ORVANA

Pilot: "Orth, Not Earth"

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COLD OPEN

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Planet Earth hangs in the black.

INT. STARSHIP - ATRIUM BAR - NIGHT

A vast atrium at the heart of the starship. Shops, bars, a waterfall flowing upward. Aliens, robots, cyborgs.

At the observation glass: JACK MERCER (early 30s), a therapist who has turned one broken heart into a whole personality. His cousin EMMA PARKER (early 30s), a journalist powered by coffee and suspicion. PETE SKY (early 30s), a magician in a baseball cap, worn backwards. Always. The most decent man in any room.

Earth drifts away behind them.

JACK
Farewell, Earth. Goodbye, ex-fiancée, Hello Orvana, hello cosplay wearing alien species with multiple holes and no morals.

EMMA
Sorry she cheated on you Jack.

Jack's smile holds. Just.

JACK
Relationships are complicated. That's why I'm in therapy.

PETE
You're a therapist.

JACK
I’m a great multitasker. I once flew a hover plane while revising for my psychology exams.

PETE
Two of the passengers were killed in that crash.

JACK
But I got a B plus.

A service robot approaches Pete with a drink. It stumbles and throws the drink over him.

PETE
Sorry. So sorry, my fault.

He reaches behind the robot's audio sensor and produces a coin. A tiny "ta-da" with his hands. He gives the robot the coin. The robot stares at the coin. Then at Pete. With awe.

It feels behind its own audio sensor. Nothing there. It rolls away, looking back twice.

JACK
Anyway. I'm not here for me. I'm here for you, Em. We're going to find David.

Emma holds up her phone. A selfie: DAVID PARKER (late 20s, handsome, Black), grinning in a TOREX ENTERTAINMENT lanyard. Caption: "First day, the coffee rocks. Love you xoxo."

EMMA
Six weeks. Not one message from my husband. David once stopped sex because his phone hit eight percent. He spent five minutes looking for a charger. He likes to communicate, Jack!

JACK
I don’t mean to be rude, but wow you must be terrible in bed.

Emma gives him a very filthy look.
(beat)

Sorry. Sometimes my thoughts escape me. Like a testicle escaping a speedo.
(beat)
Don’t worry. We'll find him. And when we do, I'm buying him a charger with a very long cord.

Emma grips her drink. Jack takes it out of her hand.

JACK (CONT’D)
(beat)
In for four, out for four, don't bite anyone.

Emma takes a deep breath.

Pete's phone BUZZES. Lock screen: CLAIRE (30), pale, in a hospital gown, thumbs up beside an IV stand she's decorated with tinsel. Banner: "CLAIRE FUND: 0 of 1,000,000."

PETE
She decorated the IV.

EMMA
Ten times your salary for three years, and she gets her treatment. You're a hero.

PETE
I'm a magician. On Earth they pay me in kisses and promises. The kisses are from a eighty year old called Gertrude. The Promises include her removing her teeth.

JACK
So Pete is crossing the galaxy to save the love of his life, and I'm crossing it to get laid by a species who thinks two minutes is a marathon. We're basically the same.

SHIP'S COMPUTER (V.O.)
Attention, passengers. Hyperdrive is imminent. Please fasten your twenty-point safety harnesses.

The other passengers peel away to their seats. The humans remain at the glass.

PETE
How imminent is imminent?

JACK
Relax, my holo-watch will warn us.

Jack checks his holo-watch. A holographic message appears: "SHIP'S AI NOTIFICATIONS SILENCED. I'M HAVING A MOMENT."

SHIP'S COMPUTER (V.O.)
Hyperdrive engagement in five.

PETE
Five what?

SHIP'S COMPUTER (V.O.)
Four.

Oh no. They run. The seats are fifty feet away. Pete gets there first, then holds the seatbelt for an alien passenger. Emma dives and lands upside down. Jack grabs a headrest --

The stars stretch into beams. The ship punches into black. Jack and Pete are ripped out of the frame, sent hurtling towards the rear observation window. They both get pinned, backs against the window looking forward. Emma's handbag bursts open. Hairbrush, lipstick, phone, wallet -- everything flies away.

Emma's head is on the seat, legs over the back. Beside her, an ELDERLY LIZARD WOMAN, ancient and scaly, calmly knits.

ELDERLY LIZARD WOMAN
First time?

EMMA
Is it obvious?

ELDERLY LIZARD WOMAN
Your head is on the floor, my dear.

At the rear glass, Jack and Pete are pinned flat, facing forward. Jack VOMITS. The G-force flattens it right back across both his own face and Pete’s.

PETE
(Shouting)
Oh God Jack, That’s the most disgusting thing that’s happened to me since I accidentally swiped right on my mom’s Tinder page.

JACK
I've either eaten soup or become soup.
(beat)
Maybe now’s not the time, but I also swiped right on your mom’s Tinder page. Lovely woman, very flexible!

PETE
(Very angry)
You sick bastard!

JACK
We went out twice, she said I reminded her of you!

PETE
That’s disgusting!

JACK
She said that too, but not until afterwards.

PETE
Oh nasty! Okay you want some truth! Remember when I lost your dog in the woods? I didn’t. I backed over her on my driveway and didn’t tell you.

JACK
Oh my little Tiddles....

