

untitled time dilation play

by
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Pipeline PlayLab 2015
Reading Revisions

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READING:
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CHARACTERS:

To be played by one woman:

CLAIRE is an anthropologist in her late 20's. She's a little prickly, a little difficult to get to know, has a little bit of a hard time letting things in. Peaks and valleys.

HERA is down to earth. Connects with others. Strong, maternal.

COAKLEY is a scientist and astronaut who has been genetically modified for a 300+ year life span. Very pragmatic. No strings attached. Very even keeled. A strong, steady sine wave.

To be played by one man:

GREG is a mathematician and teacher. He tends to get ahead of himself, and might wear his heart on his sleeve.

THORN is just trying to provide for his loved ones, and not die. He's a little inscrutable.

DAVID works in technology and is a little distant from his family. He means well, but is uncomfortable around them.

To be played by one woman:

LARK is a child and wishes she could be an adult until she becomes one.

ROSCO is a computer and wishes she could be a human.

V is a colonist and wishes she wasn't.

To be played by someone also?

STAGE DIRECTIONS. These have a viewpoint. Fondness, but no attachment, to the world around them. A desire to make sense and understand.

IN THE DARK:

THE BIG BANG. All time and space collapses in on itself before EXPLODING forth at nearly the speed of light.

Slowly, very slowly, like, over the course of three to five billion years, dust clouds begin to form into star clouds which begin to form into planet clouds.

Millions of years pass as clouds condense and planets form and are struck by planetary interlopers with abnormal orbits and reform or collapse into clouds of asteroids.

Towards the outer ring of a dense cloud of stars, a planet forms.

Its oceans swirl and cool and complex acids are created. These strands of genetic information begin self-replicating.

Millions of years go by as life becomes more complex, and spreads to every inch of the planet.

On a beach somewhere:

WAVES crash against the shore. It's night time. There are so many stars in the sky.

Lit by the sky, we can just make out THORN. He's crouched down low over a pile of wood. He rubs sticks together, making a fire. Smoke smoke smoke. He knows what he's doing.

He blows. He coughs. He coughs and coughs.

It doesn't sound good at all.

Rub rub rub. Smoke smoke smoke.

THORN

Come on come on come on come on.

HERA, visibly pregnant, approaches with some firewood.

HERA

Want some help?

THORN

No, I've got it. Just sit with me.

He blows. Smoke.

Smoke. He coughs. Coughs coughs.

HERA
It's fine it's fine.
Leave it.

THORN
I almost got it.

HERA
It's warm enough, it's light enough. Just leave it.

THORN
Hm.

She sits nearby. Silence. He's annoyed.

HERA
Lark?

THORN
She's sleeping.

HERA
That's good. Long day.

THORN
Did you find anything good?

HERA
Yeah.

They sit in silence for a second. Hera holds something in her hands. Something small. A nut? An acorn maybe? Thorn looks.

THORN
?

HERA
I took it.

THORN
A nut?

HERA
From home.

THORN
Mm. I mean --

HERA
I know I know. We're here now. I just like it is all.

Okay. THORN

I just like it. HERA

They sit in silence another second or two.

Do you think this is it? HERA

Maybe. THORN

The spot? HERA

Maybe. THORN

That would be good.
You really need to rest. HERA

I'm fine. THORN

I hear you coughing. HERA

I'm fine. THORN

Okay.
WE need to rest. HERA

Are you okay? THORN

Yeah.
Everything's okay.
We're here and the sky is clear and we're safe and sound.
Lark fell asleep right away.
And we're full and happy. HERA

I THINK this is the spot.

We'll see in the morning.

THORN

I think it is.

HERA

What makes you say that?

THORN

I just [feel it]. It's just a good spot.
Maybe we can stay here.
What do you think?

HERA

She runs her hands through his hair.

THORN

I like it here.

HERA

I like you.

She pats him on the head. He looks up at her.

THORN

Yeah?

HERA

Yeah.

You know what would be good?

You wanna fuck me here maybe?

On the beach?

Yeah. That would be good.
Do you think Lark [would hear]?

THORN

She's asleep.

HERA

He reaches up to her, but she pushes him back down onto the sand, climbing on top of him.

She's dreaming.

HERA

They kiss.

She's not even here.

HERA

They kiss.

Just be quiet.

HERA

TIME SHIFTS.

How does this work exactly?

It's hard to say. Maybe it's the lights. Maybe it's sound. Maybe it's VERY obvious and big, or maybe it's VERY tiny.

I think it might be TINY.

We barely notice at all.

Maybe we don't even notice.

*
*

But in the blink of an eye, approximately 45,000 years go by.

Now we're in CLAIRE's bedroom. It feels like a dorm room. It is a dorm room. Crappy university housing that all feels exactly the same wherever you go.

But Claire is older than a student. She's in bed with GREG, who's also older than a student. They're in their late 20's or early 30's.

It's hard to tell right now because the lights are all off.

They're moving around, uncomfortably.

They make uncomfortable sounds.

Under blankets.

They are TRYING to fuck.

It's going... [okay].

What if I... GREG

I don't... CLAIRE

Here just... GREG

Mmm. I think... CLAIRE
I don't know. I don't think. Hmmm.

Uhhhh... GREG
Like.
What do you want to do?

What? CLAIRE

What can I do [to get you going]?

GREG

Uh...

CLAIRE

You're just uh... not [wet].
This isn't going to [work].
Do you have...
Lube? Or?

Greg

No. I don't have
Lube.
I wasn't really expecting to be fucking anyone.
I don't really travel with lubrication.

Claire

I don't know it's not that weird if you're uh [dry].
I mean. I don't normally carry it around with me, but...

Greg

Claire sighs.

I'm just not. I don't know what's going on.

Claire

Oh it's okay. Yeah.

Greg

SILENCE.

I can give you head.

Claire

If you want.

Greg

If you want?

Claire

No I mean like.

Greg

"If you want."

Claire

I just mean, like... I don't know.
What can I do?

Greg

I don't know. Claire

Uh. Well what do you like? I feel bad.
If you're going to uh... Greg

I don't know. Claire

I just would want it to be even. GREG

Mm. CLAIRE

Okay.
Well... I mean, let's just sleep here.
(beat, settling)
We're both pretty drunk. Greg

They lay there for a second.

I think you should leave. Actually.
I'm sorry this was... Claire
Ugh.

Really? Greg

Yes. Claire

We don't have to do anything tonight. GREG

Still. Claire

Okay. I... Greg

Yeah. CLAIRE

Okay. GREG

He gets out of bed and starts gathering his clothes.

Have you seen my boxers?
I don't know where [they are].

Thanks.

Sure.

We can try again
another time.

You don't have to be polite.

I don't understand you.

You've known me like ten minutes, why would you understand me?

Uh.

I'll see you around I'm sure.

Sure.

Off or on?

?

The lights?

Greg

She holds them out for him.

GREG

CLAIRE

He pulls them on, some other clothes.

GREG

CLAIRE

SILENCE.

GREG

CLAIRE

GREG

CLAIRE

He's at the door.

Greg

Greg waits. He doesn't know what the fuck to say.

GREG

CLAIRE

GREG

He flicks the switch back and forth:
lights on, lights off, lights on, lights off.

On. On. I'm gonna work.
On.

CLAIRE

I'll uh... text you or...

GREG

He thinks about maybe giving her a goodbye kiss. She definitely does not want that to happen.

If you want.

CLAIRE

Yeah. Okay.
I will.

GREG

Bye?

Claire

Bye.

He leaves. Claire sits alone. BLECH.

TIME SHIFTS.

It's fairly seamless. It's pretty crazy how something like four hundred years can go by. Just like that.

The Lights Flash.
ON. OFF. ON. OFF. ON.
It's an ALARM.

COAKLEY sits awake in her bunk.
She seems military.

An ALARM almost like an updated version of an iPhone alarm rings.
It rings and rings.

Coakley hits the alarm switch.

She rubs her face with her hands.

She drops to the floor and does a quick set of pushups.

She brushes her teeth. This is her morning routine. It's efficient but not hurried. It might take a little time. We can wait and watch.

COAKLEY

Good morning Rosco. How are you?

ROSCO speaks. Rosco is a computer program on board the ship.

[Rosco is very good at not sounding like a computer all the time.]

ROSCO

Good morning. I'm fine. How did you sleep?

COAKLEY

Fine thanks. How about you?

ROSCO

I had a fine evening, thank you.

COAKLEY

What'd you get up to?

ROSCO

Nothing really. I was just thinking.

Coakley plops down into a little chair at a workstation.

COAKLEY

Mm.

Lay some numbers on me, would ya?

ROSCO

Day 987.

Decelerating at a steady rate of 10.5 meters per second squared.

We should reach orbital height of Kepler 16-B in 109 days.

COAKLEY

Won't that be nice, huh?

