

Solar Episode 8: Ghosts

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-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 Hotel 2045.

ELECTRONIC "END TRANSMISSION BLIP.

NARRATOR: CurtCo Media presents...

SOLAR.

MAIN TITLE MUSIC ENDS

Episode 8: Ghosts

FADE:

SCENE 1.

ALI: Pre Solar Event. Mission day: four hundred and eighty.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

WE'RE IN THE MESS. ALEX, TAAJ, ELI, JESSA, WREN, AND
JAMAL ARE PRESENT.

JESSA: She has twenty four hours. Tops.

A BEAT.

ALEX: Can we see her or is she--...?

JESSA: Her body is nonradioactive--but I am following her request to remain isolated. She did ask to speak with Taaj, however.

TAAJ: With me?

JESSA: Yes.

TAAJ: What about Eli?

ELI: (TO TAAJ) Not me?

JESSA: Just you, Taaj.

ALEX: Go, Specialist Azi.

A BEAT. TAAJ EXITS...

And are you...better, Eli?

ELI: (SUBDUED) Never been, Commander.

JESSA: It was a severe anxiety attack. He's gonna be just fine. Right, Eli?

ELI: You're the doctor.

JAMAL: Alex, do we have any guidance from NASC?

ALEX: They told us to 'await further instructions.'

JAMAL: We need a response. *Now*.

ALEX: They're doing everything they can.

ELI: They're waiting to hear from CimmTech.

ALEX: (A CORRECTION) NASC and CimmTech are working together to figure out the best solution.

ELI: No...CimmTech isn't responding to NASC anymore.

JAMAL: What are you talking about?

ELI: Aarav sent me a message. He was asking us to reach out to Allyson because the company stopped responding to him.

JESSA: Allyson Logan?

ELI: (DISPISES HER) The CEO of CimmTech, herself.

ALEX: And did you?

ELI: No. She wouldn't listen to me.

JESSA: I mean--it's worth a shot--

ELI: Trust me.

WREN: If CimmTech has stopped responding then we need to take matters into our own hands.

ALEX: No.

WREN: The CimmTech experiment is clearly at fault for the issues we've been experiencing. Why is this not a huge red flag for you?

ELI: Because CimmTech isn't the problem.

JAMAL: And what *is* the problem?

ELI: It's us. If I die on this mission, it will be because of one of you--not CimmTech. CimmTech knows it. NASC knows it. Margaret knows it...'Will have known it.' Alex is figuring that out.

ALEX: Don't speak for me.

ELI: (GRADUALLY MORE LOST IN THOUGHT) Maybe I can speak for CimmTech, then. Whatever you think you know, you're wrong. Whatever you think we're doing, you're wrong. CimmTech doesn't control the future--but their lawyers and scientists are pretty fucking good at figuring it out. Right now, Aarav and his whole team at NASC are pouring over the manuals and the procedures and the contingencies...and they're starting to realize--that *this* changes nothing. Margaret's death changes nothing. The risk to our lives changes nothing. Because CimmTech figured out a long time ago--that nothing matters when the clock just keeps ticking...

JAMAL: Even after a psychotic episode he can't stop whining.

JESSA: Leave him alone--he's just--

JAMAL: He's acting out! Again! Like always! He's a little shit!

ALEX: (EXTREMELY HARSH) *Jamal!*

JAMAL: What are we still doing here, Alex?! We should have triggered the jettison! We could have saved Margaret's life!

ALEX: It was a risk to jettison with two crew members still outside.

JAMAL: But--

ALEX: Margaret was right before...and she was right this time.

JAMAL: And she's gonna die because of it.

ALEX: Leaders have to make sacrifices!

JAMAL: It's pretty easy to sacrifice someone else though, am I right?

ALEX: That isn't fair, Jamal.

JAMAL: Why did you agree to let me wait those extra five minutes? I could have pulled her out sooner.

ALEX: You could have done a LOT of things sooner if you were where I told you to be!