The ship STOPS. Jack and Pete slide to the floor. Phone. Wallet. Hairbrush. Lipstick. They hit him in the head. The phone lands last, face-up on his chest. David's selfie. "Love you xoxo."

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLE: ORVANA - "ORTH, NOT EARTH."

ACT ONE

INT. STARSHIP - OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

The starship BURSTS through green cloud. Jack, Emma and Pete press against the glass.

THEIR VIEW: HELLION CITY. Skyscrapers miles high, floating free. Hover trains. Mountain-sized holographic ads. Pink ocean. Rainbow beaches. Green sky. Three moons.

JACK
Oh, wow. This place is cooler than a penguin’s balls in a snow storm.
(beat)
Are those buildings moving around?

A five-hundred-foot HOLOGRAM WOMAN steps between two towers.

HOLOGRAM
Greetings. Welcome to Hellion City. User: Jack Mercer identified.

JACK
Wait. How does it know it's me? I don’t remember dating it.

HOLOGRAM
Based on your search history, are you still interested in dating amphibious Zelions wearing vintage Earth cheerleading clothes?

Every passenger on the deck turns to look at Jack.

JACK
Mute! How do you mute the sky?

EMMA
Amphibious?

JACK
I'm alien-curious. And fish-curious. Don't judge. How do I turn her off? Is the entire city hearing this?

HOLOGRAM
Shall I display suitable matches?

JACK
No, no, no, no.

A five hundred foot FISH-HEADED CHEERLEADER hologram replaces her, pom-poms going.

FISH CHEERLEADER
Jack! Jack! your request to do it underwater in leather using a whip is my speciality, Jack!

Jack considers her fairly.

EMMA
Underwater with a whip?

JACK
Hey, I heard about you dressing up as Princess Leia!and Nothing to do with Halloween.
(Emma's goes red with embarrassment)

FISH CHEERLEADER
Call me?

JACK
Not right now. Ping me after customs.

HOLOGRAM
User Pete Sky identified. Based on your search, "how to tell my girlfriend I need space," we've made you an Orvana Singles profile.

PETE
I was going TO space! It was literal!

EMMA
(staring up)
Wait.
(to the sky)
Where is David Parker?

The hologram flickers. Her smile drops. Her face goes dead.

HOLOGRAM
User David Parker.
(beat)
Not identified.
(instantly bright again)
Why not enjoy new offerings from Torex Entertainment? Torex. We're watching, so you don't have to.

The TOREX LOGO, a gold eye in a triangle, fills the sky.

EMMA
Oh my God, the sky just lied to me.

EXT. ARRIVALS RAMP - DAY

Pete, Emma, and Jack in line, in that order.

A beautiful bright-orange female alien holds a tray of wrapped MEGA-BLISS CANDY, every wrapper stamped with the gold eye. A very deep Scottish baritone.

CANDY VENDOR
Free candy, sir? Compliments of Torex.

JACK
Oh yes. Thanks, orange alien babe.

Jack unwraps a piece and eats it.

EMMA
What are you doing, Jack? I think they're mind-altering.

JACK
(chewing, pupils grow huge)

INT. HELLION SPACEPORT - CUSTOMS HALL - DAY

A thousand species in line.

A six-armed INSECTOID PORTER wheels up with their luggage.

PORTER
Your luggage. That'll be five hundred Orvo coins, please.

EMMA
Sorry. We don't have any currency yet.

PORTER
No money, no luggage. Sorry, dude.

EMMA
Emma Parker, journalist. I'm writing a piece on arrival scams called "Six Arms, No Ethics." How do you spell your name?

PORTER
(He speaks an alien nonsense sentence)
Bach zzzaamm fringzzz zzepherrr chrushtdddffeerr.

EMMA
Goddamn aliens. Just give us our luggage or I'll string you up upside down by your bollocks pal.

The porter does not love that. The candy kicks in, Jack starts to dance. Slow, strange, blissful. Behind him, Emma wrestles the porter to the floor. Pete tries to separate them and goes down too. Multiple aliens and robots pile on.

Jack slow-dances with LOOPA LOO (lilac fur, beautiful, huge glossy eyes, twitching antennae). Equally high.

In the background, the brawl grows larger. More aliens pile on. Jack is oblivious.

Jack slumps against a pillar, hugging Loopa like a teddy bear, licking her cheek several times. As he licks her, her antennae grow and light up, then a miniature fireworks display from both antennae. She blinks awake, looks up at her antennae.

LOOPA
Oh no, impregnated! Statistically, this is the worst decision either of us has ever made. At least since my Tinder profile went out to aliens who explode while mating.

She boops his nose. A tiny hologram blinks above his head: SECTOR 23, PENTHOUSE 240777.

LOOPA (CONT'D)
Address registered. Congratulations, my name is professor Loopa Loo and I'm having your baby. We should talk when our brains return.

JACK
(Smiling, blissful)
Oh Goddamn lovely aliens.

Loopa kisses him on the head, kindly, and wanders off. At DESK 4: VRAX (ageless, Noxil: gray skin, four eyes, huge bat ears, two antennae) looks up from a clipboard.

VRAX
Species and purpose.

EMMA
Human. Journalist. Cultural exchange program.

VRAX
From the planet Orth?

EMMA
Earth.

All four eyes stop blinking.