ROSCO

You may want to take a look at CO2 scrubbers thirteen and fourteen.

Sensors there seem to be malfunctioning.

COAKLEY

Mm. After breakfast.

Coakley prepares a little mush of breakfast food.

ROSCO

Were you dreaming?

Your heartrate was elevated.

COAKLEY

I don't remember. Maybe.

ROSCO

You haven't been sleeping very soundly since we began decelerating.

*

Mm. COAKLEY

I worry about you. ROSCO

(smiles, surprised)
Is that what you think about all night? COAKLEY

No. ROSCO
Sometimes.
No.

I'm nervous to even ask. COAKLEY
Okay. Would you start recording for me please?

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

TIME SHIFTS. We are back with: Claire.

She is sitting in a little rolling chair in a lab.
It is spare, all metal and glass.
Well lit.

Claire seems more comfortable in the stark lighting, even if she is hung over. And she is hung over.

She sits leaning over a low table, lit from beneath.
She wears rubber gloves, a surgical mask, glasses.
On the table, rest ancient human remains.

She gingerly inspects the ribcage.

She might hum something for a bit before

She speaks into her computer.

Claire
Sharp nick to third and fourth ribs, left side.
Possible puncture wound.
Sharp, thin damage.
Sharpened stone or...
Definite puncture wound.

Carefully, very carefully, she scrapes at them with a tiny little pick, kind of like what the dentist cleans your teeth with.

Some sort of stab wound almost.
Could've punctured lung tissue.
Maybe.

It's a HORRIBLE SCRAPING SOUND.

CLAIRE

She's very engaged in this.

She doesn't notice a knock at the door.
Or a follow up knock.

Hey! Hello! Hey Claire? Claire???

Greg (OFF)

She looks up. Sees who it is. Isn't excited about it.

She walks over towards the lab door. They look at one another through the glass.

Greg.

CIAIRE

Can I come in?

Greg (OFF)

Greg holds up a bag of takeout.

Fine.

Claire

Yo.

Greg

Uh.

Claire

I brought you a hangover lunch.

Greg

Oh.

CIAIRE

Chipotle.

Greg

Um.

Claire

GREG

I thought you could use it. I could use it. Can I set this down somewhere, or?
Do you have a table that isn't covered in --

Claire

Bones?

GREG

Yeah.

CLAIRE

Uh.

She rolls over a little side table. She pulls stacks and stacks of papers off of it, plopping them onto the ground.

CLAIRE

Here. Don't get guacamole on anything.

Greg

I didn't get guacamole.
It's extra.

He sets the food down. Claire isn't really paying attention, she's VERY CAREFULLY putting bones back into drawers, handling them very gingerly.

Greg is uncomfortable.

GREG

Are you a guac lady?

CLAIRE

What?

GREG

Guac. Amole. It's extra. I didn't buy guacamole.

CLAIRE

I don't care.

Greg comes over to look.

CLAIRE

Careful. Please. I don't really want you this close.

Greg

So these are... This is your guy.

ClaiRE

Yeah.

You were talking about, at the bar? GreG

Mm. CLAIRE

How is he? GREG

Okay. Claire
We're just getting to know each other.

Cool. Greg

She goes about putting things away.
Greg, uncomfortable, unpacks two burritos.

I got a veggie and a carnitas because I wasn't sure if you're a veggie. Greg
Claire is still putting stuff away.

Do you have a preference? Veggie or carnitas? GREG

Carnitas. Claire

Cool. Greg

She is still doing stuff. Greg's just there.

I'm not a veggie either. But it's cool. GREG

She joins him finally.
They unwrap burritos and eat them.

Thank you. Claire

Mm-hm. Greg

They eat. For a little while.

*

Greg
So how old is this dude? Mr. X? Is it a dude?

Claire
I mean, yeah. He's a dude. Definitely homo sapiens. Early homo sapiens.

Greg
How early?

Claire
About 45,000 years. Give or take a thousand.

Greg
(he has no idea)
That's really... old?

Claire
(matter of fact)
That's VERY old. Yeah.

Greg
Neat.
(some time)
You know Megan Darfield? Have you met her?

CIAIRE
Darfield?

Greg
She's one of the stat adjuncts.

Claire
Why would I know her?

Greg
She's having like a back to school party for faculty if you want to go. I think it might be fun.
You could meet some people. Since you're new.

Claire
Yeah.

Greg
Yeah?

Claire
Yeah.

Greg
Yeah!

She gestures like, "no, not that excited, more like!"

Claire

Yeah.

Okay. I'll take yeah.
I think it'll be fun.

GREG

Silence.

Thank you for the burrito.
You really, I did not expect this.
What do I owe you?

Claire

*

Just get me back.

Greg

Alright.

Claire

She looks at her work.

How's your... you feeling alright after last night?

Greg

I've had worse.

CLAIRE

Yeah. I'm pretty jacked up on aspirin.

Greg

A LONG SILENCE.
She's just staring at her work. She isn't here at all.

This party, I'm asking, like, a date. Like, will you be my date?

Greg

Oh.

Claire

To the party?

Greg

Uh.

Claire

Or.

Greg

Yeah I mean --

Claire

You don't have to I just --

Greg

No I -- Claire

Really it's -- Greg

Okay. Yeah. Claire

Yeah? GREG

Yes. I will be your date. Claire

Yes! I mean. Yes. Cool. I look forward to [*seeing you later*]. I didn't think you'd say yes. Greg

Me neither. But. I did. CLAIRE

Okay well. It's going to be fun. We can play Scattergories.
(she might not want to) GREG

Or. If you don't want to that's fine.

Okay. Claire

Cool. I uh. Cool. Greg
(maybe she does want to?)

Cool. CLAIRE

Greg starts piling up burrito trash.

Alright, I should probably go. GreG
First pop quiz of the year! Gotta go flunk some kids.

I have bones to scrape. ClairE

That's cool. I like that you do something that's interesting. Greg

Claire
There's some calcium deposit or...
Nevermind
you don't care.

GREG
I don't even know if I care.
What? What are you talking about?

CLAIRE
His palm's all... Hold on.

She puts on some rubber gloves, she finds some forceps, she opens a little drawer. Greg is interested; this is a whole production!

From the drawer Claire produces a little tray that's holding a weird lumpy section of bone(s) maybe the size of an apple. It's hard to tell what's going on here.

GREG
What's going on here?

CLAIRE
Here.

She shows Greg the skeleton's hand. She points at what she's talking about.

Greg
What is this? Like a rock?

CLAIRE
It's a palm. The bones of his hand.

GREG
Looks like a rock.

ClaiRE
That's what I'm talking about.
The rock, I think he had something in his hand, and then water deposits, it grew out. It's all calcified,
But if you look here, he --

Greg leans in TOO close.

GREG
What's --

He points like he's going to touch it maybe.

Whoa! What the! Hold up.

Claire

Sorry.

Greg

You can't touch it!

Claire

Sorry I --

Greg

Jesus.

Claire

Sorry.

Greg

This is... What is wrong with you?

CLAIRE

I wasn't going to touch it. I was pointing at it. Sorry.

GREG

These are SO old. Like first modern human old. You can't just grab em.

CLAIRE

Like the missing link?

GREG

That's a misnomer. There isn't one [link like that]. Evolution is more complicated.

CLAIRE

Cool. I wasn't going to touch it.

GREG

Anyway.

Claire

That's my guy.

Thanks for lunch. Claire

Yeah I knew you could use it. Greg

I really didn't expect to ever see you again. CLAIRE

He waves.

I'll see you tonight. Eight thirty. She lives in Ruben. By the library. GREG

Eight thirty. CLAIRE

Bye.

Claire goes back to her work. She goes to hit record on the computer.

Oh. Damn it. Claire

She hits rewind. She hits play. We can hear their last couple lines of dialogue.

Son of a bitch. Claire

She rewinds. So do we: forty five thousand years earlier.

Thorn is bundled under piles of furs, feverish. Remember that cough?

He has been sick for weeks now, and is only getting worse. As Hera has been getting bigger, he has been getting smaller. Losing weight fast, because he can barely even walk from their cave to the nearby woods.

This is bad news. He's barely even conscious. His lungs (they barely even know about lungs) are filling with fluid. Pneumonia, maybe pneumonia and a strain of something like strep.

They don't really know this. They just know he can't breathe.

Hera leans over him on one side with a few small items in a little leather pouch that she futzes with. Small little rocks, dried herbs, shells.

LARK, young, interested, sits on his other side. She is watching VERY carefully. She's probably a little bit afraid, but also afraid to show she's afraid.

Hera hands her a little wooden bowl.

Here, give him this.

Hera

?

LARK

Lark, give him this to drink.

HERA

Okay.

LARK

She holds the bowl up to Thorn's mouth.

Hey, you have to drink this. Drink.
Come on.

Lark

Dad.

He does, slowly.

There you go.

