

"SPACE"

*The Sheridan Tapes - B-Side 03*  
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Written by

Trevor Van Winkle

Based on story and characters from  
"Homestead on the Corner"  
By Trevor Van Winkle

INT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - EDGE OF SPACE EXHIBIT - NIGHT

The echoing but not overpowering sound of a small crowd in an underground exhibit. Someone stands on the edge of a mezzanine, tapping their fingers against the metal rail.

After a moment, ADAM AINSLEY SIGHS and pulls out his phone. Tapping in a number, he waits as it rings.

ADAM AINSLEY

(a little nervous)

Anna! Hi, uh, listen -- are you sure you told them the right place? I've been here for what, like... Twenty minutes?

(to himself, whispered)

*Only twenty minutes? Geez Ainsley.*

(back into phone)

I haven't seen any sign of him. Is he...

(listens)

No, I'm not saying you would, I'm just...

(listens, SIGHS)

Right, right... Fine. I'll wait a little longer. Yeah, you too.

Adam hangs up, pockets his phone, and MAKES SEVERAL FIDGETING, UNCOMFORTABLE NOISES, glancing around the room.

ADAM AINSLEY (CONT'D)

(GROANS, to himself)

Where the heck are they? I know this is a blind date, but aren't I supposed to... You know, actually see them at *some* point? I mean...

Adam pauses, noticing someone has just appeared behind him.

ADAM AINSLEY (CONT'D)

Oh. Hello.

REN PARK

(flat, distracted)

Hello.

ADAM AINSLEY

That's uh... That's my spot.

REN PARK

(amused)

Your spot?

ADAM AINSLEY

I mean -- I was waiting for someone there.

REN PARK

(joking)

Waiting? Seems you've found someone, I'd say.

ADAM AINSLEY

(CHUCKLES)

Okay, Yoda. But seriously, I'm supposed to meet up with someone here.

REN PARK

(faking disbelief)

*Exactly* here?

ADAM AINSLEY

Yeah, exactly here. See, look...

(pulls out phone, holds it up for inspection)

"Griffith Observatory, Edge of Space mezzanine, right next to the Observing Telescopes. 6pm sharp."

REN PARK

Huh. I guess so. Here, you can have your spot back.

ADAM AINSLEY

(relieved)

Thanks.

Adam steps back up, beginning to drum on the railing again. Ren turns and looks through one of the small telescopes nearby, which squeaks slightly on its hinges.

REN PARK

(distracted, toying with Adam)

So... Who are you waiting for?

ADAM AINSLEY

Oh, uh... Blind date. A friend of mine set it up.

REN PARK

Seems they're running late, then.

ADAM AINSLEY

Well, Anna said they're usually pretty busy... And that they have a tenancy to forget things.

REN PARK

(slightly hurt, hiding it quickly)

Really? What else did... Anna? What else did she say about them?

ADAM AINSLEY

Well... Not much, really. Just enough to get me interested, I'm guessing.

REN PARK

And what's that?

ADAM AINSLEY

Well... That they love astrophysics, mostly. And that they're one of the smartest people she knows, so... Yeah. Figured it was worth a shot.

REN PARK

Is that high praise, do you think? Coming from her, I mean?

ADAM AINSLEY

(uncertain)

Eh... Mostly. I'm not really sure, we don't really know each other that well. We just reconnected the last time she was in New York.

REN PARK

You're from back east?

ADAM AINSLEY

Yeah, Rochester. You?

REN PARK

Florida. Actually grew up pretty close to Cape Canaveral.

ADAM AINSLEY

(intensely jealous)

No way.

REN PARK

(CHUCKLES)

Spent most of my childhood watching shuttle launches. Sparked a bit of a... A Lifelong obsession, to be honest.

ADAM AINSLEY

God... Ever get to see one of them up close?

REN PARK

(mildly annoyed at the fact)

Only after they were retired. Saw *Atlantis* at Kennedy Space Center a few times before I moved out here. And I stop by to see *Endavour* whenever I feel like risking downtown traffic. You?

ADAM AINSLEY

(nodding)

*Enterprise*.