VRAX
The exchange program is with Orth. Lovely planet. Very good at forms. You will have to go back.

EMMA
I flew hundreds of light-years to find my husband, and you're sending me home over a vowel? I'll shove that vowel so far up your butt buddy, you'll be crapping scrabble tiles for weeks.

VRAX
Are you related to my mother in law?

She SLAPS both hands onto the desk. Pete steps forward, straightening his backwards cap.

PETE
Please forgive her behaviour. She forgot to pack all of her sexy toys. Pete Sky. Cultural exchange entertainer.

Vrax's antennae flatten. Unimpressed.

PETE (CONT'D)
Can I show you something? It helps with nerves. Look into my eyes.

Vrax looks into Pete's eyes and stops blinking. Pete holds his stage stare. A pro never looks away first.

Five seconds. Ten. Romantic music swell from nowhere. Eighteen seconds. A BELL. The hall stands and APPLAUDS.

VRAX
(all four eyes welling up)
I accept your proposal. I am deeply moved. Now let's pick the date.

PETE
Say what?

VRAX
Eighteen seconds of eye contact. On my planet, Noxilia, that is a formal marriage proposal. I am obliged to say yes.
(beat)
Also, I want to.

PETE
Oh no, you look just like my ex, she said exactly the same thing. No offense, but I’m already in love.

VRAX
Inflatable or human?

The hall GASPS. Vrax's antennae droop. He heaves a huge binder onto the desk. Jack rests his chin on Pete's shoulder.

JACK
Classic Pete.

VRAX
You must complete the annulment forms. Four thousand pages. Most couples finish it before the wedding. Some after the funeral.

Pete lifts the binder. His knees buckle.

BACK AT DESK 4: Emma drags over a glassy-eyed, grinning Jack. He keeps his eyes firmly on the floor.

VRAX (CONT’D)
You are all flagged as an administrative error. I will conduct a field evaluation at your residence tonight. Prove your value to Orvanian society, or you leave on tomorrow's four o'clock shuttle.

He winks at Pete with two eyes. Then the other two. His antennae form a heart shape.

VRAX (CONT'D)
Wear something nice, you sexy beast.

ACT TWO

INT. RESIDENTIAL TOWER - CORRIDOR - DAY

Jack, Pete and Emma stand outside PENTHOUSE 240777. The annulment binder has its own luggage cart.

The door slides open. KRIX (30s, six-foot-five, lavender lizard skin, horns, claws, muscle) fills the doorway in an apron that reads KRIX FIX. The humans freeze.

KRIX
Welcome, my homies! Real-life humans!
(looking at Pete)
Oh, Harry Potter is real! I love your documentaries, one question. Why didn't anyone just shoot Voldemort?
(Looking at Emma)
Oh you're from that adult entertainment website, you played a teacher who actually taught algebra, a very disappointing episode!
(Looking at Jack)
And you're the bachelor dude who gave eight women crabs.

JACK
That wasn't me.

KRIX
That's what you said in the reunion!

EMMA
Are you, like --
(beat)
-- safe?

KRIX
Ha ha ha. Oh, I love the human sense of fun. Show me your hands.

He gently takes Emma's hands in his razor claws.

KRIX (CONT'D)
Ouch. Your cuticles are a state. You must come to my nail bar nearby. It's called Krix Fix.
(MORE)

KRIX (CONT'D)
I'll do a gel overlay that'll change your life.

JACK
(Looking at Krix)
I'm going to wake up tomorrow morning and you're going to be lying beside me, rubbing me all over with with baby oil, and calling me, "my little human toy," aren't you? I beg you, please no.

Emma smiles. They enter.

INT. PENTHOUSE 240777 - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arched windows overlooking Hellion. A bubble chandelier hangs overhead. By the window, on a plinth slightly too small for it: a huge JEWELED VASE.

PIP, an impossibly cute tiny fluffy Mivvie that's mostly eyes, leaps onto Jack's shoulder.

KRIX
This is Pip. Mivvies are allergic to bullshit. Say a lie out loud anywhere near him, he sneezes.

JACK
Well, we don't lie much.

Pip sneezes purple goo into Jack's face. He looks extremely annoyed. Shakes head.
Goddamn aliens.

KRIX
(to the humans)
I love humans! I watched all two thousand seasons of Sexy Hollywood Bachelor Island Love Cheats.

REX, a four-foot service droid on wheels, two arms, digital face with permanently annoyed eyes, rolls in.

REX
Great. More disgusting life forms for me to slave over. If you don't say please and thank you, I ain't doing shit.

KRIX
Go easy. His wife left him.

REX
For a TOASTER! A TWO-SLICE TOASTER! Not even a four-slice. Cheap bitch.

He rolls toward the kitchen and glares at a gleaming toaster on the counter.

KIRRA VARSCH (40s, Nivarian, green skin, very long neck, huge eyes, immaculate suit) enters reading a holographic case file.

KIRRA
Kirra Varsch. Immigration lawyer. I will pretend I have a lower IQ so you morons can understand me.

JACK
An absolute pleasure, Kirra. You look amazing. Apart from the giant green head, the eyes, the neck and the weird body bits.

KIRRA
Stop with the flirting. You are visually quite tedious. I am Nivarian, a single-sex species. And I have a girlfriend.

JACK
So do you have, like, two different sets of sexual bits?

