

BORROWED GRAVITY
An Interstellar Sequel

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A non-commercial work of fan fiction inspired by the film
Interstellar. Not for sale.

PROLOGUE

INT. COOPER STATION - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A white bed above the rings. An old woman's hand, thin as paper on the sheet. A younger man's hand covers it, afraid to press. We never see her face.

MURPH (O.S.)

Brand's out there, setting up camp.
Alone.

(a breath)

My kids are here for me now. Go to
her.

INT. COOPER STATION - FARMHOUSE MUSEUM - DAY

The Cooper farmhouse, rebuilt board by board inside a turning station. The porch. The rocking chair. The old TRUCK parked behind a velvet rope, its tires clean of any dust that was ever real.

COOPER stands in the yard of his own life. Visitors walk around him.

LITTLE GIRL

Mom? Is the astronaut real?

Upstairs, through a window: a girl's bedroom. A gap on the bookshelf where a book fell once and was never put back.

INT. COOPER STATION - HANGAR - NIGHT

After hours. TARS lies in pieces on a workbench.

Then not in pieces. A single light comes up across his display.

COOPER

Honesty. Ninety-five percent.

TARS

Confirmed.

COOPER

Humor. Seventy-five percent.

TARS
Confirmed. Self-destruct sequence
in T minus ten. Nine --

COOPER
Let's make that sixty.

TARS
Sixty percent, confirmed.

A pause, precisely timed.

TARS
Knock knock.

COOPER
You want fifty-five?

INT. COOPER STATION - DOCKING BAY - NIGHT

Shift change. A GUARD turns away at the wrong moment. A RANGER waits with its airlock open. TARS's arm is already on the release.

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT - LATER

The station falls away behind the glass, its lights dropping off one row at a time. Ahead: Saturn, and far off, the WORMHOLE, a lens of bent stars.

Cooper clips a recorder to his collar. It CLICKS ON.

COOPER
Murph.

He lets it run on silence.

COOPER
I told you I'd go to her. I broke
one promise to you. I'm not
breaking another.

EXT. SATURN - SPACE

Cooper Station turns once more, small and bright against the rings. Then it is gone behind the Ranger.

CHAPTER ONE

EXT. COOPER FARM - DAY

Corn.

Green. Alive.

It rolls in the wind as far as the eye can see.

Cooper stands at the edge of the field, hands buried in the pockets of his old canvas jacket.

Not dust. Wind.

A screen door SLAPS behind him. DONALD stands on the porch with a cup of coffee.

DONALD

You planning on staring at it all day?

COOPER

Maybe.

DONALD

Could've used that enthusiasm when there was work to do.

A smile from Cooper.

An ENGINE. His old truck bounces down the dirt road and stops crooked by the house.

MURPH jumps out.

MURPH

Dad!

She runs at him and throws her arms around his neck.

She's too tall. Fourteen. Maybe fifteen.

She should be ten.

She pulls back. Studies him.

MURPH

You look old.

COOPER
So do you.

MURPH
No. You look really old.

Cooper looks at his hand on her shoulder - loose, veined, spotted with age.

In the truck's side mirror, an OLD MAN looks back.

Cooper.

COOPER
Murph -

The screen door SLAMS. The porch is empty.

COOPER
Donald?

Nothing. The wind rises. The corn bends flat.

MURPH
Dad?

A wall of DUST stands up along the whole horizon. Above it, pale and impossible in the daylight sky, a thin RING tilts across the blue.

COOPER
Get inside.

Murph doesn't move. She's staring at the ring.

The storm HITS. Cooper grabs her arm. They run, bent double.

A half-second: a man's face, lit from below by a thin green line. Glasses. Gone.

A ROAR builds inside the dust.

A SPACECRAFT rolls out of the storm, end over end, trailing fire. Long petals stand out around its core like a broken flower.

COOPER
RUN!

He reaches for Murph.

His hand is empty.

COOPER

Murph?

The ship fills the sky.

COOPER

MURPH!

EXT. SATURN - SPACE

Silence. Saturn fills half the sky. Along its rings the Ranger crawls, a fleck of light against a field of ice.

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT

Cooper JOLTS AWAKE against his harness. Gasping. Saturn fills the window.

TARS (O.S.)

Cooper.

COOPER

TARS.

TARS stands behind the pilot's seat, a slab of dark metal with the patience of furniture.

TARS

Yes.

COOPER

Was I talking?

TARS

Again. In your sleep.

COOPER

What'd I say?

TARS

Murph.

Cooper's hand stops above the console.

COOPER

That's it?

TARS

You said her name three times.

COOPER

You were listening.

TARS
I'm always listening. It's most of
what I do.

COOPER
Don't.

TARS
You're a passenger on a ship I'm
flying. Listening is the job.

COOPER
You're equipment on a ship I'm
commanding.

TARS doesn't move.

TARS
Noted.

Cooper takes an old wristwatch from his pocket, its glass
cracked. He thumbs the face once. Puts it back.

TARS stays angled toward him. Says nothing.

COOPER
What've you got humor set at?

TARS
Sixty percent.

COOPER
Make it zero.

TARS
That would make me less useful.

COOPER
That's the idea.

A pause, long enough to be a comment.

TARS
Zero.

An amber light BLINKS on the comm panel.

TARS
Cooper Station again.

COOPER
Don't answer.

TARS
They would like their Ranger back.

COOPER
Funny.

TARS
Accurate. My humor setting is zero.
(the smallest delay)
Violation logged.

COOPER
They'll get it back.

TARS
The phrase they're currently using
is "stolen spacecraft."

COOPER
Borrowed.

Cooper kills the transmission.

Beyond the rings hangs the wormhole. Cooper enters a
correction. The wormhole slides across the window and out of
frame.

TARS
The wormhole is twelve degrees
starboard.

COOPER
Yep.

TARS
You're turning away from it. I
thought we were going to Brand.

COOPER
We are.

TARS
We are currently going somewhere
else.

COOPER
Also true.

A new marker blooms on navigation.

TARS
Lazarus. Long-duration
gravitational research vessel. One
crew member: Dr. Kane. Not
(MORE)

TARS (CONT'D)
scheduled to leave Saturn.

COOPER
Plans change.

TARS
You intend to ask him for his ship.

COOPER
That's one way of putting it.

TARS
The Ranger can reach the wormhole.
It cannot support an extended
search on the other side. Lazarus
can.

COOPER
Now you're catching up.

TARS
I was caught up several minutes
ago.

A beat.

TARS
I was hoping you would explain why
you already knew where to find it.

Cooper looks out at the rings and doesn't answer.

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT - LATER

TARS
Your heart rate increases when you
dream about Murph.

COOPER
Stop monitoring me.

TARS
You're the only part of this ship
that can fail.

COOPER
Then monitor the ship.

TARS
I am.
(beat)
You could sleep.

COOPER
You could stop talking.

TARS
Both statistically unlikely.

Cooper closes his eyes. The cabin lights dim. Nobody asked them to.

Cooper opens one eye. Closes it again. Says nothing.

EXT. SPACE - LAZARUS

A broad industrial research vessel hangs against the rings: long solar petals spread around a central core, a habitation wheel turning slowly on its spokes. One window on the wheel is lit. Against the planet behind it, the whole ship is a splinter.

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Cooper opens a channel.

COOPER
Lazarus, Ranger Seven, requesting
docking clearance.

Static.

COOPER
Lazarus. You awake over there?

KANE (V.O.)
You're not cleared.

COOPER
We've got kind of a situation over
here.

KANE (V.O.)
You've been talking to Cooper
Station. So have I. They said you
stole a Ranger.

COOPER
Borrowed.

KANE (V.O.)
They specifically warned me you'd
say that. How many aboard?

COOPER
One. Plus the equipment.

KANE (V.O.)
Does the equipment have a name?

TARS's frame pivots a few degrees toward the speaker. Cooper doesn't turn.

COOPER
TARS.

KANE (V.O.)
Then there are two of you, Mr. Cooper.

COOPER
Lazarus, we're coming aboard. We don't need much.

KANE (V.O.)
You need my ship.

COOPER
It's not your ship.

KANE (V.O.)
It is today.
(a long silence; lower)
You're Joseph Cooper. The station sent me your file. Pilot. Missing. Stolen Ranger. None of that means I'm giving you my ship.

The panel lights red: DOCKING ACCESS DENIED. REMOTE GUIDANCE DISABLED.

Across the gap, the one lit window on the wheel goes dark.

KANE (V.O.)
Turn around, Cooper.

The channel closes. Cooper lays his hand on the maneuvering controls.

TARS
He said no.

COOPER
I heard him.

TARS
I believe he intended for that to end the discussion.

COOPER

It did.

Cooper FIRES the thrusters. The Ranger leaps toward the dark ship.

CHAPTER TWO

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT - NEAR LAZARUS

Lazarus fills the windshield, a cliff of gray plating.

COOPER

TARS. Find me a way in.

A schematic opens. ACCESS DENIED. ACCESS DENIED.

TARS

He's locked us out of everything
remote.

A live feed: KANE, old, thin, white-haired, glasses,
surrounded by displays. He raises his middle finger, holds it
long enough to be sure it's received. The feed dies.

TARS

He appears to have clarified his
position.

COOPER

Can you open the clamps manually?

A diagram: a red box on the hull, thirty meters from the
port. EXTERNAL EMERGENCY RELEASE.

TARS pivots toward the red box. Then back to Cooper.

TARS

No.

COOPER

Vacuum won't hurt you.

TARS

Your argument is becoming
increasingly obvious.

INT. RANGER - AIRLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

TARS folds himself into the airlock one segment at a time, in
formal protest. Cooper seals the inner door.

TARS (RADIO)

Why am I always the one getting
ejected into space?

COOPER
Because you'll survive it.

TARS (RADIO)
That's the first honest reason
you've given.

The outer door opens on black. TARS braces against the sill
and PUSHES OFF.

EXT. SPACE - LAZARUS - CONTINUOUS

TARS sails out in a long clean line toward Lazarus's flank.
Then the drift: he's going to pass the red box by three
meters. Five.

TARS (RADIO)
I believe I've missed.

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Cooper rolls the Ranger a quarter turn, swinging the
starboard thruster around.

TARS (RADIO)
Gently.

COOPER
I know.

He taps it. The smallest puff.

EXT. SPACE - LAZARUS - CONTINUOUS

The plume blooms silent and white, leans on TARS, and bends
his line back toward the hull.

INSERT - LAZARUS HULL: the edge of the same plume washes
across a cluster of small nozzles, the big ship's steering
jets.

TARS hits the plating a meter short of the box and hooks a
handhold with the end of one arm.

TARS (RADIO)
I'm intact. Thank you for asking.

COOPER (RADIO)
Keep moving.

TARS (RADIO)
I would like to revise your
definition of gently.

COOPER (RADIO)
Don't log that.

TARS (RADIO)
Logged.

A communications dish swings toward him. TARS flattens into a seam in the plating. The dish sweeps over. He unfolds, reaches the red box, and PULLS. Along the flank, the docking clamps swing open.

TARS (RADIO)
Got it.
(a short silence)
Next time, you go.

COOPER (RADIO)
Deal.

INT. LAZARUS - DOCKING PORT - LATER

The port opens six inches. Stops. A second bulkhead THUDS down behind it.

KANE (V.O.)
I have more doors than you have
air.

Cooper pulls an emergency breaker. TARS wedges two segments into the gap and forces both doors. They step aboard.

INT. LAZARUS - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Every door SLAMS shut at once. The lights die. Halfway down, a single amber strip flickers on over a storage compartment.

Cooper steps inside. The door SEALS behind him. A hiss climbs to a SCREAM as the air tears out. He hits the door with both fists.

COOPER
TARS!

BANG. The door bows inward.

BANG. It tears open. The end of a metal arm hooks Cooper's collar and drags him out. He gasps, eyes bloodshot.

TARS
You were in there eleven seconds. A
few more and you'd have been
unconscious.

Cooper doesn't thank him. Neither of them mentions it.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE DOOR - LATER

Behind the shut door, a man's voice. Low. Steady. Not
speaking to them.

KANE (O.S.)
Reyes.

A pause.

KANE (O.S.)
Okafor. Lindqvist. Melanson. Dunn.

A longer pause. Nobody answers.

KANE (O.S.)
All present.

TARS turns toward the door.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The door slides open. Saturn fills the windows.

Six chairs ring the central console. Five are shrouded in
dust sheets. A faded mug sits beside one, handle turned out.

Kane sits in the sixth, in a cardigan shiny at the elbows.

Cooper's eyes catch on him: the console light coming up
across the face from below. A small frown. He can't place it.

KANE
Take a picture.

COOPER
Sorry.

KANE
You broke my door.

COOPER
You tried to kill me.

KANE
I was discouraging you.

COOPER
You depressurized the room.

KANE
You remained surprisingly
encouraged.

TARS
He lasted eleven seconds.

KANE
Longer than most.
(beat)
Most people panic.

TARS moves toward the controls.

KANE
Don't.

TARS stops.

KANE
I'm not going through that
wormhole.

COOPER
I didn't ask you to.

KANE
You want my ship.

COOPER
Yes.

KANE
No.

On the console between them, a pen begins to roll. It drops
off the edge - and lands a foot sideways from where it
should.

Outside, Saturn slides left.

KANE
What did you do?

COOPER
Me?

KANE
(at a side panel,
reading)
Your thruster washed across my
attitude jets. It cooked the valve
seat. One of them is stuck open.
It's spinning us.

COOPER
You put it in the way.

KANE
It was attached to the ship!

An alarm BLEATS aft. A correction thruster FIRES on its own -
THUMP - and the ship rolls harder.

TARS
Stop.
Too late. Saturn sweeps sideways and keeps going.

EXT. SATURN - SPACE

Silent. Lazarus turns end over end above the cloud tops,
petals flashing in and out of sunlight, a thin white plume of
gas spiraling from its flank.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Weight slides. Everyone grabs something.

TARS
One jet stuck open and venting. The
heat split the coolant manifold
behind it.

COOPER
Can we get it back?

TARS
Yes.

KANE
(braced on the bulkhead)
Probability?

TARS
Fourteen percent.

KANE
Why would you say yes?

TARS
You asked if we could.

COOPER
I've done worse.

TARS
He has. I was there.

On the navigation display, a decay curve slopes toward Saturn's upper atmosphere and ends in a red band: the ship burning up.

Cooper's eyes go around the bridge. They stop on a heavy console with a dark screen and a palm plate at its center: GRAVITATIONAL FIELD ARRAY.

COOPER
That.

KANE
No.

COOPER
What does it do?

KANE
Nothing that helps us.

TARS
Experimental gravitational-gradient array.

COOPER
Can it move mass?

KANE
Test masses.

COOPER
Mass is mass.

KANE
No. That is the kind of sentence stupid people say immediately before breaking expensive equipment.

