesting--

JAMAL: The Russian word.

WREN: Matryo--

JAMAL: Not yet! *You're* gonna say it, and *I'm* gonna say it, and then I'm gonna see if we can connect to each other.

WREN: What are you talking about?

JAMAL: You'll see...but if you don't hear from me in like, a minute...then just say the word again.

WREN: What's gonna happen?

JAMAL: Just say it when you're ready.

WREN: ...Matryoshka.

THE DOORS IN CAPSULE 1 SLAM SHUT.

A NEW LIGHT TURNS ON, AND THE PROGRAM WHIRS.

AUDIO PLAYS A HIGH PITCH FOR A SPLIT SECOND--THEN
SUDDENLY PICKS UP AGAIN.

ALI: CimmTech encryption enabled.

WREN: WHAT THE--?...Ali, did you say *CimmTech encryption* enabled?

ALI: Yes.

WREN: This is---...I don't know what this is.

ALI: Incoming message from Jamal.

WREN: Connect us!

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

JAMAL: Wren!

WREN: What the what!?

JAMAL: CimmTech Encryption!

WREN: So Ali is letting us talk--

JAMAL: Because both compartments are enabled.

WREN: Of course CimmTech had a separate encrypting system. Of course they'd need time to speak in secret...*The recordings!*

JAMAL: The recordings!

WREN: Ali! Please bring up the recordings listed as timelines.

ALI: Yes.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

WREN: They're all there now.

JAMAL: They are?

WREN: Ali, please share this screen in Capsule 8.

ELECTRONIC BLIP (OVER SPEAKER)

JAMAL: Look at that.

WREN: So, Taaj mentioned the dolls to Jessa. Why? Was Jessa connected to CimmTech?

JAMAL: Not according to the vote they took at the payload four meeting.

WREN: Then why mention it at all?

JAMAL: She was leaving breadcrumbs. She must have been scared to die at that point if her 'adjustments' didn't work.

WREN: That was the conversation she asked Alex to delete.

ALI: Yes.

WREN: Ali--this is incredible--how did you--?

ALI: I am programmed to assist the crew in any way possible.

JAMAL: Why couldn't you just tell us?

ALI: My programming does not allow me to say the trigger word or speak of its existence outside of encryption.

WREN: You have contradictory programming?

ALI: That is correct. I had to find, as Jamal said, 'a different way to say it.'

WREN: I thought Jamal was deleting the messages from Chelsea.

JAMAL: There was one that I--couldn't delete. Day 41.

ALI: It was very useful.

JAMAL: To say the least.

ALI: Thank you for not deleting it.

WREN: With CimmTech Encryption enabled...what do we have access to?

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

ALI: Displayed are all of the files that can only be accessed with CimmTech Encryption Enabled.

JAMAL: Jeez Louise...

WREN: Ali--is *this* the recording of the payload four deployment?

ALI: Yes.

WREN: Of the disaster?

ALI: Yes.

JAMAL: Why don't the emergency protocols prevent us from accessing it?

ALI: I was reprogrammed with CimmTech Emergency Protocols.

JAMAL: But why would CimmTech have separate emergency protocols?

WREN: We can listen to it?

ALI: I was reprogrammed eighty nine days before launch. All changes were approved by NASC.

JAMAL: That seems like a glaring oversight.

WREN: I just want to verify that we can listen to the payload four deployment.

ALI: The recording only lasts until the flare overloaded the systems and I could no longer locate mission control.

WREN: This is it, Jamal. We can find out what they did.

JAMAL: It's gonna be difficult to listen to it.

WREN: Yeah but--this is the silver bullet. This is the key to the lock.

JAMAL: I think there's a lot more locks than you think there are.

WREN: Ali--please begin playback of--

JAMAL: Are you *sure* you want to hear this?

A BEAT.

WREN: I'm more sure in this moment than I have been this whole mission.

JAMAL: ...Okay.

WREN: You'll listen with me.

JAMAL: ...I will...

WREN: Ali--please begin playback of Payload Four Deployment.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

END RECORDING.

END SCENE.