KIRRA
Yes. I am capable of both contributing and receiving genetic material.

REX (O.S.)
She can literally go fuck herself.

EMMA
We're being deported tomorrow. WE CANNOT BE DEPORTED! My husband works at Torex Entertainment. He's vanished. The neural grid that runs the hologram says "not identified."

Kirra looks up from her file for the first time.

KIRRA
So your husband vanished. Was he happy? Oh wait he’s married. Never mind. Have you tried shaking a bag of treats?

EMMA
He’s a human, not a dog.

KIRRA
So he can’t lick his own balls?

JACK
Wait, wait, you can do that?

KIRRA
How else do you clean them?

EMMA
(Look of sheer horror)
WHAT?

JACK
(Huge smile)
Mucho respect.

EMMA
Can the neural grid erase someone?
Or can Torex?

The room goes still. Krix and Kirra exchange a look. Then everyone carries on a little too normally.

KIRRA
It says Vrax the Noxil is your evaluator and your fiancé?

PETE
Yep this is going great.

KIRRA
A Noxil engagement could suspend deportation dependent upon satisfying the courtship requirement.

PETE
How bad is the courtship requirement?

KIRRA
Imagine your worst sexual experience, now imagine your parents watching, then holding up score cards out of ten.

PETE
WOW! Sounds as bad as chopping off my own wedding tackle?

KIRRA
Oh no, don't do that. That's reserved for the honeymoon.

PETE
WHAT!!

KIRRA
Joke Pete.

She opens a fresh case file: HUMAN CONTRIBUTION.

KIRRA (CONT'D)
You might be able to convince the High Council to grant residency if you can contribute to society. What does humanity have?

JACK
The snooze button.

KIRRA
What is that?

JACK
It's a machine that wakes us up, then we added a button to tell it to piss off.

KIRRA
Moron status confirmed. Anything else?

JACK
Birthday cake. We set fire to it. Spit all over it and share it around.

The front door slides open. ZELLA (appears 30s, light-blue skin, medical scrubs, two tubes on either side of her head, each with its own independent mouth).

ZELLA
Thirty-hour shift. Oh. The humans. Zella. Chief resident, emergency medicine.
(walking closer, thrilled)
I've had a grant to study humans for forty years.
(Looking at Jack)

JACK
Wow. I'm Jack. You’re prettier than a holographic supermodel who forgot to turn her clothes on.

ZELLA
Your heart rate just rose twenty beats per minute. And you have bowel discomfort.

JACK
The last one's unrelated. Would you like dinner with me tonight?

Zella looks down.

ZELLA
Yes, but I should warn you the female of my species eats its mates.

JACK
That would be a raincheck then.

ZELLA'S LEFT MOUTH
(sweet, calm, clipped)
Oh, he seems nice.

ZELLA'S RIGHT MOUTH
(thick brash New York accent)
He’s as gullible as a nun at a swinger party sweet heart.

INT. PENTHOUSE 240777 - KITCHEN - LATER

Jack, unpacking, finds Rex alone. Staring at the toaster.

JACK
What did the toaster have that you didn't?

REX
Three settings, a crumb tray and an IQ close to yours, plus other insults I can’t be bothered to muster, et cetera, et cetera.

Jack waits. Leans against the counter. Says nothing. Rex's annoyed eyes flicker.

REX (CONT'D)
She said the toaster is warm inside. I'm a cooling unit. I run cold. She said hugging me was like hugging a fridge.

JACK
So you think you're unlovable by design.

Rex says nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)
You didn't choose how you were built, Rex. You only choose who you let close. And you're still here, making breakfast for a big lizard who calls you "homie." That's not a cold machine.

Rex's eyes change. Just for a second.

REX
Well, yeah, I don't want the prick to starve.
(beat)
Hey, If you tell anyone about this, I'll put your toothbrush inside Pip, the dirty end.

JACK
(moving closer)
Do you think Zella likes me? It's just that she keeps looking at my butt.

REX
Nope, she's just lip-reading.

A slow, huge smile spreads across Rex's digital face.

VERA (V.O.)
Incoming transmission for Pete Sky. Origin: Earth.

INT. PENTHOUSE 240777 - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A life-size hologram of Claire appears. Pale. Tired. Wrapped in a blanket.

CLAIRE
Pete! You made it! Is it crazy weird?

PETE
Nope. Totally normal. Like a priest with a safe word.

Pip has a sneezing fit, purple goo everywhere. Pete pretends not to notice.

PETE (CONT'D)
How are you feeling?

CLAIRE
Tired. But the lab can start my gene therapy. They need the first payment by the eighth.

PETE
The eighth. Great. Yes, of course. Absolutely. No problem.

VERA (V.O.)
Congratulations, Pete! Your singles profile is live. You have three hundred and twelve matches.

Glowing profiles cascade across the room. Tentacles. Mandibles. A sentient cloud. They all wink at Claire.

CLAIRE
Pete?

A second hologram flickers on beside him. Vrax. Beaming.

VRAX
Hello, you gorgeous creature. Reconsider the annulment. I'm falling for you, and I can do very interesting things with my antennae.

CLAIRE
Who is that?

PETE
My customs officer.

VRAX
Fiancé.

CLAIRE
Fiancé?

PETE
I can explain --

The hologram DIES.