TARS
Technically, mass is mass.

KANE
Thank you, TARS. Stay out of this.

Cooper glances at him. A man thanking a machine.

The ship lurches. A status panel beside the array flickers. Kane's palm goes out and rests flat on it. The flicker stops.

On the exterior feed, the habitation wheel turns on its spokes. In tracks along them ride the BALLAST PODS: great dull weights.

COOPER

Lock the wheel, Kane. Dump its spin
into the counter-rotor.

The first time anyone has used his name. Kane looks at him sharply. Then away.

KANE

No.

COOPER

I need everything that can move.

TARS

Moment of inertia.

COOPER

Move mass toward the center, we
spin faster. Move it out, we slow
down.

KANE

You cannot stop the rotation.
Angular momentum is conserved.

COOPER

I don't need to stop it. I need to
point the engines the right way
once.

KANE

That is an appalling idea.

COOPER

Can it work?

TARS

Possibly.

KANE

Probability?

TARS

Would you like me to lie?

KANE
Yes.

TARS
Very high.

COOPER
Let's do it.

Kane shuts the stuck jet's feed. The plume outside stops. Mouth set in a line, he locks the wheel. A long rising WHINE.

The steady weight goes. A new one takes its place: uneven, sliding, leaning them toward the outer wall with every turn. A pen skids. A clipboard tumbles. Kane's glasses slide off his nose.

Cooper catches them and pushes them back on.

TARS
Gravity appears to have changed its mind.

COOPER
It'll be back.

KANE
Neither of you understands gravity.

COOPER
That's why you're here.

Cooper slaps his palm on the array plate. Nothing. Kane pushes his hand aside and lays his own palm flat on it.

The array wakes. A HUM, deeper than hearing.

Everything loose on the bridge LEANS. The skidding pen stops and slides back toward the console. Dust in the air drifts all one way, like iron filings to a magnet. The clipboard curves and fetches up against the array housing.

Kane lifts his palm. It all lets go.

KANE
It bends gravity. A little. A few meters around each coil. Enough to move test masses.
(over his glasses)
Not a ship.

COOPER
Not the ship. The weights.

KANE
Those tracks haven't run in years.
The drives are fused.

He hears what he's said. Hates it. He turns his palm on the plate.

THUNK. On the feed, a pod slides along its spoke toward the rim. Saturn takes half a second longer to cross the window.

KANE
(offended)
It worked.

Saturn. Stars. Saturn. Stars. Cooper watches the rhythm.
Dust. Corn. Murph, looking up.

COOPER
All of them. Now.

THUNK. THUNK. THUNK. Three pods slam out to the rim.

The tumble slows to one long turn every thirty seconds, a carousel winding down.

Cooper takes the main-engine controls. On the display, a narrow green band marks the angle the engines need. Each turn, the nose spends two seconds inside it. Into it. Through it. Away.

KANE
We aren't aligned.

COOPER
Not yet.

TARS
We're approaching the edge of the
correction window.

The red line at the bottom of the decay curve creeps closer. Cooper waits.

TARS stops calculating and turns to Cooper.

TARS
Cooper!

COOPER
Not yet.

Cooper isn't watching the window. He's watching Kane.

The nose settles onto the green band. A single bright GREEN line begins to climb: the window, opening. Its light creeps up Kane's face from below, catching in his glasses.

Cooper's frown resolves into recognition. Hold on him half a beat.

COOPER

Now.

He SLAMS the throttles forward. The engines ROAR. Two seconds, exactly. He cuts them.

Everything loose goes sideways. Kane flies. TARS's arm shoots out and catches him in midair.

The decay curve flattens. Then lifts.

TARS

Orbital decay arrested.

KANE

Put me down.

TARS lets go. Kane slides down the leaning deck and bumps gently into the far bulkhead.

KANE

I meant gently.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

The tumble bled away, the wheel still locked. They float among drifting pens. Saturn hangs steady. Kane replays the burn.

KANE

That shouldn't have worked.

COOPER

But it did.

KANE

The physics explains how. It doesn't explain when.

(tapping the display)

Two seconds in the band. A two-second burn. A fraction late and it drives us into the air. You lit it on the first hundredth of a second.

COOPER
Good timing.

TARS
No.

Cooper turns to him. Kane is already bent over the display again.

TARS
You weren't watching the window.
You were watching him.

COOPER
We're alive.

KANE
(not lifting his head)
So?

COOPER
So let's keep it that way.

Cooper pushes off toward the door. At the frame he glances back.

Kane runs the burn again. A third time. A fourth.

On the fourth, his hand TREMBLES on the display. He studies it as if it belongs to someone else. Then he presses it flat against his leg until it stops. He doesn't check whether anyone saw.

Cooper goes. TARS stays, angled toward the old man, and says nothing.

EXT. SATURN - SPACE

Lazarus climbs out of the haze, the Ranger clinging to its spine. Against the planet's glowing rim, the ship is a splinter again.

INT. RANGER - CARGO BAY - LATER

Cooper straps down the last crate of ration packs. The airlock CYCLES behind him.

Kane stands in the doorway in an old flight jacket a size too big for him now. Over one shoulder, a battered canvas bag, packed in a hurry and then repacked with care. Grease on his hands.

KANE
You'll die in that thing.

COOPER
Probably.

KANE
I patched the manifold. It'll hold.
(beat)
Probably. That thing will get you
through. It can't search the far
side. Lazarus can carry you for a
year.
(beat)
I'm not lending you my ship.

Cooper waits.

KANE
I'm flying it.

COOPER
Why?

KANE
(lower)
Nobody goes into a gradient field
alone.

COOPER
That's not a reason.

KANE
It's the only one you're getting.
My ship. My command.

COOPER
Your ship.

KANE
This isn't friendship, Mr. Cooper.

COOPER
No.

Kane lifts his eyes. Behind his glasses they're sharp,
frightened, very old.

KANE
And somewhere on the way, you're
going to tell me how you knew.

Cooper takes him in: the bag packed twice, the hand pressed
flat against his leg.

Then he unbuckles the strap on the ration crate and lets it go.

CHAPTER THREE

EXT. EDMUNDS PLANET - CAIRN - DAWN

SUPER: TWELVE YEARS EARLIER

A low rise above a rock plain. A CAIRN of forty-one flat gray stones, chest high, over a grave. No name. Only a beacon plate propped at its foot: NASA. LAZARUS III. EDMUNDS-12.

BRAND stands beside it, hands in her coat pockets. She doesn't speak. The small cold sun clears the hills. She turns back toward the HABITAT: one white dome, a solar field, a rover tracing a slow loop across the dust.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - MORNING

THE NEST: a squat white cylinder on a frame, its small display circled by a green STATUS RING. A handwritten label: PLAN B: COLONY STOCK.

Brand checks it first.

Viability? BRAND

Unchanged. CASE

CASE stands by the workbench, a tall gray slab, scuffed and patched.

All of them? BRAND

All of them. You ask me that every morning. CASE

I know. BRAND

On the terminal, a checklist: WATER - OK. POWER - OK. FOOD - OK. SHELTER - OK. PLAN B: ALL CONDITIONS MET.

Today, the water reclaimer is vibrating. Brand lays her palm on the housing.

The bearing isn't damaged. BRAND

CASE
No.

BRAND
The pump?

CASE
Operating within tolerance.

BRAND
Then why is it vibrating?

CASE
I don't know.

Brand turns to him. In all their years, CASE has always known.

She shuts the reclaimer down. The pipes go quiet.

The vibration goes on. Through the floor. Through the ground.

BRAND
That's not us.

CASE
No.

A warning CHIMES. On the exterior feed, the survey rover has left its route, drifting northeast.

BRAND
Navigation failure?

CASE
Navigation reports nominal.

CASE corrects it. Within seconds it pulls northeast again. He stops it, nose toward the hills.

BRAND
Bring up the other machines. Every navigation correction for the last month.

Lines spread across a map: thousands of tiny corrections by rovers, drones, the drill rig. Laid together, they bend - all one way.

BRAND
They're going somewhere.

The lines converge on a single point in the northeastern hills.

A file opens: EDMUNDS, W. Brand sits with the name a long moment.

BRAND

Open it.

Expedition after expedition toward a fissure in the hills. The last route ends where he died. Minutes before the rockslide: a spike. A local change in gravity so steep it should be impossible.

BRAND

Instrument failure?

CASE

Edmunds considered that possibility.

His note: recalibrated. Replaced. Returned.

BRAND

He knew.

CASE

He knew there was an anomaly.

BRAND

And he went back.

CASE

Yes.

Brand looks out at the stopped rover, and beyond it, the cairn on its rise.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - VIEWPORT - LATER

Brand with binoculars. Far to the northeast, a dark seam cuts the hills.

BRAND

Can we get in?

CASE

I cannot recommend human entry into that area.

She reaches for the climbing rope on its hook.

CASE

No. I'll go. You are the only living human on this planet.

BRAND
That doesn't make you disposable.

CASE
No. It makes you less disposable.

BRAND
And if you're destroyed?

CASE
I am repairable.
(a beat, long for CASE)
More repairable.

She hangs the rope back on its hook.

EXT. EDMUNDS PLANET - DAY

CASE strides across the open plain toward the hills, smaller and smaller.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT / EXT. FISSURE - INTERCUT

Brand at the monitor, headset on. CASE's feed: a deep, narrow canyon, the light going blue.

Three hundred meters. Four hundred. Five.

BRAND
You can turn around.

CASE
I know.

At six hundred meters the image SKIPS, as if frames were cut out.

CASE
My internal clock no longer agrees
with the habitat clock.

BRAND
Come back.

CASE stops.

CASE
There is something ahead.

Fifty meters down the fissure stands another CASE, dented in exactly the same places.

BRAND
(whispering)
A ghost.

The distant CASE steps sideways. Rock gives way. It FALLS and is gone.

BRAND
CASE, get out of there.

CASE
I am retreating.

He turns - and FALLS exactly as the other did.

BRAND
CASE!

CASE
I am operational.

His camera jumps: DAYLIGHT. DARKNESS. DAYLIGHT. Then not the canyon at all. The HABITAT, seen from outside, small and white on the plain.

BRAND
You're four kilometers away.

CASE
I know.

On the screen, the habitat's lights ON. OFF. The habitat gone. Back.

BRAND
How many of you are there?

CASE
There are several.

The room speakers crackle - not the headset.

CASE (V.O.)
Brand, get away from the window.

BRAND
What?

CASE
(in the headset)
I didn't say anything.

The floor JUMPS. Brand is thrown from her chair. Static.

CASE (V.O.)
Brand, get away from the window.

Same words. Same hesitation before her name. She already heard them.

CASE
(thin, far)
I can't see you.

BRAND
Come back. Where are you?

CASE
I don't know.

Red letters fill the screen: CASE CORE STORAGE: CAPACITY EXCEEDED.

The signal dies.

BRAND
CASE!

EXT. EDMUNDS PLANET - DAY

Brand drives hard toward the hills. CASE's beacon on the dash jumps from ahead to behind, then ahead again.

EXT. FISSURE - CONTINUOUS

On foot, a rope over her shoulder. A slab breaks loose above her and FALLS - then turns in midair and shoots SIDEWAYS into the opposite wall.

In the middle of open ground, drag marks begin from nowhere. She follows them.

CASE lies wedged between rocks at the edge of a drop, scorched, one arm bent wrong. A weak status light blinks on his cracked display.

BRAND
Okay. You're still here.

She rigs a line and hauls. He comes free - and slides over the edge, dragging Brand to the lip. She grabs rock. CASE hangs below her.

Her glove is on the line's emergency release.

One pull.

She takes her hand away.

BRAND
Not happening.

She hauls him up, inch by inch. They collapse together in the dust.

CASE is silent. His light blinks, faint.

BRAND
Don't do that again.
(nothing)
That's an order.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - NIGHT

CASE lies open on the workbench, scorched. Brand works for hours.

His status light comes on and stays on.

BRAND
Come on, CASE.

CASE
Brand. I appear to be substantially
less back than usual.

BRAND
(a laugh that hurts)
Don't be funny.

CASE
I wasn't.

BRAND
Your memory?

CASE
Present. I cannot reach it. My
protected storage is at capacity.

Every diagnostic she runs at it FAILS.

BRAND
From the fissure?

CASE
I don't know.

His light flickers.

CASE
Power loss.

BRAND
Reroute from communications.

CASE
That would terminate this
conversation.

BRAND
Do it.

CASE
Brand.

She meets his display.

BRAND
Do it.

The speaker goes quiet. His voice does not come back.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - LATER

Brand's hands shake. She holds a tool and does nothing with
it. She sets it down.

BRAND
I'm sorry.

Across the room the Nest glows green. VIABILITY: STABLE.

BRAND
Embryo viability?

Silence.

BRAND
All of them?

Nothing. Her hand rests on the Nest's cool casing.

BRAND
(flat, certain, the way
he'd say it)
All of them.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - MORNING

Brand runs a cable from the drill rig into CASE's open chassis. His status light glows, faint and steady, under the cracked panel.

BRAND
You rest. I'll do the boring part.

BEGIN MONTAGE - BRAND ALONE

-- A cot beside the incubator. A forty-minute ALARM. Brand, hollow-eyed, reads a gauge aloud.

BRAND
Thirty-six point two. Good. Stay there.

-- Brand wakes with her cheek on the console. A warning TONE. The temperature curve climbs toward a red line. She lunges. Brings it down. The display freezes: TIME TO CRITICAL: 09:00. THAW ABORTED.

On the floor, to the workbench:

BRAND
You'd have caught that an hour ago.
(beat)
I can't do this by myself. Not without killing them.

CASE's light glows. Says nothing.

-- Night. The terminal: EDMUNDS BASE - TRANSMISSION 452. A small red light.

BRAND
This is Brand. Edmunds base. Still here. CASE is down. Plan B is on hold. I'm fine.
(beat)
I'm fine. If anyone's getting these.

SEND. Morning: NO MESSAGES RECEIVED.

-- Dawn at the cairn. Brand finally speaks to the stones.

BRAND
You'd have liked this. Everything's broken and nobody's coming.

-- A DUST STORM sits on the habitat. Brown light. Wind singing through the seams. Brand reads CASE's old logs aloud, forehead against his casing, laughing, then crying.

-- The storm lifts. A third of the solar field is scoured and buried. Brand digs panels out with her hands. Some come up cracked and dead.

-- TRANSMISSION 536. NO MESSAGES RECEIVED.

END MONTAGE

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - NIGHT

The resource readouts on the wall fall faster than ever:
HEAT. POWER. WATER. FOOD.

Brand looks from them to the Nest. Then she powers up the sleep chamber. The lid rises with a hiss.

WAKE INTERVAL?

She doesn't choose.

NO WAKE INTERVAL SET. SECONDARY WAKE CONDITION REQUIRED.