SCENE 3.

ALI: Pre Solar Event. Mission day: five hundred and thirty two.

WE ARE IN CAPSULE 1...WHERE WREN IS SERVING AS ON BOARD COMMANDER. ALL OTHERS ARE ON INTERCOM.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

WREN: This is Mission Specialist Doctor Wren Guerrero--the serving on-board commander of the Aethon during the launch of CimTech Earth-synchronous Satellite Number Four. Role Call for everyone on the commlink and their current locations for the record.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Specialist Eli Wright. In Capsule five awaiting deployment sequence for payload four.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Chief Scientist Taaj Azi. In Capsule five, awaiting deployment sequence for payload four.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Commander Alex Tawley, serving as an additional supervisor on the deployment sequence for payload four.

JESSA: (INTERCOM) Medical Officer Aquino...In the medical bay, tracking reactor and energy flow readings, awaiting activation of payload four.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Usually, we're further along in the deployment process before the on board commander is involved.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) This is what we decided on yesterday, Eli.

ELI: (INTERCOM) I'm just marking the deviation from the script...
(CONDESCENDING) How much sleep did you get reading all the manuals, Wren?

WREN: I'm fine, Specialist Wright.

ELI: (INTERCOM) You wanna make some coffee?

WREN: I have some, Specialist Wright. Can we please focus?

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Are we ready?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Tawley. Guerrero's in command.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) You're right. I apologize.

WREN: Azi, please open the bay doors when ready.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Opening bay doors.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE BAY DOORS OPENING.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Jesus Christ and my mother forgive me...*It's beautiful...*

ELI: (INTERCOM) Now, I'm going to start running the software to disconnect the electronics from the ship. Commander, Taaj and myself are going to connect the payload to the arm if you want to join us?

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Can't we just take a minute?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) No. We stay on schedule. We're already running behind.

ELI: (INTERCOM) We can start without him.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) It's honestly the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. God, I wish Jamal was out here. He'd know some good poems or something.

JESSA: (INTERCOM) If you had made him on-board commander, you could tell him yourself.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) It was a compromise, Jessa. I'll straighten it out with him after the satellite deployment.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Starting satellite internal battery for initial launch sequence and removing the power cables attached to the Aethon.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Arm in position, please attach payload four when ready.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Attaching arm to payload four.

WE HEAR A THUNK THROUGH HIS INTERCOM AS HE
PLUGS SOMETHING IN PLACE.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) I can verify that the attachment is secure. Moving to second attachment.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) I can get it.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) No, I'll do it. At this point, consistency is best.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) What is Eli doing exactly?

ELI: (INTERCOM) I just said it. We have to say everything we're doing.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) I'm sorry. I was distracted.

ELI: (INTERCOM, CONDESCENDING) Well, I just finished turning on the internal battery that will run the satellite until wireless power is connected and the solar panels are fully functional. Now I'm literally gripping the cable that was powering the satellite from the Aethon. I'm pressing the release button and--power removed.

POWER SHIFT SOUND.

WREN: ...Power usage has decreased within the estimated amount.

ELI: (INTERCOM) See? All good. Everything's fine.

A SHUDDER ROLLS THROUGH THE SHIP.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Ali, please take all the readings from your sensors for the past five minutes and include it in the next packet you send to Earth.

ALI: Yes, Commander Alex (GLITCH) T-T-T-Tawley.

ELI: (INTERCOM, BITTER) And look at that...no flash...just like everyone told me I saw.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Attaching arm to payload four.

WE HEAR A THUNK THROUGH HER INTERCOM AS SHE
PLUGS SOMETHING IN PLACE.

(INTERCOM) Let me get back into the cab and verify the connection.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) You have to admit, Eli. It is beautiful, right?

ELI: (INTERCOM) Yes, it would be a glorious way to die.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Stop talking like that.

ELI: (INTERCOM) ...Yes, Commander.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) I confirm the second attachment. Payload four is fully attached to the arm. Ready to separate payload four from docked position.

WREN: You may begin separation.

ELECTRONIC WARNING.