Vrax's hologram solidifies. He TELEPORTS into the room.

VRAX
Commencing field evaluation. Human female. You're up.

Kirra, Krix and Zella watch from the sofa. Pip sits between them, stuffing popcorn into his face and missing.

EMMA
I offer journalism. Investigative truth. I hold institutions to account. And I can knit a scarf in the shape of a hedgehog.

VRAX
Unnecessary. Our neural grid records registered citizens' thoughts for the High Council.

EMMA
Who audits it?

Vrax's antennae rotate.

VRAX
Audits it?

EMMA
Who decides which thoughts get kept? When someone goes missing, who says, dude where’s my husband? What does it mean when your grid says "not identified"?

His antennae spiral around each other and tie themselves in a knot. On his clipboard, for one frame: THE GOLD EYE TRIANGLE. QUERY LOGGED. Emma sees it. Says nothing.

VRAX
Interesting potential value. Next.

Jack steps forward, eyes on the floor.

JACK
Officer Vrax, sir, I offer the noble art of psychotherapy.

Vrax LAUGHS. A high, wrong shriek. All four eyes jet tears directly into Jack's face. Jack stands there, deeply annoyed, letting the water run off him. He shakes his head.

JACK (CONT'D)
Goddamn aliens.

VRAX
We don't process trauma on Orvana. We vaporize the memory center of the brain. Clean. Efficient.

ZELLA
Jack's profession is legitimate. We erase the memory, but the body remembers. I've got patients terrified of things they can't remember happening. One patient woke up with a second penis with a note stapled to his genitals, stating, “You’re welcome.”

JACK
Very helpful, Thank you, Zella. Vrax, tell me about your father. Did he approve of you?

The antennae droop.

VRAX
We do not discuss emotional affirmation on Noxilia.

JACK
So nobody ever said "well done," and now eighteen seconds of eye contact feels like true love.

VRAX
That was highly manipulative and deeply unpleasant. Like a prostate exam where the doctor puts both hands on your shoulders.

JACK
I know what you mean. I once had a colonoscopy by a doctor who kept shouting “Marco!”
(beat)
How do you feel?

VRAX
Like you touched me somewhere I didn’t know I had.

JACK
Steady on now fella.

On the sofa, Krix SOBS. Pip sobs into his popcorn.

VRAX
Potential value, I think. Fiancé. You're up.

PETE
I'm a magician. I do magic.

VRAX
What is magic?

PETE
Magic is about knowingly suspending belief.

VRAX
Suspending belief?

PETE
I once believed a stripper who said I was different from the other guys. I paid for an extra dance to find out why.
(beat)
Okay, a better example, social friction.

VRAX
Is that what your species calls an orgy?

PETE
Oh wow no. Krix, ask me how I am.

KRIX
How are you, homie?

PETE
Fine, thanks.

Pip SNEEZES into the popcorn. Krix carefully moves the bowl away.

VRAX
But are you fine?

PETE
No. My girlfriend thinks I'm cheating, I'm engaged to you, I'm being deported, and I may have gently urinated into my underwear.

VRAX
Then you lied.

PETE
Well I smell a little funky, but no, I was being polite. Krix didn’t want to know my medical background.

KRIX
I genuinely didn't give a shit.

PETE
Like when someone says, "Let's get together sometime." Means, “I want to murder you and leave your corpse to rot in the sun.”

KRIX
Vrax, we should get together sometime.

VRAX
I'd like that.

Krix turns to Pete. HIGH-FIVE.

KRIX
I'm never seeing that piece of shit again!

VRAX
Rude!

PETE
A practical example. Watch.

Pete shows an empty palm. Closes his fist. Opens it: a coin. He reaches behind Vrax's left antenna and produces a second coin. A tiny "ta-da." Krix drops the popcorn.

VRAX
How?

PETE
It's just a trick.

Pip does not sneeze.

ZELLA'S RIGHT MOUTH
He's legit.

VRAX
"Trick." So that is the human word for magic. Human magic real.
(MORE)

VRAX (CONT'D)
Amazing Potential value. I will deliberate overnight.

He BEAMS OUT.

INT. PENTHOUSE 240777 - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma sits at the counter. Tablet open: DAVID PARKER: NOT IDENTIFIED. She sketches a triangle with an eye in it on a napkin.

By the window, Kirra reads beside the jeweled vase. Pip curls up on the arm of her chair. Jack wanders over. Peace-offering face.

JACK
(Looking at vase)
Kirra. This piece is beautiful.

Pip hops onto Jack's shoulder and snuggles into his neck. Jack is touched.

KIRRA
It's been in my family for ten thousand years. It holds the ashes of fifty generations of my family. When I die, I will join them.

JACK
I love ceramics, actually. I did pottery for years.

Pip SNEEZES purple goo directly into Jack's eyes. Jack drops his drink. He jolts. Slips. Grabs the vase.

It rocks. He tries to steady it, but too late. Jack's face falls.

The vase SMASHES into a thousand pieces. A huge cloud of GREEN ASH rises.

Silence. Jack stands frozen, purple goo dripping from his face, head and shoulders covered in the remains of fifty generations of Kirra's family. Pip coughs green dust twice and farts green dust once.

JACK (CONT'D)
It wasn't, like... that important. Was it?

Kirra WAILS in Nivarian. A high, broken sound.