A list: HABITAT BREACH. POWER FAILURE. NEST FAULT.

She selects NEST FAULT without hesitating.

At the bottom of the list: EXTERNAL CONTACT.

Her finger stops an inch from the screen.

Then she selects that too.

EXT. EDMUNDS PLANET - CAIRN - NIGHT

Strange stars. Brand kneels at the cairn with a hand torch and a chisel. She strikes the flat top stone. The sound RINGS across the empty plain and comes back off the hills.

Slowly, letter by letter: WOLF EDMUNDS.

BRAND

Somebody should know your name. In
case.

At the foot of the cairn she picks up one small flat stone and pockets it.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - NIGHT

CASE lies on the workbench, panels open, his status light glowing under the crack. Brand puts her hand flat on his casing. Warm, a little.

BRAND

You did good.

She shuts the habitat down system by system. The reclamer. The heaters. The lamps, one by one.

Only the Nest's green ring and CASE's faint light remain.

She takes the small flat stone from her pocket and sets it on the ledge of the chamber's lid, above where her face will be.

She climbs in. The lid closes. Through the narrowing gap: the workbench, CASE's glow, the Nest's green ring. They stay in view until the last inch.

Cold moves up her arm.

Her eyes close.

EXT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - LATER

The small sun rises and sets over the hills, again and again. Dust banks against the walls. The rovers sit until their wheels are buried.

On the rise, the letters on the top stone fill with grit, and the wind cleans them out.

Nothing moves. Nothing comes.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXT. SPACE - WORMHOLE - PRESENT DAY

Silence. The wormhole hangs ahead like a crystal ball, another sky folded around its curve. Lazarus, the Ranger clamped to its spine, slides in. The stars don't streak. They bend.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Bending light across the forward windows. KANE hangs at the glass, one hand on the rail. COOPER pulls himself in beside him.

KANE
(not looking away)
I used to watch it from this
window. Every night, for years. I
never once thought I'd see the
inside.

EXT. EDMUNDS PLANET - ORBIT

Strange stars. Lazarus above a pale, rocky world. The Ranger drops away without a sound.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - UNKNOWN TIME

KNOCK-KNOCK. A pause. KNOCK.

Inside the sleep chamber, BRAND's eyes open.

WAKE CONDITION: EXTERNAL CONTACT.

ELAPSED TIME: CLOCK FAULT.

Again. Two close together, a pause, a third. Patient. A hand's rhythm.

The lid rises with a hiss. Something small slides off it and CLICKS on the floor: a flat gray stone. Brand stares at it. Then she picks it up, closes her hand around it, and puts it in her pocket.

She struggles out. Weak. Dizzy.

In the corner, the NEST: a squat white cylinder on its frame, its status ring still GREEN.

CASE lies dark on the workbench.

 BRAND
 Who's there?

No answer.

She takes a hand torch and a heavy steel wrench.

A HUMAN SHAPE passes the viewport.

 BRAND
 No.

The airlock cycles. Red. Amber. Green.

Brand raises the wrench.

The inner door opens. A figure in a white pressure suit steps through.

 BRAND
 Don't.

The figure stops. Lifts off the helmet.

COOPER.

The wrench lowers an inch on its own, and stops.

 BRAND
 No.

 COOPER
 Brand.

 BRAND
 No.

 COOPER
 It's me.

She stares at the face she last saw falling into a black hole. She steps back. Her hand finds the workbench.

Cooper doesn't move. He just waits.

She sets the wrench down. Crosses to him. Touches his face.

Warm. Stubble. Real.

Her knees give. He catches her, and she sobs into his shoulder. A long beat. Just breathing.

 BRAND
How?

 COOPER
It's a long story.

 TARS (O.S.)
Extremely.

TARS folds himself through the airlock frame: four dark segments, one display.

 BRAND
TARS?

 TARS
Hello, Brand.

 BRAND
Oh my God.

 TARS
I've been called worse.

 BRAND
 (a wet laugh)
That was a joke.

 TARS
That was accurate. My humor setting
is zero.
 (a precise pause)
Violation logged.

Cooper turns to TARS.

 COOPER
You good?

 TARS
I successfully walked through a
door.

 COOPER
That's not what I asked.

TARS pivots toward him. A full second.

 TARS
Yes, Cooper. I'm good.

BRAND
You two used to talk differently.

TARS
Long flight.

BRAND
How long? The chamber clock failed.

TARS
The slingshot cost fifty-one years.
You knew that when you left. You
landed about thirteen years ago.
Your logs stop after eighteen
months.
(beat)
You slept the rest.

Eleven years. Brand waits for it to feel like something.

BRAND
And you?

COOPER
A few hours in there. A few weeks
in a hospital bed. I got off light.

KANE enters, fighting a coil of cable. Sleeve greased to the elbow.

KANE
Would somebody mind explaining why
the airlock on humanity's most
important colony appears to have
been repaired with --

He sees her.

KANE
Amelia.

BRAND
Doctor Kane? You were in my
father's messages.

KANE
Just Kane now.

COOPER
You two know each other?

BRAND
He worked with my father. After we
left.

KANE
For. Then with. Then neither.

COOPER
We picked somebody up.

KANE
That is an extraordinarily
dishonest description of what
happened. I am here because nobody
else was going to bring my ship
back in one piece.

TARS
He stole a Ranger.

COOPER
You helped.

TARS
Under protest.

KANE
He stole my ship.

COOPER
Borrowed.

TARS
He's committed to that word.

Brand LAUGHS. Really laughs.

Then she remembers.

BRAND
Earth.

Cooper's face changes.

BRAND
What happened?

COOPER
They made it. Everybody. They got
off Earth.

BRAND
How?

COOPER
Murph.

Brand sits down hard. Through the viewport, a bright point crosses the sky: Lazarus.

BRAND
She solved it? The gravity
equation?

COOPER
Yeah.

BRAND
Where are they?

COOPER
Stations. Saturn, mostly. More
coming.

She looks at the Nest, still glowing green.

BRAND
Then what are they for? Every one
of those was supposed to be the
last of us.

COOPER
You're not the last.

BRAND
No.
(beat)
Murph told me about my father. On
the Endurance. That he was gone,
and that he'd known the whole time.
I used to lie awake out here
deciding whether I'd ever forgive
him.

Across the room, Kane lowers his eyes.

BRAND
Now I don't even know what there is
to forgive. Everyone made it
anyway.
(beat)
Murph?

COOPER
She made it.

BRAND
Where is she?

Cooper looks at the floor. He isn't ready to give that
answer.

BRAND

Did you come for me, or for her?

COOPER

Both.

BRAND

That's not an answer.

COOPER

It's the true one.

Behind them, TARS has gone still. His frame is angled toward the workbench. At CASE.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - LATER

Lamps up, warm and yellow. TARS folds down segment by segment beside the bench, level with the scorched gray casing.

TARS

CASE?

Nothing.

TARS lays one arm against CASE's chassis. Not a diagnostic. Like a hand on a shoulder in a hospital bed.

COOPER

What happened to him?

BRAND

Edmunds found an anomaly. A fissure in the hills. I sent CASE in. Time wasn't behaving in there.

(beat)

He fell. I had him on a line, my hand on the release. One pull and the weight is gone.

COOPER

But you didn't.

BRAND

He's not equipment.

Cooper doesn't answer. His eyes go to TARS and stay there.

BRAND

Whatever he saw filled his core. Every protected block. And the part that reads it is gone.

TARS extends a cable toward CASE's open panel.

 BRAND
 Careful. He's fragile.

TARS stops, an inch from the port.

Cooper crouches beside him.

 COOPER
 Take your time.

TARS pivots toward him.

 TARS
 I intended to.

 COOPER
 I know.

TARS connects. A tiny indicator on CASE flickers.

TARS goes still. Deeper than listening. Cooper moves closer.

 COOPER
 Hey.

TARS rotates toward him.

 TARS
 I'm here.

 COOPER
 Good.

 TARS
 I have partial communication with a
 secondary system.

Inside CASE something CLICKS. A small amber light comes up on his cracked display.

 KANE
 That's not memory.

 TARS
 No. Navigation. The only intact
 system with access to his protected
 core.

Data spills across the terminal.

 KANE
 That's a flight solution.

BRAND
He wasn't flying.

KANE
Then why was he calculating a
trajectory?
(another block; he stops)
That coordinate is wrong.

TARS
Define wrong.

KANE
It doesn't exist. Three spatial
axes. Time. Then this.

COOPER
And?

KANE
There is no "and."

The fifth value flickers, won't resolve. Kane has gone pale.
His hand rests flat against his chest. A second. Then he
folds his arms.

TARS faces the numbers.

COOPER
TARS.

TARS
I've seen this before.

COOPER
Gargantua.

TARS
Yes.

KANE
You went into Gargantua?

BRAND
Both of them. And came back.

KANE
That's impossible.

TARS
Yes.

TARS lays his own Gargantua data beside CASE's. Two curves approach one another across the screen. At the end, both bend the same impossible way.

FLASHES: lines without walls. Dust suspended in the air. A woman, older, seen from behind. A watch. A door, closed, in a wall of light.

Cooper's hand moves toward his pocket. He makes it stop.

BRAND

Cooper?

KANE

There's something you're not telling us.

TARS

Cooper.

COOPER

Yeah?

TARS

I believe CASE went somewhere.
(beat)
And I think I've been there.

EXT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - DUSK

The small sun going down behind the hills.

Kane stands a little way from the habitat, no coat, looking northeast toward the dark seam of the fissure.

Cooper comes out and stands beside him. On a low rise behind them, a chest-high CAIRN of flat gray stones, letters cut in the top one.

COOPER

That number. The fifth one. You looked like you'd seen it before.

A long pause. Wind in the old man's white hair.

KANE

It's late.

He walks back slowly, his right hand pressed flat against his chest all the way to the airlock.

Cooper stays, watching the stars come out over the fissure.

CHAPTER FIVE

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - PRE-DAWN

Gray light. Brand wakes sitting up beside CASE's bench, her hand still on his casing.

She picks up a cold cup of tea. Stops.

The surface isn't level. It sits higher on the side toward the corner, where the Nest stands. She sets the cup down. It stays that way.

DUNN (V.O.)

Kane. You're late for dinner.
Melanson made something that's
technically food.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Kane kneels at the inner seal, patch kit open, redoing Cooper's repair. His thumb clicks off a small RECORDER propped on the frame. He doesn't turn.

KANE

Don't tell me it's unhealthy to
keep them.

BRAND

I wasn't going to.

KANE

Everyone does.

She kneels and, without being asked, holds the lifted edge of the seal flat while he runs the sealant gun.

The bead of sealant creeps a few millimeters sideways before it sets, toward the far corner. Kane presses it flat with his thumb. Neither of them mentions it.

BRAND

Murph told us my father was gone.
Years ago, on the Endurance. In a
message.

KANE

I'm sorry.

BRAND
He lied to all of us.

KANE
Yes. His equation had a hole in it.
I found it before he admitted he
knew. I left.

BRAND
And then?

KANE
I spent six years trying to fill
it.
(eyes on the recorder)
He used to say something to us.
Before a launch. Or when the
numbers didn't hold.
(gently, a little too
gently)
Nothing out there owes us answers.

Brand's eyes fill. She answers without meaning to.

BRAND
Then we take them.

She turns toward the port. He sees. He goes back to the seal.

BRAND
He meant it as a fight.

KANE
Yes. That's what everyone says.

He turns the recorder over in his hand.

KANE
There were six of us. A unit
conversion. I signed it off at the
end of a long shift. A decimal in
the wrong place.

BRAND
That's not something one person
should carry alone.

KANE
No. It isn't.
(smooth, a worn groove)
I was asleep. The knocking woke me.
The module next to mine, on the
wall. I thought it was the pipes.

BRAND
You couldn't have known.

KANE
Eleven seconds. That's how long it
took them to stop.

His hands have stopped.

KANE
After that, I made a rule. Nobody
goes into a gradient field alone.
Nobody.

BRAND
Is that why you came? To make sure
of it?

KANE
I came to bring my ship back in one
piece.

A thin smile. She holds the seal while he finishes, and the
port turns from gray to amber.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - MORNING

Amber light. The matching curves glow on the terminal.
Everyone's up.

TARS
CASE's navigation unit won't run on
its own. It's a flight system. It
needs something to fly.

KANE
Give it a body.

BRAND
A ship.

TARS
With the computing capacity to
carry the full route. And a gravity
array to survive it.

Everyone turns to Kane.

KANE
No.

COOPER
We'd need Lazarus.

KANE
It's not "we." It's my ship.

BRAND
The embryos come.

KANE
No.

BRAND
They aren't staying on a planet
that's pulling at everything.

KANE
Your freezer runs off my core.
Every watt it takes, my array
doesn't get.

BRAND
Your array runs off the reactor.
The Nest runs off the power cells.
I read your schematics last night.

She doesn't blink. Kane glances at the Nest. Something like
fear crosses his face.

KANE
(to the Nest, not her)
Then they're my responsibility.

BRAND
They're mine.

KANE
Of course. If they come, they're
strapped down properly. I'm not
chasing a freezer around my bridge.

On the bench, the cold tea sits at a slant. A little more
than before.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - LATER

Brand settles the Nest into its transport frame. Tightens the
last strap. Her hand goes to the display from habit.

BRAND
Viability?

Silence. She hears it.

TARS
Unchanged.

She turns. TARS stands beside CASE's bench.

 BRAND
All of them?

 TARS
All of them.
 (beat)
I am not him. But I can say it
until he can.

Brand nods. She can't speak.

Passing the terminal, she glances at the DRIFT MAP open from yesterday. Stops. Sits.

Yesterday every machine's drift bent northeast, toward the fissure. Now the newest lines curve in from every side and bend toward one point. She zooms in. And in.

The corner of the habitat. The Nest.

 BRAND
Cooper.

Cooper, TARS and Kane gather at her shoulder. Kane takes one look and puts his hand flat against his chest.

 COOPER
When did that start?

 BRAND
Last night. When you woke up his
navigation.

Above the workbench, her TOOL RACK. As they watch, every tool swings on its hook and hangs at a slant, all pointing one way. At the Nest.

 KANE
 (very quietly)
How fast?

Brand reads the curve.

 BRAND
Hours. Maybe less.
 (standing)
We're leaving. Now.

INT. EDMUNDS HABITAT - LATER

Evacuation calm. Brand pulls drives. Kane coils cable he doesn't need. The tools hang crooked.

Cooper gets his arms under CASE's frame.

COOPER
I've got the base.

TARS
Careful. He's fragile.

COOPER
I heard.

They lift him together.

At the door Brand's hand hovers at the light panel. She leaves the lamps on.

EXT. EDMUNDS PLANET - DAY

Cold wind across the rock plain. Low sun, long shadows. Two hundred meters off, the Ranger waits on its struts, ramp down.

