

An Oblivion Prolonged

by

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EXT. MARS SPACE STATION - SPACE

We see a faintly lit space station over the desolate surface of Mars. The only movement is the rotation of the station's centrifuge. Round and round, never stopping; providing artificial gravity to its inhabitants.

TROXLER (PRE-LAP)

After a while you get used to it.

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

This is a practical square room with tile carpeting, plain walls, and an airtight hatch for an entrance. A small work desk sits in one corner. Plants and pictures adorn the area.

DR. ANDERSON (29), two-piece suit, slight facial stubble, nods as he jots a note down on his pad. He looks up and leans back in his chair.

DR. ANDERSON

Perhaps if you opened your eyes to new perspectives. Come at things with a blank slate.

DAVID TROXLER (40), clean-shaven, buzz cut, sits on a comfortable black couch in front of a bland white wall. His blue jumpsuit is equally bland, with only the embroidered name patch "TROXLER" giving it any individuality.

TROXLER

Oh, no, no, no. I like the routine. I find comfort in it.

DR. ANDERSON

(long beat)

Your work keeps you a lot busier than Ellen. That can be difficult for some couples.

TROXLER

Mmm. The Kepler problem.

DR. ANDERSON

I'm sorry?

TROXLER

Just a lame joke.

Dr. Anderson shifts in his chair uncomfortably.

DR. ANDERSON

Do you? Find it difficult?

TROXLER

We each have our eccentricities.

A smirk briefly plays on Troxler's lips, then fades.

TROXLER (CONT'D)

But we manage.

(beat)

I gather that you've spoken with my wife - and she wishes to return home.

Dr. Anderson looks down, then admits...

DR. ANDERSON

Perceptive. The review board doesn't even allow civilians to stay past three years. You and Ellen are going on five.

TROXLER

(with a light laugh)

Starting to lose it, is she?

Dr. Anderson returns the laugh.

DR. ANDERSON

No, I'd say she's relatively stable.

The conversation has gotten more friendly.

TROXLER

That's good to hear.

(jokingly)

I wouldn't want her to end up like Perkins.

DR. ANDERSON

Perkins is just fine. You should go see him.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT [VIDEO]

PERKINS (45), runs frantically down the space station hallway. We watch him from a security camera's POV with no sound.

PERKINS (O.S.)

I've had nightmares, of course, but I've never done anything like this.

Dressed only in pajama bottoms he dead ends to a metal hatch and begins banging on the operation panel. He turns and flails his arms to defend against nothing.

We pull back to reveal...

INT. SICK BAY ROOM - NIGHT

JAKE MARTELL (27), tall and fit, stands, watching the video footage on a tablet. He's dressed in a green jumpsuit.

The room is clean and minimalist with bed and two chairs. Perkins, in full pajamas, sits on the edge of the bed.

Jake hands the tablet to Perkins, who looks weary and broken down.

PERKINS (CONT'D)

It's strange watching it all outside myself. Through different eyes.

Perkins takes one last look at the tablet, then sets it aside.

PERKINS (CONT'D)

Guess I won't be joining you out there tonight, Jake.

JAKE

Trox and I can handle it.

PERKINS

I bet it turns out to be latchup with that five series.

JAKE

I bet you're right.

DR. WHITAKER (30) passes by the open doorway and glances in without breaking stride.

DR. WHITAKER

Hey, Jake.

JAKE

Hey ya, Doc.

Perkins grabs Jake by the forearm.

PERKINS

That's it for me, you know. Once I get back. That's it.

Jake uses his free hand to sympathetically return the grasp.

JAKE

I know.

INT. TROXLER'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

This dining room/kitchen area is basic white, but with pale red, blue and yellow accents to give it some character.