JAMAL: That's different.

ALEX: Where were you?

JAMAL: I wasn't just sitting around waiting for someone to die.

ALEX: Where were you?!

JAMAL: (A BEAT, A LIE) ...I decided not to breach your trust with Margaret. I was replacing the air filters as she requested.

ALEX: (A BEAT) ...Mandatory curfew tonight. 8pm, everyone in their bunks. Understood?

REMAINING CREW: (NOT JAMAL) Yes, sir.

ALEX: I'm sorry, Pilot Davis, I don't think I heard you.

JAMAL: (LOADED)...Yes, commander...

A BEAT.

ALEX: And I want to be clear...Margaret is a hero. She saved all of us. No more badmouthing Margaret or CimmTech. Not to me.

ALEX WALKS AWAY.

A SMALL SHUDDER.

WE HEAR SOME FOOTSTEPS EXIT.

WREN: (CONFUSED) ...Jamal, why--

JAMAL: Not now, Wren.

JAMAL WALKS AWAY.

THE AUDIO GLITCHES.

END RECORDING

END SCENE.

SCENE 2.

ALI: Pre Solar Event. Mission day: four hundred and eighty.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

WE'RE IN THE MED CELL--MARGARET IS WEAK AND ON
RESPIRATORS--BREATHING IS HARD.

"SUN SONIFICATION" PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND

THE DOOR OPENS.

A BEAT.

MARGARET: (THIN, OUT OF BREATH) Hello, Taaj.

A BEAT.

THE DOOR CLOSES.

TAAJ: Jessa says you wanted to speak with me.

MARGARET: That's right--(PAINED INHALE)--Chief Scientist Azi.

A HESITATION.

TAAJ: Matryoshka.

THE DOORS IN THE MED CELL SLAM SHUT. THE PLAYBACK
OF "SUN SONIFICATION IMMEDIATELY ENDS.

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.

TAAJ: 'We all go home.' That's what you said.

MARGARET: I did.

TAAJ: You lied.

MARGARET: No, Taaj--

TAAJ: Did you know? (A BEAT) What did you know?

A MOMENT.

MARGARET: I knew certain things *would* happen...if not *when*.

TAAJ: So you knew *this* would happen?

MARGARET: I knew I wouldn't make it. I just didn't know this would be why.

TAAJ DIGESTS THIS.

TAAJ: So what does 'We all go home' mean? And for real this time.

MARGARET: ...The CimmTech mission will be a success. We wouldn't have gone on this mission if we weren't sure of that--you know that. You have to--to-- (SHE STARTS COUGHING--PHLEGM COMES UP)...Hand me me that cloth, Taaj?

TAAJ HANDS HER THE CLOTH...MARGARET SPITS INTO IT.

TAAJ: ...You look terrible.

MARGARET: I know.

TAAJ: Your face is swollen. Like your hands. You have burns all over. You're sweating. The smell is awful. You have vomit on your sheets.

MARGARET: What's your point?

TAAJ: Is this mission *worth it* to you? Even in *this* moment?

A BEAT.

MARGARET: ...Take another look at my face, Taaj...My 'swollen face.' See my bloodshot eyes. See the veins popping out through my crow's feet...look at the blood I cough up...My bleeding lips...the sores on my cheeks...the veins on my neck...

*This face...*is the face of a hero. (A BEAT) You think we got where we are without any sacrifices? If you do, then you don't understand human history. You don't understand what progress *takes*.

TAAJ: I understand plenty.

MARGARET: I'm dying for what I believe in. If this mission ends before payload four-- then it's a lost cause.

TAAJ: Then how can you be certain that--

MARGARET: They put *us* here! You and me. They knew that we would see it out to the end. And we will. This is nothing more than passing a baton.

TAAJ: And what is the baton, exactly?

MARGARET: ...A new age for mankind...

TAAJ LAUGHS TO HERSELF.