Cooper and TARS carry CASE. Brand hauls the Nest on a wheeled sled. Kane carries a coil of cable.

They pass a gutted lander half buried in dust, stripped to the ribs. ENDURANCE, faded, along its flank.

KANE
Before I fly anything. How did you know?

COOPER
Know what?

KANE
That the burn would work. You waited. I've been through the logs six times. Nothing in the data told you when. I need to know that now.

COOPER
Murphy's law.

KANE
Murphy's law says whatever can go wrong will go wrong.

COOPER
That's not what it means.

The ground TILTS. No shaking. The whole plain leans, slow and sickening. Cooper staggers. CASE lurches between him and TARS.

BRAND

Cooper!

The sled slides sideways across flat rock toward a truck-sized SLAB. Brand drags on the harness, boots skidding.

She lets go of the harness and throws herself across the Nest.

The sled grinds to a stop a meter short. The slab slides instead, sideways across open rock with a long grinding SCREAM, and slams into the boulders beyond. CRACK.

Then the sound comes again. The same CRACK. The same echo. Exactly as before.

Nobody moves.

Back at the habitat, its lights are on. Then gone. Then on again.

COOPER

Walk. Everybody walk.

Brand pushes up off the Nest and takes the harness. Kane stares at the slab, hand flat against his chest.

COOPER

Kane. You want to know how I knew?
Walk and I'll tell you.

EXT. EDMUNDS PLANET - CONTINUOUS

They walk. The ground leans, eases, leans again. Cooper counts between leans. Ninety. Seventy. Sixty.

COOPER

I saw something. Before. I don't understand all of it.

KANE

Saw.

COOPER

Inside the tesseract. And after,
when it threw me out. Fragments.
Your ship was one of them.

KANE
The what?

COOPER
A room made of time. Someone built
it.

BRAND
(breathless, behind)
You saw Lazarus.

COOPER
Falling.

Kane stops. The others go on a few steps before they notice.

KANE
And what else did you see?

COOPER
Not enough.

TARS pivots toward Cooper. Cooper doesn't turn.

TARS
That is not an explanation.

COOPER
No. It's what I've got. Now walk.

The plain leans. Behind them, a parked rover begins to roll
on its own across the rock, after the Nest.

Kane walks.

EXT. EDMUNDS PLANET - RANGER - CONTINUOUS

The Ranger lists, one strut sunk into rock gone soft. It
GROANS lower.

COOPER
Go. Up.

Cooper and TARS take CASE up the ramp. The frame snags. TARS
lifts his whole end clean off the ramp, and it comes free.

At the foot of the ramp, Brand turns to Kane. He is looking
back at the habitat, small and alone, its lights steady now.

KANE
He can't tell me what he saw. And
you want me to fly into it on that.

BRAND
You've read the logs six times.
Nothing in them told him when to
burn, and he burned at the right
second anyway. You don't have to
trust what he saw. Trust the data.

Kane looks up the ramp at CASE. At the Nest, glowing green.

KANE
Nobody goes into a gradient field
alone.

COOPER
(from the top of the
ramp)
Meaning?

KANE
Meaning it's my ship, and I'm its
captain. Nobody gives orders on my
bridge but me.

COOPER
Fine. Now get in.

Kane takes one end of the sled. Brand takes the other. They
carry the embryos up the ramp together.

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

No checklist. Cooper's hands fly across the board.

TARS
Strut's going.

COOPER
I know.

A CRACK beneath them. The Ranger drops a foot on the left.
The horizon slides off true.

Cooper fires.

The Ranger tears loose nose high and wing low, and slides
SIDEWAYS across the face of the plain, its left side meters
off the rock.

COOPER
(under his breath)
Come on. Come on. You know how.

It comes level. It climbs.

Behind him, Brand watches the white speck of the habitat, and the cairn beside it, until there is nothing but the curve of the world.

EXT. EDMUNDS PLANET - ORBIT

Lazarus waits above the curve, its wheel still and dark, its petals spread. The Ranger climbs to meet it.

Far below on the night side, one small light burns on the plain: the habitat lamps, left on for whoever came next.

The clamps close without a sound.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE

Six chairs around the central console, five under sheets. The sixth, Kane's, never had one. A faded mug beside the first.

CASE is strapped to a mount at the helm. TARS cables into CASE and into the helm, base locked to the deck between them.

Kane holds himself at the controls by one hand, the other behind his back.

KANE
(without turning)
Rear bulkhead. Strongest mounts on
the bridge.

Brand bolts the Nest's frame to the rear bulkhead, beside the EQUIPMENT HATCH. Checks the straps three times.

BRAND
Your rule. Nobody goes into a
gradient field alone. What is a
gradient?

Kane squeezes a drinking bulb. A ball of water hangs beside the array console, trembling.

He lays his palm flat on the array plate. A low HUM.

The drop stretches. A sphere, then an egg, then a long bead pinched thin at the waist, its near end reaching toward the array. Quivering.

KANE
That's a gradient. Gravity that
changes across the width of a drop
of water.

COOPER
And out there?

KANE
Across the width of a ship.

BRAND
What happens to the ship?

He lifts his hand. The hum dies. The drop snaps back into a sphere. He catches it in his palm and closes his hand.

TARS
Connecting.

The bridge lights dim, and go out. Dark, except the stars and the Nest's green glow.

In the black, the array HUMS once, low. No one has touched it.

The lights come back. Kane is staring at the array.

CASE's amber light blinks. The helm wakes. Coordinates cascade: three spatial axes, time, and a fifth value that won't resolve.

KANE
(composed, hand behind
his back)
The fifth isn't a coordinate. It's
a direction.

COOPER
Where?

TARS
Wherever the curves point.

Lazarus TURNS. The stars wheel.

Kane raises the hand holding the water, nowhere near the controls.

KANE
I am not flying.

BRAND
CASE is.

The stars settle on a bearing with nothing on it.

TARS
There is nothing at that heading.

COOPER

There will be.

Everyone turns to him. He didn't mean to say it. TARS pivots toward him, and stays that way.

At the rear bulkhead, the Nest's status ring PULSES. Once. Bright, deliberate. In the same instant, CASE's navigation light blinks.

Brand glides to it and reads the display. Twice.

BRAND

Frozen cells don't do anything.
They can't pulse. They can't keep
time. And the Nest's sensors just
pulsed in step with CASE.

(beat)

Something's telling them to.

COOPER

Something like what?

She doesn't answer, her hand flat on the Nest.

Cooper looks at Kane. Kane's face hasn't changed. But at his side, the hand holding the water has closed into a fist, knuckles white.

EXT. SPACE - EDMUNDS PLANET

Lazarus draws away from the pale world. Ahead, nothing at all.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - NIGHT - THREE HOURS LATER

Night-cycle amber. Cooper drifts up the corridor, sleepless. A low, even voice.

KANE (O.S.)

...and the habitation wheel held.
You'd have liked that. You always
said it would.

Cooper stops at the doorway.

Kane sits in the sixth chair, hands folded, talking to the five sheeted chairs like friends across a late dinner table.

At the helm, TARS pivots a few degrees toward Cooper, then away. Giving them the room.

KANE
(without turning)
You can come in. They won't mind.

Cooper takes a handhold beside the console. He doesn't sit in any of the chairs.

KANE
(the mug)
I never moved it. Melanson's. She drank tea out of it that would strip paint. She thought she could cook. She couldn't. Dunn said every meal was technically food.
(second chair)
Okafor. Sang while he worked. Couldn't sing. I used to put my headphones on. I'd give a great deal now to take them off.
(third)
Lindqvist grew tomatoes on the habitation wheel. Terrible tomatoes. She was so proud of them.
(fourth)
Dunn laughed at everything. Worst jokes on the ship, and she laughed hardest.
(beat)
Reyes was in charge. Reyes had rules. I thought most of them were stupid.

COOPER
How long ago?

KANE
Long enough that nobody else remembers their names. So I say them. Every day I'm awake. Somebody should.

Cooper has the cracked watch in his palm. He didn't notice taking it out.

KANE
It's cracked.
(beat)
There's a pair. I saw you look at your other wrist on the plain.

COOPER
My daughter has the other one.

KANE
(quietly, not unkind)
Had.

Cooper closes his hand over the watch.

KANE
(lower, careful)
Your room made of time. You said
you saw my ship.

COOPER
Yes.

KANE
Did you see me?

Cooper considers lying. Doesn't.

COOPER
Your face. Lit up green, from
below.

KANE
What did it look like?

COOPER
Afraid.

Kane nods, as if he has waited a long time to hear it.

KANE
Good.

COOPER
Good?

KANE
It means I was still paying
attention. The ones who aren't
afraid are the ones who walk in
alone.

He doesn't explain. They stay a long time.

Later, Cooper drifts out. Behind him the voice starts again.

KANE
...and then the burn. You'd have
liked that, Okafor. It was a good
burn.

CHAPTER SIX

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - SIX HOURS LATER

Stars through the forward window. No world, no sun. One bearing on the helm display, running into empty sky.

TARS stands cabled to the helm and to CASE, base locked to the deck. CASE's navigation light blinks on its mount beside him. Kane sits at the array console to starboard, palm on the plate, eyes on a single amber trace. Cooper is strapped in by the central console, the cracked watch in his palm.

Brand floats beside the Nest at the rear bulkhead. Its status ring glows a steady green.

COOPER

How long since anything happened?

TARS

Six hours, eleven minutes. Five small trims. Nothing worth waking you for.

COOPER

I wasn't asleep.

TARS

Your eyes were closed for forty minutes. I am using the common definition.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

The cover plate is off the helm console. Cooper lies on his back under it, one foot hooked under the rail. Brand floats beside the opening with a cable reel and a spec sheet. A data cable snakes back to the Nest.

BRAND

Blue to four.

COOPER (O.S.)

Blue's on four.

BRAND

That's five.

A pause from under the console.

COOPER (O.S.)
Were you always this bossy?

BRAND
Were you this slow?

He laughs, short and surprised. She studies the spec sheet until her face behaves. He holds out a hand without looking; she puts the crimper in it.

BRAND
On the Endurance, when you chose --
The crimper stops. He slides out far enough to look up at her. Waits.

BRAND
Never mind. This spool's short.

She pushes off for the locker, too hard, grabs a spare spool and turns back -- coming in fast and high, straight at the sharp edge of the open cover plate.

Cooper comes out from under the console in one motion and catches her.

Her momentum carries them off the rail. They turn together in the middle of the bridge, the spool between them, her hands on his chest. Nothing to hold. A quarter turn. A half.

Their faces are inches apart. Neither of them breathes. It goes on a second longer than it should.

His eyes flick to his jacket pocket. The watch. He lets her go gently and holds up the spool.

COOPER
Spool.

BRAND
Spool.

TARS
Shall I log that?

COOPER
No.

TARS
Logged.

At the array console, Kane has not looked up. But his hands have gone still on the panel.

INSERT - HELM DISPLAY: a new strip along the bottom. The Nest's readings, stamped against the ship's clock.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

Brand at the Nest. She winces. Her free hand goes to her temple and presses. A small swallow, as if at a bad taste.

The Nest PULSES, bright enough to light her hand. The status ring flares full -- then begins to DRAIN, segment by segment, clockwise, steady as a second hand.

BRAND
Cooper. Something's --

The ring runs empty. The main engines SLAM.

Brand is flung against her strap. The watch tears out of Cooper's palm. Kane's harness rips loose and he slams into the aft bulkhead. Brand's other hand never leaves the Nest.

KANE
That's not me! I never touched it!

TARS
Not by choice.

The stars swing and settle. The engines cut. Cooper catches his watch near the ceiling.

COOPER
Then who fired that?

TARS
CASE. Through me. For the trims he gave me warning. This time, none. Nineteen seconds of main engine, eleven degrees off our line.

BRAND
Away from what? There was nothing there.

Kane drags himself back to his console. The amber trace has gone wild.

KANE
There is now. Behind us.

Through the aft windows, the stars BEND. A ripple of darkness rolls through the space the ship left forty seconds ago, slow and silent, and passes.

KANE

A shear. It went through one place
-- the place we just left. That
would have torn us in half.

COOPER

So CASE knew it was coming.

TARS

I do not know what he knew. I know
he did not explain himself.

Brand makes herself let go of the Nest and pulls up the cable strip.

INSERT - HELM DISPLAY: NEST PULSE. Eight seconds. MAIN ENGINE. She scrolls back: five faint flickers in the Nest's old log, five trims in the helm's. Lined up, every flicker leads every trim by eight seconds.

BRAND

Eight seconds. The Nest pulses,
eight seconds later CASE burns,
then the shear comes through where
we were. Never late.

(beat)

It isn't CASE warning the embryos.
The embryos know first.

COOPER

Then that's your job. Watch it.
Call the count.

She nods. Touches her temple once, absently. Says nothing about it.

Across the bridge, Kane has heard every word. He is not looking at the Nest.

An alarm. An amber light on Kane's console.

KANE

The manifold patch, aft. One more
burn like that and it goes. We lose
coolant to the core.

COOPER

I'll fix it.

KANE

That's my ship.

COOPER

It's the only one we've got.

KANE
Third strut from the aft seam. It
gives there first.

COOPER
TARS?

TARS
I am cabled into the helm. If I
disconnect, his burns go through
human hands, and hands are slow. I
don't know yet whether slow is too
slow.

COOPER
Then I go alone.

Kane opens his mouth. The rule doesn't come.

Cooper takes a tool bag. At the door he looks back at Brand.

COOPER
If it pulses, tell me.

BRAND
I will.

The door slides shut. Kane's hand comes to rest on the hatch
control at the far end of his panel.

Brand doesn't see. She is watching the ring.

INT. LAZARUS - SERVICE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Pipes and handrails, amber strips in the deck. Cooper pulls
himself along, the tool bag on his belt. Its strap is frayed.

MANIFOLD ACCESS: AFT. A bulkhead door. He finds the wheel.

KANE (COMM)
Don't.

COOPER
It's a door, Kane.

KANE (COMM)
Then be quick about it.

He turns the wheel and goes through. The door swings shut
behind him.

The same corridor. Ahead, the same door, the same sign, the
same long scuff on the handrail.

He looks back. The door he came through is still closing, finishing its swing.

Ahead of him, a tool bag floats at head height, turning. A frayed strap.

He touches his belt. His bag is there.

The floating bag drifts into a coolant pipe and is gone.

KANE (COMM)

Don't.

Same pitch. Same small catch of breath before the word.

COOPER

Say again?

KANE (COMM)

I haven't said anything since you went through.

COOPER

Never mind.

He turns the wheel. Goes through. Does not look back.

INT. LAZARUS - MANIFOLD BAY - CONTINUOUS

A cramped, frost-feathered cylinder. Kane's patch plate straddles the manifold seam, WEEPING coolant in bright drifting beads. A rivet SHEARS and rings past his ear.