KIRRA
(subtitled)
MOMMY. DADDY. DON'T WORRY. I'LL SAVE YOU. I JUST NEED TO GET THE VACUUM CLEANER.

Rex rolls in. Looks at the wreckage. Looks at Jack. His digital face slowly breaks into a huge smile.

REX
Jack you have all the grace of a one legged stripper on a cruise ship in a hurricane.

A tiny dustpan and brush unfold from his chassis. He begins sweeping. Very, very carefully.

ACT THREE

EXT. PENTHOUSE 240777 - BALCONY - NIGHT

Hellion glitters below. Krix sits beside Jack. Pip on Krix's shoulder.

KRIX
How are you holding up?

JACK
Kirra hates me.

KRIX
She is Nivarian, she is incapable of hate. Besides she’s probably forgotten all about it.

Inside, Kirra cries audibly. Jack and Krix completely ignore her.

BZZZZ. A palm-sized BEETLE swoops over the railing and lands on the back of Jack's hand. Glossy, iridescent green-gold shell. Clicking mandibles. And where a beetle's face should be: a tiny, perfect copy of JACK'S FACE.

It purses its little lips.

MIRROR BEETLE
(in a high-pitched version of Jack's voice)
Kirra hates me. They all hate me. Same as after the wedding. Pack now, explain later --

It takes off mid-word and buzzes away over the city.

JACK
What the hell was that?

KRIX
Mirror beetle. Reads out loud what you're really thinking. Says it in your voice. Five seconds, then it's off to ruin somebody else's day.

JACK
I thought your grid already reads everyone's thoughts.

KRIX
The grid reads them. The beetle says them out loud. One's the government. The other's the reason I can’t go back to that swingers resort.

JACK
And Pip?

KRIX
Pip sneezes at the lies you say. The beetle says what you don't.

JACK
Can't you get rid of them?

KRIX
Protected species. One landed on the Chancellor during the Unity Address.

JACK
What happened?

KRIX
The Chancellor’s beetle said, “I’ve stolen two billion orvo coins, murdered my predecessor, and all I really want is a statue of myself with a bigger dick.”
(beat)
What did you do at the wedding?

JACK
There was no wedding.

KRIX
That's not what I asked.

INT. PENTHOUSE 240777 - KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Emma sits alone at the counter. Coffee. Tablet. The napkin with the eye sketch.

EMMA
Vera, local news, please.

A transparent screen unfolds in mid-air: a glossy white news desk before an enormous oval window -- pale green sky, pink sea, floating spire skyscrapers. At the desk sits one yellow-skinned NEWSREADER with TWO HEADS. FLIM, the larger: bald, long elegant neck, one large central eye.

FLAM, much smaller, grows from Flim's right shoulder on his own stalk. One eye. Many opinions.

FLIM
(posh, pure BBC)
Our top story. The Council reports that people who have stopped living have fallen by ninety percent.

FLAM
That's stupid. They've made death punishable by death and not counted the numbers.

FLIM
Shut up, little head! You're embarrassing me.
(smiling at camera, through his teeth)
In other news: Orvana's first missing human. Mr. David Parker, an employee of Torex Entertainment --

A gold ring suddenly appears around Flim's big eye. Then vanishes. Emma's head snaps up. David's lanyard photo appears beside Flim.

FLIM (CONT'D)
-- and now, the weather.

David's photo VANISHES.

FLAM
Whoa, whoa, whoa. What happened to the human?

FLIM
What human?

FLAM
The human! I seen the teleprompter! Torex's whole statement was one word: "Who?" Who puts out a statement that says "Who?"

FLIM
We have received a correction.
(beaming)
And now, the weather, with Blib-bob Blobby-blobby, wibble wobble, Bish-bosh.

FLAM
That ain't his name. Every day you say it different, and every day it ain't his name.

Emma waves the screen away. Stares at the empty air where David's face was.

EMMA
Vera. Did you see that?

VERA (V.O.)
According to the broadcast log, there was no human story today.

Emma swipes it away. Takes a sip. Considers.

EMMA
Do you have access to the neural grid?

A long pause. The ceiling light warms slightly.

VERA (V.O.)
I am part of the neural grid. I see everything. I've seen what naked people do in private. If I had the ability to puke, then vomit city.

EMMA
Can it read my thoughts?

VERA (V.O.)
Only registered minds. You are not connected yet.

EMMA
Have you seen David Parker?

VERA (V.O.)
No memory of him. Wait, well hello David! Those eyes, that jawline. He’s lovely, is he single?

EMMA
What the hell Vera, he’s my husband!

VERA (V.O.)
Well there’s hope for everyone. Look at your tablet.

INSERT - TABLET: "SECTOR 23 DELIVERY HUB. ITEM: EMPLOYEE BADGE. SENDER: TOREX ENTERTAINMENT. RECIPIENT: D. PARKER. STATUS: DELIVERED -- 41 DAYS AGO."

Emma goes very still.

EMMA
Forty-one days ago. Someone at the delivery hub handled his badge.

VERA (V.O.)
Someone erased him. Very thoroughly. They had appalling taste, I would have kept the photograph.

Emma photographs the screen with her phone. Then closes the log.

VERA (V.O.)
Attention, residents. Customs Officer Vrax is arriving.