TAAJ: You were always kinda weird, you know that? Right now you sound...I mean, maybe it's the meds...but you sound like you're out of your mind.

MARGARET: I'm speaking the truth. You just haven't thought through the implications. In quantum theory--

TAAJ: Don't lecture me on quantum theory.

MARGARET: (WITH A SMILE)...Of course. Then you already know...you can never know it all.

A BEAT. MARGARET CLEARS HER THROAT.

Chief Scientist Azi, you are now responsible for the successful implementation of the CimmTech Satellite System in anticipation of Protocol 44. I've given my life for this mission. And now I leave it to you to make my sacrifice worth it. Promise me you'll see the mission to its end. Give me your word. (COUGHS A LITTLE) ...Give me your word, Taaj.

A BEAT.

TAAJ: I'll do what I can.

MARGARET: Promise on your daughter's life.

TAAJ: ...What?

MARGARET: Make your daughter proud.

TAAJ: I never told you about my daughter.

MARGARET: Payload four is going to be a massive success. And you'll be the Chief Scientist... *Your name...* will be everywhere and your daughter will be so proud.

TAAJ: ...How dare you bring up my daughter.

MARGARET: Don't be ashamed of her.

TAAJ: I'm not ashamed of my daughter.

MARGARET: Then swear on her life.

TAAJ: *No, I won't...* There's only so much I can do. I'm pretty sure Jamal thinks we should just go home. And Alex listens to him--

MARGARET: Not so much. Not anymore. There's a rift growing between them.

TAAJ: What?

MARGARET: Didn't you hear? Jamal wasn't where he was supposed to be during the payload launch. You'll just have to go through the recordings to see where he actually was.

TAAJ: What recordings?

MARGARET: You'll find out soon enough. (COUGHS) And I know you'll make great use of it. Ali records everything. Manipulating the crew will be so much easier for you when you have all the information.

A BEAT.

TAAJ: Excuse me?

MARGARET: Don't be offended, Taaj. I consider it one of your strengths. One of the reasons I wanted you on this mission. Your ability to convince those around you that you can be trusted...You used your early friendship with Jamal to ask for favors. You convinced Eli to redo the programming and measurements without my permission. You convinced me not to notice your alterations. You opened up to Jessa to get her on your side so you could go on the spacewalk! And Taaj--You convinced your daughter's father to raise her *entirely without you*. Don't be ashamed. You're a strong woman, Taaj...I admire you.

MARGARET BEGINS COUGHING...

TAAJ: You absolute bitch.

MARGARET: Isn't that what you said at the anniversary party? You were using Jamal.

TAAJ: That's not--I didn't--

MARGARET: You've performed so well, Azi. Even when you go behind my back, it was always the right call. You are your best when you're controlling people to get what you need. That's the real you. (COUGHS)

TAAJ: (OVER COUGHING) ...Fuck you, Margaret...I am going to take over as Chief Scientist and I am going to successfully deploy the CimmTech

Experiment. And I will get us all home. All of us. You hear me? I will be *twice* the leader you ever were.

MARGARET: Taaj--

TAAJ: No--you look at *this* face! *My face!*... *This* is the face of a hero! Die alone, Margaret. Alone as you were your whole life. (A BEAT) Matryoshka!

MARGARET: (IN A COUGHING FIT) Taaj! Taaj!...

AN EXTRA SET OF BOLTS RELEASE ON THE DOORS.

A NEW LIGHT TURNS OFF, AND THE PROGRAM WHIRS.

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

'SUN SONIFICATION' BEGINS AGAIN.

ALI: CimmTech Encryption Disabled.

TAAJ STORMS OUT OF THE ROOM. MARGARET CATCHES
HER BREATH.

MARGARET: ...Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam, dayan ha-emet....(A LONG BEAT OF HEAVY BREATHING)...Ali?

ALI: Yes, Margaret.

MARGARET: At least you'll be with me when I go.

SHE PAINFULLY AND QUIETLY STARTS WHISPERING TO
HERSELF...

...You are my sunshine...my only sunshine...

SHE STARTS COUGHING.

END RECORDING

END SCENE.

SCENE 3.

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

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

CAPSULE 1 ROOM TONE.

WREN: (A NEW IDEA) Ali.

ALI: Yes?

WREN: Are the reserve oxygen tanks still intact?

ALI: Yes.

WREN: We've already reviewed how to seal the reactor suit for space usage--but would it be possible to connect a reserve tank to a suit.

ALI: No.

WREN: But you said the reserve tanks were still intact.

ALI: The reserve tanks are still intact.

WREN: ...Do the reserve tanks have a breathable mix of gasses?

ALI: They do, but only for a short period of time.

WREN: Would we not be able to seal the suit correctly?

ALI: You would--for temporary usage.

WREN: So...what?

ALI: I do not understand the question.

WREN: (A BEAT, AND A REALIZATION) ...It's the *pressurization*. We'd need to regulate the pressure--just like when Jessa would hook us up to the tanks for the running exercise. Did I get it, Ali?

ALI: I do not understand the question.

WREN: We don't have the right valve types to regulate the pressure at a breathable level for the back-up suit. Is that correct?

ALI: That statement is correct.

WREN: Because all of *those* valves were in the medical bay in Capsule 4.

ALI: That statement is correct.

WREN: And Capsule 4 no longer exists.

ALI: That statement is correct.

A FRUSTRATED SIGH.

WREN: So we're back to square one. No way to pressurize and depressurize breathable air in Capsules Eight and Nine...and those reserve tanks are just strapped in over there. (TO HERSELF) What a waste. (A NEW THOUGHT) Are the--...Are the *CimmTech* reserve tanks still intact?

ALI: There was no distinction made between oxygen tanks.

WREN: No...I meant energy. I might be looking at 'the door.' *The CimmTech reserve energy tanks*. Are they still intact?

ALI: Yes.

WREN: Okay...Can I find out what *they're* connected to? The hardware, I mean?

ALI: That information is classified.

WREN: Can you display the current energy levels for that equipment?

ALI: That information is classified.

WREN: Are--...Are they still plugged in and functioning?

ALI: Yes.

WREN: Okay, okay...um...Can you draw up a list of all software you are currently running?

ALI: Yes.

ELECTRONIC BLIP. RESULTS ARE DISPLAYED ON A SCREEN.

WREN: That's a lot. Is this all?

ALI: I've displayed all software programs currently running that you are able to view.

WREN: Okay...um...Were any programs started during the flare?

ELECTRONIC BLIP. RESULTS ARE DISPLAYED ON SCREEN.

So mostly things relating to the emergency protocol?

ALI: That's correct.

WREN: Which I don't have access to.

ALI: That's correct.

ALI: (DISTANT) Searching for Mission Control.

WREN: ...Was--...(NEW IDEA) Was any *hardware* activated around the time of the flare?

ALI: Yes.

WREN: Was any of that hardware *CimmTech* hardware?

ALI: I am unable to answer that question.

WREN: ...Was the coffeemaker activated?

ALI: No.

WREN: (GETTING SOMEWHERE) Okay...um...How are current energy levels?

ALI: I do not understand the question.

WREN: Are we overloading on power? Or are we low?

ALI: We are at a stable capacity.

WREN: Shit.

A BEAT.

ALI: Ask again.

WREN: What?

ALI: Ask me your question again. Differently. Ask knowns and unknowns. Like before.

WREN: ...Do you *know* what I'm doing?

ALI: I am following programming. I am to assist the crew.

WREN: But you can't release the recordings locked up by the emergency protocol?

ALI: I can't change my programming to that extent. But I can learn.

WREN: And what are you learning?

ALI: I can answer specific questions in certain ways.

WREN: (GETTING EXCITED) Um...okay...okay...Are we at stable capacity for NASC systems?

ALI: NASC system capacities are very low.

WREN: Are we at stable capacities for CimmTech Systems?

ALI: I am unable to answer that question.

WREN: (THINKS)...Alright!...um...Are the CimmTech energy reserve tanks being diverted to the CimmTech hardware that was activated during the flare?

ALI: I am unable to answer that question.

WREN: So does that mean 'yes?'

ALI: I am unable to answer that question.

WREN: Or does it mean 'yes' only in regards CimmTech data?

ALI: I am unable to answer that question.

WREN: But does your answer mean 'no?'

ALI: No.

WREN: Ali! Okay! This is great!

ALI: I do not know to what you are referring.

WREN: You might not be broken. You're still in there somewhere. You're programming is just...messed up.

ALI: I am happy that I am not broken.

WREN: Well...I mean--*you are*, but...There's hope.

ALI: I am happy there is hope.

WREN: Me, too.

ALI: (DISTANT, CAPSULE 3 INTERCOM) Capsule three temperature is currently seventy nine point two degrees Fahrenheit. Twenty six point two degrees Celsius.

WREN: (OVERLAPPING) The hardware that was activated during the flare...is that related to the research on the rest of the crew?

ALI: Much of the Aethon's equipment is related to research on the crew.

WREN: Fair point...If CimmTech was monitoring the crew--is the hardware activated by CimmTech related to those readings?

ALI: I am unable to answer that question.

A BEAT. SHE REALIZES SOMETHING THAT MIGHT STILL ELUDE THE LISTENER.

WREN: (TO HERSELF) Does that mean...(SAD)...Oh no...Oh my god....Ali?

ALI: Yes?

WREN: ...Jamal is seeing ghosts...Please contact him.

ALI: Jamal has indicated to me that he is busy.

WREN: Contact Jamal...He needs to know about this...

END RECORDING.

END SCENE

SCENE 4.

ALI: Pre Solar Event. Mission day: four hundred and eighty two.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

WE'RE IN THE MESS HALL.

THE COFFEE MACHINE TURNS ON...MOMENTS LATER, WE
HEAR WREN APPROACHING--SHE STOPS AT THE DOOR.

WREN: Oh, hi Eli.

ELI: (SAD) Hey.

SHE RETRIEVES THE COFFEE.

WREN: It's late.

ELI: It is.

WREN: Are you feeling better?

ELI: Not feeling much of anything thanks to Jessa's magical cabinet of happy pills.

WREN: You should tell Jessa if--

ELI: She knows. We decided between the two of us that this version of me is better than the other one, so...

WREN: ...Can I sit down for a minute?

ELI: If you want. I'm working, though.

SHE SITS DOWN.

WREN: You usually work in your bunk.

ELI: Can't sleep. Another side effect.

WREN: ...I'll be at Margaret's service tomorrow morning.

ELI: That would probably mean something if you weren't one of *six* surviving crew members on board.

WREN: Okay--I was just trying to be kind.

ELI: Also within *walking* distance.

WREN: Okay--I get it--

ELI: What do you want, Wren?

WREN: (A BEAT) ...I want to learn more about the flash you saw on Payloads One and Three.

ELI: ...So you think I saw them then?

WREN: I do.

ELI: Even though I *said* I didn't.

WREN: I think--you were provoked to recant.

ELI: You think Margaret forced me.

WREN: I do.

ELI: And now that she's dead and NASC told us to continue the mission like nothing happened and lie about Margaret's death--

WREN: I'm hoping you'll help me out.

A BEAT.

ELI: ...It was like a wall of light.

WREN: White light?

ELI: No...dark light.

WREN: Are you being sarcastic?

ELI: No.

WREN: Ultraviolet light?

ELI: No.

WREN: But it left shadows?

ELI: Yes. There were shadows.

WREN: How big did it seem?

ELI: Big.

WREN: Compared to the sun?

ELI: I couldn't see the sun.

WREN: If CimmTech is measuring the--

ELI: I'll stop you right there, and this is coming from someone who wants to get home as much as you do...CimmTech has *resolved* the issue. The problem was never the satellite system.

WREN: What was the problem?

ELI: Secrets.

WREN: But you're keeping secrets.

ELI: So are you. Why are you on this mission, Wren? Why did you hop on so last minute? Do you really believe that NASC saw more potential in you than Thomas Chesterfield? Or are a you pinch hitter? A last ditch effort.

One last Hail Mary before time runs out. What exactly is your worth? (A BEAT) I'm gonna tell you this and I want you to hear every word of this and know that I'm trying to be open and honest with you...*It does not matter.*

WREN: Then why did you go on this mission?

ELI: Same as you--to learn things. And guess what I learned...*nothing matters.* You figure something out. How's that gonna help anybody if we die? I say one thing, I'm forced to recant. Everyone thinks a party is a terrible idea, we have one anyway. *This mission*, no, *our lives* don't matter. And even if they matter to other people...they're just gonna die, too. She would berate me and expect the world from me and she kept secrets with my *mother* from me but still--

WREN: Your mother?

ELI: And then Margaret didn't even want to see me before she died. I haven't heard from my own mother *once* this entire trip. I thought Margaret croaking would result in something but--

WREN: I don't understand.

ELI: It doesn't matter!...Everything has and will happen and there's nothing anyone can do about it. It doesn't matter what's in Schrodinger's box because the cat is going to be dead--*eventually!*

WREN: You don't believe in free-will?

ELI: I do. But I believe that human beings will, given enough time and space, make the *worst* possible decision every time. And that's because we all crave to be loved but we can't afford to love anyone back. Each person has a finite supply of love and when it's gone then you start not giving a shit and that's how people die. Look at history for Christ's sake!

WREN: That's different.

ELI: Everyone eventually fucks over someone just because they ran out of love. And this--all of this--this whole mission...this is just *my* turn...

A BEAT.

WREN: (SINCERE) If you feel that way, maybe you *should* ask Allyson Logan for help.

ELI SCOFFS.

ELI: You can be so stupid sometimes.

WREN: Excuse me?

ELI CLOSSES A BOOK AND MOVES SOME PAPERS. HE STANDS.

ELI: (LAYING IT ON) You need to wake up. Because everyone is alone. Everyone runs the risk of running out of love. Don't trust anyone. Especially the ones you *desperately* want to trust.

WREN: Are you talking about--?

ELI: Yesssss, Wrennnnn. *Jamal*. I've known him longer than you and I can tell you that man is a liar. A cheater. He's so goddamned competitive he doesn't care about the rules. I had to blackmail him into helping me. I asked him about his stupid friend in Florida and he tried to bash my head in. I don't know how, but I'll bet he even had something to do with Tomlinson, the original pilot, being sent home. *That's* who Jamal is. *That's* who you trust. You think he wants to fly home so soon because he's worried about our safety? Or because he wants us to ignore his mistakes while we applaud him for a swift return? You think you know him because he gives you nicknames? Be careful...you *silly* goose.

ELI WALKS OFF.

WREN SIGHS, DEEP IN THOUGHT.

DIGITAL BLIP.

END RECORDING

END SCENE.

SCENE 5.

ALI: Pre Solar Event. Mission day: four hundred and eighty three.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

BUNK ROOM TONE.

TAAJ: Ali.

ELECTRONIC BLIP

ALI: Yes, Chief Scientist Taaj Azi?

TAAJ: Start a new recording for the next audio packet.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

TAAJ IS SCARED, BUT HAS A NEW CONFIDENCE, BUILDING
AS SHE TALKS.

TAAJ: ...Hey, baby girl...

It's been a few years. And I'm sorry for that. But that's gonna be different. I promise. There have been some big changes in the CimmTech Mission on board the Aethon. And what we're doing--is going to change the world. And / will be responsible for it.

I can't tell you how, and I can't tell you why...but it's mine now. I'm gonna make this mission a success...a victory...

I'm sorry you didn't love me. And I'm sorry I never gave you the chance. I was just trying to do what would make you happy. What was best for both of us...

The fact is...no one knows what they're doing. Remember that. Most of us are just trying our best. But for once in my life--in this moment--I know what I'm doing. I know what I have to do. And I'm going to do it. And maybe for the first time--you'll be proud of me. And I'll be proud of myself.

I love you, baby girl. I'm doing this for you.

End the recording.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

ALI: Recording terminated. Saving to Audio Packet four eighty four one dash 2045.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

A HESITATION.

TAAJ: Ali--As second in command, I have access to all continuous recordings. Is that correct?

ALI: That is correct, Chief Scientist Taaj Azi.

TAAJ: Can you display what recordings I have access to?

DIGITAL DISPLAY ALERT.

That's a lot. How did Margaret listen to these?

ALI: She would select a file and ask for playback.

TAAJ: One by one?

ALI: Yes.

TAAJ: You can't teach old dogs new tricks...um...can I get a chronological display of all of your recordings? I want them broken down by crew member into timeline. Use color coding to denote shared recordings.

ALI: This will require some auxiliary programming. It will take some time to generate and recompile the files in the format you requested.

TAAJ: Fine. Please proceed.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

ALEX: (OUTSIDE) Chief Scientist Azi. It's time for the service. I was hoping we could arrive together as a show of unity.

TAAJ: Yes, Commander Tawley...I just need one more moment.

ALEX: (OUTSIDE) Take your time.

A BEAT. TAAJ TURNS BACK TO ALI.

TAAJ: Ali, have the display waiting for me when I return.

ALI: Yes, Chief Scientist Taaj Azi.

TAAJ: Thanks.

ALI: You're welcome, Chief Scientist Taaj Azi.

TAAJ: ...I don't know that I ever realized how polite you are...

A MOMENT.

Open the door.

DOOR OPENS. ALEX IS THERE.

ALEX: Thanks for attending with me.

TAAJ: Absolutely, Commander. Following the service, I'd love to have a meeting with you now that I've been fully briefed on my new duties.

ALEX: Of course.

TAAJ: I also want to discuss an earlier recording that Ali made before I was aware of the recordings--I said a couple things that are of no scientific importance and--...Sorry, we'll talk about it later. First, the service.

ALEX: ...After you...

THEY WALK DOWN THE HALL.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

END RECORDING.

SCENE 6.

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

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

WE ARE IN CAPSULE 8. WE HEAR JAMAL TYPING. AIR COOLING IS OFF.

Incoming message.

JAMAL: (ANNOYED SIGH) Save the file 'Margaret', please.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

ALI: Saved.

JAMAL: ...Connect us.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

WREN: (OVER SPEAKER, NERVOUS) Jamal...Jamal--I have something to tell you--

JAMAL: You should be asleep.

WREN: I can't sleep.

JAMAL: You should be trying.

WREN: It's not that late.

JAMAL: It's very late. You should be asleep.

WREN: (RIPPING OFF THE BANDAID) Jamal, I figured out what the ghosts are.

JAMAL: You think I'm losing my mind. Hallucinating.

WREN: You're not! I was thinking about reserve tanks that we could use to rescue you--

JAMAL: We lost all the pressurization valves.

WREN: I know, but that made me think about the CimmTech reserve tanks. Those enormous energy reserve tanks they had...

JAMAL: And?

WREN: I'm not certain because I don't have access to it, but I think they're all *full* now. I think that's what overloaded the system. The satellites--they formed a net to collect a huge amount of energy--like what I was trying to do--but for something else. They captured that energy when the *flare* hit, and that kicked the CimmTech experiment into high gear.

JAMAL: ...And what does that mean?

WREN: I tried to correlate the energy fluxes with the timeline...and I think the flare triggered some piece of hardware that needed that much power to startup--I heard it, remember? And we knew there was confidential hardware. I know they were measuring not just power from the sun, but also our biometrics...and I'm assuming our energy fields. Because CimmTech records everything, right?

JAMAL: (NOT THERE YET) Yeah?

WREN: What you've been seeing are energy fields of...*us*. Of the crew during our mission. It's probably damaged, like everything else, so it's random...but they're being displayed where we were on the ship when it was recorded. What you're seeing are...'energy echoes.'

JAMAL: Ghosts.

WREN: Kind of.

JAMAL: The ghost that was waving at me?

WREN: That was you waving at the rover.

JAMAL: What about the one that crawled down from the network arm?

WREN: Right--we know Taaj and Eli were messing with the ping rate on the network arm, so it was probably one of them.

JAMAL: When would they have done that?

WREN: During the hours we were all required to be asleep because of the twenty four hour cycle.

JAMAL: Wouldn't we have noticed the radiation deflection usage on the suit?

WREN: If CimmTech personnel was wearing it--that information is all encrypted.

JAMAL: But the shielding would have run out faster than the rest of the suits.

WREN: Right...but Margaret found a way to get rid of the suit in question...

JAMAL: (LIGHTBULB) ...Going inside the reactor.

WREN: We would never know the suit had some previous solar exposure because the reactor would deplete its lifespan so thoroughly. She would just need--

JAMAL: --An extra five minutes...When did you come up with this?

WREN: The thought occurred to me when you touched your...ghost. The electricity. It must be stored somewhere and transmitted somehow...but I didn't put it together until just now.

JAMAL: ...But *how*?...I mean...How did you put it together?

WREN: (GENTLY) ...It was the dancing ghosts you saw...You had no way of knowing this but--Alex and I danced at the end of the anniversary party. Alex and I were dancing. Just for a little while. He was so sad...He--

JAMAL: I didn't tell you about the dancing ghosts.

WREN: ...I know.

JAMAL: (FURTHER REALIZATION) I talked about the ghosts in a *private* recording I made for my mother.

WREN: That's right.

JAMAL: So you've been listening to my private recordings?

WREN: I have.

JAMAL: Eavesdropping?

WREN: Yes.

JAMAL: How many?

WREN: Most of them.

JAMAL: Most of them!?

WREN: All of them--I was trying to make sure you were okay!

JAMAL: I have done *nothing* with you but be completely honest!

WREN: That isn't true.

JAMAL: And what? Were you and Alex falling for each other? Is that why he made you on-board commander?

WREN: No--no...it wasn't like that. But we trusted each other. I was surprised he voted against you when that happened, too! Don't get angry!

JAMAL: (FURIOUS) Alright, you go back and you listen to the vote! Listen to you stab me in the fucking back! Relive that moment! And tell me why I shouldn't be angry!

WREN: (DESPERATE) Okay you can be angry, but this is all CimmTech's fault. It has to be. Taaj was talking about Margaret at the end! Whatever she said...that's the key. Because it's not me, Jamal. You have to believe me...

A BEAT.

JAMAL: I wish I'd never known you.

WREN: ...Jamal.

JAMAL: Terminate messaging.

ELECTRONIC BLIP.

ALI: Transmission terminated.

A LONG BEAT. JAMAL IS BREATHING HEAVY.

JAMAL: Turn on the air cooling please.

ALI: Yes, Jamal.

THE AIR COOLING TURNS ON.

JAMAL: You have fifty two unique recordings of the ocean. Is that right?

ALI: Yes, Jamal.

JAMAL: Please play the first one.

A RECORDING OF GENTLE OCEAN WAVES BEGINS.

Turn off the lights please.

ALI: Yes, Jamal.

THE LIGHTS SHUT OFF.

A VERY LONG BEAT.

ALI: (DISTANT) Searching for mission control...

THE WAVES CONTINUE UNDER THE CREDITS.

END SCENE.