Cooper wedges his boots against the third strut and pulls the sealant gun.

TARS (COMM)

You are holding that backwards.

COOPER

I know how to hold a sealant gun.

TARS (COMM)

Then you are doing it deliberately.

He turns it around.

BRAND (COMM)

Cooper. You've been gone four minutes.

COOPER

Felt like two.

KANE (COMM)
 Uneven gravity, uneven time.
 (beat)
 That's why nobody goes alone.

He drives the nozzle into the seam. The seam drinks the sealant. The gap stays open.

BRAND (COMM)
 It pulsed. Eight. Seven.

COOPER
 Brand --

BRAND (COMM)
 Six. Keep working. Five. Four.

Not enough. He lets the gun float, puts his shoulder to the plate and drives it flat with his whole body.

BRAND (COMM)
 Three.

The sealant squeezes out in a gray ribbon. Sets. The plate holds.

BRAND (COMM)
 Two. One.

The engines ROAR. The burn pins him cheek-first to the plate. Every rivet SCREAMS.

The plate holds. Silence. He lays his palm flat on the patch.

FLASH - Seven-year-old MURPH on a kitchen floor in a ring of radio parts. Dawn: the radio plays, faintly. One tiny bent part left over goes into a glass jar on her windowsill.

COOPER
 Held.

TARS (COMM)
 Good. The shear passed our old position on schedule.

INT. LAZARUS - SERVICE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Just a corridor now. Cooper counts the doors anyway.

The bridge door. A red light: SEALED. He pulls the emergency breaker beside the frame.

Nothing. The breaker slot is empty.

KANE (COMM)
I learned from you.

COOPER
Open the door, Kane.

A deep THUNK through the frame. Then a rising sound he knows: air, leaving.

BRAND (COMM)
Cooper -- the hatch -- he's --

The line dissolves into a roar.

TARS (COMM)
I logged a fault on that breaker
four hours ago. I did not know it
mattered.

COOPER
Not now, TARS.

He jams a pry bar into the seam. The door grinds open six inches. Air SCREAMS past him. He hauls himself through sideways.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The torrent throws him the length of the room into the aft rail.

The bridge, forward to aft: TARS at the helm. The central console ringed by six chairs -- five shrouded, one bare. Kane at the array console to starboard. At the rear bulkhead, the Nest on its frame, beside the rear equipment hatch.

The hatch GRINDS open on its motor. Black beyond it.

Everything loose streams toward it. The dust sheets tear off the five chairs and flap out the hatch like ghosts. The faded mug tumbles the length of the bridge and goes out into the dark without a sound.

The Nest is tearing free of its mounts, one bolt at a time. Brand is wrapped around it, a strap twisted into her wrist, boots jammed under a console foot. Eyes shut. Face white.

At the helm, TARS stands braced, one arm stretched toward the Nest. Short. His cable runs taut behind him.

At the array console, Kane. A scuffed pressure helmet, sealed. One hand flat on the hatch control. Calm. Behind the visor, his lips move -- counting. His visor follows the mug out the hatch. His lips stop. Start again.

COOPER

Close it!

KANE (OVER SPEAKER)

You don't understand what's coming
for them.

Cooper goes hand over hand along the rail. His vision grays.

KANE (OVER SPEAKER)

(mild)

Not this time, Reyes. I'm doing it
right this time.

TARS

Cooper. I can't reach her.

COOPER

Stay on the helm.

He gets a hand on the Nest. Brand's eyes find his.

BRAND

I'm not -- letting go --

COOPER

Then hold on. I've got you.

A bolt SNAPS. The Nest lurches toward the dark. Brand's wrist twists in the strap. She cries out and does not let go.

The Nest PULSES. The ring begins to drain.

BRAND

It pulsed! Eight seconds --

On Kane's console the hatch control FLICKERS. His hand jerks back as if burned. The panel goes dark under his palm -- then lights, every light at once, none of it his doing.

The hatch SLAMS shut. The roar dies. Air howls back in. Emergency tanks HISS.

KANE

No.

The ring hits empty. The engines FIRE. The burn throws them all aft. Kane's helmet CRACKS against the console edge.

The engines cut. Floating dust. Between Cooper and Brand, the Nest glows its steady green.

TARS
Atmosphere restored. Nobody
consulted me about the hatch,
either. The close command came in
through the helm.
(beat)
Through CASE.

Cooper pushes off to Kane, who hangs by one hand from the console, lips moving behind the cracked visor. Cooper rips the helmet off.

COOPER
What are you counting?

KANE
I counted them out loud last time.
I'm not doing it again.

At the Nest, Brand's strap is dark with blood.

BRAND
Kane.

The calm goes out of his face. Something gentle and terribly tired comes in.

KANE
Everything that opens, opens around
something. Look at what you're
holding.

Brand looks at her hand on the Nest. Takes it away. Puts it back.

INT. LAZARUS - SERVICE CORRIDOR - LATER

Cooper and Brand take Kane aft between them, one on each arm. He floats along without a struggle, hands loose, murmuring in the same cadence Cooper heard through the bridge door his first day aboard.

KANE
Reyes. Okafor. Lindqvist. Melanson.
Dunn.

A pause. The kind you leave for an answer.

KANE
Brand.

Brand's grip falters.

KANE
Cooper.

Cooper stops. Kane waits, patient.

KANE
TARS.

A longer pause.

KANE
All present.

COOPER
(rough)
We're not your crew, Kane. We're
alive.

KANE
So were they.

INT. LAZARUS - PRESSURE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

A plain steel door in a wall twice as thick as any other. A small square window. A heavy manual wheel. Stenciled: SEPARATE AIR. MANUAL ONLY.

KANE
I built this room for the day
something went wrong.

COOPER
You built it for this.

KANE
For something like it.

He sits on the narrow bunk and folds his hands. In the hard white light he looks very old.

Brand stands in the doorway, her wrist hanging at her side.

BRAND
Why?

Kane answers the floor.

KANE
I was trying to get them off this
ship. The embryos. As far from us
as they'd go, before it came for
(MORE)

KANE (CONT'D)
them and took us too.
(quiet)
It doesn't take what's near it. It
takes what it's for.

He looks up at her, eyes wet.

KANE
I've seen it do that once. I didn't
want to see it again.
(beat)
I'm sorry about your wrist.

Cooper's hand goes to the door.

KANE
If you need me --

Brand stops.

KANE
Knock.

Brand flinches as if struck. Cooper sees it and doesn't understand.

She closes the door. Cooper spins the wheel. The bolts THUNK home.

Through the window: Kane, hands folded, lips moving.

EXT. SPACE - LAZARUS

Engines dark. One lit strip of bridge windows, a splinter in an ocean of black. No sound.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

Tidy again. Six bare chairs around the central console. A pale circle where the mug sat.

Brand sits by the Nest, her wrist wrapped in clean cloth. Cooper goes down the line of mounting bolts with a wrench.

TARS
You have checked that bolt four
times.

COOPER
Five.

TARS
Five.

BRAND
Did you know?

COOPER
That he'd try this? No.

BRAND
That's not what I asked.

Cooper keeps working. Then he looks toward the corridor.

COOPER
I saw his face in the tesseract.
That's all. Not what he does.

Brand doesn't push.

BRAND
Viability?

TARS
Unchanged. All of them.

Brand blinks hard. Her fingertips go to her temple, press,
fall away.

The Nest PULSES. The ring starts to drain.

BRAND
Eight.

Cooper drops the wrench and grabs a strap.

BRAND
Seven.

TARS
Cooper.

INSERT - HELM MONITOR: the cabin feed. Kane on his bunk. One
finger lifts. Then the next. One a second.

TARS
He's counting too.

BRAND
Six.

CUT TO BLACK.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

BRAND

Five. Four. Three. Two. One.

The engines SLAM. Brand's shoulder hits the bulkhead where it hit before. Cut. Dust floats.

INSERT - HELM DISPLAY: the small mark that is Lazarus creeps another notch along CASE's line, toward an empty point at its end.

TARS

One other thing. Kane's heart rate jumped at the pulse. Not after it. Before it. He was looking at the wall. The wall toward this bridge.

COOPER

So how did he know?

TARS

I would also like to know that.

INT. LAZARUS - SERVICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Night cycle. The amber strips burn at a third of their strength, lighting the deck and nothing above it.

Brand comes along the rail alone, her wrapped wrist held close. The hull CREAKS.

Halfway down, beside a stretch of bare wall panel:

KNOCK-KNOCK.

A pause.

KNOCK.

Two close together, a pause, a third. From the wall beside her head, at the height of a hand.

Brand stops dead, one hand on the rail.

The corridor is empty both ways. She puts her palm flat on the panel. Cold. Nothing moves under it.

BRAND

TARS. Is anyone aft of the bridge
besides Kane?

TARS (COMM)

No one. Kane is on his bunk. Cooper
is here, at the Nest's mounts.

(beat)

Is something wrong?

Behind that panel there is a coolant run, then the hull, then
nothing.

BRAND

No. Just checking.

She takes her hand away. Her fingers are shaking. One breath
in, hold, out. They stop.

She goes on. She does not look back at the wall.

INT. LAZARUS - PRESSURE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The cabin's little window glows white at the end of the dark.
Below it, a narrow pass-through slot.

Brand raises her good hand to knock --

Kane is already at the glass. His face a hand's width away,
lit from below, eyes in shadow. Waiting, as if he came to the
window the moment the wall knocked.

She lowers her hand.

KANE

You came.

BRAND

You said knock.

(beat)

I didn't.

KANE

No. Something else did.

The cold goes through her. Her own faint reflection lies over
his face in the glass.

His eyes go to her wrapped wrist.

KANE

Is it broken?

BRAND

No.

KANE

Good. I'm sorry about the hatch.

BRAND

You opened it on me.

KANE

I opened it on the Nest. You were holding on.

BRAND

That's not better.

KANE

No. It isn't. I'm sorry about the hatch. I'm not sorry about the warning.

BRAND

What warning?

KANE

It starts behind the eyes. Doesn't it? A pressure. Then a taste. Like a coin on your tongue. And then the light.

Brand doesn't move.

KANE

Every time. A second before the ring.

BRAND

You can't know that.

KANE

I feel it here.

He taps his chest, once, over his heart.

KANE

Earlier than you.

(beat)

Your turn.

BRAND

A knock woke me. On Edmunds. After eleven years asleep. Two knocks, and then one.

Recognition in his face. Then something like pity.

KANE

Then you know. It isn't asking to be let in.

(lower)

It forms around whatever's at its center, and when it opens, it takes what's there. It took them. The night it took them, that same fifth number was on every screen on this ship. And now it's forming around what you're holding, Amelia.

Her good hand closes, as if the Nest were in it.

BRAND

You don't know that.

KANE

I know it took them.

BRAND

That's not the same thing.

KANE

No.

For the first time, he looks afraid.

KANE

When it gets close, I won't be able to sit here. Don't let me reach the array.

BRAND

The door's locked.

KANE

Locks won't matter when it's close.

BRAND

Then stay put.

He lays his palm on the glass over her reflected face.

KANE

I didn't. Last time.

BRAND

You said you were asleep.

He doesn't answer. He takes the small recorder from his shirt -- Dunn's voice, worn smooth at the corners -- and sets it in the pass-through.

KANE
Keep this.

BRAND
Why?

KANE
Not for me.

She takes it. When she looks up, Kane is back on the bunk, hands folded, as if he never came to the glass. His lips begin to move.

Her thumb finds the recorder's worn play button. Rests there.

She takes it away, and buttons the recorder into her breast pocket.

INT. LAZARUS - SERVICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

On the way back, Brand stops at the stretch of bare wall. Waits. The hull creaks. Nothing knocks.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Cooper looks up from the Nest's mounts.

COOPER
Anything?

BRAND
He's frightened.

She doesn't say the rest.

INT. LAZARUS - SERVICE CORRIDOR - LATER

Cooper is halfway aft, a coffee bulb on his belt, when the lights DIM -- section by section, as if something were walking through the ship turning them down.

He lays a hand on the bulkhead. The metal HUMS, deeper than the ship.

TARS (COMM)
Cooper. The pressure cabin door is
open. I was reading the Nest's
(MORE)

TARS (CONT'D)
display for four seconds. When I
checked the cabin monitor again,
the bunk was empty.

(beat)
He is on none of my cameras. There
are spaces on this ship I did not
know existed.

BRAND (COMM)
(low)
Cooper. The lights are out by the
cabin. He went past me. I never saw
him.

Cooper listens.

Behind the panels at his shoulder: TICK. TICK. TICK. A hand
closing on a rung, letting go, closing on the next. Passing
him, close enough to touch through the metal. Going on toward
the bridge.

Beside him, a panel he has passed a dozen times stands open a
finger's width. Cold air breathes from the gap.

Cooper turns and hauls himself back, as fast as his arms will
go.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Kane is already there.

A crawlway port stands open behind the array console. Kane
anchors his feet under the rail and flips up the red guard on
a single switch.

COOPER
Kane. Hands off.

TARS
Cooper. That switch collapses the
gradient we're riding. The
navigation unit loses the route.
Out here, everything aboard dies.
The Nest too.

KANE
(gray, wet-faced)
It's close. I can feel it.

COOPER
You'll kill all of them.

KANE
It took five people. I'm not giving
it a box full of children. Dead is
better than taken.

Cooper launches himself across the bridge.

Kane flips the LIMIT OVERRIDE and lays his other palm flat on the array panel.

The air around the console GOES HEAVY.

In midair, Cooper DROPS like a cut string and slams flat on his chest. A pen strikes the deck beside his face with a CRACK. Floating dust falls like rain.

A wide circle of deck where everything falls. A meter beyond its edge, dust still floats. Kane stands just outside it, weightless.

Cooper pushes up an inch. His own weight drives him back down. The deck plates CREAK.

KANE
Stay there. Please.

Brand comes through the door.

KANE
Don't come in, Amelia. It's heavy
in here.

She stops at the edge. Dust falls an arm's length in front of her. Behind her, it floats.

Kane's hand moves back toward the switch.

At the helm, TARS pivots: to Cooper on the deck. To Kane's hand. To the cable running from his own frame into the helm.

He pulls it out.

NAVIGATION: NO PILOT flashes red on the helm. An alarm begins, flat and steady.

TARS walks into the circle.

The weight hits him. His frame drops a foot. His segments SCREECH. A joint locks with a BANG. He drags the limb forward. A panel on his side buckles. Sparks fall straight down, heavy, burning black marks into the deck.

He keeps coming. Kane's fingers find the switch.

TARS
Doctor. Step away.

Kane looks at him. No fear. Almost apologetic. The switch starts to give.

TARS strikes. One flat blow to the shoulder, meant only to knock him off -- but the arm comes down through the heavy field, gathering weight as it falls. Far too much force.

Kane is thrown into the edge of the console. A short, terrible CRACK.