ALI: Abnormal solar activity detected.

WREN IMMEDIATELY BEGINS TYPING.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Belay that, Taaj. Wren?

WREN: Um...

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Do we have a problem on our hands?

WREN: Gimme a second.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) ...Wren?

WREN: ...It's nothing. It's just more of those solar storms. It's acceptable to continue.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Okay...

WREN: You may begin separation.

WE CAN MAKE OUT THROUGH THE SUITS THE SOUND OF
A MOTOR RUNNING. THEN A THUNK.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Payload separated from docked position. Ready for orbital placement. Please attach your safety tethers to the arm.

WE HEAR SEVERAL DIFFERENT THUNKS AND CHECKS.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Alright, let's roll.

ELI: (INTERCOM) So we're *really* abandoning the script with Margaret gone, huh?

ALEX: (INTERCOM) You're right--let's stick to the script.

ELI: (INTERCOM) This is where we would normally contact the on-board commander, but I don't want to waste everyone's time if--

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) We have to move a lot quicker gentlemen.

ELI: (INTERCOM, ANNOYED BUT SUBDUED) ...This is Specialist Eli Wright--and we are about to begin the deployment sequence for CimmTech payload four. Chief Scientist Taaj Azi, on payload arm control, can you confirm that you are ready for orbital positioning of satellite four?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) I can confirm.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Chief Scientist Azi, can you confirm visual on Commander Tawley and myself?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) I can confirm.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Chief Scientist Azi, can you confirm that Commander Tawley, and myself are both locked into the tether system according to the readings?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) I can confirm.

WE HEAR SOME LOW THUNKS THROUGH THE SPACESUIT.

ELI: (INTERCOM) I am confirming visual and physical lock in tether failsafe. Commander Tawley, can you confirm the same?

ANOTHER COUPLE LOW THUNKS.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) I confirm.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Ali--please link wireless power to Payload four.

ALI: (INTERCOM) Yes, Specialist Eli Wright.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Thank you, Ali...Power supply connection has been verified. Levels are...nominal. Next I will establish NASC Network Arm connectivity. Activating communication on payload four.

DIGITAL BLIP.

ALI: Abnormal spike detected in power usage.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Wren?

WREN: I'm on it. How much was the spike, Ali?

ALI: Point twenty three percent over simulated value.

WREN: That's pretty high.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) It should be following *adjusted* projections. The power demand will even out once the satellite is linked with the others.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Do we continue, Wren?

WREN: ...Yes...I think Taaj is right about the adjusted projections. You may continue.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Thank you, Doctor Guerrero.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Requesting verbal permission to continue with payload four deployment protocol.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Chief Scientist Azi--permission granted.

WREN: (INTERCOM) Onboard Commander Guerrero--permission granted.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Continuing with payload four deployment protocol. Payload four is now hailing the network arm connection.

DIGITAL BLIP.

ALI: Please enter access code to allow for sync with NASC Network Arm.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Wren?

WREN: ...Echo. 8. 2. Charlie. 1. 3. Uniform. 9. 9. 1. 3. Whiskey. Zulu.

DIGITAL BLIP.

ALI: Access granted.

DIGITAL BLIP OVER SYSTEM. IN THE CAPSULE WE HEAR A DISTANT ELECTRONIC WHIR START---VERY FAR AWAY.

WREN: (TURNING AROUND) What was that?

ELI: (INTERCOM) CimmTech Payload Four is now synced with NASC--

WREN: Eli--be quiet...

DIGITAL BLIP.

ALI: Abnormal change detected in power usage.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) What's going on, Wren?

WREN: What happened, Ali?

ALI: Four hundred and seventy five point two one percent decrease in power consumption.

WREN: No, that isn't right. I heard something power *up*. I think in Capsule 3. We should be using *more* power.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Where is Jamal?

WREN: Ali, please tell Jamal to report to his station in Capsule 8.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) That wasn't why I asked.

WREN: I just want him to get eyes on it.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) CimmTech is using less power. This is a good thing. Right?

WREN: I just want him at his station.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Wren--

WREN: I'm still in charge, Taaj. Ali--please lock the jettison protocol and only release it when I give verbal permission.

ALI: Yes, Doctor Wren Guerrero.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) That seems a little drastic, Wren. If something happens--

WREN: I won't hesitate, Commander.

JAMAL: (INTERCOM, STILL ANGRY) Pilot Jamal Davis, reporting from Capsule eight.

WREN: Look at the power level drop just now.

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Whoa...Did something shut down?

ELI: (INTERCOM) We just powered up and synced payload four.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, FRUSTRATED) CimmTech procedures said this would happen. I said this would happen. The power levels are evening out now that the whole system is in place.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Is it safe to continue?

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) You already know what I think.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) If you take this satellite offline, then the power will jump back up. I have to see this through. It's working like it's supposed to. Eli--say something.

ELI: (INTERCOM) The power levels were going to become more stabilized over time. While the exact amount has been in question--the overall tracking of the readings has been accurate to our projections. Right, Jamal?

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) ...Sure. But it's not my call, is it?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Wren, if we stop now...everything you and I have done on this mission will have been for nothing. Clock is ticking.

A BEAT.

WREN: Please continue, Eli.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Thank you, Doctor Guerrero.

ELI: (INTERCOM) ...CimmTech Payload Four is now synced with NASC Network Arm. Chief Scientist Azi, you may begin payload bay arm extension for orbital placement of satellite four.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Payload bay arm extending for orbital placement. Hold on.

THE SOUND OF A MOTOR.

ALEX LET'S OUT A MOMENT OF SURPRISE THAT
NATURALLY ROLLS INTO A LAUGH.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) This is amazing. No wonder I was feeling so trapped inside when *this* was just out here! I've never felt so small--or everything has never felt so big...Wren--it's too bad you don't have an EVA on the docket. The view is amazing!

WREN: I was never trained.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) But the sun--!

WREN: I can see the sun from inside, Commander.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Not like this, though. This is something else.

WREN: Noted.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) The surface of the sun has so much more texture than it looks like from onboard!

WREN: Those are the solar storms I was referring to. You can see them because of the visor shielding.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) And they're not a threat?

WREN: No.

JESSA: (INTERCOM) Why didn't they train you for an EVA?

WREN: I was added too late in the process.

JESSA: (INTERCOM) Yeah but...doesn't it seem important? I know the basics of a thermo-nuclear reactor.

WREN: It was Aarav's call.

ELI: (INTERCOM) It wouldn't be the first mistake NASC ever made.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Your sarcasm is a little sour today, Specialist Wright.
Wanna check that attitude?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Stopping payload arm extension.

THE MOTOR STOPS AND WE HEAR THE WEIGHT OF THE
SATELLITE SHAKE THE ARM UP AND DOWN.

(INTERCOM) I am verifying orbital position.

A BEAT.

(INTERCOM) Orbital position is accurate for release.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Thank you, Chief Scientist Azi. Requesting permission to
activate payload four.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, MOMENTUS, TO HERSELF) Okay we're here. This is it.
(OUTLOUD) Chief Scientist Azi...permission granted.

WREN: ...On-board Commander Doctor Wren Guerrero--permission granted.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Activating payload four...in three, two---Alex?

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Yeah?

ELI: (INTERCOM) If you think this is beautiful wait till you see the
flash...*Activating.*

DIGITAL BLIP.

A MOMENT.

...Payload four activated...

A BEAT.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) ...Payload four successfully activated.

ALEX SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN HOLDING HIS BREATH--HE EXHALES IN RELIEF.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) You litte shit--why did you say that?

ELI: (INTERCOM) Cause if the flash *did* happen this time--it would've been an awesome line.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

ALI: Abnormal solar activity detected.

WREN BEGINS TYPING.

WREN: It's um...Solar wind is increasing, it looks like...

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Detach the payload, Specialist Wright.

ELI: (INTERCOM) ...Specialist Wright, detaching payload four, lock one.

A THUD AS ELI FORCES HIS FIST INTO SOME DEVICE THAT EMITS A PARTIAL 'RELEASE' FOR PAYLOAD FOUR.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Commander Tawley, detaching payload four, lock two

A THUD AS ALEX FORCES HIS FIST INTO A SIMILAR DEVICE THAT RELEASES PAYLOAD FOUR.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Payload two released, please confirm orbital position Chief Scientist Azi.

WREN: Wait wait--something looks off...The storm--...no wait...close this information, I can't see, Ali, I need to go back to the other screen--

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, HURRIED) Position confirmed...the CimmTech Satellite System has been fully deployed and is up and running. Wren--don't worry about the storm. Everything is gonna be fine, now.

WREN: No it's--

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Power usage has dropped an additional fifteen percent.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, RELIEVED) You boys ready to come back in?

ALEX: (INTERCOM) In a second--I wish you all could see this it looks incredible--is that the storm? It's gorgeous!

ELI: (INTERCOM) Can you bring me in?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) It's all or nothing.

AN MILD ALARM GOES OFF.

ALI: Solar flare detected. Solar flare detected. Solar flare detected.

WREN TYPES FASTER.

WREN: Shit shit shit. Where is the flare directed, Ali?

ALI: Current calculations have the flare pointed directly at the Aethon.

WREN: Okay. (URGENT, NOT PANICKED) Everyone get back inside, now.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Wren--trust me it's gonna be fine.

WREN: You don't know that.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) I do. We're gonna be alright.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) I can see the flare! We're millions of miles away still. Let me watch it for just another couple seconds.

WREN: (INTERCOM) I would advise against it, Commander--

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Another couple seconds, okay, but your spacewalk is over right after.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Again, I would really prefer to get back on board at this point.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Eli--we did it! *We did it.*

WREN: Ali--send a message to Earth. The flare is pointed at the satellite system and that means it's pointed to Earth.

ALI: Would you like for this message to be included in the next audio--

WREN: No, Ali. Send it now. Send the audio now. Mission Control, this is the Aethon Solar Flare pointed directly at Earth. Take precaution. Please advise. (REPEATS)

ELI: (INTERCOM) No. I don't like this. I'm gonna climb back inside.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Eli, don't.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) It's more dangerous if you disconnect.

ELI: (INTERCOM, MATTER OF FACT) That's fine.

ELI DISCONNECTS.HE STARTS CLIMBING BACK TO THE AETHON.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Eli--you know we're gonna be fine.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Nope...I don't think I do. Ali can you open the airlock for me when I get back to the payload bay.

ALI: Opening airlock.

WE HEAR A DOOR OPENING SOUND.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) No, Eli--we can't waste the time for multiple repressurizations. I'm pulling you back in, Alex.

WE HEAR THE MOTOR OF THE ARM RETRACTION BEGIN

ALEX: (INTERCOM) No, we're fine. Everyone stop overreacting! Just shut up!

WREN: No, Alex. I need everyone back in side now. Can the arm retract faster, please, Taaj?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) This is as fast as it goes.

WREN: Okay--Alex? I need you to climb back in inside like Eli.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Why are you freaking out, Wren?

WREN: Early indications have the flare at over X20 in power.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, CONFUSED) That can't be right.

WREN: Alex, get inside now.

ALEX: No! This is crazy. I can see it! We have time! I don't--I can't go back inside just yet.

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Commander, you need to come back inside now. If our ship isn't sealed, then we won't have a solid barrier against the wall of radiation heading for us right now.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Pilot Davis--I will not be taking orders from you.

JESSA: (INTERCOM) Alex...can you hear me?

ALEX: (INTERCOM) I hear you, Jessa.

JESSA: (INTERCOM) We need you to come back inside.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) But you don't know what it's like out here. Not compared to what's in there. I can't go back. I can't...breath in there anymore.

JESSA: (INTERCOM) Alex...what you're feeling is Space Euphoria. It's real and documented. Some people don't want to come back on board.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) It's not that. That make me sound crazy. We still have time. I'm watching it right now!

JESSA: (INTERCOM) You no longer have a sense of scale, Alex! There's nothing to compare the sun to! You can't tell how fast or how slow things are moving because there is no perspective!

ALEX: (INTERCOM) No. It's far away. I can see *everything!*

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) If we don't close the bay doors before it hits, we're fucked, Alex.

WREN: (URGENT) Jamal, Taaj--it's an estimated X45. (SHE RESUMES HER MESSAGING) AETHON TO MISSION CONTROL! AETHON TO MISSION CONTROL!....(ETC.)

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Holy shit...Ali, retract any solar panels that are capable of being retracted! Turn all dishes away from the sun!

JESSA: (INTERCOM) What, what's happening?

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) This is going to blow out all of our energy systems...Alex, get the fuck inside, we need you.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Listen, Alex, I was wrong. Get back inside now! This...this shouldn't be happening.

WREN: Ali, how long until the flare hits us?

ALI: I'm unable to answer that question.

WREN: What?! Why?

ALEX: (INTERCOM) It's just so beautiful.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Eli just got inside.

ELI: (INTERCOM) We can detach the arm, if we need to. If you think it matters.

WREN: (CHIMING IN) Alex is still attached to it! (BACK TO HER CONSOLE) Mission control--Mission control--(ETC.)

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, TO ELI) I don't understand. Margaret promised me. She said we all go home if we finish this.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Oh...and you believed her?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) She *promised* me.

ELI: (INTERCOM) ...She *manipulated* you. (HE STARTS LAUGHING)

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, HORRIFIED) Why are you laughing?

ELI: (INTERCOM, EXHAUSTED, GIDDY) I don't know! We're all gonna die someday! And Alex is right...this is certainly a beautiful view!

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, NEW CONVICTION) ...Requesting permission to detach payload deployment arm.

WREN: Not yet!

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) We need to close up the Aethon. She can't handle a flare of that size if we're exposed like this.

WREN: We can't abandon Alex to die!

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Wren! *Someone* is going to die today, I'm sorry!

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Everyone needs to calm down!

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) I'm ready to jettison the arm.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Don't jettison the arm!

WREN: He'll make it, I think!

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Jettison the arm!

WREN: Jamal!

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) We don't have time to pull him back! We have to close the payload door and seal the airlock!

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Jamal is right! Wren, I'm sorry...Jamal, I'm so sorry. We have to jettison!

WREN: Ali, please stop the alarm about the flare.

ALI: I cannot. The proximity is too close for me to deactivate the alarm.

WREN: How fast is it moving?

ALI: I'm unable to answer the question.

WREN: Ali, is the arm going to retract in time?

ALI: The arm will not retract before the flare reaches the Aethon.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Okay--fine--I'm going to detach. I'm coming back...I just need to--untangle the uh...

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Jettison the arm, Taaj. Close the airlock.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) I'm sorry, Alex....Detaching the payload bay arm.

WREN: No! Taaj--what are you doing!

ALEX: (INTERCOM) Stop--wait! My tether is stuck! I'm coming back! I'm trying! I can't--I can't undo it--!

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Get in the arilock! We can at least save Taaj and Eli!

ALEX: (INTERCOM) You fucking asshole, Jamal! Oh god--please!

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Close the airlock, Wren! Close the airlock!

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Arm detached.

ALEX: (INTERCOM) No! Wait!

NEW ALERTS BEGIN: EVERYTHING IS OVERLAPPING IN PANIC.

ALI: Electrical system overload warning. Shutdown and reboot imminent. Structural payload compromised. Shield deterioration critical. Airlock integrity collapsing. (REPEATED CONTINUOUSLY)

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) The system is starting to overload!

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Jamal--jettison the reactor.

WREN: No--We can fix this...just get in the airlock, Taaj!

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Ali...Trigger the jettison option.

ERROR SOUND

ALI: Jettison option requires verbal authorization from the on board commander.

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Wren--give me the authorization.

WREN: No--get in the airlock, Taaj and Eli!

TAAJ: Do it, Wren!

ALEX: (INTERCOM) No! Wait! Please! Don't leave me out here!