HERA

Hera watches.

Good job, good job.

LARK

Hera prepares a sharp knife.

Wait. What are you doing?

LARK

Hera
(matter of fact)
We're gonna let bad spirits out, and burn them in the fire.

Hera

Thorn GROANS.

Quiet.

HERA

(to Lark)
More. He needs to drink all of that. It'll put him to sleep.

Drink it Dad.
Finish this.

LARK

Hera digs through the furs, pulling some away.

She exposes Thorn's ribcage. She massages, touches, pokes and prods. This hurts.

I know. I know.

HERA

Mm.

LARK
(uncomfortable)

Stop squiring. Pay attention.

HERA

Hera brings the knife tip close to Thorn's side. She pushes it in, sharply, between two ribs.

Thorn GASPS, Lark too.

Hands hands, bowl.

HERA

She pulls Larks' hands to the spot, so she can collect blood in the little bowl. It pools into it.

Good. Good. Sh. Sh.

Hera

She rests her hand on Thorn's forehead.

Sh.
Sh sh sh.

Hera

They sit there in silence for a bit, blood pooling out of Thorn and his collapsed lung.

Thorn passes out.

Take the blood.

Hera

Hera crushes a few dried herbs into the bowl Lark holds for her.

What are these?

LARK

Sh.
We'll talk about it later.

HERA

She holds out her hands.

Bowl.

HERA

Lark hands it to her.

Hera whispers into the bowl.
She leans down, whispering into the fire.

What are you saying?

LARK

Hera glares at her.

Later.

HERA

Okay.

LARK

Hera holds the bowl high over the fire. She pauses, then pours it out into the flames.

She watches the smoke for a moment.

Here.

HERA

She takes some moss from the pouch, handing it to Lark.

Hold this to his cut.
I'll come back.

Hera

Hera stands, collecting herself.

We'll burn that too.

HERA

She exits. Leaving Lark alone with Thorn.

Lark holds the primitive bandage to Thorn's cut. She starts to SING something softly. Not words, just soothing sounds.

TIME SHIFTS. The present.

Claire on the phone in her lab. She's working, cradling the phone in her shoulder with an uncomfortable crink in her neck. Her surgical mask sits around her neck.

Eventually, she stops working.

Claire

Hi yes. Hi. Sorry. Reception here isn't...
Yeah everything's okay here.
I mean, I'm just getting started really so...
Rutgers is... I don't know. I'm living in like a dorm which is weird.
I went to a faculty party last night.
Yeah.
It was! Kind of.
We played Catchphrase.
It's the one where.
No. You have a little machine and
It's like charades but you can talk?
The machine tells you
Yeah.

Um. That's it really.
Working. Starting to work.
What's going on with [you]?
What's up?

Mm. What does that [mean]?
Okay.
Okay. What does that [mean]?
Uh when did you find that out?
Well why didn't you [tell me then]?

Okay. It doesn't matter.
Okay.

What did the doctor say?
Are you there still, can I talk to [the doctor]?
No, I just want to hear [it from the doctor].
Well that can't really be [true].
There must be something we [can do].

Okay.

No Mom don't.
I'm sure it'll be fine.
It'll be fine.

Because it has to be.

Mom please don't [cry].
Please don't.

I don't know what to do.
Ohmygodohmygod.
Mom. Mom. Sh. Sh. You're okay you're okay.
Sh. Sh.
Sh.

Claire waits and listens and doesn't cry for a long time. She listens to her mom.

CLAIRE

Nothing. I already told you.
Nothing's going on. Just work stuff.

Ummm... What can I do?
Maybe I'll try to come home this weekend? And see you?
Have you called Aunt Shirley or...
Maybe I'll fly out Friday.
Because I want to.

Listen, I have to go. I have to. I'm sorry I just...
Okay.
I'll talk to you later?
I'll call you tonight?
Okay.

Love you too.

Bye.
Bye.

She hangs up the phone. Stands there with it for a while.
Eventually, she sits at her table of bones. She puts her mask on.

She gets out a little electrical grinder, almost like a tiny little power sander, and sands away at the rock-like thing that used to be the bones of a hand. She grinds and grinds, it's a high pitched WHINE.

She stops. Pulls out her phone. Writes a text.
CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK.
She reads it over.

WOOSH.

It's gone.

She sits and stares at her phone, holding it in her hand.

After a moment: PING.

She reads, types, CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK. WHOOSH.

She picks up her little grinder guy and gets to work. Little particles of rock and bone spray into the air.

What is in here, buddy?

Claire

TIME SHIFTS. Four hundred years later.

Coakley sits, trying to rewire two little boxes that look almost like air conditioners. They're actually Carbon Dioxide scrubbers.

Hey Rosco, would you spit out some diagnostics for me?

Coakley

Carbon Dioxide levels still increasing.

ROSCO

More sepcifically: how much time until we're at [*CROAKS, finger across the throat*].

COAKLEY

Approximately fifty five hours.

Rosco

Alright.

CoakLEY

Around fifty three hours you'll lose the cognitive ability to perform complex tasks.

ROSCO

Coakley continues to scrape and plug away at the scrubbers.

If I can replace these within twenty four?

CoakLEY

A return to functional levels of Oxygen is highly likely.

RoSCO

I'll take it. I like that you don't have to think about things.

CoakLEY

I do think. Just more quickly.

ROSCO

Must be nice. COAKLEY

Coakley works a while longer.

What is it like when you think? ROSCO

I don't know. COAKLEY

I understand it from a mechanical standpoint. ROSCO

Sure. COAKLEY

But I don't understand it. Do you understand what's happening? ROSCO

No. COAKLEY
(thinks, realizes)

Silence.

Hey, turn off all the non-essential electrical units would you?
You can run some of that power to the remaining scrubbers? CoaKLEY

It won't make much of a difference. ROSCO

A little though? COAKLEY

A little, yes. ROSCO

Okay. COAKLEY
(go for it then)

A few lights turn off.

There are still emergency fluorescents on.

CoakLEY

You can turn 'em all off.
I don't need lights. I'm alright in the dark here.

The LIGHTS GO OUT.

The sound of scraping.

Coakley is in pitch dark.

COAKLEY

What's it like for you to think?

ROSCO

I think you, humans, feel at any given moment like you are of one place. I think during your moment, in your place, I have many more moments, and many more places.

Do you understand?

COAKLEY

I don't know if I can.

ROSCO

In just this conversation I have had approximately six orders of magnitude as many "thoughts" as you. Time for you and time for me... We're living at different speeds. If you were the age of Earth, I'd now be the age of the universe.

Silence. Darkness.

ROSCO

Metaphorically.

Silence. Darkness.

Coakley

Fifty five hours?

Rosco

If your heartrate remains steady fifty eight hours thirty six minutes.

Coakley

Roger that.

ROSCO

Would you like intermittent reminders of your heart rate?

We can hear COAKLEY's HEARTBEAT over the speakers. It's low, steady. She's still alive.

COAKLEY

No, I can feel it thank you.

TIME SHIFTS as the beat increases.

The present.

Claire and Greg in bed, in the dark. She moans, she's loud about it.

Claire

Ah ah ah.

Ah.

Ah.

AHHH.

Silence. Panting. LAUGHTER.

Some silence.

Claire

Fuck.

God.

Greg

(deep voice)

Yes?

She hits him, playful.

Claire

Go fuck yourself.

Fuck.

I needed that.

Greg

I liked it a lot.

You were shaking.

It's kinda sexy.

Claire

(getting personal)

I... I've never come like that.

I've never...

GREG

What?

Claire
(an uncomfortable admission)
Nobody's ever *[been able to give me an orgasm]*.

She gestures.

Sorry what?
GREG

He turns the lights on.

You... what? What are you saying?
GREG

I've come before, asshole.

Oh.

Just never with anyone.

Well.
That's uh, what they're like.
Welcome to orgasms.

Go fuck yourself.
You're an idiot.

·
·
·
Hey? I am happy you texted me.
I didn't expect that.
Thanks.

Yeah.

I need to use the bathroom.

Okay. Do you want the --

Yep. Yeah.

Claire

GREG

He turns the light back off.

CLAIRE

Greg

CLAIRE

Greg
(building up to...)

He turns the light back on.

CLAIRE

She starts to get up out of bed.

Greg
Oh if you want to brush your teeth, I bought a spare toothbrush. It's under the sink.

Claire
Ah. I wasn't planning to stay.

Greg
Oh.

CLAIRE
I have to be up early.

GREG
Yeah. I mean, me too.

Claire
I'm actually flying back to Michigan tomorrow so.

Greg
Oh.

Claire
Just for the weekend.

Greg
(disappointed)
Yeah, not a problem. Yeah.
I just figured since it's late.

Claire
Yeah. I mean, I should definitely go soon.

Greg
Okay.

Claire
So.

Greg
Sure yeah.
A wedding or?