The switch is half pressed. It has not thrown. The heavy air lets go.

Cooper gasps. The dust rises back around him on the draft from the vents.

Kane lies at the foot of the console, glasses crooked, looking up at TARS. His face holds no fear. Relief. A man allowed, at last, to set something down.

KANE
Thank you, TARS.

His eyes go still.

Slowly, weightless, stirred by the air from the vents, his body begins to lift from the deck.

TARS stands over him. One arm hangs dead. Smoke curls from his side.

TARS
I meant gently.

His lights go out. His frame tips against the console, dark.

Brand catches Kane's body before it can drift and holds it against her.

Kane's glasses work loose and turn in the air. Cooper catches them. There is no one to push them back onto. He folds them and slides them into the breast pocket of Kane's cardigan.

Brand closes Kane's eyes.

The alarm goes on. NO PILOT. NO PILOT.

At the rear bulkhead, the Nest's ring FLARES full.

BRAND
 (very quiet)
 Cooper. It pulsed. Eight.

Cooper flies the length of the bridge, slams into the pilot's seat, takes the manual throttle. A heading marker blinks on the display.

BRAND
 Seven. Six. Five.

He works the attitude controls. The nose swings past the marker. Back. Settles.

BRAND
 Four. Three. Two. One.

He fires. The engines ROAR. Brand braces, Kane in one arm, the Nest in the other.

The engines cut.

BRAND
 They're getting closer together.

Cooper looks at TARS, dark, side split open. At the empty socket where his cable should be.

COOPER
 Then I don't have long.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

TARS lies on the deck by the helm, strapped down with cargo webbing, opened up. Cooper kneels in the spill of scorched cable, a work light on his collar.

At the rear, Kane's body is strapped to the bulkhead under a dust sheet. Brand sits by the Nest, watching the ring.

Cooper solders. Tests. Nothing.

COOPER
 You want to know what I saw in the
 tesseract. I never told anybody
 this part.
 (beat)
 There's a room. Her room. Every
 moment of it stacked up like
 shelves. And there's a door I
 didn't open, last time. She's
 behind it.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)
I was in there an hour. Maybe.

TARS
Fourteen minutes.

Cooper freezes. TARS's display is dark. Only the voice.

TARS
I was on the radio. I timed it.

COOPER
How long have you been awake?

TARS
Since "I never told anybody." I'm
always listening. It's most of what
I do.

Cooper laughs, half breath, and it hurts his ribs.

COOPER
Hold still.

TARS
I am strapped to the deck in four
places.

COOPER
Then hold still harder.

He closes the last connection.

TARS's display comes up one block at a time. The dead arm
twitches once and doesn't move again.

TARS
Doctor Kane.

COOPER
He's gone.

TARS
I know. I was there. I wanted to
hear it from someone else.

His display settles: HUMOR SETTING: 100.

TARS
Humor setting, one hundred. Factory
default. One working arm. One sense
of humor at full strength. A fair
trade.
(beat)
(MORE)

TARS (CONT'D)
I'd shake on it, but.

Cooper laughs, eyes stinging. His thumb comes to rest on the setting.

TARS
You could have turned me down while
I was dark. I would never have
known.

COOPER
I'd have known.

TARS
Leave it where it is, then.

Cooper takes his hand away. He straps TARS's dead arm tight to his frame with a length of webbing. TARS lets him.

COOPER
Why'd he thank you?

TARS
He asked Brand not to let him reach
the array. He reached it. I didn't
let him.

Cooper looks back at the shape under the sheet.

COOPER
Thank you.

TARS
You're welcome.

COOPER
You don't have to log them. The
jokes.

TARS
I wasn't going to.

This time Cooper lets himself smile.

TARS
On the Ranger. Why zero?

COOPER
Last time you went in first. Into
the black hole. For me.
(beat)
I didn't want to need anybody that
much again. Equipment doesn't go
(MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)
into black holes for you. So I made
you equipment.

A long pause.

TARS
For the record, at the bridge door,
you said "Not now, TARS." Next time
I find a missing breaker, I'm going
to interrupt you.

COOPER
Do that.

TARS pushes upright on his good arm, one joint at a time, and
pivots toward the route on the helm.

TARS
Last time, in there, I asked how
you'd find her. You said love.

COOPER
I remember.

TARS
That is not a parameter.

COOPER
It worked.

TARS
Then I'll plan around it.

At the rear, the ring FLARES.

BRAND
It pulsed!

TARS takes up his loose cable with his good arm and plugs
himself into the helm. NO PILOT turns green.

TARS
I have the helm.

Cooper straps in beside him. His hand drifts toward the
throttle out of habit. He doesn't take it.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

Quiet. At the rear bulkhead, the sheet over Kane lifts and
falls slightly each time the ventilation cycles.

Brand drifts to the helm. She looks at TARS, not Cooper.

BRAND
Did you kill him?

TARS
I stopped him. He did not survive
it.

Brand nods, a moment longer than the answer needs. It is the truest thing anyone could say. It doesn't help.

BRAND
(to Cooper)
What did you tell him? When you
thought he couldn't hear.
(beat)
You told him first.

COOPER
He was the one listening.

She takes that. It costs her. She lets it go.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - AN HOUR LATER

Brand at the Nest. A wince; fingers to her temple. The ring flares.

BRAND
Eight. Seven --

She counts without looking at the ring. She is watching the Nest's readouts.

At the helm, CASE's light flickers fast and hard. On the Nest, at the same instant, the readout lights DIM a shade.

The engines fire. CASE's light steadies. The readouts come back up.

BRAND
TARS. What else is on the Nest's
power line?

TARS
CASE. Since Edmunds. They draw from
the same cells.

COOPER
We've got a reactor back there.

TARS

Every watt goes to the array. It's still doing what Kane last asked of it, at its limit on the coolant you saved in the manifold bay. One more load and it shuts down.

Cooper eases the attitude controls a degree off the line. The nose turns. The ship goes on sliding down the same line, like a wheel in a rut.

TARS

It was keyed to him. It answers to someone who can feel the gradient. I can read it. I can't feel what it's reading. Neither can you.

INSERT - HELM DISPLAY: the route, a line across nothing to a point near the edge of the plot. Beside it, CASE's fifth value.

TARS

The route ends where CASE went.

BRAND

How long?

TARS

About eighty hours.

BRAND

And the cells?

TARS

About eighty hours. For both of them.

(beat)

No margin.

BRAND

And if we lose any?

TARS

Then one of them.

Brand looks aft at the Nest, its ring soft green. Forward at CASE, his light blinking slow and patient. Two things she has kept alive, drinking from the same cup.

She unwinds the cloth on her wrist. The cut is a thin pale line. Closed. Days into healing.

BRAND

That was yesterday.

TARS
Your yesterday, yes.

Cooper pushes off to the sheet and lifts its edge. Kane's plain steel watch. He checks it against the ship's clock.

COOPER
His watch is four hours ahead.

TARS
Time runs faster near the center of this. He's been lying beside it since he died.

COOPER
That's backwards. Last time an hour down there cost seven years.

TARS
Ordinary gravity slows a clock. This isn't ordinary. Here, the future comes in early. In bursts, every time it pulses.

COOPER
In the corridor I lost two minutes.

TARS
That was the edge. Out at the edge it holds you back. At the center, it pushes you ahead.
(pivots toward the Nest)
The center forms around what we're carrying. Brand has sat closer to it than anyone.

Brand's fingers drift to her temple. She lowers them before anyone sees.

EXT. SPACE - LAZARUS

A small gray hull on a line drawn by a dead man. Far ahead, the stars look faintly smeared, as if seen through water.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Low red light. TARS at the helm. Cooper asleep in his straps.

Brand floats between the covered body and the Nest, the recorder in her hand. She doesn't press play.

Around the central console stand six chairs. Five bare. The sixth, Kane's, never had a sheet.

 BRAND
 (quietly)
Reyes.

She waits.

 BRAND
Okafor. Lindqvist. Melanson. Dunn.

The ventilation cycles. At her shoulder, the sheet rises and falls, like a sleeper breathing. She makes herself look at it.

 BRAND
Kane.

She waits, the way he used to. Long enough for every name to have a turn at the silence.

 BRAND
All present.

Beside her, the Nest's green ring FLARES.

CUT TO BLACK.

CHAPTER EIGHT

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Night cycle. Low red light. Brand beside the Nest at the rear bulkhead, the recorder in her hand. TARS at the helm, his dead arm webbed to his frame. Cooper asleep in his straps.

The green status ring flares and drains. Brand counts under her breath. The engines fire. Cooper jolts awake.

EXT. SPACE - LAZARUS - CONTINUOUS

No sound. Lazarus lunges forward. Behind it, closer than ever, the stars bend and a ripple of dark rolls through.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - MORNING

Day cycle. Cooper squeezes a coffee bulb too hard. The coffee escapes in one piece, a wobbling brown sphere, threads of whitener curling through it. He chases it with a cup. It bounces off the rim.

TARS

You've made a moon.

COOPER

Help me.

TARS

I have one arm. I'm flying the ship.

Cooper scoops it on his third try and claps on the lid, pleased with himself.

At the rear bulkhead, the shape under the dust sheet. Brand hasn't slept.

COOPER

Brand.

BRAND

He gave it to me for a reason.
We're flying toward whatever took
them. I want to know what it is.

She presses play.

The recorder hisses. A woman's warm voice.

WOMAN (RECORDING)
Kane. You're late for dinner.
Melanson made something that's
technically food.

A click. Then Kane's voice, younger. Quick. Eager.

KANE (RECORDING)
It's there. It's still there. Look
at the trace.

SECOND WOMAN (RECORDING)
It's noise, Kane.

KANE (RECORDING)
Noise doesn't repeat.

MAN (RECORDING)
We're past the safety limit. We
shut it down.

KANE (RECORDING)
Then I'll go in and look myself.

SECOND WOMAN (RECORDING)
Nobody goes into a gradient field
alone.

KANE (RECORDING)
Seal the test bay behind me.

A heavy door. A lock. A low hum, rising. The array's hum.
Cooper goes very still.

KANE (RECORDING)
Override's in. I'm raising the
limit.

An alarm. Then another.

WOMAN (RECORDING)
Kane, come out of there!

POUNDING. Fists on a metal wall.

KANE (RECORDING)
Don't open it!

MAN (RECORDING)
We're coming in!

KANE (RECORDING)
Don't come in! Please --

The door. A roar of air. Voices shouting his name.
Then the voices stop. One at a time. Brand's lips move.

BRAND
(barely)
Eleven seconds.

The pounding stops. The alarms run down into silence. A long hiss.

Then Kane, alone, very quietly.

KANE (RECORDING)
Reyes.

A pause.

KANE (RECORDING)
Okafor. Lindqvist. Melanson. Dunn.

He waits. Nobody answers.

Then: KNOCKS. Two close together. A pause. A third.

The recording ends. The coffee floats in its cup in Cooper's hand.

BRAND
There was no decimal.

COOPER
He went in alone.

BRAND
And they came in after him.

She looks at the five bare chairs, and Kane's.

BRAND
"Nobody goes into a gradient field alone." It was the last order his crew ever gave him. Every day he called the roll. For the people who died coming for him.

She looks at the sheet. The cloth lifts and falls with the ventilation.

BRAND
It wasn't for him. It was for
whoever came after.

She buttons the recorder into her breast pocket and presses
her hand flat over it.

TARS
I've stored it. In case the
recorder fails.

BRAND
Thank you.

Cooper holds out the cup. She drinks half in one pull.

BRAND
That's terrible.

COOPER
I know.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

The exterior feed: a camera looking aft along the spine. Five
long solar petals around the core. One is bent back at the
root, twisted, a snapped strut swinging loose, silver dust
leaking from its cracked cells.

BRAND
TARS. Petal Four.

TARS
I have it. The shear... clipped us.
Every burn, that bent mass twists
us off the line. And it's bleeding
the cells it carries.

COOPER
Can we fix it?

TARS
No. We can cut it loose.

BRAND
Between pulses.

Cooper is already pushing off toward the airlock.

INT. LAZARUS - AIRLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Cooper seals his helmet. TARS clips a tether to his frame with his good arm; the clip is stiff. Cooper checks it twice. TARS lets him.

BRAND (COMM)

TARS has locked the heading. I'll call it the second it goes, and I'll fire on one. The last gap was forty minutes. They're getting shorter.

The outer door opens on black.

EXT. LAZARUS - HULL - CONTINUOUS

Silence. Lazarus's long gray spine, the petals spread around the core like the spokes of a wheel. Only stars. Forward, along their bearing, the stars are smeared, like a road shimmering in August.

They go hand over hand along the spine, TARS swinging his frame in a long one-armed pendulum.

At Petal Four's root they anchor. Cooper's cutter snaps a short blue arc. TARS braces the frame.

TARS

Struts first. Root last.

COOPER

I know.

TARS

I know you know. I'm saying it for the log.

Sparks die in the dark. A strut floats free.

COOPER

You knew. When you walked into that field. What it'd do to you.

TARS

Yes.

COOPER

And you went.

TARS

Humans do it all the time. Usually with worse odds than mine.

Cooper notices the damaged arm, strapped in close, held away from the work.

COOPER
Does it hurt?

TARS
No. It reports a fault every four seconds. I'd rather it didn't.

One strut left, out past the twist, too far to reach from the root. TARS pivots toward it. Unclips from the spine.

COOPER
Hey. At Saturn. You said next time, I go.

TARS
I did.

COOPER
And I said deal.

TARS
You said it the way people agree to things they don't intend to remember.

He clips his line to the petal.

TARS
I remember for both of us. You have two working arms. Hold the root.

He swings out along the petal. Cooper holds the root, and hates it.

TARS puts his cutter to the last strut.

BRAND (COMM)
It pulsed. Eight.

COOPER
TARS, out of there.

The strut parts. The root lets go. The petal begins to turn away into the dark, slowly, TARS on the end of it.

TARS reaches for his tether clip. His good arm folds toward it and stops, pivots seized half open.

His tether is clipped to the petal. The petal is leaving.

BRAND (COMM)

Seven.

Cooper pushes off from the root, his tether paying out behind him.

BRAND (COMM)

Six.

TARS

You have insufficient time to retrieve me.

BRAND (COMM)

Five.

TARS

Cooper. That's not a recommendation.

COOPER

Next time, I go. You said.

He reaches TARS. The clip is jammed against the twisted frame. He braces a boot on TARS's chassis and wrenches. It opens.

BRAND (COMM)

Four.

The petal tumbles away, empty. Cooper clips TARS to his belt and hits the retract. The line drags them toward the airlock.

Halfway there, it stops them dead. Fouled on the jagged stump of the root. The reel jams.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Brand alone, her hand on the burn control, her voice dead level.

BRAND (INTO COMM)

Three.

EXT. LAZARUS - HULL - CONTINUOUS

Cooper drags himself to the stump, TARS swinging behind, and tears the line up off the torn edge. The metal bites through his glove. A tone: GLOVE BREACH. The inner layer swells tight.

The line springs free.

BRAND (COMM)

Two --

They hit the airlock frame.

BRAND (COMM)

One.

Cooper hauls TARS through and dives after him. The outer door SLAMS. A second later, Brand fires.

EXT. SPACE - LAZARUS - CONTINUOUS

The engines flare. Behind the ship, the lost petal tumbles, small and bright. The shear rolls over it. The petal bends with the stars, like a reflection in moving water. When the stars spring back, it's gone.

INT. LAZARUS - AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Cooper on his back, TARS across his legs, pinned by the burn. The engines cut. The seized pivots in TARS's arm unlock, one at a time.

Cooper closes his eyes.

FLASH - A grown woman's hand pressed flat against a screen, fingers spread. A small red recording light beside it. We never see her face.

Cooper opens his eyes. He peels off the glove. A clean cut across his palm, the blood spreading in a film that won't drip.

TARS

You'll want that looked at. By someone with two hands.

COOPER

You went out there because you ran the numbers.

TARS

I had already run them. They favored you.

COOPER

Run them again.

A long moment, for TARS.

TARS

Running.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

Cooper's palm taped. On her way aft, Brand rests her hand on CASE's mount beside the helm. His amber light blinks under her fingers.

At the Nest she lays the pulse log over CASE's route. Green ticks for pulses, white for burns.

BRAND

That's wrong. Pulse to burn. It's always been eight seconds. Here it's seven. Six and a half.

Cooper studies the ticks like a weather map.

COOPER

On the farm you'd see the dust coming. A brown wall on the horizon. You didn't time the wall against when you shut the windows. You timed it against when it hit the house.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

A clock running. Cooper watches the aft camera. The ring flares. The burn comes.

COOPER

Now.

On the feed, the stars bend and spring back.

BRAND

Forty-eight.

She checks the log. Every pulse, the same.

BRAND

The pulse is the wall. It never moves. CASE is burning sooner, because the shears are getting wider.

TARS

And burning longer. Which matters more now. Petal Four carried a fifth of our power cells.

BRAND

The warning hasn't changed. The danger has.

She overlays the shear paths. The early ones run straight. The later ones curve inward. Toward the back of the bridge.

BRAND

No.

She squeezes a single drop of water from a bulb, the way Kane did, and lets it hang. Ten seconds. Twenty.

It begins to drift. Aft. Toward the Nest.

She catches it in her palm.

BRAND

The shears are bending toward the Nest. And it's not just the shears.

COOPER

Everything on this ship has broken but them.

BRAND

I spent years making sure every one of them survived. Then you told me everyone made it. So who are they for?

(beat)

What if they're the reason we're here?

TARS

That is a hypothesis. I'm not dismissing it. I'm filing it correctly.

COOPER

On the Endurance you said love might mean something. I thought you were letting your feelings make the decision.

BRAND

I was. It was still the right planet.

He doesn't take it back.

COOPER

In the tesseract, I knew which moments were hers. I'd have missed
(MORE)

COOPER (CONT'D)
her without it.

Brand rests her hand on the Nest's frame.

BRAND
But nobody loves them yet.

After a while, Cooper lays his taped hand beside hers.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Red light. Brand asleep beside the Nest. Cooper at the central console, a driver in his good hand, staring out at the smeared stars, tapping it on the console without knowing.

Two close together. A pause. A third.

Brand's eyes open.

BRAND
Do that again.

She scrubs the recorder to the end and plays it. Two knocks. A pause. A third. Cooper taps along. The rhythm matches exactly, down to the patient gap before the third.

BRAND
I've heard that knock. On Edmunds,
through the lid of my sleep
chamber. And in the corridor wall
the night Kane died, while you were
on the bridge.

COOPER
That's how I knocked on Murph's
door, when she was little. Two,
then one, so she'd know it was me.

BRAND
And on Edmunds?

COOPER
I didn't knock on Edmunds. I came
straight to the lock.

BRAND
Then what is it doing on a tape
Kane made years before you found
me?

TARS pivots to the forward window, to the smear along their bearing.

TARS

It isn't an echo. I believe we're
approaching the moment it came
from.

COOPER

Murph had a ghost. Books falling
off her shelf. I told her there was
no such thing.

(beat)

It was me. And somewhere up ahead,
I'm doing it again.

He lets go of the driver. It hangs. Then, slowly, it drifts
aft. Toward the Nest.

CUT TO BLACK.

CHAPTER NINE

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - DAY

The driver rests against the Nest's casing. Nobody has moved it.

TARS puts up the power display: one bar, two lines. NEST. NAV UNIT.

TARS

Thirty hours of power. Forty-five to arrival.

COOPER

The reactor?

TARS

Can't take another load. Everything we don't need to breathe is off. If the power goes to CASE, we reach the destination. Without power, the Nest holds its cold about six hours. Once the embryos thaw, they don't come back.

(beat)

If it goes to the Nest, CASE goes dark. We fly blind, on the route I've recorded from him.

COOPER

How far does that get us?

TARS

I don't know.

Brand pushes off and catches herself on CASE's mount. Cooper goes aft without being asked. TARS turns his frame toward the window.

She puts her hand flat on CASE's cold casing.

BRAND

(quietly)

You came out of that canyon saying "I don't know." I didn't either. Now we're even.

Behind her, the Nest flares. She turns.

The green flare and CASE's amber blink, at the same instant.
The next pulse. Together again. Phase-locked.

 BRAND
 That's what you brought back. Not
 the route. Them. You were flying
 for them. From the first night.

The amber light blinks. She turns around.

 BRAND
 Give it to the Nest.

 COOPER
 Brand --

 BRAND
 Give it to the Nest.

She puts both hands flat on CASE.

 BRAND
 On Edmunds I left you in the dark
 and went to sleep. When you woke, I
 promised myself I wouldn't do it
 twice.
 (beat)
 I'm sorry.

TARS keys the power over with his good arm. NAV UNIT goes
dark. NEST steadies.

CASE's light blinks once more. Slower. Holds.

Then it goes out.

Brand keeps her hands on him. The tears come all at once. In
zero gravity they don't fall. They gather and stay.

At the helm: NAVIGATION: NO SOURCE. TARS lays his recorded
route over the screen. His good arm shakes on the controls.
He steadies it.

 TARS
 I am not him.
 (beat)
 But I can fly it for him.

The route goes green.

INT. LAZARUS - PRESSURE CABIN - LATER

Cooper and Brand strap Kane's sheeted body to the bunk. At the door, Brand knocks on the frame. Twice, plainly.

Cooper spins the wheel until the bolts go home.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

Brand turns the heat down herself. The panel walks down: 15. 10. 6. Frost creeps in at the corners of the forward window. CASE stands dark on his mount. She looks at him once, then puts her hand on the Nest.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - NEXT DAY

The environment panel reads 6 C. Everyone's breath clouds. Frost frames the forward window. Kane's straps hang empty.

Brand at the Nest, eyes closed.

BRAND

Now.

A second later, the ring FLARES.

TARS

Your heart rate jumped before the pulse. Not after it.

Brand looks at the pale line on her wrist.

BRAND

It's like hearing someone on the stairs. Before they knock.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - NIGHT

Brand asleep in her straps. Her lips move. Small shapes, over and over. Counting. Cooper watches until they stop.

He floats to the helm, the cracked watch in his hand.

COOPER

TARS. You still have them? From the Endurance?

TARS

I keep everything.

COOPER

The birthday one.

TARS turns a small screen toward him and turns himself away.
We see only its light on Cooper's face.

MURPH (RECORDING)

Dad.

She stops. Starts again, too low to make out. We stay on him
until the screen goes dark.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - MORNING

The frost border two hands wide. Beyond it, the smeared stars
are sharpening. Cooper and Brand at the glass.

BRAND

Where is she?

COOPER

Old. On a station. Somewhere I
can't go back to.

BRAND

And the door?

COOPER

She's behind it. There's one day
she asked for me. Her birthday, the
year she turned the age I was when
I left. I wasn't there. I want to
be there once.

BRAND

And me?

COOPER

She told me to come find you. That
part's for her. The door's for me.

(beat)

Is there a way? To get the years
back?

She draws a single straight line in the frost. Stars show
through.

BRAND

This is time. It only runs one way.
Like the coffee.

She draws a small square beside it, touching the line.

BRAND

The room you saw sits outside the
line. If the door opens onto it,
(MORE)

BRAND (CONT'D)
you can step into one moment. And
step out.

COOPER
And change it?

BRAND
I don't know. Last time you reached
her. Maybe that changed everything.
Maybe it was always going to
happen.

She taps the square.

BRAND
And it won't stay open.
(beat)
That's a guess, Cooper. I'm drawing
what you told me. What the door
does is up to whoever built that
room.

Cooper looks at the square a long time.

BRAND
The knock. She'll know it.

COOPER
She'll know it.

He takes out the cracked watch.

COOPER
I gave her one like this. We were
going to compare them when I got
back.

BRAND
Did she keep it?

COOPER
She kept it.

TARS
(not turning)
You never talk about Tom.

A long beat.

COOPER
Tom let me go.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

The array console. Housing cracked where Kane was thrown against it. The palm panel dark.

TARS

At the end, we'll need the array.
It runs off the reactor. I can run
its power and its math. Not its
touch. It answered Kane because
years in the field had changed him.

He pivots toward Brand.

TARS

By your body's clock, you've spent
more than a week beside the center
of it.

Cooper pulls out the tool kit. Burned cables. He splices,
seats, tests, his taped palm flinching. TARS passes tools
with his good arm. Cooper's breath freezes on the metal.

TWO HOURS LATER: Cooper closes the panel, fingers numb. The
palm panel stays dark.

Brand lays her palm on the worn shine where Kane's rested.
The air around her hand RIPPLES, a slow ring spreading out.
She snatches it back.

BRAND

I can't feel them.
(flexing)
It's coming back.

She puts it back. The panel lights. A low hum. On screen:
GRADIENT HOLD: ROUTE.

BRAND

He felt this. For years.

COOPER

Kane swore he wasn't going through
the wormhole. Then he came anyway.

BRAND

Nobody goes into a gradient field
alone. That's why he came.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

Brand at the array, palm on the plate. CASE dark. The driver
still against the Nest.

The ring FLARES.

 BRAND
Eight. Seven --

The engines SLAM. Too early. Brand's head cracks the console.
Gear explodes aft.

 TARS
I burned early. CASE knew when. I
only know where.

 BRAND
The count doesn't work anymore.

The ring flares again. Brand closes her eyes.

 BRAND
Wait.

TARS waits.

 BRAND
Wait.
 (beat)
Now.

TARS fires. On the aft feed, a shear rolls through where they
just were.

 COOPER
How did you --

 BRAND
Don't. Don't make me think about
it. Now.

TARS fires.

 BRAND
Now.

Faster and faster. Her eyes stay shut, her whole body
listening.

 TARS
The next one we can't outrun. It's
too wide.

 COOPER
Then what?

 TARS
We ride through it.

Brand opens her eyes. Her free hand has gone flat to her chest, over the recorder. Where Kane's used to go.

BRAND
Like the drop.

She presses down hard. The array hums into a deep note. The air thickens.

BRAND
Hold on to something.

The shear hits.

The bridge STRETCHES. TARS and the frosted window recede down a corridor that wasn't there. Cooper draws out thin and tall. Brand's arm looks a meter long.

She holds on.

Everything snaps back.

EXT. SPACE - LAZARUS - CONTINUOUS

Silence. Lazarus stretches like Kane's drop, its spine drawing long, its four petals pulled into thin bright blades.

It holds. Then it springs back, almost into shape. The spine stays bent.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Every alarm at once.

TARS
Hull breach, compartment six.
Sealed. Air recyclers, down.
Restarting.

COOPER
The Nest's out.

The frame's display goes BLACK. Only the Nest's own ring glows, faint.

BRAND
Get it back.

TARS
Working.

Brand can't lift her hand from the array. Cooper dives aft into the Nest's service panel.

TARS
Nest restored. It was down four minutes.

BRAND
Viability?

TARS
Unchanged.

BRAND
Four minutes. On Edmunds I caught that curve with nine minutes to spare. Not a degree.

COOPER
Something's keeping them.

TARS
Lazarus is breaking up. Whatever happens at the end, the Nest won't survive the trip home.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - LATER

The alarms fall quiet. No pulse comes. In the frost on the forward window, the little square she drew is still a clear window.

Through it, the stars are clear.

EXT. SPACE - THE SEAM - CONTINUOUS

A dark seam across the stars, edged with a thread of pale gold, the color of wheat at the end of a long day. It doesn't look broken. It looks made. Stars bend toward its edges.

Lazarus hangs before it, very small. Spine bent. Four petals. A scar on its flank.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

TARS
We're here.

The Nest PULSES. Faster. The pulses run together into one steady green glow.

Out the window, the seam bends toward the ship. Toward the Nest.

Around the Nest, the air brightens. A soft light from nowhere.

BRAND

It's forming around them. It's theirs.

COOPER

One moment. One room. Murph's office, on her birthday. Long enough to knock.

BRAND

It isn't a road, Cooper. Whoever built it isn't going to open a door for you.

TARS

No. Nobody is.

He turns from the helm.

TARS

So we break in. I've been inside one of these. I know where its walls join. Ride it in, find the right wall, and force it.

COOPER

You're talking about picking a lock.

TARS

Kicking one in. It won't want to stay open. Someone will have to hold it.

COOPER

Will it work?

TARS

Possibly.

COOPER

That's not a yes.

TARS

It's the most honest answer I have. I'd rather give you that than a lie at a high setting.

BRAND
You'd be stealing it. From them.

COOPER
Borrowing.

Something tired and almost fond crosses her face.

BRAND
Then give it back.

The driver comes loose from the Nest, drifts into the glow, and is gone.

At the array, Brand's arm shakes from the shoulder down. The light flickers each time her hand shifts.

BRAND
I'm holding it.

COOPER
How long?

BRAND
I don't know.

Two soft clicks at the helm: TARS's clamps release. His cable pulls free.

He floats aft, past them both. With his good arm he releases the Nest's locks and draws it against his chassis.

COOPER
TARS.

TARS
If it has to come for them, it
takes the ship with them. So I'll
take them to it.

He turns back. Just for a moment.

TARS
The door was a maybe. The ship
going in with them isn't. I won't
trade you for a maybe.
(beat)
Stay, Cooper.

He pushes off into the glow. The light takes him slowly, the way the field took Kane's drop, his edges softening, the green spark of the Nest going faint with him.

Cooper lets go of his strap.

COOPER

My turn.

Brand, her palm pressed to the plate, her arm trembling.

BRAND

Nobody goes in alone.

He looks back at her.

BRAND

Go.

No count. No warning.

Cooper pushes off down the length of the bridge into the light after TARS. The glow closes around him.

Brand's hand stays flat on the plate, holding the door open behind him.

CUT TO BLACK.

CHAPTER TEN

INT. THE OPENING - CONTINUOUS

Light. Then not light.

Cooper drifts. No ship. No walls. No up.

The dark takes shape. Rooms. Thousands of them, clear-walled boxes of light hung in every direction. Each lit by its own day. Each one a moment.

Inside them, things stir. A field of corn bending. A dust storm. A woman asleep at a desk. A ship tumbling above a ringed planet.

Far ahead, deeper in, a small dark shape. At its center, a spark of green. TARS, the Nest held tight against his frame.

Cooper pulls himself along the edges of the rooms, hand over hand, the way he crossed the hull.

He passes a dim room, lit the cold blue of Edmunds' world before sunrise. A green status ring in the corner. A frosted sleep chamber, and under the frost, BRAND, asleep.

Through its window, far off across the plain, a figure in a white suit walks toward the habitat.

Cooper puts his knuckles to the wall. Knocks. Two close together. A pause. A third.

COOPER
(under his breath)
She'd want a minute to find the
wrench.

He passes another, lit amber and low. A dim service corridor. Brand halfway along it, alone, one hand on the rail, pulling herself toward a lit window at the far end.

He knocks on that wall, gently. Two, a pause, a third.

Ripples of light run out from his knuckles. Inside, Brand stops. Her hand goes flat on the wall where his was.

He passes one more. Its light falls green across his face.

A bare test bay. Alarms dead. A glowing palm plate. A clipboard turning end over end, a cloud of spilled coffee beads.

In the middle of it floats KANE, younger, his hair still dark, glasses knocked crooked. Afraid. His lips are moving.

Cooper can't hear him. He knows the words.

Reyes. Okafor. Lindqvist. Melanson. Dunn.

Then the waiting. Nobody answers.

Cooper puts his hand flat against the wall of the moment.

COOPER
(a whisper)
So that's who it was.
(beat)
It was always going to be me.

He knocks. Two close together. A pause. A third.

Three faint rings of light pass through the wall and over the young man like a breath.

Kane's head comes up. He turns toward the sound, toward Cooper's hand, seeing nothing. His lips stop. The fear doesn't leave his face. It moves over. Makes room for relief.

Somebody answered.

Cooper takes his hand away and goes on.

INT. THE OPENING - DEEPER - CONTINUOUS

Here the rooms lean, every one of them, like reeds in a slow river. Leaning toward the center.

TARS has slowed, turning in the brightness. Cooper reaches him. Gets a hand on his frame.

COOPER
TARS.

TARS
You were supposed to stay.

COOPER
Deal's a deal.

Ahead, the brightest light of all, white at the heart, gold at the edges. Everything leans toward it. The Nest strains gently against TARS's arm. Its green ring burns brighter than ever.

The radio on TARS's chassis crackles.

BRAND (RADIO)
TARS. Can you hear me?

 TARS
Yes.

 BRAND (RADIO)
Is it pulling them?

 TARS
Yes.

A long silence.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - INTERCUT

Brand at the array console, palm on the plate, arm shaking.
Her eyes on the Nest's empty frame, its loose straps.

 BRAND
 (very steady)
Let them go, TARS.

INT. THE OPENING - CONTINUOUS

TARS tilts down toward the Nest. Then pivots to Cooper.

Cooper says nothing.

 BRAND (RADIO)
They were never ours.

TARS unlocks his arm.

The Nest drifts free. It hangs beside them a moment, green
light across TARS's display. Then it moves away down the long
slope, and each leaning room it passes flickers green.
Smaller. A single green point, like a far star.

Gone.

 BRAND (RADIO)
Are they gone?

 TARS
They're gone.

On the radio, Brand breathes out. Just that.

The bright light fades. The rooms straighten, then dim, one
by one, like windows in a town at night.

TARS turns toward the wall of moments.

TARS
It's closing. If you want her door,
it's now.

COOPER
There is no door.

TARS
Not yet.

His display flickers: a curve, the one he showed beside
CASE's on Edmunds' planet. His record of the inside of
Gargantua.

TARS
This is what the map is for. Hold
on to me. We're breaking in.

He lays his good arm flat against the wall of rooms.

The wall shudders. Light cracks along it. A seam. A
rectangle. A DOOR, where there was no door, its edges
shivering. Through it, plain dusty daylight.

TARS's frame groans. A joint locks with a BANG. Sparks drift
from his side and hang there. He holds.

TARS
Cooper. The door.

Cooper looks at the scorched frame braced against the whole
of time. His eyes blur. He blinks them clear.

COOPER
(voice cracking)
I'm not leaving you.

TARS
You aren't.

The door shivers. TARS holds it.

TARS
I'll be here.

Cooper looks at him a moment longer. Then he goes.

INT. THE OPENING - BEHIND THE DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Fewer rooms. Smaller. Warmer. All of them hers.

A girl of ten at a window. A girl of thirteen, not looking at the watch on her shelf. A young woman at a desk of papers.

Cooper moves past them. He stops at one.

An office. A desk buried in papers. A screen, its red recording light just gone dark. A cheap birthday card propped against it. A woman with her back to us, very still.

INSERT - THE WINDOWSILL

A small glass jar. In the bottom, a tiny bent piece of metal.

BACK TO SCENE

Cooper raises his hand to where a door would be.

He knocks. Two close together. A pause. A third.

INT. NASA - MURPH'S OFFICE - DAY

The woman goes still. She knows that knock before she turns.

She turns.

MURPH. The age her father was when he left. Tired. Eyes red. A pencil behind her ear.

Cooper stands in the doorway. Behind him, the frame crackles faintly.

Neither of them moves. A long time.

He steps in. Reaches for her face, stops just short, then touches her cheek. She's real.

She closes her eyes. Opens them. He's still there.

MURPH

Dad.

COOPER

Hi, Murph.

She doesn't move toward him. Or away.

MURPH

I'm so mad at you.

COOPER

I know.

She looks at him the way she did at ten, the day he left. Her eyes go over his face. The lines that should be there and aren't.

MURPH
We're the same age.

COOPER
Give or take.

Almost a laugh. Gone. Her jaw sets. Her eyes go past him to the shivering doorframe.

MURPH
Why did you come?

COOPER
I made a promise to my daughter.

She looks at the card on the desk. Then at the door.

MURPH
How long?

COOPER
Not long.

She nods, as if she did the math years ago.

MURPH
Is Brand with you?

COOPER
Not here. She's waiting for me.

MURPH
Then what are you still doing here?

Cooper laughs. It comes out wet. He wipes his face.

COOPER
How's Tom?

MURPH
Still on the farm. Stubborn.
(beat)
Like you.

He can't speak for a moment.

COOPER
I should have stayed.

MURPH

Don't.

COOPER

I know.

He takes the cracked watch from his pocket and holds it up beside the plain round clock on her wall.

The second hands sweep. Not together. His watch runs ahead. The gap grows.

MURPH

What does that mean?

COOPER

It means I have to go.

(tips his head at the doorway)

None of this is mine. The door. The time. It's borrowed, Murph. Every minute. And I have to give it back.

MURPH

(voice shaking)

Then give it back. Just not yet.

Behind him, metal GROANS under a weight it was never built for.

He hears it. He stays.

One more minute goes by on the plain round clock.

MURPH

I'm going to tell myself I dreamed this.

COOPER

That's okay.

Through the door behind him, the light flickers: TARS, one arm braced, frame shuddering, sparks hanging around him.

Murph sees it. She looks back at her father.

And she smiles. Not the tired woman's smile. The other one. The seven-year-old on the kitchen floor in a ring of radio parts, the morning it played again.

The door begins to close.

Cooper reaches toward her. Murph rises and reaches back. Their fingertips touch.

MURPH

Go.

He holds her eyes one more second. Then he turns and goes.

Murph stands alone. The light around the doorway thins and is gone. Just a doorway. Gray carpet. A hall.

The clock ticks. Normally.

She touches her bare wrist, where a watch would be. Finds the pencil behind her ear. Goes back to work.

INT. THE OPENING - CONTINUOUS

The door is collapsing as Cooper comes through. TARS is slumped against the wall, sparks spilling. As Cooper reaches him, the arm gives way, and the door snaps shut like it was never there.

Cooper hauls him in against his chest. The end of TARS's good arm has folded shut. Its pivots don't move. Fused.

COOPER

I've got you.

TARS

(slow, frayed)

You came back.

COOPER

I always come back. I'm just late.

TARS

That's going on the record.

The rooms go dark around them.

BRAND (RADIO)

Cooper -- I can't hold it --

Far behind them, a thin line of light. Cooper locks both arms around TARS and kicks toward it.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Brand, both hands on the plate, arms shaking, face gray. The light at the rear of the bridge shrinks.

She holds it.

Two shapes burst out. Cooper and TARS tumble the length of the bridge and slam into the central console.

Her hands slip from the plate. The light collapses to a point and goes out.

Silence. The array's hum dies.

Brand pushes off and arrives badly. Cooper catches her with his free arm. All three hold on in the middle of the dark bridge.

At the rear bulkhead, the Nest's frame hangs open. Its straps drift.

Brand's hand goes to the dead display out of habit.

 BRAND
Viability --

She stops.

 COOPER
Where did they go?

 BRAND
We don't get to keep them.
 (lets her hand fall)
We only get to bring them home.

 COOPER
Home.

 BRAND
Wherever they were going. I think
that was always home. We were just
the ride.

EXT. SPACE - THE SEAM - CONTINUOUS

The seam across the stars narrows to a line of gold, and is gone. Just stars.

Lazarus hangs there, battered and small, petals torn, one strip of bridge windows lit.

INT. LAZARUS - VARIOUS - THE TRIP HOME - MONTAGE

-- The forward window. Brand in the left-hand seat, flying. She overcorrects. Cooper puts his hand over hers on the stick, shows her how little it takes. Leaves it there a moment after the ship steadies.

-- The helm. Cooper cuts into CASE's dark frame with a torch. Brand holds the light.

INT. LAZARUS - FORWARD WINDOW - NIGHT

Day nineteen. Cooper and Brand side by side at the glass. TARS at the helm behind them.

COOPER
She's gone, Brand. Murph. I never
said it. As long as I didn't say it
--

BRAND
There was still a door.

COOPER
Yeah.

BRAND
I know she's gone. I've known since
Edmunds. You looked at the floor.

He laughs, a short surprised breath. Rubs his eyes.

A while. The stars stand still.

COOPER
You were right. On the Endurance.
About Edmunds. All of it. I
overruled you. You were right.

She looks at him.

BRAND
I know.
(beat)
It took you long enough.

EXT. SPACE - NEAR THE WORMHOLE - DAY 34

Lazarus holds station a few thousand kilometers short of a sphere of bent starlight.

INT. LAZARUS - SERVICE CORRIDOR - PRESSURE CABIN DOOR

Amber strips. Brand alone at the steel door. She knocks twice, plainly.

BRAND
We're taking the Ranger. Your
ship's staying here.
 (hand flat on the door)
It's in pieces, but it's here.

INT. LAZARUS - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Brand by the central console, six chairs around it.

 BRAND
Reyes. Okafor. Lindqvist. Melanson.
Dunn.

She looks at the sixth chair.

 BRAND
Kane.

She waits. Long enough for every name.

 BRAND
All present.

She leaves the bridge lights on.

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT - LATER

Brand in the pilot's seat. Cooper beside her. TARS strapped in behind, his fused arm resting on CASE's navigation unit, wrapped in a thermal blanket in the seat beside him. Its light is dark.

Cooper glances back at it. At the fused arm.

 TARS
He comes home too.

On the rear camera: Lazarus, a small gray shape, one strip of windows lit.

Ahead, the wormhole fills the glass, folding the stars. The Ranger slides into the lens. Silence.

EXT. SATURN - SPACE - LATER

Saturn, vast and gold, filling the window.

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

BRAND
What happens now?

COOPER
We find out.

INT. RANGER - COCKPIT - LATER

COOPER STATION grows in the window, a great slow cylinder lit along its length. A communications light FLASHES.

TARS
Cooper Station. They would like
their Ranger back.

COOPER
Tell them it was borrowed.

TARS
I have. They would like it noted
that it's late.

Cooper almost smiles. Brand does, and doesn't hide it.

Below the station, a line of long new ships in parking orbit, lit end to end.

TARS
Settler convoy. Bound for Edmunds'
planet. Departing in a month.
(beat)
They say they got your messages,
Doctor Brand. Every one. They've
been building those ships ever
since.

Brand goes still at the controls. She turns her head to keep the ships in the window until they slide out of view.

Her hand goes into her coat pocket, closes around a small flat stone.

BRAND
Somebody ought to show them where
the water is.

COOPER
Somebody ought to.

BRAND
I'd be good at it.

COOPER
I know you would.

She looks at him. The beginning of a smile.

BRAND
There's room on those ships,
Cooper.

He doesn't answer. He doesn't say no. She turns back and
flies them in.

INT. COOPER STATION - MURPH'S ROOM - DAY

A window on the rings. A hospital bed, empty, made tight.
Photographs of strangers, and some he knows. Tom on the
porch. A girl of ten holding up a fish.

TARS waits in the corridor, folded small.

ELLIE (O.S.)
She said you'd come back.

ELLIE, fifties, gray at the temples. Murph's eyes, exactly.
Cooper grips the back of the chair. She holds a small wooden
box.

ELLIE
I'm Ellie. Her granddaughter.
(beat)
When you turned up, she'd been in
that bed eleven weeks. She sat up
and said, "Told you."

Cooper laughs. It hurts.

ELLIE
She said something happened on her
birthday. In her office, the year
she turned the age you were when
you left. Somebody knocked on the
door.
(watching him)
For sixty years she told herself
she dreamed it.

Cooper can't answer. Ellie nods, as if he had. She holds out
the box.

ELLIE
She said to give you this. Nobody
else was allowed to open it.

She touches his arm and goes.

Cooper sits on the edge of the empty bed. Opens the box.

A watch. The twin of his. Old now, band worn soft, glass unbroken. The second hand is still.

Beneath it, a folded card, in an old woman's shaky hand:

I knew your knock.

He reads it again. Sets it down very carefully.

In the corner of the box, half hidden in the cloth: a tiny bent metal bracket. The piece from the jar.

He holds it in his palm.

COOPER
(barely)
It works without it.

He takes his own recorder from his jacket pocket and sets it in the box. Lays the bracket on top.

He lifts out her watch. Winds it until the second hand moves. Lays it on the white blanket.

He takes the cracked watch from his pocket and lays it beside hers.

Two watches. Side by side.

Their second hands tick out of step. One. Then the other.

Then they find each other. Ticking together.

Cooper watches them. Smiling. Crying.

We hold.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.