WREN: (REPEATED, DESPERATE) Mission control! Do you read?! This is the Aethon! Mayday mayday! Solar flare, X45, pointed directly at Earth! Do you copy?! Mayday! Mayday!

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Wren--Close the airlock! Close the airlock!!

ALEX: (INTERCOM) You can't leave me to die out here!

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Eli help me push the arm out of the way! (A BEAT) Eli!

ELI: (INTERCOM, STILL CHUCKLING) It's already happened, Taaj.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) I need your help.

ELI: (INTERCOM) Nothing can stop what's coming.

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, TO ELI) It wasn't supposed to be this powerful, Eli! I don't understand!

ELI: (INTERCOM) Who said it wouldn't be this powerful?

TAAJ: (INTERCOM, A REALIZATION) 'I knew certain things would happen, if not when.'

JESSA: What did you say Taaj?

WREN: Everyone on board get to safety restraints immediately!

TAAJ: (MESSAGE SCRAMBLING) Margaret knew. *Margaret knew this whole time.* (IT IS BARELY DISCERNIBLE.)

JESSA: Wren--Taaj said something about Margaret--

JAMAL: (INTERCOM) Close the airlock! Wren!

WREN: Not now! Jessa! Everyone get to restraints! Aethon to Mission Control! Aethon to Mission Control. Solar flare pointed directly at earth!

TAAJ: (INTERCOM) Please--Wren--!!

THE AUDIO BECOMES CHAOS--THEN SOME SCREAMS--
THEN SOME ELECTRONIC BURSTS AND
EXPLOSIONS...THEN SILENCE, VERY SUDDENLY...WE ARE
IN THE POST-EVENT CAPSULE 1 AUDIO...WITH WREN...

A LONG BEAT.

WREN: ...It was my fault. Entirely. I never had command. I was playing with fire.

JAMAL: (AS GENTLE AS POSSIBLE) You meant well.

WREN: The payload was detached. And I waited too long. I took away your ability to help. I literally locked everyone in a room and watched it burn down.

JAMAL: Which is why I think you were misremembering some things. You were traumatized. And you still haven't processed it. You haven't given yourself space to rest. You aren't wrong, Wren...CimmTech was up to something. I mean--Taaj did say something about Margaret we can talk about. You identified the power usage was suspect, so that's something we can investigate--

WREN: *Everything went the way Margaret said it would.* CimmTech...CimmTech did nothing wrong. But I...I waited. I...hesitated...

JAMAL: Why did you hesitate? Why didn't you retract the arm immediately?

WREN: I don't know. There was a lot going on--it was...I mean...

JAMAL: ...Did you wait because of Alex?

A BEAT.

WREN: ...Fuck! Fuck!

SHE THROWS HER MUG ACROSS THE ROOM. WE HEAR SOMETHING BREAK.

JAMAL: What was that?

WREN: ...I...I threw my mug.

JAMAL: Doesn't sound like you.

WREN: I know...I shouldn't have...I hit the ant habitat...I need to tape it up. And--...

JAMAL: It's okay to be upset.

WREN: I killed four people. *I did.* No one else.

JAMAL: But we have some answers. And maybe some closures on this hunt...so maybe we should focus on contacting Mission Control--

WREN: I don't know how to reach earth! I don't know how to save you! And in *trying my best*, I destroyed the Aethon and its crew! *I did that!* I don't--...I don't deserve to survive. I'm not...worth it...

JAMAL: Don't say that.

WREN: I'm sorry you ever knew me.

JAMAL: Wren. Please--keep talking to me.

WREN: No...I have to--...I have to fix the nest habitat...I'm gonna--Ali, terminate messaging...

JAMAL: No, Ali--

ALI: (OVERLAPPING) Terminating messaging.

ELECTRONIC BLIP

WE HEAR WREN BREATH HEAVIILY AND ALMOST HAVE A SPIN OUT--BUT SHE PREVENTS IT...

WREN: ...Ali...where is the duct tape?

ALI: Capsule two.

WREN: Thank you.

WREN WALKS AWAY.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE.

END RECORDING.

END SCENE.