REN PARK

Oh, now I'm jealous. Always wanted to see that one.

ADAM AINSLEY

Well don't turn green on me. I only got to see it from across the harbor. The *Intrepid* was closed for renovations when I came to visit.

REN PARK

(imitating Shatner slightly)

Still... *To boldly go*, right?

ADAM AINSLEY

(shrugs)

I guess. To be honest, I always thought it was a bit of a misnomer.

REN PARK

(gauging him)

Really?

ADAM AINSLEY

Well... You think *Enterprise*, you think long journey into the far reaches of space, right? You think...

(MORE)

ADAM AINSLEY (CONT'D)  
(gestures to something)  
That.

REN PARK  
(messing with him)  
A giant photo of the Virgo cluster?

ADAM AINSLEY  
Possibilities. Billions of stars  
and trillions of planets, just  
waiting to be explored.  
(SCOFFS)  
Even if half of them did end up  
looking like Vasquez Rocks.  
(beat)  
And the shuttle program never even  
got out of orbit. Did you know it  
was supposed to be part of a bigger  
space program?

REN PARK  
(amused, but humoring him)  
I think I've heard that.

ADAM AINSLEY  
(getting worked up)  
I mean, we could have had  
astronauts on Mars by 1983. We  
could have had nuclear rockets  
going back and forth from the moon  
by now, for crying out loud! And  
what do we have? Billionaires  
throwing cars into the depths of  
space? Internet satellites? Come  
on.

REN PARK  
(CHUCKLES)  
I guess that's as big as people can  
dream right now.

ADAM AINSLEY  
(exasperated)  
Look at where we're standing! They  
can clearly dream bigger!

REN PARK  
People can dream as big as they  
like... It's actually facing that  
bigness they have trouble with. And  
you don't get much bigger than...  
(gestures to wall)  
All of that.

ADAM AINSLEY  
 (a little deflated)  
 I guess not. Still -- I wish I  
 could have seen that future.

REN PARK  
 (encouraging)  
 Hey, you still might.

ADAM AINSLEY  
 (joking, a little bitter)  
 You're right -- Maybe I could tow  
 some rich guy's roadster into space  
 for him someday.

REN PARK  
 No, I mean... Things change. People  
 change. They just need to see  
 what's possible. That's why I love  
 this place so much.

ADAM AINSLEY  
 Huh. Fair enough. I just like it  
 cause all my favorite movie were  
 filmed here.

REN PARK  
 (CHUCKLES, reassuring him)  
 No, that's good. We love what we  
 love for our own reasons. Or no  
 reason at all. It's all the same. I  
 mean, in the grandest scheme, none  
 of it really matters anyway.

ADAM AINSLEY  
 (confused)  
 Doesn't it?

REN PARK  
 (shrugs)  
 Nothing we can directly affect. I  
 mean -- here, try this telescope.

Adam hesitates, then crosses over to the telescope, which  
 squeaks slightly as he adjusts it and looks through.

ADAM AINSLEY  
 Okay... What am I looking at here?

REN PARK  
 Space.

ADAM AINSLEY  
 Oh, very funny.

REN PARK

No, really. That's what it looks like from earth -- a blank, empty section of space between the Virgo and Leo constellations, so small you can cover it up with one fingertip.

ADAM AINSLEY

(SCOFFS)

It sure as hell doesn't look empty to me.

REN PARK

Exactly. You're seeing a massive, blown up image of the Virgo Cluster, the center of which is nearly 54 million light years from earth. There are at least 13 hundred galaxies scattered throughout it, so bright that the intergalactic medium between them glows with diffused starlight. Each of those galaxies is home to at least hundreds of millions of stars, billions of planets, and potentially thousands of worlds able to support life.

ADAM AINSLEY

(slightly annoyed)

Okay... Space is very very big and very very empty. You know, I did actually take Astronomy 101 when I was in college.

REN PARK

(getting excited)

No. That's just the thing. It's not empty. It just seems that way because we can't see -- or affect it -- at the proper scale. It's packed to the gills. It's bursting with matter and energy, and probably full of lifeforms whose very existences would be horrifyingly incomprehensible to us.

(beat)

But for all that... We haven't found a single piece of evidence for extraterrestrial life anywhere.

(MORE)

REN PARK (CONT'D)

Which, to me, says that even with a 360 degree view of the universe out to the cosmological horizon, we've yet to find a civilization capable of changing even a tiny piece of their galaxy enough for us to notice. So ultimately...

ADAM AINSLEY

(realizing)

Nothing we do matters. The universe doesn't care.

REN PARK

Why should it? It didn't ask for us to be here. And there are a near infinite number of cosmic phenomena out there that could destroy the Earth too quickly for us to realize, and, as far as we know, no one out there would even notice our absence if they did.

An awkward silence, then...

ADAM AINSLEY

(a little disheartened)

I bet you're really fun at parties, aren't you.

REN PARK

(a little hurt)

Actually, I am.

(realizes how that sounded, apologetic)

Sorry, it's just... Big picture stuff has a tenancy to make me a little existential.

ADAM AINSLEY

So what's the point then?

REN PARK

(confused)

What do you mean?

ADAM AINSLEY

Well, if nothing we do matters -- if it's all going to end in tragedy no matter what -- then why should I bother? Why am I waiting here to meet someone? Why was I actually hoping I might have a chance with this person?

(MORE)

ADAM AINSLEY (CONT'D)  
Nobody's going to remember it  
happened, much less care. So what's  
the point?

There's a moment of silence between the two of them as Ren  
weighs their answer. Finally...

REN PARK  
(serious)  
Look around. What do you see?

ADAM AINSLEY  
(a little flippant)  
Huh? Uh, well -- the lower floor of  
Griffith Observatory? The meteorite  
exhibit, and the scale model of the  
solar system? A bunch of kids and  
tourists running around poking at  
things they probably shouldn't...  
And someone taking a selfie with  
the Einstein statue. That's  
original.

REN PARK  
(serious)  
A moment. You're seeing a moment...  
One that happens and vanishes as  
quickly as it's observed. And  
another, and another, and another,  
each passing so quickly that you  
don't even notice it happening.  
Time, marching endlessly from  
future to past with us stuck in the  
middle. Yet every moment of it was  
real... and in some ways, still is.  
(beat)  
Space is so huge and distant that  
we can't even hope to touch our  
nearest stars... But time? Being in  
this moment, here and now? That's  
even more of a miraculous feat.  
We're here. We were here. We'll  
forever be here. And as far as we  
know, no one will ever be able to  
touch this moment again. It belongs  
to you and I alone. And that has to  
count for something.

Ren falls silent, Adam staring at them as though only just  
seeing who's standing in front of him for the first time.

ADAM AINSLEY  
 (stammering, slightly  
 embarrassed)  
 I... Sorry, but... Are you Ren?

REN PARK  
 (slightly smug)  
 Guilty as charged. Adam?

ADAM AINSLEY  
 (a little annoyed, mostly  
 amused)  
 Oh, buzz off... Why didn't you just  
 say that to start with?

REN PARK  
 (shrugs)  
 I don't get out of the office much.  
 I've got to make my own fun when I  
 do. Sorry for the, uh... Slight  
 existential dread there.

ADAM AINSLEY  
 No, it's... It's fine. That was  
 actually -- it was really kind of  
 beautiful. In a weird sort of way.

REN PARK  
 (CHUCKLES)  
 You know, I think that's the nicest  
 compliment I've ever received.  
 (holds out his hand)  
 Pleasure to meet you, Adam Ainsley.

ADAM AINSLEY  
 (shaking it, slightly  
 sarcastic)  
 Charmed, I'm sure.  
 (beat, looking around)  
 You want to get out of here? The  
 crushing weight of eternity is  
 getting to be... A bit much for me.

REN PARK  
 (CHUCKLES FONDLY)  
 Lead the way.

Two sets of footsteps retreat from the edge of the balcony,  
 fading into the noise of the crowd. As they do, *Salut d'Amour*  
 begins to play on the speakers, filling the infinitude of  
 distant space with the sound of love.

ROLL END THEME  
 AND CREDITS