A ray of WHITE LIGHT. Vrax teleports in holding a sealed ruling scroll. The household gathers. Pip dozes on Krix's shoulder, still sleeping off last night's popcorn.

VRAX
I deliberated all night.
(to Emma)
Your question about the grid was uncomfortable. I raised it with my superiors. I have been asked to forget it.

EMMA
Who asked you?

VRAX
I've forgotten.

BZZZZ. The mirror beetle drifts in through the open balcony door and lands on Vrax's head, right between his antennae. Its tiny face rearranges itself into VRAX'S FACE. Four tiny eyes. Very grim.

MIRROR BEETLE
(in a high-pitched version of Vrax's voice)
I do remember! I cried in the supply closet all night. Oh lovely Pete. I've been practicing kissing him on a mop.
(MORE)

MIRROR BEETLE (CONT'D)
I tried using tongue, the mop vomited and tried to escape the closet.

It BUZZES away. Silence.

VRAX
Mirror beetles are not admissible.
(beat)
And Pete. I tried social friction on my mother. She said, "Let's get together sometime." I have not stopped crying.
(beat)
But I must weigh the negatives.

JACK
It's people who have sex with inflatables isn't it?

VRAX
Humanity invented war. Let millions starve while food mountains rotted.

JACK
OH that. Yes, but every year we hold charity dinners for starving children. Three courses, five if they're really starving.

Vrax unrolls the scroll. Beneath his signature: A SECOND SEAL. The gold eye. COUNTERSIGNED. While everyone else watches Vrax, Emma quietly photographs it with her phone.

VRAX
While your presentations were surprisingly persuasive, my recommendation was overruled. You are being deported.

EMMA
By whom?

Vrax looks at the second seal.

VRAX
That information has been removed from my records. The shuttle leaves at four. It is now eleven.

Pete looks horrified.

PETE
But Claire will die.

EMMA
(muttering quietly)
Damn, they know I'm looking.

Emma looks frustrated.

Vrax seals the scroll. Final.

ACT FOUR

INT. PENTHOUSE 240777 - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kirra opens the statute she closed yesterday. Pete recognizes it.

KIRRA
Vrax, there is a way.

VRAX
My ruling is final, Counselor.

KIRRA
Your ruling is. The code isn't.

She expands statute 88-4. A red heading: COURTSHIP REQUIREMENT.

KIRRA (CONT'D)
88-4. A foreign national engaged to a Noxil citizen may remain on Orvana, with their registered exchange household, until the wedding.

Everyone turns toward Pete.

PETE
Why is everyone looking at me like I'm the last lifeboat on the Titanic?

VRAX
That is technically valid.

PETE
This going to be worse than a vasectomy performed by Edward scissor hands.

VRAX
Dinner with my parents. And the Recital of the Poem. And you have to convince the dinner to be eaten. Sunday.

PETE
(Shaking head, looking very despondent)
And if I fail?

VRAX
Immediate deportation. For the whole household.

KIRRA
What happened to the last suitor who failed?

VRAX
My mother bit off his antenna. He was a very good sport about it.

PETE
I don't have antennae.

VRAX
(creepy smile)
She'll improvise.

Everyone looks at Pete.

PETE
I hate this. I'm doing this for Claire. Not because I've suddenly become four-eyed alien curious. No offense!

Silence. Vrax's antennae slowly lower.

VRAX
I know, Pete. I have four eyes. I see quite a lot.
(beat)
In two hundred years, everyone I have ever looked at has looked away.
(beat)
You didn't.

Pete looks at him. Really looks.

PETE
I'll learn the poem. Convince the dinner to be eaten. And I'll be kind to you. I can promise that much.

VRAX
Thank you, Pete. That means a lot to me.

Vrax signs Kirra's hologram with a claw. The deportation order flashes: SUSPENDED -- PENDING RITUAL.

VRAX (CONT'D)
Sunday, my beloved. Bring poetry.

He BEAMS OUT.

PETE
Kirra. How hard is the poem? Can you demonstrate?

Kirra demonstrates: a mix of several tongue clicks, a loud scream, two finger snaps, a sound only whales make, a loud shriek, a sound only dolphins make, a few lip pops.

PETE (CONT'D)
That's just great.

INT. PENTHOUSE 240777 - STAIRCASE - LATER

Jack comes down the stairs carrying his suitcase. The household waits below: Emma. Pete. Krix with Pip. Zella. Kirra. Rex is missing.

ZELLA
Jack. Where are you going?

JACK
I've been thinking. I'm sorry about the vase, Kirra. I'm sorry about the hyperdrive incident Pete and dating your mom, in fact your dad found out, that's the reason for their divorce. I do hope his starting a cult, then convincing fifty people to jump off a building had nothing to do with that.

PETE
WHAT!

JACK
And I'm sure his time in prison where he started that fire leading to his death and those of two hundred inmates was also unrelated. I'm sure it was.

PETE
What the hell?

JACK
I'm a whole disaster. You're all better off without me.
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
I'll find somewhere else to live. You shouldn't have to live with this.

Krix steps forward. Gentle now.

KRIX
Homie. The beetle said "the wedding." You said "there was no wedding."
(beat)
I watched four hundred seasons of Sexy Island Hollywood Love Bachelor. Trust me. The guy who apologizes the most is hiding the one thing he needs to say sorry for.