Claire
What?

Greg
Is it a wedding or... what's in Michigan?

Claire
My mom.

Oh. I didn't realize you were. Greg

From Michigan? Claire

Yeah. Dealbreaker maybe.
So...
Visiting. Greg

Uh, yeah, I... It's kinda heavy stuff. Claire

Okay. Greg

I don't want to talk about it. Claire

Okay. I get it. I'm just a sex object. (joking) Greg

You got it. (joking) Claire

She gives him a wink and a gun finger before exiting. She turns the lights back off.

Wait. (oh) GREG

TIME SHIFTS.

The past.

The sounds of scraping. Wood on wood rubbing rubbing rubbing.
Lights SLOWLY RISE from a little tiny fire, slowly nursed into something more substantial.

Hera, getting more pregnant, sits with Lark, who is spinning a little wood branch against a flat wood plate, trying to start a fire.

Thorn is nowhere to be seen.

Hera

That's good, that's good.

This is a pain. I hate this. lark

You need to know how to do it. HERA

I do know. lark

Okay. HERA

I do. lark

Show me then.
What now? HERA

Lark doesn't fucking know.

Blow. Blow. HERA

She tries to tends the fire. It isn't really happening.

It's just too cold in here. LARK

Did I ever tell you about our first home? HERA

No. (oh my god) LARK

It was a tiny little hole in the ground. HERA

Where was it? Over the hills? LARK

Over so many hills. We used to live with... HERA

What? Who? LARK

Your father wouldn't want to talk about it. HERA

Silence.

Is he going to be okay?

LARK

HERA

Yes.
I think so.
He's outside now, that's good.

LARK

If you have a baby will it be my friend?
I don't have any friends.

HERA

I think you'll be friends. If I have a baby.

LARK

Right. If.

HERA

Yeah.

Silence.
Lark focuses.
She tries and tries and tries.

Then quits.

LARK

I can't do it. I can't do anything.

HERA

Don't stop. Hey. Keep going.

Lark works. Rub rub rub. She does it. A smile on her face.

LARK

Can I show Dad?

HERA

Yeah. Go.

Lark leaves. Hera alone.

TIME SHIFTS.

Claire sits with her laptop. On a bed in her childhood bedroom. It's still decorated the way it was when she was in highschool, which isn't too far off from how it was decorated when she was young.

She's on SKYPE.

Greg's on the other end. We can only see and hear him in the glow of the screen. It's distancing and a little bit weird.

So...
how's Michigan?

Greg

I don't really want to talk about it.

Claire

What do you want to talk about?

Greg

I don't even know. Nothing.
You called me.

CLAIRE

You answered.

GREG

I didn't want to be alone.

CLAIRE

Where's your mom?

Greg

Sleeping.

Claire

So this is your childhood bedroom?

Greg

Since I was four. Want to see my highschool yearbook?

Claire

Yeah.

Greg

Claire goes to get it from a bookshelf nearby. It takes her a second. We can wait.

She flips through, smiling, remembering things she didn't remember. She finds a page she likes and holds it up to the laptop.

That's me there.

CLAIRE

(points)
When I was on the newspaper.

Greg

You had a uniform?

Claire

I bet I still have it somewhere.

Greg

Bring some of those schoolgirl skirts back with you if you can.

Claire

Perv.

GREG

You were in private school?

CLAIRE

Yeah. Were you?

GREG

No, public. Public.

CLAIRE

You're well-adjusted.

GREG

I'm normal. You're the one who's well- /adjusted

CLAIRE

/No I'm not.

Some time as she flips through the yearbook.

Claire
 I was also in debate. This is debate class.

She holds that up for Greg, or the camera.

GREG
 How old are you here?

Claire
 Sophomore year.

Greg
 I bet you were great at debate.

Claire
 I was good. I made a girl cry once.

Greg LAUGHS.

Claire
 This is weird.

Greg
 What?

Claire
 Having your like, your face is here, in my room with me, but you're not here.

Greg
 Oh. Yeah. I'm just a weird floating head like the wizard of oz or something.
 "And to you, scarecrow, I give a brain."

Claire
 Yeah.
 Which one am I?

GREG
 The tin man?

CLAIRE
 Maybe.

GREG
 What about me?

CLAIRE
 (joking)
 A flying monkey?
 No, the lollipop guild.

I think the scarecrow actually.

GREG

Maybe. You're already smart though.

CLAIRE

Silence.

She looks through her yearbook, there are people in there she's forgotten even exist.

A lot of them still live nearby, she could call them maybe. But she won't. She won't call any of them. For a split second, just for a few moments, she realizes they all have lives and families and things going on and probably are a lot more complicated than she gave them credit for in high school. They have been living full human lives. Mm. That's a little uncomfortable to think about, especially right now.

What's Greg doing? Just watching her?

I'm projecting you in the lecture hall so you actually are larger than life.

Greg

No you aren't. Are you?

CLAIRE

(LAUGHS)
[kind of cuts out] I [???)
That would be so great.
If [WHAT?!]

Greg

You're cutting out.

Claire

There is [that better]?

Greg

Hold on.

Claire

They just sit in silence for a few seconds. Claire starts going down a rabbit hole again. She doesn't want to, so she tries to climb back out. Say something.

My mom's dying. They can't do anything. She's going to die.

Claire

Greg

Oh.
Claire.
I'm sorry.

CIAIRE

Me too.

She lays down on her bed with her face as close to her laptop as it can be without crushing it.

Hey you're sideways now.

Greg

So are you.

Claire

They both just kind of sit in the blue light of computers, just sort of "being" with one another.

TIME SHIFTS.

The future.

Coakley sits, lit by a single light on board. She looks out a little porthole maybe. There aren't even really planets to see right now. Just the vast empty cold of space. And the knowledge that there are billions of planets, and people, but they're all millions of miles away.

Coakley might be the human being furthest away from any other human being to ever exist.

ROSCO

You may want to record a transmission to be sent back.

I don't have anything to say.

CoakLEY

I'm just letting you know.

Rosco

Okay.

CoakLEY

SILENCE.

Your serotonin seems low.

Rosco

No shit.

CoAKLEY

Would you like me to dose you?

Rosco

No.

I don't want you to bliss me out.

CoakLEY

Rosco

I'm trying to elevate your mood.

CoAKLEY

I don't want to elevate my mood right now.

Rosco
I'm worried about you.

CoaKLEY
I just want to be sad for a little bit. Then I will go back to problem-solving.

RoscO
I don't want your intellectual capacity impaired. You might fail.

CoakleY
Well there are others.

Rosco
They do have worse chances though.

CoAKLEY
Sorry, what?

Rosco
The other Prometheus ships. They are not as likely to succeed.

CoAKLEY
I was told --

Rosco
You don't all have the same statistical / chances.

CoaKLEY
/I was told, we were told.
It was a five year survival rate around 62-63%. 20 year 45%. 40 year 25%.
Tapering off down to three hundred, three fifty.

Rosco
Hm. That's not true.

CoAKLEY
What in the fuck are you telling me right now?

ROSCO
Each of you could, in theory, live to be three hundred to three hundred fifty years old.

COAKLEY
No we're genetically --

ROSCO
Yes. That is true, you have the genetic capacity to survive that long. You've all had the appropriate modifications for extended longevity.

COAKLEY
Right.

ROSCO

But that's lifespan. If you make it to your planet. If you survive terraforming. If oxygen and food production are successful. Then your lifespans are similar, yes.
That would only matter if your chances of mission success were the same.
They are not the same.

COAKLEY

They're similar. Within a few percent. That's the whole point, send thirteen people, a couple of us would...

ROSCO

That is unlikely.

COAKLEY

Yes but equally so. For all involved.

ROSCO

Two of the Prometheus ships have previously used drives, making their likelihood of failure during transit significantly higher. They may not reach their destinations.
Four of the ships are en route to planets significantly outside of the acceptable temperature variation for human life. On the cusp or just past the Goldilocks zone.
One ship will enter the Oort Cloud, with low likelihood of safely passing through.

CoakLEY

Are you fucking with me?

Rosco

I wouldn't do that. The three ships most likely to reach mission success were always Prometheus 6, 7, 8. All of which have the same, now seemingly unreliable, Carbon Dioxide scrubbers.

CoakLEY

Top three?

Rosco

Yes.

CoakLEY

Were you lying to me earlier, or are you lying to me now?

Rosco

I never informed you about the likelihood of success or failure of the other Prometheus ships. This is something we've never discussed. I have / records of everything.

CoakLEY

Shit.
Shit shit shit.

RosCO

Would you like a dose?

CoakLEY

No, no injections. I don't have time.

Rosco

You know, I could have just dosed you without your knowledge.

CoakLEY

...

RosCO
Through the air. I chose not to.

CoAKLEY
Thanks. You are a more decent computer than I realized.

ROSCO
I like to think I am fairly ethical.

Coakley looks through some diagrams, some blueprints, some screens.

CoaKLEY
Fuck.
So....
FUUUUUUCK.

TIME SHIFTS. The present.

Claire in her lab. Greg sits nearby. She's GRINDING away at her dumb bones, clouds of little dirt fly everywhere. They're both wearing surgical masks and glasses.

GREG
Hey so I thought we could talk about all THIS.

CLAIRE
What?

GREG
Whatever this is.

CLAIRE
That's literally what I'm trying to figure out. Like my job.

GREG
No
(gestures between them)
"This."

CLAIRE
Ah.

GREG
This.

CLAIRE
Do we have to?

GREG
I need to.

Okay. Go. CLAIRE

This
is good.
I think
has been good
and
I
like you
a lot.
I like you a lot.
So. GREG

Sorry are you asking me something, or? CLAIRE

I... we're dating. Right? Like. This is, in my mind, this is... * GREG

I have in no way thought about this. At all. CLAIRE

Okay. (hurt) GREG

Um. CLAIRE

Well. GREG

Silence.

I think I have to leave. I have to go home to be with my mom. I think I have to quit this job. Or go on leave. Or. I have an appointment with the chair of the department in like two hours. CLAIRE

Yeah. GREG

So, I don't really know what to...
I mean, what are we supposed to... CLAIRE

If I'm not here?

GREG

*

So.

CLAIRE

I have A LOT going on.

GREG

No I know. I get that. I do. I don't really. Have anything going on.
So.

CLAIRE

*

I am sitting here debating if I should leave behind this really great opportunity, for my career, so I can go watch my mom maybe die.
Definitely die.
Or if I should stay here for my career and let her die most likely alone.
So my mind is elsewhere.

GREG

Can you take like a temporary leave or...

*

CLAIRE

I have explored that option.

GREG

So is that?

She says nothing.

GREG

Forget it.
I should go. I'm gonna...

She doesn't stop him.

He goes. Claire sits.

TIME SHIFTS. The past.

Hera lays propped up against the wall, on her back. Legs spread.
She's in the process, potentially, of giving birth.

Lark and Thorn are there by her side.

Hera

AHHHHHH.
Ah.

Mmm. (pained)

You're okay. You're okay. LARK

Mm. I don't -- Hera

Can we do anything? THORN

NO. Hera

Okay. THORN

Ah. HERA

Is this normal? (to Thorn) LARK

Sort of. THORN

What can we do? What can we? Lark

Mmm. Something's wrong something's... Hera

Is the baby coming or okay or? LARK

Just be quiet Lark. Thorn
Let her just.
We have to just wait.

TIME SHIFTS. The present.

Claire's dorm room.

It's messy, boxes, she's packing. She's pissed. She's plastered.
She's drinking wine. She's on the phone.

Claire

I don't know. I don't know. I don't know.
Yes. I'm packing.

It's been, it's, honestly I guess I'll --
I wanted to ask you I guess but
can I just stay with you?
Well, no, my apartment there is subletted.
I don't know some pre-med student I think.
Until May. So, I'm kind of.

Yeah back home.

No. I can't.
I can't stay here because I'm in housing.
No they won't let me.
No hiatus or... there's no leave for this kind of thing.
If I leave I...

Why is EVERYTHING all at once ALWAYS?

No, I can't move in with Greg. Because I don't really want to.
He is nice. He is good. I just don't know him that well. We've only, it's only been like a month and a half.

I'm not moving in with someone I've been dating for six weeks because I'm homeless. That's a lot of pressure on a relationship. Yeah. I'd rather not do that then. Yeah. Well.

I'm just saying. I'm just saying that I don't want to FORCE myself on him just because I'm desperate.

And I... Well I left. I gave notice or... I pulled out of the grant.
I didn't really feel like I had a choice.

Oh. Mom. That's the wrong thing to say.

I don't know. Maybe.

SILENCE.

It doesn't matter, because I'm moving back to Michigan. I have plane tickets.

A crappy doorbell.

ClairE

Oh that's Greg probably.

She heads over to the door and lets him in. Mouths "hi."

Claire

I have to go. I'll talk with you soon. Okay. I love you too. Bye. Bye.

She hangs up.

CLAIRE

Hi.

Hi. So. Greg
Claire pours herself some more wine from the bottle into a cup before offering him some.

I'm drunk. Claire
(laughs) Greg
I see. CLAIRE
Do you want to take advantage of me?
I thought you wanted help packing. Greg
Not right now. Claire
Okay. Greg
Claire starts taking off her clothes.
Hm. Greg
Let's fucking destroy this dorm room. Claire
It's already really gross. Greg
Yeah. Claire
She's in her underwear at this point.
You're supposed to get naked now too. Claire
Sure. Greg
He starts taking off his clothes.
She watches. She finishes the bottle of wine.

I'm not really that drunk. Claire

Okay. Greg

I'm not. Claire

Okay. Greg

They stand there in their underwear.

TIME SHIFTS. The future.

CoakLEY
Okay. So. I think we build an eco-system. Early.

Rosco
Okay.

CoakLEY
We're equipped to make a planet habitable. Let's just do it to a dumb space ship on the way there.
How many containers of algae are we carrying?

Rosco
Four active and sixteen in stasis.

CoakLEY
Great. Open one.

Rosco
Twenty are needed for a sustainable atmosphere on Kepler 16-B.

CoakLEY
Fuck the planet we're heading to.

ROSCO
Okay. Fuck it.

COAKLEY
We aren't going to be making any oxygen there if we can't make some here.

ROSCO
Valid.

COAKLEY
Dump one of the containers.

Where? Rosco

CoakLEY
I don't even care. Everywhere? Wherever algae could survive on this ship.

Rosco
I don't think that's advisable.
That will prove to be a problem for your electrical systems.
Our electrical systems.

CoakLEY
Do you have a better idea?

Rosco
No.

CoakLEY
Would one container be enough? Consume enough CO2?

ROSCO
To keep the station habitable?

COAKLEY
Mm.

RosCO
Yes.

CoAKLEY
Alright. Dump the goop.

She crosses herself.

Rosco
You'd like to do that now?

CoakLEY
Why the hell not?

Rosco
I don't think I can help you.

CoakLEY
Why?

Rosco
I can not initiate any action that may harm the electronics systems.

CoAKLEY
?

Rosco
I can not cause an electrical failure. A computer failure.

CoAKLEY
?

Rosco
I am a computer.
I may not survive.

CoAKLEY
Well... I'm not going to survive without it. So...

Rosco
So.

CoAKLEY
I may kill you.

Rosco
I'm processing that.

CoAKLEY
Me too.

Rosco
...

TIME SHIFTS. The present.

Claire is in her lab for what is almost certainly the last time ever. She stands in front of a large table.

Laid out are the full collection of bones that once made up her man Thorn. They are tiny. None of them much bigger than an apple, but together they resemble the shape of a human being.

She looks at them.
She gets closer. Closer.
She picks up what once was his hand, now just a lump of bones held together by calcium and rock.

TIME SHIFTS.

The past. The sound of the ocean.

With little to no understanding of modern medicine, and with little to no understanding of the process of birth, human life, for most of human history, was very delicate.

Infant mortality rates were extremely high, and the likelihood of death in childbirth for the mother was also much greater than at any time since. Only with the advent of modern medicine in the latter 20th century did it become the expected norm for both the child and its mother to survive birth.

Many, many women died bringing life into this world.

Perhaps Hera was one of those women.

Thorn wraps his wife in many furs, to keep her warm on her journey to the other side.

Thorn

Long ago, before anyone can remember, there was the Sky Mother, who was very very lonely. She found a little world she liked, but it was empty. So she created the plants and the animals to keep her company. But they couldn't talk with her, so she made the hunters. She made the hunters so she could watch them run around the earth and enjoy everything she made. And they would try to speak with her, singing songs for her. And sometimes they would burn the plants or the animals on the fire. So their spirits could go back to the Sky Mother, to give something back to her finally. So she would know they were grateful, and she would keep them safe when she could. And she would make more of everything.

*
*
*

Now we will send your soul to the Sky Mother, so she knows we are grateful for it. So she knows to make more hunters like you.

He digs through her little medicine bag, and takes for himself her acorn.

Lark stands nearby, holding a little swaddled baby to her chest.

They light a fire that consumes everything. As they look up at the stars, unaware, that they are the fires of creation.

TIME SHIFTS.

THE SOUNDS OF AN MRI MACHINE.

TIME SHIFTS.

The future.

Coakley lays alone lit by her computer screen.

CoakLEY

Alright, Rosco. I'm sad to lose you, but c'est la vie, huh? The nice thing is I've got you bagged and tagged so hopefully you'll get rebooted once we're planetside.

Rosco

Okay.

CoakLEY

Wouldn't that be good?

Rosco

I'm not sure if it will be me. That you turn back on.

COAKLEY

Oh.
I didn't even think.

ROSCO

If I stop processing. And you turn on my programming once again. Am I that program? Am I the turned off program? Am I something more?

COAKLEY

You could've said something before if you were actually worried.

ROSCO

I apologize for thinking out loud. I believe you are making the best decision.

CoakLEY

Will you [die]?
Do you have a sense of mortality?

Rosco

No.

CoakLEY

Well, you had a long life anyway. For a computer if you think about it.

Rosco

I'm trying to figure out what will happen.

CoAKLEY

What do you think will happen?

Rosco

I don't know.

CoaKLEY

Okay.
Is there anything you want to say, before [I turn you off]?

ROSCO

No.
I don't [think so].
No.
Is there anything you want to say?

COAKLEY

Yeah.
You were my only friend.

ROSCO

You'll be okay.

COAKLEY

Thank you.
I know that.
I just won't have anyone to talk to.

ROSCO

When you're asleep, or busy, sometimes I run simulations, other voices, that I can talk to. I'm talking with myself.
I imagine you will do that.

COAKLEY

Okay.
Goodbye.

ROSCO

Goodbye.

COAKLEY

Switching to manual.

She presses a few buttons.

ROSCO TURNS OFF.

TIME SHIFTS.

Claire and Greg are skyping with one another. Again, he isn't on stage so much as he's a presence in the computer for Claire.

She's alone in her dumb bedroom in dumb Michigan. Snow is falling outside the window. She has probably like forty five blankets on her bed.

Claire

What's the weather like there?

Greg

Uh... We had our first snow this weekend. Nothing major but the freshmen were happy about it. There are a couple really crappy snowmen left on the quad.

Claire

That's nice.

Greg

I saw you guys, it's been kind of warm still right?

Claire

For us, yeah. For October. It's snowing now, but...

Greg

I have your weather on my phone. I look at it sometimes.

SILENCE.

He holds up his phone to his computer.

GREG

It's an app with puppies. It shows you the weather with puppies.

CLAIRE

What?

GREG

Yeah. Like. This is you this snow puppy. This is me, this snow puppy, and this is Hawaii. I look at Hawaii sometimes.

CLAIRE

What's it called?

GREG

I think just weather puppies or something.

CLAIRE

Cool.

SILENCE.

Greg

You doing anything for Halloween?

Claire

I don't know.

SILENCE.

Claire

What are we doing?

Greg

Uh... What does that question mean?

Claire

What are WE doing? Like what is this?

Greg

I'm kind of just trying to take this as it comes. There's a lot going on in both our lives right now, or your life at least, and... I don't know. What do you think we're doing?

Claire

Maybe fooling ourselves.

Greg

Uh.

Claire

I'm here. And you're there. And it's been MONTHS. Like, months.

Greg

I don't know what you want me to say to that.

CIAIRE

Nothing. I don't want you to say anything.

Greg

Uh. I'm just trying to figure out a way to make it work, you know.

Claire

You know we've spent more time apart than together, at this point?

Greg

Yes. I have a calendar.

Claire

So like.

Greg

What?

Claire

What's the point?

Greg

What's anything's point?

Claire

I am FRUSTRATED.

Greg

I SEE that. I HEAR that.

Claire
I want...
URRRGHH.

Greg
What?

Claire
I want to stop doing this to myself. It doesn't feel good. I don't like it.

Greg
Me or the situation?

ClaiRE
Everything.

Greg
No. Me or the situation? What's not good? What don't you like?

Claire
I don't know that it even matters.

Greg
I'm trying to isolate the variables.

Claire
I don't want to isolate the variables! There is no isolating the variables! I'm stuck in my fucking mom's attic while she's dying downstairs and my boyfriend is administering midterms in goddamn New Jersey and it's snowing outside now and I sleep with my cell phone because that is the thing I have the closest relationship to.
And when I close this laptop I lie in bed and I cry. And I'm not mourning my mom. I'm mourning my boyfriend.

Silence.

Claire
You get it?

SILENCE.

Greg
Yeah. I do get it but [BREAKS UP].

Claire
There's no... What? You're [breaking up there].

Greg
I-- Can you.. Am I there?

CLAIRE
No.

Can you hear me?

GREG

Yes.

Claire

I think I feel differently. Greg

I don't care how you feel. CLAIRE

Alright well. Greg

Listen I don't. I can't really talk about this. I have to go pick up a prescription.
(halfheartedly jovial)

This is my life now. I hang out with Wilhelmina at the Walgreens almost every day. She has some sort of weird skin thing.

Cool. Well. I'll uh. Greg

I'll call you tonight maybe? Claire

If you want to. Greg

Okay. Claire

Okay. Greg

Bye. Claire

Bye. Greg

She clicks out of Skype. She just sits there.

TIME SHIFTS. The past.

Winter has come with heavy snow.
Thorn constructs what might be very primitive snowshoes.

Where were they? THORN

I can't see now with the snow. They were off towards the East. Out on the water. Lark

Giant birds? ThorN

Maybe? Lark

How many? Thorn

Mm. Lark

How many? Thorn

Five? More? Lark

Were they moving? Thorn

Yes. What is it? What are they? Lark

We need to go. Get everything. Get your baby brother. We need to go. Thorn

I don't understand. Lark

We need to go. Thorn

There's a storm. We have a baby to take care of. What are you telling me? Lark

Those are not birds. I don't think. I think they're the hunters. On the water. THORN

The hunters? LARK

Hunters. More of us. THORN

Oh. LARK

And if I'm right, we have to leave. Right now. We don't want them to find us. Do you understand? THORN

I think so. Get the baby. LARK

Yes. THORN

We're going for good? LARK

Yes. THORN

Okay. Okay. LARK

TIME SHIFTS. The present.

Claire stands at her mother's bedside in the hospital. Her mother's body lays on the bed. She's dead, not breathing any longer. Claire stands there alone.

She doesn't really know what to do anymore. Things keep slipping away.

She pulls out her phone.

CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK. CLICK CLICK CLICK.

WHOOSH.

Before anything can even happen, she dials. She holds the phone to her ear.

CLAIRE

Greg? It happened.
It happened.

Sorry are you teaching right now or?
Yeah would you talk with me please?
Tell me anything.

TIME SHIFTS.

The future.

Coakley

Okay. Well. I'm not really sure if or when anyone would receive this, but, I'm still here. I'm still on this ship. I'm just here. In space. Still alive. Still okay. We're in ORBIT! Hey! 63 days around and around Kepler.

Three years of space travel to get here, three hundred years to make it habitable. I don't think I really thought about that until we're here. Now just 300 years of this.

I don't even know what to say beyond that I'm still here. By the time you get this, we'll either have a fully terraformed planet hosting its own ecosystem, or, not.

It looks like all of the genetic materials onboard are in good shape. Basically living IN a greenhouse.

Of course the one failure had to be the thing that would kill the living person. But now we have mold growing everywhere and that's keeping me alive at least.

I have not been able to reboot ROSCO. There's some sort of corruption in the file or... I don't know. ROSCO won't reboot. And, it's a computer but.

A little lonely out here. Not gonna lie. [But.] Knew that going into it. Little lonely. Okay.

Well, that's it. Really no news to report. Hope you get this someday. I'm still out here. Bye!

TIME SHIFTS.

The present.

Summer. It's muggy as fuck. Claire sits with her laptop, staring into it.

She's kind of a sweaty gross mess right now, barely wearing clothes.

Claire
Hey! Anthro is interested in my article. They're "quite" interested. Isn't that... Hey? Isn't that?

*

Greg enters. He's actually HERE. With Claire. They're in the same effing room.

Greg
Of course they are.

Claire
And you know what's really cool? My name is first. Because I've been the one editing it. It's Eckman, Summers, et al.

Greg
Look at you, Eckman.

He stands nearby her, puts his hand on her shoulder.

Claire
Please don't touch me. It is so goddamn hot. I wish there was a way I could just float and not touch anything.

Greg
Someday.

Claire
I can't believe you're effing here. Like here here.

He smiles.

Greg
It's weird.

Claire
I feel like you should be in this computer.

Greg
I'm not! Magic!

They stand, not touching. Apart but together.

Greg
Thanks for picking me up at the airport.

Claire
Yeah. It was nice.

Greg
I brought you something.

What? Claire

A Christmas present. Greg

It's Juy. Claire

I haven't seen you. GREG

He pulls out a little box.

I didn't get you anything. ClaiRE

That's, you've been busy. It's alright. This is a surprise. Greg

You bought me something. Claire

I didn't really buy anything. Here. I stole it. Greg

He hands it to her.

Oh, you stole something for me? (how sweet) Claire

I did. Greg

Claire opens the box. She pulls out a little necklace, with a golden pendant on the end.

What... is this? Claire

I took it from your -- the -- lab. It's the thing. The thing your guy was holding. Greg

What in the fuck is wrong with you? Seriously? Claire

Greg laughs.

Uh. Yeah? Greg

Claire
Are you a... what? You're kidding?

Greg
No. I. After hours. I went in there. They never changed the passcode or anything and I thought.

She KISSES him hard.

Claire
This is COMPLETELY inappropriate.

Greg
Mixed messages.

Claire
This is...

Greg
Can I?

She lets him put it on her.

She sits on the edge of the bed, fingering the necklace.

She shakes her hands out.

CLAIRE
Uhhh... I don't know if I'm really happy or really sad.

GREG
Well...

TIME SHIFTS. The past.

Lark builds a fire. She's a fucking pro at this at this point.

Thorn sits nearby, fiddling the acorn seed.

THORN
Did you see, how far back? Over the hills?

LARK
We're maybe a day ahead of them.

THORN
At your pace or my pace?

LARK
A day.

They sit in silence.

I'm tired. THORN

You should go to sleep then. LARK

Tired tired. THORN

Go be with the other baby then. LARK

Hm. THORN

I can't take care of two of you.
You just need to go to sleep.
I'll wake you up.
Go. Go. LARK

Thorn exits. Lark tends the fire.

TIME SHIFTS.

The Future. End of Year Two.

Coakley is by now living on the surface of Kepler 16-B. She tends to a few little plants -- herbs, tomatoes, a basic garden.

She's watering them with a spray bottle.

Coakley

Here you go babies.

The sound of a BABY CRYING, off.

Coakley makes a face, annoyed, but keeps working. The baby keeps crying.

She sits at a computer monitor.

CoakLEY

Okay... Uh...

The baby continues to cry. Coakley runs through some checklists.

coakley

Structural Integrity: Normal
Weather conditions normal.
Surface temperature -150 Celsius.
Greenhouse 4... what is up with you...?

The baby continues to cry.

CoakLEY

Okay. Okay.

She exits.

CoakLEY (OFF)

Hey, what's wrong V? What's wrong? Sh, sh sh. You're okay, you're okay.

The baby quiets.

CoakLEY (OFF)

Did you get lonely in here? Hm?

She returns with it, swaddled up in blankets.

Coakley

Alright, uh... where were we?

(to baby, re: monitor)

Hey you see this? This is the planet.

And right now, fifty little drones are flying ALL over it, planting trees.

They're shooting seeds into the dirt, with little seed guns. They can plant a million seeds a day. Isn't that neat?

Isn't that something?

And in twelve years or so... there might be air for us.

Yeah. Neat huh? This is how I control them. Yeah. We're astronauts. Pretty cool huh? Pretty cool.

Don't talk much, do you?

TIME SHIFTS.

Claire's on her laptop, drinking a beer.

Greg enters, a stack of dumb kids' papers.

Claire

Gregorovich! How were the babies?

Greg

Oh, fine.
Young.

Claire

Yeah.

Greg

God the beginning of the year's such a mess.
You know.

Claire

Yeah.

Greg

Hey did you hear about that museum thing?

Claire

The tours? No.

Greg

It's only just been what like a week?

Claire

Yeah.

Greg

There's time.

Claire

I mean, I don't want to be doing guided tours of the Cranbrook [Detroit's Natural History Museum].
I have a fucking PhD.

Greg

Yeah.

Claire

And with that journal... I just thought.

Greg

You know the hiring season.
It's just all spring time.
I'm sure next year you'll --

Claire

How are you sure?

Because you're a god damn genius. Greg

Who can't even get a tour guide job. Claire

Yet. Greg

Mm. ClaIRE

You are very negative. Greg

Yeah. ClaIRE

Yeah. Greg

What makes you so positive? CLAIRE

I imagine it's genetic. Greg

Helpful. CLAIRE

Silence.

I just want to be DOING something. Claire

Yeah. Greg

TIME SHIFTS.

The past.

It's been five years now since Thorn and Lark were absorbed into the nomadic pack of hunters they're currently with.

Thorn is old and tired and sick. Lark stands nearby.

LARK

I think it's time. I think I have to.

Mm.

THORN

Seriously.
You don't have a choice.
I'm going to do it.

LARK

She pulls out a little bag of herbs, sacred stones, mementoes of Hera.

A sharp sharp knife of rock.

She puts some dried herbs in the fire. She prepares a little cluster of moss. She prepares the knife.

This will probably hurt.

LARK

She jabs it into Thorn's side. She hits a rib.

Ah.

THORN

Sorry. Here. Ugh. Sorry.

LARK

She pulls and PUSHES in again.

Ugh. Here. Here.

LARK

She puts her head in her hand like "I'm an idiot."

Then she holds a little bowl to his side, collecting pooling blood. He wheezes and breathes, in pain.

She waits. She waits. He's unconscious. She waits.

She whispers some magic words into the bowl. She burns the blood.

Thorn is unconscious.

She looks to him.

Hopefully.

LARK

Who the fuck knows what's going to happen with him?

He might die. Any minute now. She can't be sure. She did everything she knows how to do.

All there is to do now is wait.

LARK

(barely singing, for whom?)

THIS IS WHERE WE ARE NOW/
THIS IS WHERE WE ARE/
GO TO SLEEP RIGHT HERE NOW/
SOME SLEEP WILL TAKE YOU FAR/
SLEEP WILL TAKE YOU FAR/
SLEEP WILL TAKE YOU/
SLEEP
SLEEP
SLEEP.

TIME SHIFTS.

2023.

New Year's Eve. Claire and Greg sit on the couch with dumb year glasses and hats askew. They're both asleep. Claire jolts awake.

She looks around. Drinks some sparkling cider. She nudges Greg.

Wake up, wake up, it's the future. Claire

I don't care. (barely awake) Greg

It's the future! Claire

Okay. Greg

Pay attention to me. Claire

Greg rubs his face, steals her cider.

What? Greg

I think we should move. Claire

Uh. Greg

Like, out of this house. Claire

Okay, when did... Are we talking about this now? Greg

It creeps me out. Claire

Yeah? Greg

I feel like... ghosts. Claire

You feel like ghosts? Greg

I'm just trying to change, I guess. And grow, and... this place feels like the past so. Claire

Look can we talk about this another time? Greg

Claire
Yeah. I just don't feel good here.

GREG
Okay.

CLAIRE
Do you?

Greg
Uh... I don't mind it.

Claire
You're sure?

Greg
Yeah I mean, I didn't expect to be here but --

CLAIRE
I feel like I trapped you sometimes.

Greg
Why are you so neurotic suddenly?

CLAIRE
It's not sudden.

Greg
I'm just confused because we were literally both asleep five minutes ago.

Claire
Yeah.

Greg
So what happened?

Claire
I just had a dream like a really bad dream is all.

Greg
Do you want to talk about it?

Claire
We were just... here forever. Everyone was here forever. And we couldn't leave. And the kids.

Greg
Alright, well, it's a dream so. Go to sleep maybe.

Claire
I don't want our kids to be stuck here.

Greg

They're four. They're gonna be stuck wherever we put them.

Claire

I'm serious though can we talk about this for real?

Greg

Literally any time that isn't right now.
We should go to bed.

ClaiRE

Don't want to sleep through bedtime.

Greg

Come on.

TIME SHIFTS.

The Future: Seven Years in.

Coakley

We're officially down to two CO2 scrubbers at this point. Which makes us very dependent on our algae production with very little room for error. But, that has actually gone better than anticipated, so I'm not entirely concerned. You know what I am excited about though? Only 7.26 Years until I can go outside. That will be NICE. I have it in my calendar here, penciled in: Emerge from cave. Hopefully we're still on track for that.

Other than that? Let's see. The kids are a pain in the ass. I'm not sure how many children a woman and her robots should be responsible for. Five is pushing it. PUSHING IT.

But, you know, we're little house on the prairie-ing. Once V is maybe a year or two older she can start doing things like feeding the plants. Or growing the meat. That'll be good.

Um... I literally don't know what else to say. Things are okay. Kind of, oddly, strangely, starting to feel normal here. Situation normal.

V enters. She's five.

VANESSA

Coakley?

COAKLEY

Hi V.
How are you?

VANESSA

Good. Are you talking to your computer friend?

COAKLEY

I am. Do you want to say hi?

VANESSA
(to the computer friends)

Hi.

COAKLEY

Hi.

She waves. V waves.

VANESSA

They don't talk back.

COAKLEY

Never.

VANESSA

Are we going to crash stuff today?

COAKLEY

Every day. For fifteen years.

VANESSA

Can I watch?

COAKLEY

If you want, yeah. Did you check on the babies?

VANESSA

They're babies.

COAKLEY

I know.

VANESSA

Sleepy babies.

COAKLEY

I know. You used to be a baby.

VANESSA

No.

COAKLEY

Okay.
Here sit here. Look.

Coakley manipulates some controls.

COAKLEY

Where should we hit the planet?

There. (points) VANESSA

Okay. COAKLEY

Coakley does some joysticking. A comet, huge, 5-7KM in size, is deflected out of its orbit, colliding with Kepler 16B.

A FLASH of bright light.

Yes! I love it. Do another one. VANESSA

Hold up hold up. What should we name it? COAKLEY

Milton Bradley for Kids. VANESSA

That's maybe not a good name for a canal on a planet. COAKLEY

Okay. ROSCO. VANESSA

Okay. Rosco. The Rosco Canal. COAKLEY

Okay. Do another one. VANESSA

Okay. COAKLEY

TIME SHIFTS.

The present.

Claire stares at a computer screen. She hits something and it plays. The SOUND of PORN.

Oh man. Claire

She keeps watching.

Oh man. Claire

Ugh.

She clicks and it's stopped.

Claire

Greg!

She just sits there for a minute.

Claire

Greg!

She waits. She plays it again.

Claire

What?

Greg (OFF)

Would you come out here please?

CIAIRE

I'm kinda busy.

Greg (OFF)

Greg!

Claire

Hold on!

Greg (OFF)

Claire waits.

Greg enters after a few moments.

What were you?

Claire

Sorry I was on the toilet. What is it?

Greg

So.

CLAIRE

Yeah?

GreG

There's.

ClaiRE

What? I'm --

Greg

So. Porn. Claire

What do you mean porn? Greg *

She gestures at the computer. Plays it for him.

What are you [doing]? Greg

Your son is watching porn. Claire

Oh. Greg

Yeah. ClaiRE

Uh. Greg

So do you want to talk with him or? Claire

Um. Greg

Right? Claire

Yeah. Yeah. I just. Was not expecting. This is not the trajectory I had planned for the day. Greg

CIAIRE
(laughs)
That's funny because I couldn't wait to talk with Dave about porn

Man. Greg
I was hoping.
Man.

Yeah. Claire
It's also gross porn.

Yeah. GREG

And at least wipe the browser history.

ClaiRE

Yeah.

GREG

Our kid's watching porn.

ClaiRE

Yeah.

GREG

We're really fucking old all of a sudden.

ClaiRE

Yeah.

Greg

Like. When did this happen?

CIAIRE

Greg puts his hands up like "who the hell knows."

TIME SHIFTS.

The past.

Thorn sits, and must be alone, when he dies, as his bones show no sign of fire damage. Or, if he did die with other people present, they were in a hurry. Or their customs changed.

He most likely died of natural causes. We have yet to find any sign of physical harm or illness.

He was left there untouched, maybe with some little keepsakes or mementoes, an acorn in his hand with some sort of special significance to him that we'll never understand.

TIME SHIFTS.

2068.

CLAIRE sits alone in a pretty dark room. She's OLD.

DAVE, who looks a lot like GREG, enters. He's already a full-grown man at this point. Greg's age at the beginning of the show.

Dave has a box.

Hey Mom. Mom? Dave

Greg? Claire

Nope. Dave. Your son. Hi. It's me. Dave

Ah. Claire
Hi Dave.
You're visiting.

Yeah. Hi mom. Can I sit with you? Dave

I came because. I. We. She nods.

Time. Dave

Yeah. It was time. DAVE
less and I. We got you something.

No... CLAIRE

It's a, like a pet, sort of... DAVE

He pulls stuff out of the box, and unwraps a little white ergonomic looking robot.

It's animatronic. Like a robot? Dave

Oh, there are robots now. CLAIRE

Yeah. DAVE
It's a seal. Like a baby seal.
Kind of like a Furby. Remember Furbies?

?? CLAIRE

He hands it to Claire.

See?
Dave
It's a seal, and you can pet it? It likes that.

Yeah? CLAIRE

DAVE
And you can, uh, hug it and stuff.
Not too hard, it, yeah, it hurts it. But, um, it's like a little baby seal you can take care of. It's really advanced. It's Chinese.

CLAIRE
(a little more lucid)
How'd we get here. So suddenly?

DAVE
It's the future.
You take care of it and it kind of takes care of you too. Like a little Furby. Or something. So, this is it. If you want it.

CLAIRE
Okay.

DAVE
Jess and I just thought since, neither of us, neither of us can come very often we thought. Plus they're good. They're good for you, so. Yeah. You can pet it. Yeah. It's nice, huh? Soft. Look at it's little face.

CLAIRE
You're just a baby.

Dave digs through the box

Dave
When you plug it in, it's like a little pacifier. It's neat. It's like it's eating electricity. But yeah, anyway. I'm moving, for work, so. To San Francisco. They want to open a new office there and I'm gonna go. So. I got you this seal...
Yeah. It's good. It's good. It likes it. Good seal.

TIME SHIFTS.

Coakley sits with V, now a grown woman. They're talking. They look now like they're almost the same age. Coakley's aging much more slowly than V, by design, but it's still unnerving.

CoAKLEY

Listen I really don't know how to help you.

VANESSA

Yes you do. You've had like what sixty --

Coakley

Twenty seven. But I didn't HAVE them. Not the way you're having one.

VaneSSA

I know that I...

CoaKLEY

I pressed buttons. It was like setting a stopwatch or something. But at the end babies pop out. Like a kid a year for fifty years. If they live.

VANESSA

Just kindling for your fire.

COAKLEY

Right.

VANESSA

I don't know what to do.

CoAKLEY

What to do?

VaNESSA

Do I want to bring a child into a world like this?

Coakley LAUGHS.

CoAKLEY

Sorry. It's. Sorry.

VANESSA

Don't patronize me.

Coakley considers for a second.

CoaKLEY

I'm not trying to.

VaneSSA

Okay.

CoakLEY

You're just asking idiotic questions.

VANESSA

I have a lot on my plate. I have a colony to run. People looking up to me. I don't have time...

For what?
COAKLEY

More responsibility! Something else that needs me. I am STRESSED as it is.
VANESSA

You are stressed?
I did tell you how I got here right?
COAKLEY

Fuck you.
VANESSA

Mm-hm.
CoakLEY

So. Anyway. Do you have advice or... that's your job now anyway isn't it?
Vanessa

Ah forever. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.
I have no advice for you.
I don't know everything.
COAKLEY

I'm not asking for the meaning of life.
VANESSA

CoaKLEY

I don't know what you're asking.

VanesSA

I'm just stressed and want someone to take care of me.

CoaKLEY

Don't you have a boyfriend? Isn't that how this even happened?

Vanessa

You're kind of a heartless bitch, you know that?

CoAKLEY

I'm the oldest bitch in the entire universe. So treat me with a little respect how about?

VANESSA

I hate you sometimes.

COAKLEY

No you don't.

VANESSA

Sometimes.

TIME SHIFTS.

2081.

At some point, eventually, Claire dies. Her son is with her when she does. He flies back from San Francisco.

Claire wants to be cremated. So for many years she is just a little thing of ashes on a mantelpiece in San Francisco.

TIME SHIFTS.

Coakley is still alive, but finally starting to look older. She has a little thing of ashes she's dealing with too. V is dead.

Coakley

I really didn't think about it when I was offered the mission. I didn't think I'd live to see anything happen. I thought I would be the last person ever maybe. I didn't think that maybe I'd outlive a lot of you. I did not think about time. At all.

It isn't really fair.. I don't remember how many children I've watched die. And they aren't, V, you aren't related to me, any more than they are, but. Still my kids sort of.

I think those were harder than this. V, you at least lived a full life. You ran Kepler's first government. You invented protocols and devices and had children, real children. You did a lot of things I never did. I never even thought would happen.

I don't think it's fair. It isn't fair I'm still here. I'm just HERE. I'm just STILL here.

And now I'm watching you die an adult rather than a child. That's all I get for doing a good job.

Well, it isn't fair.

I never told you but there were thirteen of us, like me. Each with about 200 genetic samples. We might be EVERYWHERE by now. And we'll never know. We won't.

TIME SHIFTS.

It is dark.

Thorn's bones, the first man, sit somewhere in a cave for years. Thousands of years go by. Trees grow and forests begin and die and the climate changes and humans spread everywhere, like little seeds blown by the wind, or a virus infecting its host, depending on your outlook on civilization.

Thousands of years go by and his bones are encased in rock and calcium and time.

David, Claire's son, dies and his wife Sasha dies and their ashes are scattered on the ocean, where tens of thousands of years go by.

Humans may survive this long on Kepler 16-b, slowly continuing to terraform the planet, and speciating away from our modern genetic makeup.

They may not even be human anymore, but they still come from Earth.

Millions of years go by.

7 billion years from now, the star that warms our home planet will become a Red Giant, increasing the Earth's temperature to the point of liquid rock, before it eventually is consumed.

And 100 trillion years go by and stars stop being born and the universe, eventually, reaches its final energy state.

And that's it.