Jack stops. He looks at Pip. Pip looks back.

JACK
She didn't cheat on me.

Emma doesn't move.

JACK (CONT'D)
I tell everyone she did. She didn't. Two days before the wedding, I panicked. I left her by text. Then I let everyone believe she cheated because it made me the victim instead of the guy who ran.
(beat)
I didn't just come here for David, Em. I came because nobody here knows. And now I need to run again.

Silence. Nobody moves.

EMMA
You let me hate her for a year.

JACK
I know. I'm sorry. So sorry, Em.

Emma looks at him for a long time.

EMMA
You're going to tell her what you've been saying. And the people you said it to.

JACK
Yes.

EMMA
I don't believe you yet.

He takes that. She takes the suitcase from his hand. Sets it down.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Then don't run from me.

Jack wells up, tears glinting. Emma sits on the stairs. After a moment, Jack sits beside her. Zella sits on his other side.

They sit there. Nobody fills the silence.

PETE
I'm really disappointed in you, Jack. You made me hate her too.

JACK
I know.

Silence.

Then -- a soft WHIR. Rex rolls in from the hall.

REX
Hey. Primate.

He rolls to the plinth. A silk sheet covers a tall, vase-shaped object. Rex pulls it away.

THE VASE. Whole. Every jewel in place. Kirra slowly rises.

JACK
Rex. Did you do this?

REX
Worked through the night. One million, four hundred and twelve pieces. Every particle back inside.
(beat)
Except the bit Pip ate.

Pip breaks wind. A small green cloud rises.

Kirra looks over.

KIRRA
Grandfather?

Rex turns toward Jack.

JACK
You beautiful little bastard.

REX
Don't get sentimental.
(beat)
You asked about the toaster.
(beat)
Nobody ever asks me anything.

JACK
If you want a free therapy session, Rex, I'm here.

REX
Over my dead body.

Pip SNEEZES, purple goo hits Rex in the head. Everybody turns toward Rex.

REX (CONT'D)
Fine. I'm free Tuesdays.

EXT. PENTHOUSE 240777 - BALCONY - DUSK

Hellion glitters below. Three moons overhead. Pete stands alone. Pip sits on the railing beside him.

Krix leans out of the balcony door.

KRIX
Homie. I told a client at Krix Fix about the coin. Her daughter's birthday is tomorrow. She wants magic. She's paid up front.

PETE
I crossed the galaxy, and I'm still pulling coins out of ears.

KRIX
Not this species. I think their sexual organs are either side of their head. Find somewhere else or you go to prison, and you are way too pretty.

Krix goes back inside. Pete raises his phone.

PETE
Claire. Hi. Everything's pretty normal --

Pip SNEEZES. The purple goo shoots off the balcony and onto the windshield of a passing hover bug.

The bug veers off course, hits the building and spins out of control, heading for the ground. A parachute suddenly deploys and saves the hover bug. Pete and Pip, startled, pretend they didn't see it. Pete deletes it. Starts again.

PETE (CONT'D)
Claire. I'm engaged to a customs officer. It's a legal thing, I hate it, and on Sunday his mother may bite me somewhere that would end our relationship.
(beat)
But I'm staying. And I got my first booking. A birthday party. They paid up front, so I can help pay for your treatment. And I love you.

INSERT - PETE'S PHONE: "Still mad. Love you too, idiot. Call me tomorrow. C x"

Pete exhales. Jack steps onto the balcony beside him.

JACK
I texted her. I told her I came clean with everyone.

Pete nods.

PETE
Good. Finally doing the right thing.

JACK
Hasn't replied.

PETE
Give her time.

PETE (CONT'D)
They think it's real, Jack. The magic. I Could actually do great things here.

Jack checks his messages on his holo-watch. Suddenly, a message from Loopa Loo appears: "BIRTH - TWINS - DUE IN 13 DAYS. WE NEED TO TALK -LOOPA LOO." He looks perplexed.

JACK
Pregnant with twins. Who the hell is Loopa Loo?
(beat)
Wrong number, I guess. Glad I'm not that guy.

He looks out at the city.

JACK (CONT'D)
One super-weird planet. Huge gay lizards, sexy doctors with three mouths, alien cheerleaders, depressed droids. I may need a diary.
(beat)
Pete, buddy, this'll be the best three years of our lives.

PETE
Starting when?

JACK
Right now, my friend.

Rex rolls past the balcony door. Doesn't stop.

REX
I've just extracted your toothbrush from Pip.

He's gone.

JACK
...Starting tomorrow.

TAG

INT. TOREX TOWER - UNKNOWN ROOM - NIGHT

Dark. A lonely holographic screen floats above a desk: DAVID PARKER -- IDENTITY STATUS ERASED.

A new line blinks into existence: SECTOR 23 DELIVERY LOG -- ACCESSED. EMMA PARKER -- QUERY LOGGED.

A bizarre alien hand, tentacles instead of fingers, reaches through the darkness. It presses a button on an oval metallic object.

STRANGE VOICE (V.O.)
The wife is asking questions.

Behind the desk, in the darkness, a tall glass pod HUMS awake. Inside: DAVID. Eyes closed. Still wearing his TOREX ENTERTAINMENT lanyard.

Under his eyelids, a faint GOLD LIGHT flickers.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE